Title
Base(ic) Transfigurations: Race and the Cultural Logics of Flow Along US Bases in Okinawa

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Publication Date
2016

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Base(ic) Transfigurations: Race and the Cultural Logics of Flow Along US Bases in Okinawa

By
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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology in the Graduate Division of University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:
Professor Nelson Graburn, Chair
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Summer 2016
Abstract

Base(ic) Transfigurations: Race and the Cultural Logics of Flow Along US Bases in Okinawa

by Mitzi Carter

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Nelson Graburn, Chair

What happens when concepts of “security” that circulate at a more global level consolidate around concepts of race, gender, or other factors at the local level in Okinawa and how and what precipitates the fragmentation of those consolidated imaginaries for US Americans in Okinawa? With the ever increasing consolidation of joint US-Japanese military power in Okinawa and the attempts to secure the narratives to frame “sacrifice” and “global security,” how do those people most vulnerable to these discursive claims — specifically women, children, mixed race Okinawans, and military personnel of color, and economically insecure military personnel — find ways to maneuver from these interpellations? And more importantly, how do they shift the discourse that thrives on postcolonial states of exception?

This research project focuses on how people craft themselves as globally flexible in these local “in-between” militarized sites to restructure their own resistance and modes of knowledge-making against what sometimes seems to be insurmountable militarized conditions. This project explores how these flexibilities are shaped, 1) spatially at the interstices of binaries marked as on/off base spaces, 2) in circulating discursive maneuvering by long-term expatriates and military personnel living in Okinawa, 3) by mixed race Okinawans and Black soldiers whose histories are indelibly marked within Okinawan spaces of coloniality, and 4) by artists and performers attempting to shape concepts of friendship, flow and hybridity with alternative discourses, all of which are strongly linked to the maintenance of security imaginaries on the island.

I argue that life situated within Okinawan partial sovereignty, is always affected by the rubric of national security that attempts to bridge the temporal gap between WWII and the more ambiguous, global “war on terror.” Therefore, alternative trajectories for pushing past the cultural logics that deem Okinawans as simply stuck “in the middle” of a geopolitical situation require savvy interlocutors who can flexibly and delicately dodge the disciplining effects of state power and transnational security imaginaries. I argue these actors rewrite cultural codes of “flow” and commercialized hybridity that weave together perspectives of the insecurely rooted, the routinely racialized via security talk, and the globally and locally dislocated subjects in uneven spaces of privilege at the Okinawan fencelines.
Dedication

To my mother who provided intimate guidance, love, encouragement, and direction, and for whom this entire project is built around. Her sacrifices and her complicated tales of transformation, survival, reflection, and refractions are always softly tracing each chapter.
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Preface: Nappy Routes and Tangled Tales

The first time I snuck into my dad's old grey filing cabinet in his muggy garage office in Texas, I was in high school. Somewhat inspired by the Blood Hound Gang on the PBS after-school show in my youth, I was a self-appointed detective rummaging for clues about my father’s life. He didn't talk much about his military life in Okinawa, nor of his time in Vietnam, Korea, or Thailand. Every now and then, his retired military friends and their mostly Okinawan or Filipina wives and their mixed children would unfold into our backyard and there in the suffocating Houston humidity, between the servings of sweet iced tea, ribs, tempura, goya stir-fry, and wise cracking jokes, I gathered glimpses into a world that was both culturally familiar and yet so temporally foreign.

I took it for granted when my mother, always an active storyteller, would pass on her memories of a bullet-ridden Okinawa. The imaginary I crafted from these stories were in technicolor, fluttering by like a jumpy, semi-melted filmstrip of tales layered against the sounds of war. Sometimes the stories were poetic and fragmented. She gave details of soft leaves and rough branches falling about her, neatly and quickly chopped by whistling bullets from the American planes above while she ran over the decaying bodies below. I could nearly hear the crisp, stinging, buzzing metal rounds that screeched past her ears as she walked over mangled bodies in the dark evenings, searching for new shelter in caves in the hillsides and scavenging for food in ripped up fields from the war raging around her. The pewn-pewn-pewn bullet sounds she made punctuated these tales of violence — from the squirming maggots in the pestering hole of her mother’s leg, injured by the shrapnel from an itinerant American bullet to the tales of the claustrophobic feeling of huddling together with other families gathered in dank caves reeking with the suffocating smell of rotting flesh, urine and feces all about them.

The stories would come unexpectedly. While on a walk along Anini Beach in Kauai, she stopped to show me the broad, thick leaves above us and noted they were the same ones her family and probably many other Okinawans used like toilet paper after the war began. She would often talk about the Hollywood films that made her dreamy, repeating tales of the the ones she saw from the booth where the reels spun magical stories, above the buzz cut heads of American GI’s in the theater where she worked in those tense post-war years. In her other job making identity cards on the base, she came to quietly know US systems of class and race. She quickly determined who and how quickly new stripes were gained. She quietly noted that Black American men gained fewer than others.

I knew that the well water sometimes tasted salty, the one at her old home in Naha directly on the edge of the ocean -- the one the American bombs exploded along with the rest of her village at the start of the Battle. Her Okinawa was complex, rarely progressed through time evenly, and her narratives invoked a sense of displacement, not as a privileged tourist but more in the sense of exile, through a broken diasporic lens, where the binary between West and East were blurred.

My father’s Okinawa was more grid-like and linear, clean up front, dirty in the back. In our home hung military souvenirs of “stations”— a black lacquered plate with a map of Okinawa etched in, base names mapping the island, military plaques with
achievements stamped onto golden tags. USAF (US Air Force) stenciled onto the bodies of wooden *kokeshi* dolls with bobbing heads. My father’s Okinawa was a stop-over with powerful nostalgic routes. He described Okinawa within the militarized lexicon as a “station.” His Okinawa was a stopping point, verging on the touristic, a site of deployment in a broader military “theater” where the already circulating Orientalist images abounded. It was not a place where the layering of faded signs, was a reflection of the complex palimpsest, the cultural “make- do with what we have to survive” practices nor were actions such as a request for some items from the base commissary registered as being more complex than a one-dimensional acceptance or even mere tolerance of the burdensome presence of such a heavy base presence in Okinawa.

Yet, he was not a flag waving nationalist who enlisted with patriotic passion driving him. He had taken in the knowledge about Okinawa as a base, which he said was passed down in the circulating stories within the military about these sites. A sense of authenticity had been constructed of this space and the constant negotiations of what that meant were developed in military communities as discussed in chapter one.

My father, born and raised in the US South was poor as a child and poor at eighteen when he enlisted. As an adult I asked him finally why he joined voluntarily and he responded bluntly “cause I didn’t want to shine no white man’s shoes or sell newspapers the rest of my life—that’s about the only thing a black man like me could do at the time.” Just before he enlisted, my father, because he was Black and white supremacy reigned, would not be picked up by a “white ambulance” if he was found bleeding in the streets. His father had once been severely beaten by a group of white men in a racially motivated attack, one that affected how his immediate family policed themselves around Whites for the fear of committing the cultural and legally backed no-no of expressing Black impropriety. The Woolworth lunch counter sit-in that helped to jumpstart larger acts of civil disobedience across the country would happen the year he joined the military. His move to Okinawa was liberating in some respects. But he also recognized that Okinawans were “like Japan’s Black people” to a certain degree. He felt a kinship and perhaps a sense of superiority that he wasn’t afforded before and his sense of displacement was a form of exile as well, a melancholic alienation from a form of modernity he was promised as a citizen-soldier.

My mother used to say that my father was a troublemaker -- always quick to complain about racial discrimination as an enlisted man and also as a civilian. As I rummaged in that damp cluttered garage, I would pause at my finds in the file cabinet -- two official letters he had written to his commanding officers about racial discrimination, a porno video hidden behind two files, and a book on parenting. The first and last items surprised me.

The language in the military letters seemed foreign -- the acronyms and formal structure were hard and cold. The letters stood at attention. On the back of yellowing papers they were braille-like, as if the typewriter he used also felt bitter about the humiliating experiences of being treated as a second-class citizen. My father was a mystery to me so I would continue coming back to these files secretly over the years, trying to find out more about this foreign military world, more about an Okinawa that never matched the images in the encyclopedias my mom would order from the door-to-door salesmen, more about my father and his life as a black man in transnational flux.
Slowly, I would come to learn that for certain people like my father, a “tour of duty” in Okinawa, somewhere between the “off-limits” signs and the ohakas (family tombs), was more of a detour -- a movement around mental fragmentation under an oppressive racial and economic structure of life in the US (at the risk of being physically fragmented in war). His detour placed him in an occupied territory. The schismatic cultural productions that happen as a result of these types of displaced encounters, from both Okinawans oddly placed misplaced within the nation-state as well as from Black Americans also complexly scattered into imaginaries of belonging in the US, partly shape the fields of meaning on the ground in militarized spaces as they intersect with global circulation of signs and imaginaries generated within the “military diaspora.”

So when I arrived in Okinawa for my year long “official” fieldwork, I was still hunting for more clues about my father’s life and to make sense of what these types of convergences of displacements occur locally in Okinawa, in-between these complex zones of partial sovereignties. I knew I would implement ethnographic techniques with my mother’s experiences growing up as a survivor of the war and the extreme difficulties she endured coming of age in the difficult post-war period at the center of my inquiries. I knew I would remain committed to theorizing about militarization in its multiple forms and practices. But it was my father’s tour that led me to the types of questions and complexities I had been refusing for many years in my activist work. I had been ignoring the entanglements, the transnational akou-kurou (twilight borders) between nation-states and the chaotic movements between them. It is easier to dismiss the military bases as a broad oppressive colonial network than to address the multiple entanglements and techniques which sustain and/or disrupt them in the in-between spaces. It is with this impetus and with this background upon where this dissertation research continually returns.

**Approaching homeland and “the field”**

I had been to Okinawa several times before my long-term stay for family visits and short-term preliminary fieldwork trips. I met with a wide variety of people from graduate students, professors, former military personnel who had been stationed in Okinawa as well as expatriates who continue to live there. I talked extensively with relatives who worked on base, and those who stayed far from it, local business owners, museum directors, tour operators, artists, politicians, retired military and long-term Okinawan contractors, Okinawan students, and professors. I asked many of these people what they would like to see in an anthropology of militarization and “borderland” culture in Okinawa? Some of their answers helped to structure this project.

One of the more striking answers I received during preliminary fieldwork was from a women’s advocate based in Naha, Nobuko Karimata. She said based on my particular ability to move through many of the in-between spaces and because of my access to so many military members and expatriates, she wanted to learn more about how Americans understood Okinawa. What do they really know? How do they really feel about security and Okinawa? How do they understand “the mix” of people here and

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1 See Kina’s (2011) discussion of Tami Sakiyama’s work, which raises the Okinawan phrase “Akou-kurou,” which Kina translates to “the state in between light and darkness.”
in what ways? When they return to the US, how do they explain Okinawa to others and did those meanings of being here change as they had different life experiences? Her questions percolated as I developed my own project questions. She was concerned about how communication of Okinawa was routed and it resonated with many other questions I had considered as a child listening to these tales of violence in their very multiple iterations between my parents. As a witness to court hearings, she realized the potency of communication and the ways in which hegemonic understandings of security were circulated transnationally was crucial to Okinawan livelihood.

In my study of ethnographic works on militarization, I was not surprised when I discovered that many of the ethnographic studies of US Americans in Okinawa are conducted by those who have some intimate linkages to military institutions. For example, Anthropologist Linda Isako Angst has written that she spent time on Okinawan bases as a child. Another scholar, Mark Gillem, was an officer in the Air Force and architect remarked “As an academic, I think that it I was able to develop a research agenda based on my own experiences. As an architect, I knew where to go for the answers. As an officer, I could go there” (281). His access to those spaces deemed off-limits to most Okinawans and researchers without security clearance is pronounced. His view from above, literally, as he discusses spatial optics from a Blackhawk hovering above the bases in Okinawa showcases the possibilities (and compromises) for his research on suburban mini-Americas in US outposts overseas. Christopher Nelson, an anthropologist and former Marine brings a particularly profound vantage point into the intimate workings of military culture and his familiarity and critical insight into the inner cultural workings of military institutional practices produce writings that reveal the dank corners around truth claims which may remain obscure to those who have not lived near them all their lives. Because of the numerous restrictions for entering bases, many academic scholars studying Okinawa rarely venture directly into that space and rarely engage in participant-observation there.

Catherine Lutz has noted that some “field sites have sometimes been a form of war booty,” (Lutz 1999) and our access to these sites must also be considered in our collection and analysis of knowledge. I would consistently return to this as I met other Okinawan researchers in the field. One prominent Okinawan researcher at Okinawa International University told me had never been on base and yet his entire research was centered on spatial politics of US bases and their impact on everyday Okinawan life. He had never been invited nor had access but was infinitely curious about visiting as a cultural observation. I introduced him to a friend who offered to sign him in. In these instances, I realized that my own access was problematic and I needed to remain critical of my ability to move through these spaces as I engaged in participant observation as well as accessed field informants to collect surveys there for me.

**Self-Censorship and Seduction**

For anthropologists studying up and doing ethnographies that look at power dynamics predominately in the United States or US based institutions, there is the risk of being seduced by language all too familiar to the anthropologist. Antonius Robben found that he had to peel himself away from the language of familiarity with some interviewees and when speaking to the Argentinian military elites he found it difficult not be persuaded by the techno-rational arguments for war and military violence (Robben 1996). He
describes “seduction” and “counter-seduction” in the field as part of the softer, more mysterious side of rhetorical discourse strategy and he urges anthropologists to include in their “thick descriptions” the sensitive discourse analysis that may explain how one has been or could have been “led astray unawares.” Doing so he argues, allows for a more textured ethnography and allows for the various routes of truth to be displayed that cut through the layers of empathy and detachment.

Robben’s issue with seduction in the field is not that it occurs in the first place but that the “we-feeling” that is generated in the interviews has much to do with “a personal inhibition to break our rapport with critical questions. We realize [upon reviewing material collected in the field] that we have mistaken seduction for empathy” (Robben 1996: 86). I tried to stay cognizant of these seductions in the field. In the interviews I conducted, especially with military personnel, I would explain that my father was retired Air Force and had been stationed in Okinawa and usually, and the conversations seemed to turn more frank in that immediate camaraderie we were expected to share in that family connection. However, when I mentioned I was a student at Berkeley, there was some hesitation with some interviewees. One former Marine I interviewed stiffened up when I mentioned Berkeley and pointedly asked, “You’re not one of those anti-military, left-wing hippies are you?” When I explained my project and my approach he said, “Ok, so your dad was in the service? You’re from Texas. And you’re a good old half-blood like my daughter. Ok—we’re good. What do you wanna know.” I left large excerpts of our interview in tact to show how we positioned each other throughout the interview.

Another similar problem for fieldworkers “studying up” is that they forget to question the processes that may appear just and democratic like “alternative dispute resolutions.” Laura Nader found that in her research on legal disputes in communities from rural Mexico to many sites in the United States, “social scientists sought to explain conflict while at the same time taking coercive harmony for granted” (Nader 1997).

The taken for granted notions of war are also a risk for those studying militarization. Catherine Lutz (1999) has warned that some scholars are blinded by the Clausewitzian view of war that sees “the organized violence of states in combat with each other, in search of absolute victory.” In Okinawa, these notions of war remain sedimented in narratives that justify US base presence on the island. I often heard this common narrative that I repeatedly heard during my interviews: “We won the war, so we get to do what we need to do for security.” These particular perspectives on warfare are the cornerstone of the works by several influential military historians who have shaped much of the thinking on Okinawa.

Besides the risk of seduction and self-censorship, there is also the risk of being blacklisted and shunned by colleagues within the academy for taking on the military as a subject of study. Hugh Gusterson (1993) laments that some anthropologists are labeled by their colleagues as tainted for studying “the enemy” so closely and that they are accused of losing their integrity, something that may happen less when the subject matter is more distant from people of the same culture. Others however, have a fear of being blacklisted for simply speaking out against militarization.

Another prominent reason for the distance from this topic is that Anthropologists and anthropological knowledge have long been used for war making strategies (Price 2004; Gonzales 2009) and some of these efforts were made possible by funding
scholars to produce national character studies through the State Department Defense Department’s Cambridge Project and attempts to launch Project Camelot to further assist the US government in controlling people in areas where there was a potential conflict with US interests (Nader 1998: 118-20). Again the trend continues with the ambiguous “War on Terror” and increased funding and rigorous recruiting of Anthropologists. According to the New York Times (Rhode 2007) in September 2007, “Defense Secretary Robert Gates authorized a $40 million expansion of the program” that assigns anthropologists to combat units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In other politically astute and radical writings, the dynamics of cultural practices on and around the bases appeared too static and the subjects were often caricatured or ignored. Military culture abroad is sometimes marked by suburban-like, hyper consumer mentality, a mix of US regional southern attributes of race thinking, Christian-based world views; and burdensome hierarchical orderings. I was familiar enough with many military cultural practices and logics. I grew up with DOD status on my ID cards which afforded me access to the military’s socialized medical plans and hospitals, entry into military commissaries and PX’s (military department stores) on most US bases, and short-term stays in base housing while on vacation throughout my youth. My family was in regular contact with other families my parents had met while “on tour” mostly throughout Asia. Because my father retired before I was born, I was never a “military brat,” like my older sister nor immersed in that world where a type of self-policing through militarized norms came easily. While on base as an adult, friends and family corrected me on some actions that they knew would position me awkwardly. For example, they instructed me not to take photos inside certain military establishments and not to point to items in the grocery store that I wanted or my friend might be suspected of engaging in the black market on the island. At the same time, I did not have easy access to the bases, just osmotic openings. It was through these processes of slipping through that I got to experience these snippets of base life that many other Okinawans can venture into only for short visits with family or intimate partners.

**Fugitive Events and the Emergent**

The problem I repeatedly encountered was finding a strong anthropological entry point to raise the recurring themes of displacement and contradicting concepts of security in a way that would not reinforce dominant stale economic reductionist binaries of pro/anti base rhetoric. I found it exceedingly difficult to first frame my research question with guiding theoretical foundations, shaped by semi-conclusive hypotheses — the traditional method of social scientists. Also, finding a consistent script proved difficult. My relatives in Okinawa asked repeatedly: *What are you studying again? What do you want to know? Something about the military or something about race?* My cousin in Naha taped programs on the reversion for me, “for your research on the Reversion.” One uncle brought me a very heavy, dusty book on the Battle of Okinawa, “for your work on the Battle.” Other cousins on the base asked if I needed introductions to their circle of mixed race friends and volunteered to organize focus groups, “for your project on mixed race.” Some other friends took the liberty of setting up interviews for me with several expatriates they knew on the island, “for your project on soldiering” while another set up an interview with a woman who used to be a barworker in Koza in the
late 1960’s, “for your research on Koza and bar workers.” I had a defined script as do most anthropologists entering the field, an approved IRB form with my stated purpose for asking interviewees questions, and a standard blurb I would send via email to potential interviewees. Yet, as most anthropologists commencing fieldwork, findings shift from the original intent and guiding questions become jumbled or dismissed entirely. The emergent is what I sought and in heavily militarized settings where rumors can drastically transform lives on a small island, I was careful of how to frame my research so I would not alienate those who chose to speak with me (from those who knew I was talking to them for my research and how they perceived it) and also because I was wary of how my topic would shape responses and actions. Not that I was so naive to the ways people manipulate and/or challenge but preferred a longer stay in Okinawa than short, multiple visits to get a better sense for contradictions, disruptions, and how people produce knowledge along the fencelines, how they negotiate power within strong neoliberal discourses of diversity and also under the hegemonic understandings of national and international security.

In Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary (2008) anthropologists Paul Rabinow, George Marcus, James Faubion, and Tobias Rees discuss changes in the field of anthropology, namely new designs to analyze contemporary subjects and processes. Their ideal pedagogical method would encourage Anthropology students “to submit to the outside, to get drowned in and carried away by it, while staying alert to the gradual emergence of a theme to which chance encounters, fugitive events, anecdotal observations give rise (116).

In allowing myself to be open to the emergent, I interviewed all kinds of people and kept my research scope broad enough to understand assemblages of practices and discourse trying to see how understandings of security proliferated, diminished, transformed, and how local cultural logics are re-envisioned and shift in the face of transnational political strategies to maintain US bases in Okinawa. Taking lessons from Aihwa Ong (1999:242) and Laura Nader (1998) to push Anthropologists away from venturing into armchair or “lite” anthropology, I was conscious of the temptations to dwell too long in cultural analysis.

I also found myself grappling with “the untimely” which Rabinow et al raised in Designs. This notion of the “untimely” and creating distance from the present to make the emergent visible and anthropological knowledge making relevant (64) was difficult for me to understand as someone grounded in public scholarship. Their usage of the term “untimely” is not so much temporal as it is, as Paul Rabinow states, “a matter of conceptual relationship to otherness and a distinctive engagement with a particular scale of historicity” (68). The untimely and the emergent are what they argue are necessary concepts on which to build new analytical tools for the anthropology of the contemporary. Although they do not elaborate specifically on how the interview process and other communicative practices in anthropological fieldwork could be re-worked and re-analyzed to have a more “distinctly” anthropological feeling of adjacency, they do emphasize the need for anthropologists to let go of the traditional assumptions that theory can drive knowledge production in the field. Instead, they encourage “thicker” ethnography and slower inquiry which do not rush micro-practices in everyday life to be applied to multi-sited projects. A major dilemma they identify for anthropologists today is how to not be “always already accessible,” yet remain relevant to the contemporary
which Rabinow suggests is required of journalists but not of anthropologists, (58-60). He defines the contemporary as “moving through the recent and near future in a space that gauges modernity as an ethos already becoming historical . . . The ‘contemporary’ indicates a mode of historicity whose scale is relatively modest and whose scope is relatively short in range” (58).

In Okinawa, I found this approach difficult. Much of the protest in places like Okinawa, where the daily effects of such an intense militarized landscape has environmental, health, and social repercussions on the life of those living there long-term, are urgent. There is a demand for public scholars who focus on these issues to be accessible in addition to being relevant to the contemporary. At the same time, the complicated taken-for-granted rootedness of militarized lifestyle in Okinawa requires an ethnographer not to always be accessible in order to acutely observe, through slower long-term observations, how cultural practices organize into patterns and what and how changes are precipitated. I found that watching the ways in which people’s stories develop over time, in different spaces and in different capacities of authority allowed for more nuance and in that, a more accurate way of describing the logics of militarization by which some in those borderland spaces shape their lives. As my mentor, Dr. Ikue Kina at the University of the Ryukyus warned me, too often many scholars descend on Okinawa and produce conclusive research too quickly, too neatly. Okinawa is messier than she explained to me.

**Contacts and Interviewees**

Returning to Okinawa for the first time as a married woman and mother of two children gave me access to interesting practices and conversations I was unaware of when I had been a single, child-less researcher. While in the playgrounds or waiting to pick up my children at school, I became regularly involved in conversations with parents, mostly mothers and sometimes grandmothers, about preschools, housing, playgrounds, petitions to stop radioactive debris from being burned in Okinawa, Osprey deployment and their flight paths, my children’s adjustment to being in Okinawa, and mixed race issues. Conversations with military parents also tended to focus on some of these issues as well but more often, ice breakers started with how long one was here “on tour,” where to find a good “mama-san,” off-base directions to places around the island, housing agents and complaints, deployed husbands and the activities women do to fill the wait before they return, complaints about changing or confusing rules on base and between different branches. It was through these kinds of frequent, informal meetings at playgrounds or at the school where I met a number of women, a few who I became especially close to as our children became easy playmates. Several of these mothers helped introduce me to several people within their networks both on and off base and I gained a deeper understanding of the practices around the bases through them.

Not long after arriving in Okinawa, I met Akiko Urasaki, a popular artist, rapper, performer, and entrepreneur deeply rooted in the world of entertainment and marketing along the fencelines. As detailed later in Chapter 5, she became a close friend and field assistant and guided me in countless ways, introducing me to a number of contacts both on and off base. I am greatly indebted to her for her guidance and her faith in me.
and my project. Much of her story and the people I encountered through her are distributed heavily through this dissertation.

I also met many people at three public forums/focus group sessions I conducted which will be discussed in depth later. Some of those contacts I formally interviewed and other times I had multiple informal meetings.

In other instances, as will be discussed in later chapters, I met contacts and interviewees on the base side simply by participating in activities I enjoy such as an off-base photography group which attracts mainly military based amateur and professional photographers, many of whom were spouses of active duty personnel.

Another unexpected way I met contacts for this project was through my personal blog which I started many years before entering the field. It has a significant following of Okinawa-based subscribers. When I announced I was going to Okinawa, some readers expressed interest in meeting with me personally. I was able to meet with several of them in person. Another wrote me and said even though she was based in Tokyo, she would virtually introduce me to a friend who worked in the art world along the fencelines. That proved to be a useful connection as well as my fieldwork progressed. In turn, other scholars and journalists reached out to me in hopes that I would share contacts with them including three documentary filmmakers, a New York Times editor, and a journalist from Japan Times.

Nearing six months into my fieldwork, a few local vendors I passed daily finally began engaging in more candid conversations about life along the fencelines. For instance, while out running errands, my husband called with a frantic message that our three year old daughter somehow unlocked the door of our apartment and managed to maneuver her way across and down a very busy street passing vendors and tourists in nothing but diapers and running shoes. After a lengthy search that involved the police, several neighbors, family and friends, we found her in the arms of an elderly woman at a local burger shop who held her outside her shop on the lookout for a frantic parent to claim her. Many of the local vendors who saw me running panicked through the streets in terror screaming her name suddenly warmed to me (and my daughter) after this incident, calling her the endearing Okinawan term umakuu (Okinawan term for mischievous) Aya. It was an unexpected way of gaining trust from my neighbors, many who finally approached me for the first time after the story meandered through the area and word circulated that I was not a “base person” after all but a researcher as it was the Okinawan police who came to assist rather than local base MP’s.

Two of my cousins who also have wide networks in “the base world” in Okinawa introduced me to many significant contacts, some of whom I interviewed and others who offered alternative ways of thinking about military logics and practices. Their support and unceasing assistance proved to be invaluable.

I have coded names of nearly every interviewee mentioned in this project, unless the interviewee was a public figure, organizer of an event/organization, or scholar and also who gave explicit permission to use their name. Okinawa is a small island where gossip and rumors can be devastating. For those whose livelihood (economic or otherwise) hinges on the military presence and with whom I spoke for this project, I have taken the liberty to mask their identity to the best of my ability, even if they asked for their names to be published. There are instances where I have had to change names of hometowns or exact occupation or duties to prevent further recognition of
identities. Some people, especially those who levied heavy critiques against the military or worked for businesses which thrive on militarization in Okinawa were especially sensitive to their identities being revealed.

Anthropologist Teresa Caldeira noted in her ethnography of crime and violence, “When people fear the institutes of order, and when they feel that their rights are not guaranteed by the justice system, this reaction is understandable” (Caldeira 2000: 15). Likewise, there was an intense fear of losing one’s position based on rumors. For those especially sensitive to this issue, I took care in securing more private interview sites, in private rooms of restaurants for instance.

I explicitly chose not to go through official military channels to get permission for access or official interviews to military personnel, highly cognizant of what would come with the censorship involved. After lengthy discussions with scholars and journalists who have worked on issues of defense, security, or militarization, I was well advised to work unofficially for the sake of time and less supervised responses.

I was privy to the fact that when interviewing certain people such as Black expatriates on the island, I experienced what some would causally call “the CP hook up,” also known as the “colored people’s” network. One prominent Black businessman in Okinawa introduced me to several of his contacts and when I thanked him for the introductions he replied, “Well, us Black folks have to look out for each other.” In another instance, I got the phone number of a club manager on one of the bases through a mutual friend and upon telling him about my project and requesting an interview, he asked pointedly, “Are you Black? I responded “yes, well half” and he replied, “Good enough, I’ll meet you.” I am especially grateful to these people, many who experience a deep sense of “patriotic duty” while also feeling exiled — the classic schizophrenic double consciousness W.E.B. Dubois has written so painfully about in regards to Black American citizens.

**Conclusion**

The convergence of haunting glimpses of the past with the present abounded in the field. In re-visiting various sites with my mother on the island, “the contemporary” became an over-saturated site of vintage-like memories. As will be discussed later, this touristic revitalization of some base towns in Okinawa depends on the yellowing postcard images of a submissive, feminized off-base site. The tales family members told raised the prospects of what could have been, what never was, and how they should be. While visiting a local city office to retrieve my mother’s koseki, an employee asked my aunt quietly, “Does she know her mother?” was telling in many ways of the types of absences I knew abounded the island.

In her book *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*, Grace Cho explains that projects on trauma and warscapes where silences and hauntings endure painfully across generations of diasporic movement require not only various methods to be employed but also ‘multiple drafts.’ Cho allow for interruptions in the text. She breaks her text with unexpected, multiple voices and allows them to co-exist in patchwork layers—some academic, some quiet thoughts resonating from tales in her families, rumors on the streets, empirical data, communal life stories which emerge through poetry, at other times a mad, seemingly irrational voice. This ethnographic
methodology challenges the authority of a singular voice. For many of us who are intimately tied to our field sites through familial connections and who are attempting to move the direction of critical ethnography to include more reflective narratives, we start then with our plural, communal stories--fractured, repeated from multiple angles and borderlands, and in flux. This dissertation will follow in this style. It is to be read as a personal, anthropological, disruptive tale.
Acknowledgements

I am forever indebted to a number of people who saw me through this very long and personal project.

I am thankful to my lovely cousins Julie, Linda, and Rico who helped my family to settle while I engaged in fieldwork and went above and beyond to help me secure interviews, gave me nourishing encouragement and unconditional support. I am indebted to the rest of my Nakajobara munchu (family clan) in Okinawa as well. My uncle Shinko and Chieko Uehara who brought me food and furnished our apartment, to my aunt and uncle Shinsuke and Mitsuko Uehara who lovingly guided me through my research and never failed to include me in family gatherings. My many first and second cousins are not to be forgotten, especially Shigemi Uehara and his family who gave us comic relief and important insight into local dynamics on the island. My cousins Akemi and Kotoku Oshiro, Nobuhide and Misae Uehara, and Satoshi Uehara offered love and support at every turn.

I am thankful to my main advisor and chair Professor Nelson Graburn and his wife Kathy Graburn who have seen me through many phases of life as I completed graduate school. Professor Graburn has had the utmost patience and unwavering faith in my abilities to finish a solid project and I was elated when he and Kathy visited me during fieldwork in Okinawa. He has supported me intellectually and professionally and was the advisor every graduate student dreams of having through the rigorous journey of a doctorate.

I am also completely grateful to my committee members Dr. Laura Nader and Dr. Elaine Kim, who encouraged me to keep this dissertation accessible and not engage in archaic anthropology. Their words kept me grounded.

When I wavered about finishing after having my children, my dear friends Sujata Srivastava and Zelideth Rivas encouraged me to return to school to finish. They reminded me that my research and particular point of view was important when I became doubtful. I am thankful to my dear cheerleading friends whose support was constant and unwavering including Akiko Urasaki, Madhu Gadam, Caitlin Whitaker, Chrissy Arce, Brad Erickson, Krisjon Olson, Ludovic Blain, Alicia Edwards, Erika Padilla-Morales, and Chris Roebuck. I am also grateful to the support of Jon Mitchell, Chihiro Sakihara, Eriko Ikehara, Fredrick Cloyd, Namiko Kameya, Takazato Suzuyo, Bryon Fija, Edward Sumoto, and Tsugiko Taira. The following professors have mentored and supported me in numerous ways along my journey: Duncan Williams, Daniel Broudy, Makoto Arakaki, Masaki Tomochi, Ikue Kina, Laura Kina, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, Velina Hasu Houston, Yuichiro Onishii, and David Vine. A special thanks is also reserved for Dr. Annmaria Shimabuku and Dr. Uenten who gave me critical
commentaries on my various writing projects and offered sharp insight and constant cheerleading. I am thankful also to all the wonderful people in Okinawa who lent their stories to me in good faith.

The following grants helped me to sustain my research work: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the Graduate Division at UC Berkeley, Graduate Opportunity Program at UC Berkeley, Olsen Summer Research Grant, and the Center for New Racial Studies Grant (University of California).

I send a big thanks to Ned Garrett at Berkeley who has answered my constant questions and has also encouraged me to finish and has offered me crucial advice.

Last but not least, I am thankful to my dear family, Eduardo, Mario, and Aya for seeing me through this project to the very end. The sacrifices they endured so that I can complete this phase of my intellectual life are not lost on me. It is with their love, patience that has ultimately made this feasible in the end. The contributions and support of my other family members (Kim, Katsy, and Max) and especially my mother, Tomiko, for whom this project is dedicated, are also deeply cherished and appreciated.
Chapter 1: Framing Research of Okinawan “Flow”

What happens when concepts of “security” that circulate at a more global level consolidate around concepts of race, gender, or other factors at the local level in Okinawa and how and what precipitates the fragmentation of those consolidated imaginaries for US Americans in Okinawa? With the ever increasing consolidation of joint US-Japanese military power in Okinawa and the attempts to secure the narratives to frame “sacrifice” and “global security,” how do those people most vulnerable to these discursive claims — specifically women, children, mixed race Okinawans, and military personnel of color, and economically insecure military personnel — find ways to maneuver from these interpellations?

This research project analyzes how people craft themselves as globally flexible in these local “in-between” militarized sites, playing on their own conscious “multiple drafts” (Cho 2008) to restructure their own resistance and modes of knowledge-making against what sometimes seems to be insurmountable militarized conditions. This project also explores how these flexibilities are shaped 1) spatially at the interstices of binaries marked as on/off base spaces, 2) in circulating discursive maneuvering by long-term expatriates and military personnel, 3) by mixed Okinawans and Black soldiers whose histories are indelibly marked within Okinawa spaces of coloniality, and 4) by artists attempting to shape concepts of friendship, flow and hybridity, all of which are strongly linked to the maintenance of security imaginaries on the island.

My research pays critical attention to how public spheres are produced and expanded in the everyday. Guided by the theoretical scholarship of Aihwa Ong’s work on globalization, I answer this by looking at how “regimes of normativity” are being dislodged in transnational civic spaces and how scholars can name and write about them in militarized contexts. I focus on how to conceptualize modernity while focusing on these everyday forms of practices, which all too often are sidelined by theories which privilege state power.

What this research does not do is focus on all the diverse Okinawan narratives of the war nor of US or mainland Japanese representations of Okinawa. Rather, it is more attentive to the types of sociality that is produced along the borders of the fences through and against the discourse of security. It does not privilege those voices of US military officers nor those of LDP Okinawan politicians or elite business owners but focuses on those interlocutors who are creating ruptures in the more dominant discourses of modernity and who are gaining traction within the realm of sub-political fields such as artists who work on the fencelines, Okinawan independence movement supporters, mixed race Okinawans insecurely situated at the interstices of national
belonging, and Black American expatriates who stay in Okinawa because they feel a wholeness of self outside the United States.

**Early Frameworks of Okinawan Difference**

From 1398-1573, Okinawa was unified as the Kingdom of the Ryukyus and successfully traded with nations from Japan to Southeast Asia. The Satsuma clan of Japan invaded Okinawa in 1609 and began to heavily tax the island. The new modern state of Japan forcefully annexed the island in 1871 and it officially became a Japanese prefecture in 1879. It was during this transitory Meiji period, when Japan was talking back to “the West” in a way that is more striking than in previous periods. Japan had already colonized Taiwan, commenced their imperialistic move into Korea, and defeated Russia in 1905. The defeat of a “white nation” by “yellow people” as widely characterized in US and European media circuits caused some uneasiness in the US and European political spheres (Shimazu 1998). Japan’s imperial ambitions were growing and it actively inserted itself into the world as a “great power.” Dorinne Kondo call this period, “a massive mobilization in response to Western challenges” (Kondo 1997). The intensely violent process of cultural assimilation ensued throughout the outskirts of the nation during this period and Okinawans became increasingly important as a temporal and spatial marker of Otherness as Japan tried to gain a foothold in the racial ordering of global nations.

At the St. Louis World Expo in 1904 for example, Japan was removed from the “non-Western” category in the anthropological display of races (Koshiro 1999). Instead, the Ainu were showcased as Japan’s formerly primitive subjects along with the West’s internal Others, native Americans (Koshiro 1999: 93). Ainu and Okinawans (at an earlier expo in 1903) became the necessary Other to juxtapose “pure” and “authentic” Japanese who had departed from that temporal space to join “Western” nations and distance themselves from the racial sphere of China. The “escape Asia” (datsu-A ron) discourse frequently emphasized the issue of Japan’s supremacy vis-a-vis their “unique” civilization while the “pan Asian” (ajia shuji) discourse invoked Asian racial supremacy to counter global white supremacy ideals (Shimazu 1998: 97). Both discourses and the constant juxtaposition of Okinawans’ supposed stagnant primordial Japaneseness was sedimented in the discourses of sacrifice after the devastation of WWII.

During WWII, the last battle of the Pacific was fought in Okinawa in which one-third of the local population was killed. Okinawans refer to this battle as a sacrificial one as it is popularly thought to have been a purposely designed war of attrition to protect mainland Japan from a US ground invasion and because of Okinawa’s marginalized
position within the nation-state (Angst 1997:26). This discourse of sacrifice and marginalized positioning is also based on what is perceived to be the non-resistant handover of the island after Japan’s surrender for its own sovereignty. Okinawan resentment of this act continues into the present. In April 2013, the Japanese government held its first formal celebration of the enforcement of the San Francisco Peace Treaty which officially ended US occupation of mainland Japan and the surrender of Okinawa to the US military authorities until 1972. Motomura Norio, one of the hundreds of Okinawans protesting the commemorative event remarked to reporters, that Tokyo ‘sold off Okinawa to the U.S. military’ with that treaty (Mie 2013).

The US occupying authorities quickly accessed these narratives and discourses of sacrifice. In 1944, a handbook was prepared by a group of Yale anthropologists, George Murdock, John M. Whiting, and Clelan Ford for the US Navy and General MacArthur (Inoue 2007: 79-80). Their research suggested ways to create “political capital” and strategize on how to use culturally, historically, and politicized identity couched in the politics of “difference” to soften the political impact of a separate occupation of Okinawa (from mainland Japan) and to create dissension between Okinawans and Japanese. By goading Okinawans to be proud of their marginalized difference, they attempted to act as liberators of the Okinawans’ oppressed identity (Inoue 2007:80; Ota 1984: 183). As in the Japanese nationalist project of the Meiji period, the US occupation project needed the discourse of Okinawan difference to be both gendered and raced. They needed Okinawan identity to be discursively framed as anti-modern, highly effeminate, and culturally and ethnically different from Japanese mainlanders. In effect, they needed the early Japanese imperial framing of Okinawan difference.

These early positionings of Okinawan difference has continued to surface unevenly into the present as will be further discussed in the following chapters and in the following section. Some scholars of Okinawa have perpetuated these framings of difference which can sometimes effectively block the complex understandings within societies where extralegal practices abound.

**Theoretical Approaches to Okinawan Studies**

Okinawa is a particularly special transnational site where coloniality thrives because of its positioning both domestically in relation to dominant LDP Tokyo-driven policies and vis-a-vis US system of governance and SOFA regulations imposed on the island since 1945. It also thrives because of the systematic erasures in history of this blurring. It

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2 This handbook was published on November 15, 1944 as *Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands*
tends to be excluded as a site for the study of colonial practice within several academic fields because of its status as a prefecture and the bulk of attention is placed on the Japanese imperial “forced annexations” into other independent nations (Christy 1997: 142).

Anthropologists studying Okinawa have approached it from a variety of theoretical interventions. Inoue (2007) has noted that early Okinawan Studies scholars tended to appeal to essentialist notions of Okinawans. The Japanese folklorist Yanagita Kunio for example sought in Okinawa vestiges of an old, untouched and unique Japan visible in “found” folk tales at the margins. After the occupation of Japan, Okinawan anthropologists drew on this discourse of nativist purity to critique Japanese and US rationales of modernity vis-a-vis US militarization. While some US Anthropologists after the occupation highlighted Okinawan Otherness critiquing nativist accounts like Kunio’s (Inoue 2007), their accounts of Okinawa as a pastoral place or within an Orientalist framework obscured the everyday and structural violence of militarization. Ultimately, this particular positioning of Okinawa supported the US-Japan security framework of Okinawa as “naturally” in-between. Inoue best explained their academic stance as ‘Okinawans are not Japanese, but they are not Americans either’ which supported the ambiguous sovereignty of the island after the cold war (Inoue 2007: 86-87).

The anti-base mobilizations from the late 1950’s through the mid 1970’s in Okinawa brought new theoretical approaches to Okinawan Studies, a body of literature as Inoue has noted, that could be gathered under the category of “emancipatory” social movement theories that were more Marxist informed and class-focused. It was through these theoretical tools that nationally and economically insecurely positioned Black soldiers could be addressed under the global struggle of “the people” with Okinawans fighting against occupation. Okinawan writers like Akira Arakawa appealed to Black soldiers, not solely for propaganda efforts as early Japanese imperialists had done in their appeals to transnational people of color for racial equality against White western supremacy in the early 1930’s (Onishi 2013) but for radical decolonization of nationalism itself which separated those marginalized subjects brought together on Okinawa. For these reasons, I agree with Inoue that the shift to “life politics” from the 1980’s forward is problematic in that the latter do not fully address the possibilities for meaningful interactions between transnational interlocutors situated oddly against dominant understandings of modern national subjects as will be discussed below.

Inoue laments that these new theories tend to ignore structural issues of oppression and instead privilege networks and flows of identity (21). Anthropologists have critically focused on discourses of hybridity through music (Roberson 2003), film (Gerow 2003) and arts (Nelson 2008) and these works have addressed how cultural practices of purity
are strategically deployed along a continuum of identities that are exploitative to (self) exotifying.

Masamichi Inoue’s work is highlighted extensively here because of an interesting theoretical approach he implements that takes a turn quite unlike other works to frame the complexity of power in this space. He leans on Emmanuel Levinas’ critique of the “intimate society” and his conceptualization of the third person, to help frame the predicaments of Okinawan identity being appropriated against/within practices of global and local militarization. He argues that in the Foucauldian/post-modern model of power, Japan and US are recognized in the dialectic “game” of power and pleasure, but the third party, Okinawa, is not. It is considered be an excess and therefore the voices of Okinawans and their acts of resistance or appropriation of the lifestyle made possible by Japanese “political compensation” for living alongside military bases go unexplained and or are too hastily described in terms of economic reductionism. The notion of the “third person” allows Inoue to discuss “oppositional appropriation.” He argues that money funneled from Japan into Okinawa “in spite of its goal of placating Okinawa’s anti-base sentiment – has ironically become a constant reminder of the prolonged violence of power, the US military presence, thereby helping Okinawa to renew cultural sensibilities that are enmeshed with the pain of local historical experiences” (Inoue 2007: 27).

This approach is productive for analyzing and framing power, coloniality, and the often confusing ways governmentality exists in the post-war era. For instance, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles argued that Okinawa should have “residual sovereignty” instead of being a trustee under the US. This allowed the US to route power more silently as it administered the island until 1972 claiming instead that Okinawans were legally under Japanese sovereignty. This arrangement and this particular concept of “residual sovereignty” allowed for a limited range of responses from Okinawans to protest against the conditions imposed during this time (Shimabuku 2014). That limited range, slippages of traditional forms of power, and the ways in which subjects on the fencelines attempt to exceed that range as the third party are in fact, the focus of this dissertation.

Another significant consideration for framing contemporary Okinawa within studies of post/colonialism is through the complex discussion of how sovereignty and the extralegal is understood. The Comaroffs have argued that postcolonies are not organized centrally but:

consist in a horizontally woven tapestry of partial sovereignties: sovereignties over terrains and their inhabitants, over aggregates of people conjoined in faith or culture, over transactional spheres, over networks of relations, regimes of
property, domains of practice and quite often over various combinations of these things; sovereignties longer or shorter lived, protected to a greater or lesser degree by the capacity to exercise compulsion, always incomplete (Comaroff 2007: 35).

Okinawa situated within this type of framework is useful as positions sovereignty on the marginalized island as fragile. Annmaria Shimabuku’s theoretical model of sovereignty in Okinawa also provides a foundational model on which to build. In her engagement with Carl Schmitt’s theories on the disruption of sovereignty and Michel Foucault’s fabrication of it, Shimabuku explains how territorial sovereignty in Japan (and by extension, Okinawa) is configured in the postwar period. Its unstable and ambiguous reconstitution of sovereignty, she argues, is only possible through the maintenance of the U.S. military presence in Okinawa:

…Okinawa is the simultaneous convergence of four vectors: 1) Japanese colonialism 2) American military occupation with 3) intrastate law (within Japan) 4) interstate law (between Japan and the U.S.). Okinawa dissolves into a void precisely at the point in which any discursive strategy attempts to separate these threads. For Okinawa, it matters little who the sovereign or colonial master is—foreign or domestic, American or Japanese—for sovereignty is characterized as the power to subsume the extralegal space back into the fabric of this law” (Shimabuku 2014).

Situating Okinawa as such allows for a more nuanced understanding of the slippages in the discourse of flow.

The reversion (fukki) period illustrates some of these slippages more easily than others. This pivotal period of transition, like in other cases of colonial movement toward independence highlights the states of anxiety between two postcolonial conditions and the incoherent “scaffolding of legalities” (Comaroff 2006: 22) to contain public movement as well as mask the extralegal. This period generates consolidated articulations of incomplete “repatriation” of Okinawans to the Japanese state, the tropes of sacrifice and abandonment, and the dizzying multiplicity of laws and outright, normalized states of exception.

On the Marine Corps tour in which I participated (see Chapter 2) the reversion period and the moments leading up to that legal transition, was a major breakage point for the tour guide who discouraged the veracity of some of the claims made by the museum. The starkness of US military occupation in this period, apart from the other vectors mentioned above, is one that weakens the discourse around full sovereignty,
thereby also weakening the management of truth around flexibility. It is why so many artists, writers, and academics focus on this period as it reveals the thresholds of occupation more clearly and the practices of flexibility that had to emerge with certain extremely limited parameters for living without fully be “thingified” and racialized as Franz Fanon (1967) has argued is a direct consequence of living under colonial conditions. The reversion was a period where people consolidated multiple lessons on how to mask the pain of constant objectification through a doubly Orientalizing lens of the US and second-class marginalization by mainland authorities.

The reversion is still a relatively recent memory for many Okinawans and repeated narratives of the various forms of cultural disciplining, the ways desires, moralities, and political loyalties were shaped in the “return” and the micro-practices of logistically becoming Japanese through even the literal traffic of people and cars are heavily circulated as each major reversion anniversary occurs every decade. Many of my own Okinawan family members like to repeatedly share their favorite stories of how older people would stand on the wrong side of the road waiting for the bus and would have to be walked to the new, correct side.

The repetition of these types of stories in documentaries, songs, and comedies continue to remind people of the active processes which went into crafting themselves as incomplete Japanese citizens through the law and in their literal grounded movement. It was an intense moment (as well as the years of intense Okinawan activism in the period leading up to full reversion) and the potent tales that are circulated demonstrate how many Okinawans had acquired a savviness of how the extralegal is replicated, strengthened, recuperated, and managed through the discourse of international friendship, interactions, and Orientalism. Many reversion activists articulated this sentiment in their writings and organizing and especially as Okinawans were animated by the changes they fought to rebuild for full sovereignty and yet cautious that the conditions for change would continue to be limited by extralegal maneuvers. This research often draws on this period to extrapolate the genealogies of Okinawan narratives of sacrifice and narratives of flow and hybridity.

Situating Okinawa within Contemporary Ethnographies of Militarization

Several contemporary ethnographies of militarized spaces have transformed the way questions of power are posed. No longer can anthropologists look at militarized power outside an international industrial complex. Nor can they afford to glaze over the complex internal logics of expertise and rationales for management of violence (Ben-Ari 2004:341). Linda Angst for example, centers her research around narratives and memories of and by Okinawan women as victims within the postwar/occupation space
and explores maneuvering between multiple discourses and how they become politicized by the state and how violence becomes re-articulated at the state and individual levels. For others, the focus on Okinawan in-betweeness emerges in an analysis of transnational and interracial marriages/relationships (Forgash 2004 and Ames 2007). Another approach is to be site-specific and look at particular towns which become representative of macro processes in relation to maneuvering militarized discourses (Yoshikawa 1996) or by looking at contemporary transformations of performance to think through complex public spheres and imaginaries of a transforming Okinawan “we-ness” (Inoue 2007).

Framing the US military in Okinawa as having overarching governmental powers to locally shape Okinawa structurally is a faulty approach. Inoue has suggested scholars to rethink of the military in Okinawa as “a flexible global institution” capable of structuring life and resistance sometimes away from the intentions of Washington and Tokyo. My dissertation research reiterates this point but also aims to challenge the notion of militarized flexibility and its limits as they intersect locally and and globally. For more guidance on this approach, I look toward the works outside Anthropology, at scholars like Annmaria Shimabuku who conceptualizes Okinawa as an extralegal space positioned between the US and Japan and that defies the discursive containment and naming of this space to any one site of power. She has argued that the US-Japan power bloc has produced in Okinawa “an effectual state of exception” (Shimabuku 2014). This allows for more nuance around the discourses that operate outside on/off base binaries as discussed in chapters two and three.

Some scholars have engaged in more ethnographically “thick” writing and privilege historical material over spatial categories to demystify militarization (Enloe 2000, 2007; Lutz 2002; Gusterson 1999; Vine 2009) with the aim of actively countering the intense public relations efforts which tend to obscure concepts of security and ambiguous representations of danger in places like Okinawa (Frustuck 2010). Joseph Masco (2006), Catherine Lutz, and Masamichi Inoue, in particular are wary of the dismissal of the more structuralist, Marxist informed theoretical questions in exchange for the more popular Foucauldian paradigms to explain power in heavily militarized places like Fayetteville, New Mexico, or Okinawa. Instead they tend to put both models into tension with each other to highlight how subjects intimately connected to base zones are interpellated to act within a closed range of possible ways in order to participate in the public sphere. The common strength in these scholars’ research is that they tend to bring a more class-conscious anthropological perspective to defining the making of national insecurities. My work builds on these models as well as the work already done on US militarization and memoryscapes in Okinawa (Angst 2001, Forgash
2004, Shimabuku) and those works which point to resistance to “secure” military identities within Okinawa (Onishi 2013; Selden and Hein 2003; Ichiro 2000).

Since the early 2000’s, new anthropological work specifically focused on the contemporary processes of militarization have opened abstractions on how violence is organized, managed, and rationalized. Many of these works have tackled this subject by focusing on how people who make, consume, and circulate the discourses which support militarization are further strengthened or weakened. Besides the scholars listed above, I also draw on the following works that analyze the masculinized national body in Israel (Weiss 2002); on cultures of insecurity (Weldes et al, 1999); on the misreading of nationalist symbols by elite members of the military (Ohnuki-Tierny 2002); and on the sociality of war readiness and base living (Hawkins 2001). I pay special attention to Catherine Lutz’ (2001) work on militarization in Fayetteville as she constantly reflects on how militarization also relies on racialized difference, a fact that is clearly evident in Okinawa as will be discussed in chapter four.

In each chapter, I have chosen particular interview excerpts or described particular Okinawan or military cultural practices within the context of multiple modernities and “partial sovereignties” (Comaroff 2006). While Aihwa Ong, Naoki Sakai (2000) and Paul Gilroy (2000) engage in questions of how cultural and temporal spaces can be analyzed within multiple modernities, Ulrich Beck’s (1994) work on “reflexive modernity” proved useful in analyzing the proliferating field of “sub-politics” in Japan which promote a reactionary views that hinder Okinawan discourse of self-determination. Beck’s analysis of the rise of European neo-fascism is based on his research on characteristics of risk societies. In these societies, dependency on experts grows yet expertise is challenged and authority is gained from below. Risk societies, he argues, are those where daily life for people entails “living and acting in uncertainty” and it is only with creative self-destruction of the old political forms, the poles of traditional conservative and radical leftist, that people believe progress can be made. For example, in Okinawa, the former Governor Hirokazu Nakaima ran on the platform to resist new base construction in Henoko but when the pressure from Tokyo was suspected to be far too great, he faltered on his previous commitments to his constituents and allowed for an administrative permit that would eventually pave the way to base construction in the sensitive Henoko area (Ashitomi 2015). Tokyo continues to place the population of Okinawa under obligation to the state with the threat of reducing economic support to the island. Achille Mbembe has noted in his own research that this form of obligation is a classic postcolonial resource to “buy obedience and gratitude and to break the population to habits of discipline (Mbembe 45).

This action renewed activist spirit and organization against the traditional avenues of authority to speak for Okinawans, democratically elected politicians. The
small independence movement gained traction instead of the status quo demand for a seat at the negotiating table as the “third party.” Unlike integralists in Europe who use this kind of reflexive modernization and challenge to public, expert authorities which have the effect of supporting racist rhetoric against immigrants of color (Holmes 2000), Okinawan independence supporters instead draw on a more complex field of the politics of understanding that is not necessarily about a mechanical solidarity.

This “sub-political” field of independence supporters as Beck would call it, challenge organizations as vacuous because they cannot effectively address uncertainties of most ordinary Okinawans who live along the fencelines. They are able to transform their frustration with stagnation in these traditional entities into politicized impatience. Waiting and status quo no longer is acceptable and challenges to claims of rationality are then directly targeted. Beck argues that reflexive modernization is characterized by the desire and impetus to institute rationality reforms. In Okinawa, like in the industrial modernities of Beck’s models, there is an overload of rationality discourse. Military bureaucracies in particular are saturated with jural arrangements and claims to rationality and navigating the confusing routes on which they are built become part of the everyday cultural practices of people affected by them. Okinawan spaces are heavily marked by physical restrictions as discussed in Chapter 3. The security rationale which supports these restrictions on movement, have become the rallying point around new understandings of life politics. Simplicity of life and peace are highlighted and understood through local Okinawan local sayings like, *nuchi du takara* (life is precious) now politicized and contemporarily utilized in anti-base protests.

**Resort(ing) to Peace Tours: Positioning Okinawa within theoretical frameworks of Tourism**

Extensive work has been done on the transformation of Okinawa from a devastated war site to a tourist site. For the purposes of this dissertation, I am concerned with how the representation of the obvious military presence into the resort and peace tourist imagery has been an uncomfortable point of contention for tourism boards and US military alike and how the specific discourse of friendship and hybridity is crafted with this contentious relationship always hovering nearby.

In his most recent book on Okinawan tourism, Anthropologist Gerald Figal (2012) explains that the circulation of Okinawa as a sight for peace and simultaneously as a tropical resort is partially consumed by Okinawan residents themselves who were taught *kanko ishiki* (tourism consciousness). The tropicalization of Okinawa largely served two purposes as Viviane Blaxell (2010) has carefully drawn from Tada Osamu’s work. She argued it:
concealed the facts of the American war machine and Japanese complicity with it… And mutating Okinawa into Japan’s own Hawai‘i seemed to promise some solution to Okinawa’s poverty. It promised to balance radical economic asymmetry between Tokyo and Naha, while opening up opportunities for Okinawan businesses and addressing chronic local unemployment. The promises went largely unmet.

Figal has also pointed out, Okinawa Tourism Association (OTA) struggled with the military presence through the 1950’s and specifically made the decision to leave military installations out of postcards for instance (176) and other publications. But by the 1960’s, the US military and tourist authorities found a way to include both an authentic “old Okinawa” to be juxtaposed to a modern, “new Okinawa” vis-a-vis the bases and its new machinery (Blaxell 2010; Figal 178).

This widely dispersed logic of the bases as a modernizing force was not lost on skeptical Okinawan activists, as Hideaki Tobe (2006) has noted in his work (92). There were some who worried that this logic was being wielded by some Okinawans who found that reversion back to Japan was really about positioning oneself between two colonial forces and therefore the rationale of modernity through “international diversity,” bases, and military infrastructure and technology could be carefully managed to transform themselves into less colonized subjects under Japan. Eventually, this discourse gained more traction and OTA and the US military branches began to market the U.S. as such. Military facilities and personnel connected to it were included as part of Okinawa’s exotic tourist landscape for liminal resort adventures. Although now, as Figal points out, there are more peace activist-led tourism engaged in reframing the gaze in these tours aimed at mainland Japanese tourists, the larger tour companies through this now dominant form of champru (mixed) Okinawa discourse promoted in touristic language of Okinawan difference are able to weave together war and nature so that they do not clash (Figal 192). Figal argues that the success in doing this “has an advantage of actually having some local historical roots and cultural manifestations and thus an aura of credibility” (192).

Tourist discourse has been able to latch onto these intersecting forms and is part of the larger cosmology of circulating ideas of difference that was promoted even in the early occupation years as discussed earlier. As the reversion period moved forward however, the intense biopolitical project of “becoming Japanese,” shaped in Okinawa at this time (Shimabuku 2012) emphasized downplaying Okinawan difference. For instance, many of my family members vividly recall the period when Yoko Gushiken, Japan’s first world pro boxer hailing from the remote Okinawan island of Ishigaki, made television appearances after a win and how they would sit on the edge of their seats
cringing that he would use too many Okinawan phrases, guaranteeing he would either be seen as a buffoon by mainland viewers. On my last visit to Okinawa, I saw several photos of Gushiken, now a famous tarento (TV personality), in several tourist-heavy Okinawan restaurants and his face is prominently displayed on t-shirts sold in Okinawan souvenir shops. His sign of difference is now made consumable. By the early 1980’s the “Okinawan renaissance” was beginning to take root as “third world” music was on the rise (Uenten 2010: 100) and icons of multiculturalism commoditized for tourism was being more carefully channelled by pulling from the now circulating pop culture references, including the US military into this Okinawan difference.

When I went to Okinawa for my preliminary fieldwork, the Amerika-ya type stores (those that sell “American” military trinkets) seemed to be filled mostly with dog tags in the entry ways. I would sit on a bench next to the store for several hours a day observing tourists buy camouflage jackets, green canteens, take photos next to “found” grenades, and fake military ammunition. This last trip I went to the same shops as well as newer ones in Chatan’s American Village, paying attention to the kinds of souvenirs that drew most interest. What was most striking was the placement of souvenir items in the storefronts. Many of these stores still sold typical military gear and dog tags but they were not as prominently displayed as before. Perhaps in seeking to draw in the more independent tourist now coming by rental car or taxi (not necessarily on large busses) who still tend to come for the popular destination weddings, the items out front were to capture the tourist desiring a peacefully mixed Okinawa, one that would not elicit the political turbulence and guilt of sustained mainland NIMBY discourse but one that showed that Okinawa was eager to sell these onlookers of its international diversity. Taco Rice and ‘American Taste’ Cookies, and the intimate experiences of being near military people as well were part of the larger marketing for “exotic” and Okinawan difference.

The attraction to see military close-up in Okinawa has led worried base officials to post numerous warning signs posted at base sign-in stations warning those with base access not to give “cultural exchange tours” for payment. I noticed many of the signs prominently posted while waiting to be signed onto the bases at Kadena and Camp Foster. Beginning as early as 2007, the military began cracking down on these tours and with more intensity by late 2010, just a few months prior to the 9/11 period, when security was had been more lax on Kadena Air Force Base. They denied “hundreds of requests” from those with SOFA status to bring in visitors from at least sixty locally based tour groups “trying to get groups onto the base everyday” (Tritten 2011). They were recruited online and by word of mouth by organizations like “American Pro” capitalizing on this heightened interest to intimately walk through not just a Disneyfied
America but a real miniaturized suburban America with wide parking lots, manicured lots, playgrounds, schools, bowling alleys, and other sites in Japan.

This increased desire of mainland tourists to perform as spectator of active militarization is yet another way in which this landscape is normalized. Okinawans are expected to assume their roles as props in this landscape and the on/off base spaces are fixed. There is no room for the sometimes dizzying and surreal space of ambiguity and in-betweeness, of the extra-legal and partial sovereignty in which militarization and occupation thrives. These kinds of tourists engage in reifying security narratives by the slight acknowledgement of only resisting bodies, not the petitioning ones as explained earlier. They are aware they may encounter anti-base activists with signs or bullhorns but are not cognizant of those who must navigate in fragmented ways in Okinawa and thus are often lazily characterized in media accounts as devious. I begin this dissertation with a discussion of how these discourses are shaped and intimately circulated.

**Chapter Summaries**

In Chapter 2, “We Call it the Rock,” I explain the fragility of multiple tourist narratives circulated in Okinawa by US military personnel and their families, the significance of spatial metaphors of the island as a “strategic site,” and how particular transnational displacements create ruptures in the liminal touristic experience many are sold when recruited, thereby creating forms of hybrid securities and producing specific cultural logics and particular transfigurations along the fencelines. This chapter also takes up how settler colonialism is normalized and embedded in certain practices of military expatriates on the island and how they come to be routinized through expressions of nostalgia and military heritage. Through an extensive ethnographic detailing of the everyday practices and discourses of military expatriates and active duty personnel, I demonstrate the ways in which security narratives thrive alongside the spectacle of the military as a touristic destination. I ultimately argue that unlike in some highly militarized areas, like at US nuclear sites where militarized practices are often downplayed or cloaked (Masco 2006), in Okinawa, the aesthetics of fear and insecurity are made fetishized through tourist narratives and cold war logics so that coloniality thrives on the island. I argue that ruptures to these narratives by military related subjects who misread the landscape or security narratives and protest quietly continue to remain obscure along binaries of on/off base imaginaries unless they merge in an ambiguous, mobile transnational space of flexibility where national insecurity can be re-framed. It is at this point when real challenges to structural violence reaches a critical point of movement.

In Chapter 3, “Kichi Gai Kichi” (Off-base Base), I engage in a more spatial analysis of how ambiguous and porous spaces are culturally produced and how these
spaces are generative of particular gendered logics of encroaching militarized spaces outside of “on-base” spaces which are supposed to contain militarized activities. The growth in off-base housing for military residents and US military contractors, the confusing laws which lock out those who were once mobile actors between these on/off base boundaries (such as women who have lost military access because of divorce), and the settler colonial practices of some expatriates and mainland Japanese who thrive on privileges of militarization have all contributed to the translocal processes of transfigurations of Okinawans along the fencelines. Through ethnographic analysis, I explore how various actors make sense of the culturally and legally ambiguous spaces along the military fencelines and the abstract cartographic negotiations that take place daily. I demonstrate how the quiet spatial expansion of militarized presence, especially through the discourse of flexibility and extralegal practices, are further entrenching colonial practices whereby the binary of on/off base is no longer viable for accurately describing the demarcation of Okinawan sovereign space.

Chapter 4, “Dislocated Blackness and Mixed Camps” is a critical look at what happens when neoliberal ideals of inclusion and openness are articulated and circulated onto spaces where settler colonial privilege dominates, where on/off base spaces are no longer clear, and where cold war logics still thrive. By expanding the discussion about dislocations alluded to in earlier chapters, I am able to directly look at the clumsy intersection of racial and gendered understandings of “camp thinking” in militarized Okinawa. I specifically focus on the intersection of African American double consciousness in Okinawa and Okinawan activist attraction to that political manifestation, the global circulation of white supremacy through military diasporas, and mixed race Black Okinawans who must simultaneously navigate multiple modernities and nationalist modes of belonging. The intersection of their tales within the specific space demonstrates how Okinawa is site where transnational understandings of race fluctuate quickly but are also locked into places and bodies when racializing camp logic is hailed. I look at the strategies of some of these actors and how they strategically employ a sense of global flexibility to maneuver spatially limiting interpellations.

The final chapter, “Chuuto Hanpa and Flow” is a detailed analysis of the discourses of friendship and hybridity promoted by US military public relations offices and how two particular female Okinawan artists with substantial fan followings are challenging these forced imaginaries of the island and of militarization itself through a localized sense of radical flow. This detailed chapter demonstrates that many Okinawans are not meekly accepting a “gimme” cultural space, often conflated with a dependent welfare space. It also describes how artists in particular and their followers are not resisting in traditionally structured anti-base protests. Akiko Urasaki, also known as the hip hop artist “Awich,” employs a wide variety of methods to recuperate
Okinawan concepts of hybridity and directly seeks contact with US military personnel around military bases to re-produce and reshape Okinawan imaginaries, either through rap videos or through spoken word venues. Those particular engagements however are not always completely free of masculinist imaginaries of women nor do they guarantee the circumvention of an Orientalist reinscription of their signs but they are potent enough to begin a movement of new social engagements along the fencelines.

Mao Ishikawa, a contemporary Okinawan photographer, also directly documents life along the fencelines and the sensibilities of “flow” in these militarized spaces. Her method of engagement however, challenges the colonial positioning of the Okinawan female as cultural mediator and through her photographic and performative documentation of these spaces, she openly targets the scopic form of power (Feldman 1997) that abounds in Okinawa and refuses to self police both resisting and petitioning forms of action. She embraces not only scenes of trespassing but the extralegal ambiguities and excesses of flows. To this end, this chapter analyzes how and when ruptures to militarized discourses of flow are recuperated, activated, and/or diminished and ultimately shows the fragility in these forms of imaginaries. With Ishikawa’s and Urasaki’s stories, I further enhance my argument that coloniality in Okinawa cannot be framed with on/off base logics and that local actors can and do strategically use the strange formulations of sovereignty to untangle themselves from the grips of racializing security imaginaries. While the Abe administration steps up pressure to complete construction of the new landing military facility at Henoko, Okinawan protests have gained momentum and a renewed international attention has sparked repeating security narratives about threats and Okinawan sovereignty. Perhaps, attention to how people living in Okinawa, like those discussed in this dissertation, manage to survive and make sense of such a complicated field can improve the conversation around the real forms of coloniality which exist on the island.
“You know my real name is not Tomiko. It’s Utumi. That’s my real Okinawan name.”

We were in my little sunny California kitchen, chopping onions when my mother dropped this news on me.

“What?!” There I was, in my mid-thirties and had never known my mother’s real name. Not even a quiet reference to it. She found it funny that I was both annoyed and excited by this news. “What’s wrong?” she asked while looking at my wet eyes. “It’s just the onions,” I muttered.

“So what? Anyway, that’s my name before the war.” She always had a way of shooing away the exceptional happenings of her life with such a quick sweep of her hand. After a rush of badgering questions, I gathered from her that it had to do with the violent and intense process of assimilation that were pushed onto Okinawans and she believed it had something to do with how family names were registered as more Japanese into the newly rebuilt family record holdings on the island that had been destroyed during the war. I took out my recorder.

I used to always wonder why the older shinseki (relatives) called me Utumi because I was young when it was changed to Tomi. Only the old people called me Utumi. When I went back to Okinawa after a long time, I reminded some of the old people in my neighborhood, I was Katsu’s daughter from Old Oomine but they didn’t know exactly who I was until I used my mother’s Okinawan name [Kamaru] and they would say "ooohhh, tuku nakajogwa’hume (family clan name)!”

The mental family map could be visualized with the original Okinawan names.

“Wait—you mean Tomiko, when it was changed to Tomiko.” “No, my name is not really Tomiko either.”

I was floored by these revelations. I thought my mother had given me most of “the goods” in our long oral history sessions I’ve conducted with her for well over a decade. Perhaps if I had grown up in Okinawa, I would have been less shocked by this story. The inside jokes of older women who had been named in Okinawan language after kitchen objects and animals are commonplace. Stories of name changes, insecure identities, and quiet skeletons in the closet everyone knows but dare not raise would have been easier to culturally digest had I lived there longer.

“Agéeeeee...You’re going to burn the onions. Stop talking too much. Why you wanna know all this? It was your stupid dad. He said Tomi didn’t sound like a Japanese woman’s name because it didn’t have ‘ko’ at the end. So we added ‘ko’ when we got married on the base, it changed on the paperwork but I shouldn’t have listened to him because it was big problems later — the land problems when I went back to Okinawa. My name wasn’t the same anymore.”

I could see my dad insisting she do this. He had a very Orientalized vision of what was “Japanese” and also tended to collapse Japanese with Okinawans. He had married my mother quickly in a civil ceremony, eager to leave Okinawa, probably before she changed her mind.
about him. I wonder, did he want to take her back to the US as a woman who not only looked Asian, but was immediately locatable as “Japanese” with a very Japanese sounding name?

When I tried to raise the issue with him he always changed subjects quickly, uncomfortable to talk about these types of intimate subjects.

My mother later explained indirectly, only after I married and had children myself, that there were numerous complexities for many Okinawan women who married GI’s in this pre-reversion period. Literal miscommunications abounded in these warscapes. She told me of a phone call from my father that had been dispatched to her office where she worked making military ID badges (and where they had first met on base).

“I just heard war...it was loud and it sounded like war. He was in Vietnam. And I couldn’t hear him. I just didn’t understand English...He was TDY [temporary duty assignment] only for 3 months or something. When he came back he said ‘you say you was gonna marry me!’ ‘What! I never said that.’ Actually I don’t know, maybe I said that –one the phone I can’t understand good so I just say ‘yea, yes, yea’ all the time. ‘I don’t want to marry you,’ I told him and he start crying all the time.

Guilt ultimately drove her to the alter on the base. Okinawa had not yet reverted back to Japan and was fully under a US occupying administration. She left Okinawa quietly on a military plane in October 1963. The contrails of her name wisping away from the island. Her own mother spent days searching for traces of her disappeared daughter. That sudden disappearance haunts her to this day as one of her biggest regrets. ‘I should have told her’ she frequently tells me, saddened by the heartache and worry she must have endured. Her friend had later relayed the frantic story of her mother appearing at her door in the rain asking if she knew her whereabouts and it was a sad story she often told me as a moral tale to be open to your loved ones.

My mother’s journey moved her away from a space lacking sovereignty and directly into a racially segregated US also lacking complete access to the protections of citizenship for people of color. Her new inherited racialized identity as both Asian and her interpellated one as Japanese became yet another layer of her story.
"I hate those damn protestors. I hate them. Shoving those damn signs in front of my car all the damn time—telling me to go home. Dammit, this is my home. We’re here protecting them."

Sammy’s previous jocular and somewhat boastful storytelling demeanor shifted and he became angry when I interjected and slowed his stories of his glory days as an active duty Marine in Okinawa. I asked him directly about the protestors. Sammy Brown, now retired and a long-term expatriate has made a lucrative living in Okinawa. His continued SOFA status and ability to move on and off base as well as his extensive contacts with businesses which cater to military personnel moving through Okinawa such as to hotels bordering the bases, catering companies, and entertainment and concierge services for military related individuals and groups moving onto the island. He is also deeply embedded in shadow economies along the base and Okinawan
military profiteers. He engages in a large *moai* with many of them. For added emphasis on this connection he boasted, “I’m the only American in this *moai*—with fifty trusted high end Okinawan businessmen. If you can’t pay back in this group, you better just leave the island. That’s the kind of money we put down.” He conveyed that he had staked a claim on the island, made a successful living there, albeit in shadowy fenceline pockets, and said it was where he would live until he died. The prospect of a change in diminished military presence would put a dent in his plans for a smooth transition into retirement. He believes in the full security narrative of Okinawa as a strategic security site which he believes his “tour of duty” was a sacrifice and therefore can claim Okinawa as home:

“One of my biggest goals here is to educate other Americans about Okinawa. I tell them everything there is to do here, the people, the island. When these young cats ask me about those protesters in Futenma and closing the base and they say ‘they don’t want us here’ and I say ‘You’ve got a thousand people out of fifty thousand and a lot of these protesters are not from Okinawa. They fly them in here.’ And when they ask how can you live in Okinawa? I say, ‘well how can you live in America?’ and boy Americans don’t like that. I can live here easier than you can there. Because there are no guns here. In the US, I had to pull a gun on four boys around sixteen years old when I went back—- trying to jump me for cash. They said ‘you ain’t gonna shoot me.’ I said, ‘I’ve killed them younger in Vietnam.’ I’m sorry-it’s true. Twenty years in the Marine Corps, it’s no problem. I was ground combat you see. And I trained others to kill. That’s all I did.”

Sammy’s simultaneous stake on the island along with his continued embedded militarized logic and training is what many Okinawan activists fear as more retired military buy property and shape the landscape outside the bases and with their settlement, logics of security, fear, and militarization.

“Settlers” is what an Okinawan friend called people like Sammy. They are not “just expats” she explained. As an Okinawan graduate student who had lived and studied in Hawaii, she was carefully employing this term through a post-colonial framework of analysis, one often used in Hawaii to talk about non-Hawaiians who have moved onto the islands and through their movement and the jural shifts which have aided encroachment into more Hawaiian spaces (sacred and residential) and their cultural practices. I was invited to a working group in Okinawa at a warm and earthy cafe in central Okinawa (a mix of graduate students, professors, activists, and concerned citizens) to discuss the book *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local*

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3 In Okinawa, a *moai* is a selective supportive network of people who gather on a monthly basis to socialize. All members contribute money to the group funds and at rotating intervals, can borrow from the collected fees. The group is held together through long bonds of social trust and feelings of indebtedness and reciprocity. There are variations of these networks found elsewhere in the world. In anthropological literature they are often known as “rotating credit associations.”
Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawaii, which for many scholars working on postcolonial spaces in Hawaii has made a significant impact.

One of my friends led the discussion and I was struck by how these group members made such rich transnational connections that are rarely discussed in published academic writing in regards to Okinawa. For one, labeling a long-term resident or newcomer who has moved into a space which is built and presently sustained under colonial conditions as a “settler” is a delicate task. That terminology carries a powerful stigma as being a perpetual outsider and partially holds them responsible for the ongoing grievances indigenous residents have long fought. There is also a caution that must be used when deploying this term as there is a risk of essentialized romanticism around indigeneity.

The discussants in the room that day were especially interested in this because there are now several generations of Okinawans making home in Hawaii and the diasporic connection between the two islands are linked not only in the migratory connection but in the shared connections between activists fighting against militarized encroachment. To be considered a settler in Hawaii for instance, after enduring some of the push factors of militarized build-up in Okinawa is a hard pill to swallow. And yet to recognize what accepting that label means also allows for a radical ally building with indigenous Hawaiians who are actively transforming the postcolonial spaces in which they have been forced to survive. To accept that in Hawaii, also opens up how Okinawans think of the settlement practices of non-ethnic Okinawans in Okinawa, especially some former military expatriates. There are those who have settled in Okinawa because of their own push-factors of discrimination in the US, those who come because they have mixed Okinawan families and those who settle because they can take advantage of the militarized, economic shadow economies along the base borderlands and further militarize these spaces with their particular practices. It is with this latter group that the term “settler” is most critically applied by many activists.

Engaging with the work of Hawaiian scholar and activist, Haunani Trask, Kosasa (2008) argues, “settlers cannot be trusted to detect and identify colonial injustice. Hence we must find ways to alter our settler imaginary, recognize the lethal nature of quotidian settler life, and work against our desires to continue business as usual.” (Kosasa 206). With this in mind, this chapter explores the imaginary of Okinawa through the point of view of US former military “settlers” on the island and how through practices of circulating military photography exhibits, battle site tours, and circulating narratives of “the Rock” in forums and military communities, settler mentality becomes normalized. I have chosen to make this chapter ethnographically thick, leaving intact large passages of interview excerpts and exploring narratives of settlement practices through detailed description to reveal the complexity of these situations. I argue in this chapter that Orientalist settler colonialist practices, anti-Blackness in the United States, and misogynistic frameworks merge and sometimes derail each other along the militarized fencelines of contemporary Okinawa.

Okinawa and the “Good ‘Ol Days”
As the fortieth anniversary of the Reversion approached in the spring of 2012, a flurry of commemorative events were being organized across Okinawa. I attended several of these to get a sense for not only dominant narratives being employed to describe that
moment of localized displacement but how the contemporary politics of anti-base protest would be drawn into that commemoration practice if at all. In particular, I wanted to explore how US military oriented institutions framed circulating narratives of Okinawa and if and how they would intersect with more contemporary notions of settlement and claims to Okinawa through a nostalgic form of military heritage. I knew from some contacts that long-term military residents would have a hand in structuring these exhibits and including their own narratives, photographs, and memories to help shape these exhibits.

One of these events was at the Plaza House Shopping Center, one of Okinawa’s earliest American-style shopping center built in 1954 to cater to the large influx of US Americans streaming onto the island. A commemorative exhibit dedicated to the reversion activities was co-sponsored by other companies still in operation that once primarily catered almost exclusively to American military (Foremost Ice Cream, Jimmy’s, Pizza House, A&W Drive-In). The reversion anniversary commemoration had a definitively more nostalgic feel, much like the marketing of the sponsors themselves which have maintained their 1950’s US American aesthetics for which they are known. One of the directors responsible for the promotion of the Plaza House exhibit described its vision in a letter to one of the participants as reminding viewers of “the good ol’ days of Okinawa.” She continued, “To show those days are part of our heritage and cannot be forgotten.”

The description on the introductory plaque upon entering the exhibit also emphasized authenticity of an Okinawa now lost, “This Okinawa is gone forever except in memories.”

At the Plaza House photography exhibit in commemoration of the Reversion. Photo taken by author.

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4 Letter written by Jun Pangilinan of Plaza House Shopping Center Inc. Letter accessed on Wed. Feb 19 10:30pm. Posted by Brad Bradford on his public Facebook site for his father’s photographs of Okinawa.
Hundreds of photographs by prominent military photographers such as Ernest “Blackie” Gordon Bradford filled the formal gallery. Most of these early occupation photos were taken outdoors or in public institutions — a clinic, or a makeshift school house, a storefront, or of people doing work visible from the street. Sometimes the photos were of base workers or those who worked on or close to the bases. Fewer photos from inside homes were present and those that were indicated a more upwardly mobile family. The persistence to stage an “authentic” Okinawa in these images and a reclamation of those “good ol’ days” when Okinawa was under USCAR’s heavy handed rule over Okinawa had a distinctly conciliatory feel. Not to diminish the excitement many Okinawans have in viewing these photos as reminders of their spaces as a way of documenting their former landscapes, these photos, as well as those which have circulated and been shared widely on English only websites and youtube videos generate interest from those who sometimes find themselves in these prints or videos and from those who enjoy the historical mapping of the constantly shifting space.

A superficial reading of these events could lead an observer to remark that the military photographers were simply catching what happens in the public and in doing so, also capturing a glimpse of the “public self” or the omote and not the private self or the ura, two terms used frequently and uncritically along a static binary to describe concepts of non-collectives selves in Japan. However, this flattens the dynamism of racialized and gendered positioning that is occurring in the touristic, militarized photographic framing of Okinawans as “happy with their lot,” uncritical of their own displacement in relation to the photographer’s power in pointing the camera at them within an era when paranoia of communist activities emerging in Okinawa were at an all time high and surveillance of Okinawan organizing and union activities were intensely monitored.

In her critique of dominant understandings of self and other regularly accessed in Japanese studies, socio-linguist Jane Bachnick suggests a model in which relationships are active. Drawing on the works of Edmund Leach and A.L Becker, Bachnick asserts that language locates us and things around us in an ever shifting world and is especially interested in how we are located and locate ourselves in space and time. She argues that terms like ura and omote are indexes, rather than referential terms—that they define a certain distance in space, between self and other, “rather than naming or describing any characteristic of either. . .distance in turn also functions as an index---pointing out degrees of difference between self and other.” In agreement with Takeo Doi’s work on this matter, Bachnick says maturity and integrity is based on one’s ability to move fluidly between omote and ura when a situation calls for it (109). Bachnick rightfully argues that more research is needed on “hierarchy in action” and less on simply “a sense of hierarchy” (112). I raise this point because the insertion of these photos into the economy of violence, and the convergence of the touristic pose of

5 Photos by some local Okinawan residents were displayed outside in a less formal manner on mobile dividing walls in a collage like display.

6 See http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2012/04/15/6690/ for example.

7 Bachnik (1994) specifically critiques Nakane’s well known work on self and other because she says it does not adequately address time and practice as well as Lebra’s for the way she uses “social relativism” (93)
feminized islander with masculinized military frames of modernity mediates this specific form of *omote*, indexed transnationally through an Orientalist lens, all the while the ura is being modified and resignified locally. It is not just a snapshot of an assumed public self, smiling back at the friendly cameraman, it is the caption of what is assumed to be the *ura* that matters.

What many of the post-war military photographers did with this collection of captured *omote* selves, was give an easily insertable image to accompany the propaganda work specifically developed in the early post-war years. It was also in the same period when anger over the signing of the US Mutual Security Treaty ensued across Okinawa as narratives of sacrifice were raised yet again\(^8\) for the protection of the mainland’s borders from their enemy. The permanency of the bases on the island which became increasingly much more of a reality for Okinawans as the Cold War was intensifying required a crafting of militarization to coincide with these congenial tourist spatial metaphors being scripted on the island in the early 1950’s. The passive narratives and images of Okinawa, simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time is recuperated in tourism metaphors as will be discussed later and this makes the concept of “host” (for bases and tourists) much more pliable for security discourses. A Lance Corporal in the Marines for instance said in an interview with journalists Tony Barrell and Rick Tanaka, “The Okinawans didn’t ask us to come here in 1945 and they didn’t ask for the mainland Japanese to come here either. Unfortunately for the Okinawan people, they just happened to be where it happened” (Barrell 193). The lack of agency of Okinawans in this framing is part of a larger assemblage of nostalgia described below which is shaped in a field of power and benefits both Japanese mainland interests to keep bases predominately in Okinawa (and not mainland Japan), US American military interests in maintaining its inflexible permanency there, as well as the minority of Okinawans who benefit from these base arrangements on the island.

The nostalgic routes formed by the grooves of circulating narratives of “the passive Okinawan” become further entrenched in exhibits which celebrates these static, feminized and subservient essentialized Okinawans, usually portrayed as either happy

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\(^8\) See Linda Angst’s work (2001, 2003) on the tropes of sacrifice in Okinawa.
or visually distraught in war photos. The positioning of Okinawans as vulnerable, temporally stagnant, representative of a time long gone and of a particular place that is made militarizeable is common in many military photographs showcased in exhibits of post-war Okinawa.

Crafting militarized spaces through visual propaganda has long been used as a colonial technique of land usurpation. Kuletz (1998) and Gusterson (1999) have analyzed the particular ways many nuclear testing grounds in the US underwent a careful re-rendering of spatial metaphors to turn them into militarized sites. The nuclear military institutions effectively named and mapped these mostly Native American occupied areas as desolate, barren and non-modern. Similarly in Okinawa, aerial military photographs of flattened towns and villages widely circulated in photographic exhibits as the one at Plaza House add to the cartographic mapping of Okinawa as a empty slate ready for modern base building and also contributes to what Lisa Yoneyama describes in Hiroshima as “the taming of the memoryscape.” As we will see later, this is layered into security and tourism narratives, recirculated widely in contemporary publications and websites about Okinawa and presented as a way for people to measure Okinawan contemporary anti-base sentiment against the more nostalgic idea of Okinawan “natives” being gifted with military might and material resources.

Perhaps this is why the photographs of these military photographers sometimes receive only lukewarm acceptance or whose initial excitement over photos quickly wane. I reached out to the son of one of these featured photographers’ from the Plaza House Reversion Exhibit. He has assembled his father’s many photos and videos of Okinawa for public exhibits and for a popular Facebook site. In an email response to my questions, he lamented in earnest that he did not understand why some volunteers who had helped him translate some of the material for the Naha video project had “become disillusioned and angry” with what he was doing. As I was not able to reach these volunteers, I can only surmise based on conversations with Okinawan curators working on similar international photographic exhibits of Okinawa that the disillusionment may have partially been a result of quiet, albeit dominant vision for finishing the project and the expectation for it do something. That something, usually not instantly articulated has to do with the uneasy process of suturing of the past and present that is fragmented in these visual tales of “the authentic.”

While the displays of these military photographers’ works seek to recover an authentic Okinawa, that which is somehow lost in the contamination of modernity, as untouched by militarization and part of a linear site of the origo, those who have a visceral reaction to the framing of these photos under banners called “friendship” or “our heritage” then may feel slighted because there is no nuanced direction to include what Marilyn Ivy calls “the uncanny” or the “strangeness of that which is most familiar: the uncanny as place out of place” (23). The caption could easily have a colonial reading, too readily insertable into propaganda ads. The next installment for a 2015 exhibit is

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9 Personal email communication May 31, 2012.

10 I am invoking Allen Feldman’s (2000) discussion of scopic vision and “cultural anesthesia” in thinking about the tools which are utilized to create this dominant vision of control.
under “Okinawa Friendship Renunion.” As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, the discourse of friendship in many militarized spaces is not taken wholesale by most Okinawans and the ways in which they access and manipulate that term serves to highlight the incongruences of a type of gifting expected in truly mutual friendships.

Kyle Ikeda has noted (2012b) that much of the Okinawan war and occupation photography has shaped our discursive modes of framing memories and our spatial sense of place because they were always taken from the outside and by those occupying positions of authoritative power and privilege looking inwards; from outside the cave towards the scared, hungry, traumatized people, from outside a plane or tank looking down onto a village or a group of kids running after a piece of chewing gum or chocolate, from outside a brothel into a bar entry way where women resorted to prostitution for their families to survive the compounding poverty about them. It took the performative and ethnographic practice of memory work of many Okinawans to challenge this particular type of militarized positioning of Okinawa as “The Rock” or as “The Keystone of the Pacific” as described in the introductory chapter. The following section, in juxtaposition, describes the performative work of Marines touring Okinawa and calcifying Okinawa as a heritage site.

Okinawa as Military Heritage

Anthropologist Christopher Nelson (2010) poetically and acutely describes the complexity of remembrance for Marines. Nelson, once a Marine himself, remarks on how the intensive transformation from civilian to Marine requires “an appropriation of the past” (349). This process he notes, is not necessarily implemented to fully replace the Marine’s former identity, which is a belief many activists against US bases that are centered in civilian areas often argue occurs (see Chapter 2 on containment arguments). Militarized remembrance, he argues, is enacted through rituals learned on the base and in trainings. They reinforce a new sense of belonging and “the Marine is offered access to a different history, a different genealogy, one that is superior to the one to which he already belongs” (349). History lessons are embedded in their daily practices and everyday surroundings he noted, from how laces are tied to the statues and posters that surround their walks to their barracks.

When I asked Christopher Majewski, the director of MCCS Battlesite tours in Okinawa and the Battle of Okinawa Historical Display Museum at Camp Kinser, about the affinity Marines in particular tend to have with Okinawa, he pointed to these acts of remembrance Nelson raised:

The Marines have a longer history here than other branches and we push history more. Military history is very important to the Marine Corps and we pay respect to the Marines here before us. We have history class in our boot camp. The Army actually has a longer history but they aren’t really taught it like us, or don’t know it. Marines tend to know a little more. We fought here!

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11 Noted in a mass email in which I was included on January 19, 2013.
Through remembrance practices like these, Okinawa is claimed as a heritage site. The practice of walking the land, digging the dirt (i.e. on tunnel tours), touching guns that had once been used in the Battle (and which we were encouraged to pick up on the tour of the museum at Camp Kinser), all become tied to the appropriation of the past necessary in forming a stable form of loss that is used in touristic, and spatial metaphors of Okinawa as a strategic site.

These tours of battle sites is just one of the ways that military heritage is built into the privileged movement of military on the island and through the recovery of that which is has been transformed or destroyed through modernity and/or the bases. Renato Rosaldo has famously called the affective processes concerning guilt for this particular loss as “imperialist nostalgia” in which selective attention to particular destructions of a “native” heritage can transform the “responsible colonial agent into an innocent bystander” (Rosaldo 1989: 108). On forums frequented by retired veterans who lived in Okinawa at one point in their tours, a common narrative expressed is that Okinawa has become too Americanized because of Japan’s growing influence in the region and their affinity for all things Western. Another common narrative made is that with the closure of some bases and their return to the Japanese state, corrupt, capitalist developers will be flood the spaces and turn them into shopping malls or Japanese mainland focused resorts. One former MP, Bruce Leiber12, told me that upon arriving in Okinawa in 1972, he had no idea it was even occupied for the first three months he was there. To him, Okinawa was simply a station and he performed duties mechanically. Those soldiers who leave Okinawa with this imaginary of Okinawa also further circulate this imaginary as Okinawa being strictly a giant base.

Touring ‘The Rock’: A Tale from the Field

Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) produces several tours aimed at various communities of US Americans with SOFA status. Some of their tours tend to attract more families, especially newcomers to the island while others are crafted for unit tours. Christopher Majewski, director of these tours and the Battle of Okinawa Historical Display Museum at Camp Kinser told me in an interview that his younger Marine customer base is growing as they are ordered to attend with their entire company, platoon, or squad as a renewed pressure from their supervisors to learn about their history on the island. Depending on the type of attendee and how the staff sergeant handles their group, the content of the tour shifts. These outings are popular and the demand for them remains high throughout the year. The following is a detailed ethnographic account of one such tour. Many of these details reveal tense struggles over defining the island through the framework of military heritage.

I was able to secure a seat on a tour of key Southern Okinawa Battle sites through MCCS. We departed from Camp Foster, a Marine Base in central Okinawa with a group of mostly young Marines and few older military personnel or contractors with their children in tow. Our first stop was “Kakazu Ridge,” a site known to most Okinawans not by its battle site name but as Kakazu Heights Park (Kakazu Takadai Park) in Ginowan. This park is located just south of the controversial Futenma Marine Base

Bruce Leiber, January 21, 2011, 1:00pm. Interviewed via Skype
which has been the center of the most public protests in recent years. Even for Okinawans who are ambivalent in regards to a full *kichi hantai* (anti-base) position, most Okinawans feel strongly in regards to the Futenma base being closed without condition, that is, without the exchange for another base being built further north in Henoko.

Only two months prior to boarding this bus I saw a flyer being shared repeatedly in various online military communities on Facebook. The flyer warned about an “aggressive protestor” who had interrupted a MCCS tour at Kakazu Takadai Park. Looking closer at the photo, I noticed that the supposedly dangerous person in question was someone I had just met through mutual friends, Peter Simpson, a British professor at Okinawa International University and a vocal critic of the US military bases.

He had been offended that this large group of Marines had descended on this site led by a tour guide with a booming voice recounting historical battle tactics there, particularly when a crucial peace action was taking place in the park that very day. He felt strongly that it was an insensitive move on their part.

Members primarily from the prominent Okinawan women’s peace organization, Kamaduu, which has launched sharp, unrelenting critiques against US militarization and the bases in Okinawa, along with several other peace organizations were already situated in the park before the Marines arrived. They had gathered to take a photo of their group before dispersing to other locations around the neighboring, controversial Futenma Marine base where they would release their red balloons in protest of the continued base presence and expansion in Okinawa and to “reclaim the sky” as their statement explained. Local Okinawan photographers and video crew were on hand to document the balloon release. The Marines, seemingly clueless to how this could be deemed ignorant on their part, were all quietly gathered around the tour guide. The guide’s talk of the bloody battle site was interrupted when Peter accosted the tour group and began to read one of Kamaduu’s prepared statement written specifically for “People related to the U.S. Military.”

MCCS considered Peter’s approach to be “an aggressive tactic.” Majewski explained to me in an interview later, “yelling at these Marines in this way was uncalled for. These Marines were there to learn about history and many of these men had very little knowledge about the Battle.” Visibly upset he added, “he called these men ‘baby killers.’”

I disclosed to him that I knew Peter and admitted I was surprised by this portrayal of him so he respectfully instructed me to see it for myself online on a Youtube site with the search terms “Protestors Gone Wild.” The video was easy to locate. Peter indeed stood on the steps behind the group reading loudly over the tour operator. The guide, frustrated but calm, relents after Peter finished reading the statement and quietly directs his military tour group to leave. Perhaps emboldened by their departure, Peter began yelling “No war! War is a racket. Are you afraid of us? Are you afraid of peace? Why don’t you talk to us or go home. You have no right to be here.” Members of Kamaduu, some holding onto their red balloons that were to be released for the action, began chanting along side him. Their voices were softer but determined and accessed a language that directly challenged the rationale and privilege of movement in the same ways Okinawan’s movement are constantly challenged and restricted due to “security purposes.” “Okinawa belongs to us, this is our Okinawa!” Chinen Ushii, a member of
Kamaduu, writes in detail of this explosive incident in her essay, “This Sky and Earth Belong To Us13:”

“The Marines looking discouraged, began to leave the park. One said, ‘we’re here to help the Japanese.’ To which we responded in English, ‘We are not Japanese. We are Okinawan! This is Okinawa! ‘Okinawa belongs to us!’ ‘Go back to your own country!’ ‘Go back to your mother!’ ‘You are not our heroes. To us you are invaders!’

In the video, the young men and women on the tour did for the most part appear discouraged and walked away quietly to the bus, others audibly seemed to find the situation incredulous but amusing. On the back of a Black man’s t-shirt, the word “Peace” was printed from shoulder to shoulder. He seemed to be attentive to the protestors words, listening and watching quietly. I wonder if he carefully chose that particular t-shirt for this tour.

Chinen wrote that this specific confrontation that ended with the Marines’ departure was a success: “It was a small but important victory for us. Watching the backs of the Marines as they straggled despondently out of the park gave us a concrete image of what it might look like to drive the Marines out of Okinawa altogether” (213).

The backlash from MCCS was intense. Peter was directly targeted. A flyer with a downloaded copy of Peter’s Facebook photo, his age and other personal information circulated quickly across the military branches through social media and I saw it being reshared frantically online, “be careful out there” proceeded this shared flyer of the accused. I personally came across it twice in forums to which I belonged and via email from an interviewee.

Rumors on small islands and within anxious military circles circulate rapidly enough without the catalyst of the share button in social networking sites. The rumor of a threatening white male foreigner who could all too easily blend in as a “base person” and move dangerously close to these spaces made many uneasy. He had after all, the flyer noted, taught at the college (UMUC) on the base in the past, making him even more of a threat because of his intimate base knowledge garnered through this experience. The unclassified email memo demonstrates how this incident merged with heightened anxieties over “dangerous infiltrators:”

Marines were recently harassed and provoked by ‘Caucasian’ Anti-Base Protestors while on a tour of Kakazu Ridge. Personnel should be aware that there are American, Australian, and British citizens in Okinawa, living here and visiting, that participate in Anti-Base activities. These personnel are sometimes more aggressive toward SOFA personnel than the average Japanese citizen and are usually members of a broader, international so-called Peace Movement. In this case, these Anti-Base personnel seemed to be trying to provoke a physical incident with the Marines—and—they had a camera crew hiding nearby in case they were successful. This could have been a serious incident but the 60 Marines all maintained their professionalism, avoided a conflict, and departed the area”

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13 Chinen 2013: 214.
The email continues on with information on how to report suspicious activities including surveillance by possible “Anti-Base Groups [sic], criminals, espionage agents, or even terrorists” and how to deal with similar types of “harassment” when off-base.

This communique and the unclassified summary of the report by the tour guide clearly demonstrates that the military touristic lens is not civilian in scope — it was one engineered in the panoptican. Peter’s race was highlighted here along with the warning that potentially other white people may not be what they seem, a natural ally in fact more aggressive than “naturally peaceful” natives. This mimics the classic colonial narrative of the pacifist native who only protests against status quo systems of violence when somehow influenced by outside “agitators.”

The letter in circulation crafts the idea that Peter’s actions were premeditated to purposely incite a brawl and that he had planted a camera crew (the news agencies were actually there for the peace action) to record the evidence of a possible confrontation. This showcases the paranoia that is sometimes deeply rooted within some military circles about peace movements. The warning to military personnel to be

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**Aggressive Protestor**

**Peter Simpson**
- 45 years old
- British citizen
- Lived in Okinawa since 1998
- Former professor at University of Maryland
  University College

Mr. Simpson is an active member of the [Futenma-Henoko Action Network](http://www.futenmaheenokoactionnetwork.org) and is adamant about the removal of U.S. forces from Okinawa. Mr. Simpson has aggressively confronted U.S. service members off base in the past. There are indications that he may increase the frequency and aggressiveness of his protests in the future.

If confronted by Mr. Simpson or his group, do not engage in conversation or argument. Report contact with Mr. Simpson to 3d MLG G-2, 637-2255.

10/13/2011

One of the several emailed communiques regarding P. Simpson that the Marines sent to SOFA status holders in Okinawa.
extra vigilant off-base with these “dangerous characters” is easily linked to security
discourse already in circulation regarding infiltrators.

Perhaps little did they know, this activist “agitator” who they spent so much time
attempting to prevent entry onto base had already made his way into a permanent
installation on Camp Kinsner. A book he helped produce for author Chie Miyagi14 was
located in the very small section of the museum devoted to civilian loss with his photo
accompanying the other authors.

When I stepped off the MCCS tour bus and walked to the very site at the steps
where Peter stood reading Kamaduu’s statement just a few months earlier and where
the very same tour guide at the center of that incident was also leading my group, I
suddenly felt uneasy. We passed a group of Okinawan senior citizens playing gateball
nearby. The tour guide, with a mix of authority and excitement, warned us not to pick up
anything from the ground as there are still unexploded ordnances in major battle sites
like this one. Children frolicked across the lawn. I made a mental note to warn my
children who attended a nearby Japanese yochien (preschool) about picking up
exposed metal items from the parks or on their school fieldtrips.

The tour talk commenced and we jumped directly into the battle tactics and
strategies, and the war of positioning. The guide’s voice seemed to echo across the
park above our heads. This stop on the tour was to educate us on “taking the ridge,”
accessing the language of war that is always so possessive, so jealous. The discourse
was peppered with acronyms and military jargon, masculine, and rigid. In that day long

14 A Letter from Okinawa (2010)
tour, Okinawa was mapped repeatedly as a battlefield. Perhaps this is why Kamaduu’s message stung so much on that earlier tour, beyond the interruption and direct confrontation. The repeated stance “Okinawa belongs to us” directly challenges the possessiveness in military descriptions.

We stopped at various prominent battle sites including the Japanese Naval Underground Headquarters near my mother’s home where she had come of age in the post-war period and where many of my mother’s family members currently live. At this point, I had already listened to several hours of the guide’s interpretation of Japanese history, colorful anecdotes about regiment leaders and generals and their battle logics and quirky personalities. The tour told a repeated story of “the Japanese.” We were told legendary heroic tales of a cast of American characters, from the “good ol’ bulky guy who played football for Mississippi State” to the quirky personalities of regiment leaders and some noteworthy troop members who stood out in the history books. We were made to feel connected to individuals on “our side.” The mapping of this site in this way was to make us lay claim to this war booty of a landscape won.

The most salient absence nearly an hour into the tour was the mention of civilian loss. As we neared my family’s ohaka (family tomb) in Oomine, the silence regarding civilians became increasingly painful and despite my intention to be a semi-passive observer, I became increasingly worried of how this circulation of knowledge would continue to be thrust through these well-grooved routes of power, particularly on a tour like this one. I pulled the guide aside quietly during our lunch break and asked him to please spend some time on the civilian deaths during the war. He replied that as this was the “Battle Tour” the focus would remain on tactics and battle strategies and that civilian loss was for a separate tour to Shuri and other stops but promised to try to include it.

Back on the bus, he took a moment to focus on the effects of war on Okinawans, making sure to focus on the brutality of the Japanese military. The landscape of
militarization in Okinawa through the discourse he accessed centered around the infrastructure of war the Japanese state had produced, the practical enslavement of Okinawans to build their bunkers and underground caves, the oftentimes violent eradication of Okinawan cultural practices through severe assimilation policies and debasement of Okinawans. These were all major points Okinawans have fought to keep in their own textbooks as the national board of Education has made numerous attempts to erase these imprints of violence. It fed seamlessly into the dominant narrative of “total war” and the erasure of American culpability was clear.

While en route to another site, the guide told a captivating story about the “capture of Shuri” which showcased the performative practices of racialized remembrance on Battle tours. The guide dramatically explained that when the US captured Shuri castle, the Marines raised the Confederate “Stars and Bars flag” because, as the dominant tale is circulated, no one in that group, also known as “the Rebel Company,” had the official US flag on them. The guide, with a slight tinge of pride in his voice, also noted that this flag flew over Shuri for two days before it was replaced with the official ‘Stars and Stripes’ flag. At this climatic part of the story, several men behind me on the bus erupted into excited “oorahs!” I glanced at the one Black Marine a few seats over and he was not amused by this moment of communal pride either.

Despite the problems of representations of violence, the linear outline of history and racism, and the Orientalizing panoptic scope through which history was expressed, I appreciated that he directly spoke about race in other ways such as how Japanese Americans were being severely discriminated against in the U.S., which surprised

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15 CITE: according to article : Okinawa history lives on Camp Kinser by Staff Sgt. Christopher Hummel; 18th Wing Public Affairs, 11/22/2011, That flag had been given to that company commander Don Sinn by the Daughters of the Revolution. Quietly telling of a parallel story of militarization on the home front through these types of cultural practices.

16 Conventional history books usually explain that Shuri, then the headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Army, fell to the Americans on May 29, 1945. The guide made sure to highlight an important detail that is telling about the layered landscapes of power and translocal tensions even in the surge of battle. First, there was the tension between two branches — the Army’s 77th Infantry Division were being stalled by General Ushijima’s rear guard so the Marine’s 1st Battalion of the 5th Marine Regiment were able to get closer to the castle before the Army, which according to our guide was commanded by a “good ol’ boy” from South Carolina. The Major General Pedro del Valle, a Puerto Rican, gave the Marine regiment permission to move forward and fight Ushijima’s remaining soldiers knowing this decision would cause a rift with the Army for “stealing their glory.” He was also growing impatient and wanted them to swap the Japanese flag to the US one to signal to the pilots to call off the airstrike that had already been called in (apparently they could not communicate with the pilots any other way at that moment.)

17 Several military history texts that focus on the Battle explain that when the 77th Division complained to Lt. General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr, he was not upset and is quoted as saying, “How can I be sore? My father fought under that flag!” Buckner, after all was the son of the infamous Confederate General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Sr., who surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Fort Donaldson during the civil war. Buckner Jr., was also a well known racist, and openly made comments about Black troops, and Japanese, interracial mixing (social and intimate).

18 See E.B. Sledge’s memoir (1981) of his recollection hearing the flag had been hoisted over the castle. “All of us Southerners cheered loudly, the Yankees among us grumbled…” (275).
me. It reminded me that southerners tend to be more comfortable talking abruptly about race in less glossed overtones than people from other US regions. When I later remarked on this issue with Majewski and asked why in particular this story is included so dramatically, enough to invoke a celebratory shout from some in the audience, he explained that the raising of the confederate flag is told in this way because “it has racial overtones and that provokes a response from people.” The intent, he further explained, is not necessarily to evoke a positive or negative response but to make that story more memorable. “See—how you remember that story? You remembered that and you won’t forget that flag going up. And now there’s more knowledge in your head

“Lots of girls if you wanted them. All of these people were dirty and lousy. The women do all the work. The women carry bundles on their heads that a strong man considers heavy. The women and men bathe together. We had to coax them out of their caves. Many civilians were shot at nite. Japs disguised themselves as civilians!” Photo taken by author.
because of that different reaction. It helps knowledge stick more. This reliance on provocation for the sake of knowledge retention becomes normalized in settler imaginaries in other ways. For example, he explained how he intentionally provokes Okinawans who are able to get sponsorship to go on the tours:

CM: When you first come here, you read up on the internet about how Okinawans will say they’re not Japanese, they’re Okinawans.

MC: My mom says that sometimes.

CM: When they get up there [on the bus] and say that, I’ll say ‘Bullshit. You’re wrong. Okinawans are Japanese. You pay Japanese tax, you vote Japanese elections, you go to Japanese school.’ That’s like saying I’m not American I’m Hawaiian. I’m not Italian, I’m Sicilian. Okinawa is an annexed island. I’ve had Okinawans say that and I say, ‘sit down!’ I provoke them. And then Americans pick that up too and say ‘Okinawans are Okinawans, they’re not Japanese.’ Those are the Americans who are more Japanese than the Japanese are.

Provocation or poor insertion of found materials with little or no framing of the blatant sexist, colonialist, or racist framing such as those found at the Kinsner Museum enlarge settler imaginaries. Take for example the photo and the misogynistic caption that was photocopied from behind the original photo above.

One of the last stops on the tour was at the Peace Memorial Museum. Before we disembarked there, the guide cautiously warned that the latter half of the museum with its emphasis on the post-war period was biased and to take this into account if we chose to view it. The breakage in tourism discourse is less fluid for US military tourists and many mainland Japanese tourists alike for this spatio-temporal “reconstruction” period, especially after the SF “peace treaty” was signed whereby Okinawa was defacto handed over to be ruled by the US. The move from battle terminology and strategies on capturing the island to the politics of administering “a defeated people” is one that the museum has struggled and has tried to delicately deal with the brutalization of rule, razing of homes, basically, the massive and intense process of transforming an island to be a US garrison island, while also drawing away from the idea that this destruction could only be modernized through militarized efforts.

Through these types of tours, and circulating stories of Marine sacrifice and battle tours, the legacy of settlement is paved. A nostalgia is encrusted in the notion that this “Rock” was not only conquered with the sacrifice of young men, but that it is

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19 The problem with this type of mnemonic placement is that it remains a part of the systemic culture of racial shock treatments that becomes numbing for those who do not associate that act with a negative affect. It may only benefit those who are in a privileged position, those able to feel comfortable enough to cheer on that “historical moment.” That story was left dangling for drifting racist valences to be attracted to it, charging the knowledge that is intended to stick with an assumption of power, a vision of history that sediments itself in contemporary, touristic understandings of Okinawa as a site that has been claimed by those rendered as “good ol’ boys.”
precious war booty for the greater security of the world— “The Keystone of the Pacific.” These tours are conflated with a militarized “tour of duty” which merges traditional tourist metaphors with this imperialist nostalgia and ideas of heritage.

**Joining to Tour and Settling to Live: Settling for Anti-Blackness**

Militaries worldwide are concerned with how potent metaphors can unravel. For militaries with overseas bases, particularly the US military with its extensive reach worldwide, metaphors of travel and tourist experiences reinforce the hegemonic understandings of modernity and a progressive sense of development while also helping the modern tourist in their desires to “budge the grid of human experience slightly off current numbingly predictable coordinates” (MacCannel 1999: 203). In Okinawa, these metaphors geared at U.S. military communities are significant for the sake of this chapter because displacements “on tour” in Okinawa and for those who settle on the island are not a homogenous experience and understanding the diversity of these anxieties provide more context in understanding the articulations of settler imaginaries and actions in Okinawa.

According to the research of David Farber and Beth Bailey (1996), the US military along with Hawaii’s ruling elite invested in producing a strong tourist identity for soldiers stationed on the island during WWII in order to “mystify the reality of battle, to manage racial and cultural difference by casting it as exotic tourist spectacle; to reckon w/ power bestowed by the economic importance of tourist spending…”

During World War II, military public affairs officers in Hawaii distributed pocket guides to troops, which exotified the island and Hawaiians largely reinforcing an image that had already been consumed by most US Americans and providing them with “authentic” Hawaiian cultural experiences. Farber and Bailey found that what these administrators and business elite on the island realized too late was that these soldiers were measuring their experience in the military against those images that had been constructed and that the boredom of waiting for their next deployment and their “war nerves overshadowed the touristic” in Hawaii. This eventually led to expressions of resentment, alienation, and greater tension with Hawaiian local residents.

Despite its particular failure in Hawaii, this model continually makes an updated reappearance in an era when the military has shifted and backed away from emphasizing the warrior-hero to the “soldier statesman” (Moskos 2000). The reliance on these metaphors is understandable. The sheer number of military in movement, or what Mark Gillem calls the “military diaspora” (Gillem 2007) requires an extensive system of management and control. A review of Rand Corporation Studies on propensity, reenlistment and recruitment studies produced for the Defense Department reveal that alienation continues to be a significant concern for the US Forces. Attempts to combat these complex emotions is of critical importance as it is considered
dangerous because of its potential to unravel military values and cohesion (Watson 1997).

In my interviews with enlistees from various branches, I heard a repeating narrative about “deceiving recruiters” and how they promised them exciting adventures, “a new start,” a sense of purpose, a way to leave home, to escape a “bad” neighborhood or negative influences (friends, drugs, gangs). The soldier is recruited in many ways as a tourist if following the definition of Dean MacCannel (1999), who as a modern subject is always in a constant search for authenticity. Kaplan reads MacCannel’s work critically suggesting that this notion of his argument, that this quest is “a response to the generalized anxiety of modernity; that is, the certainty of tourists sights (and sites) helps assuage the feeling of drifting and fragmentation that afflicts the modern subject in the ‘West’” (Kaplan 198: 60) ignores alternative points of view outside this privileged middle-class, Euro-American capable of traveling to other sites to experience a “behind-the-stage” form of static culture that is sought. Both of their readings are useful in thinking about military tourist models in Okinawa because the Euro-American model hailed by MacCannel is very close to what is at work in the military and possibly why it fails in Okinawa. They do not account for other forms of possible displacements Kaplan mentions and experiences of loss happening within multiple modernities. It is also complicated by the fact that many of these “settlers” are Black American who articulate their life in Okinawa as a form of exile from what some consider insufferable anti-Blackness in the United States.

In Okinawa, potential transnational allies, namely Black activist military personnel and Okinawan anti-base activists, are separated through toughened parameters of settler colonialism. For example, through her analysis of legal proceedings, Andrea Smith (2014) has argued that this kind of distinction has multiple implications for transcultural/transracial ally building. Smith argued, “Anti-Blackness is effectuated through the disappearance of colonialism in order to render Black peoples as the internal property of the United States, such that anti-Black struggle must be contained within a domesticated anti-racist framework that cannot challenge the settler state itself.” Smith’s argument as applied to Okinawa is significant. For one, it allows us to see the disconnect many Black American soldiers have when it comes to anti-colonial framings and adequately addressing racism and the incongruences of full citizenship unless militarized. It is why some former black soldiers who have been hailed in the

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20 The widely cited studies by Hosek and Totten (1985, 1998) suggest that the propensity to enlist is sensitive to recruiters’ interactions within socioeconomically disadvantaged communities among other factors as well as citing the strong desire to travel. In many of the stories, it is the disconnect between a warmer, humanistic side of military recruitment and the harsh, transformation from civilian to military in bootcamp where the disillusionment begins. One soldier told me he cried before he even got off the bus. “Oh no! What did I do?” The realization set in a little too late he said as he was being yelled at on the bus. Before joining, many of these recruits were told they were being given the opportunity to choose, were being empowered with the ability to make their own decisions and “control their destiny” when in fact, they quickly learned that they were being thrown into a system which the military decision making is omniscient. One soldier recalled how this realization became perfectly clear as he was standing in a line and each person had to hold out their arm to get injected with a shot by an air gun. “I asked ‘what is this?’ but they never answered. In the military, you just give up your rights. You just have to assume they are taking care of you…so they say.”
spotlight for their “sacrifice to the nation,” (ie Tuskegee Airmen or the Buffalo soldiers) only quietly challenge anti-colonialism in their public speeches.

For example, one former Buffalo soldier, Norman “Pop” Craft, opened a BBQ restaurant catering to the transient, mostly Black young military crowd in central Okinawa. At the age of seventy-one, he gave a talk to the III Marine Expeditionary Force recalling his time battling Native Americans on the side of settlers and patrolling borders and yet he was not afforded full citizenship. Nor was he part of a lineage of people thought to be legally colonized (ie. Native Americans), just solely property of Europe or the United States alienating him from anti-colonial language that could potentially align

Article about Norman “Pops” Craft remains framed at the BBQ restaurant “Sauce Live” which Craft originally founded. It is now owned by his friend (in the photo tacked on the article). Photo taken by author.
him with Native Americans by talking back to the settler state (Smith 2014). Craft was recorded as saying, “I felt ashamed of my feelings toward the U.S., but here [in Okinawa] I was accepted and color did not matter.” Settling in Okinawa he noted, was a form of exile (Hottle 1994) and yet his critique was not unbound as evidenced in his comments to the Marines. As if to soften his embedded critique of non belonging to the nation for which he fought, he de-radicalized Martin Luther King’s message with his statement, “My belief was like Dr. King’s, not to fight about oppression, but just to know about it, remember it and build ourselves upon it” (Hottle 1994).

Where the grammar of security failed to seam the rougher edges of strained diplomacy or incomplete citizenship in exchange for “service” that many of my interviewees seemed to sense at times, the lens of tourism and military heritage narratives succeeded to recuperate the excess forms of dislocation. Much like the Israeli tourists in ‘the New Middle East’ who were able to navigate the contentious political economy in regards to reconfiguring their State borders and flows of people through them (mainly mobile Palestinians) through the discourse of tourism (Stein 2008: 21), US military deployments of tourist discourse in heavy circulation through AFN radio and television, and print media such as Big Circle likewise provided a way to recuperate dangerous forms of alienation and uncertainty. Rebecca Stein notes that in the case with Israel, “Stories about tourism tried to stabilize the nation-state at this moment of geopolitical flux, to consolidate the borders around normative national culture even as Israel’s territorial borders were becoming porous in new ways” (21).

Stein’s analysis of Israeli tourism points to ways in which language of “newness of Israeli movement through these new geographies of leisure in the ‘new Middle East” is accompanied by and made possible with particular erasures of previous regional flows and travels through these spaces. A different trajectory is routed in Okinawa. There the crucial moment of discovery through tourist language is temporally mapped onto the occupation era. The figure of the military tourist traversing freely through this space did not require the moment of discovery or newness of the American in an exotic Okinawa but rather the process of continued re-discovery of yet another new group on their tour of duty, aided by fresh reminders of “insecure” neighbors (ie. North Korea) and normalized tales of Okinawa as heritage for military. This repetitive, circulation of militarized security bridges the temporal divide between WWII and the ambiguous “war on terror.” As described in more detail through the interview excerpts below of military expatriates and those on active duty, the settler imaginary/colonialism is brittle for those who challenged anti-Blackness through and in spite of the tourist metaphors that framed their early tour of duty, yet the anti-colonial ideology needed to dismantle settler colonialism, could not fully be reached for most of them under the rubric of national security.

James:
I met James at a photography class one weekend. After he learned that I was mixed Okinawan, he suggested that I look up a blogger he followed who writes about mixed race, Blackness, and Okinawa. He had a good laugh when I told him it was my blog and said he had been following me for years and had told his own Black Okinawan kids to read it. James grew up in a small rural mill town in South Carolina, a town of approximately 1,800 people. When the textile factories began pulling out of the South
and the work was outsourced to India, the town’s economy collapsed. James went to college but there were no jobs available. “I kept going to interviews and got a lot of ‘you got a lot of education but what can you do?’” His parents both worked at factory jobs. He felt uneasy relying on them for support.

With no job on the near horizon, he felt the onset of depression. “I was sitting at home and a commercial came on — ‘Join the Air Force, it’s a great way of life!’ I had no job, I had no money and by the end of the night, it sounded like a pretty good idea.” The next day he signed up at a recruiter’s office. They asked him what job he wanted and he replied that he did not care, “I just wanna get out of here. Away from the cotton and peaches.”

His push factor was largely economic as it is for many others who join. Okinawa was not just a “station.” As soon as he arrived, he knew. “This is where I belong.” He was an Airman First Class and then moved into his role as an E-4 (Sergeant). “The Air Force was alright. It wasn’t the life for me. After I had been here for a while, I figured the Air Force wasn’t going to let me extend anymore so I tried to figure out how I could stay here.” He managed to find a lucrative position in one of Okinawa’s top companies and has found life in Okinawa fulfilling. He does not see life as a Black man in the United States to be secure and remarked he was glad to be whole again.

That sense of wholeness is what was reiterated in various ways with other interviewees, a way to live more fully without the racializing, violent dislocation from one’s psyche that Frantz Fanon (1967) refers to as “amputation.”

**Leroy’s rite of passage**
Leroy was born into a family of devout Jehova’s Witnesses. Born in Baltimore but reared in South Carolina, Leroy joined the Army after losing funding in college and his father suggested he “go into service to get a skill.” He decided to act upon seeing a Marine Corps commercial of a man who fought and slayed an evil spirit with his sword and who upon doing so was “recognized by God” in the act of striking the man with a bolt of lightening and transforming him into a Marine. “You see, I grew up as a Jehovah’s Witness so I understood it on a deep level. I didn't see myself as a warrior of God.” But it still struck him to move to join the Army which he figured was the compromise between the Air Force and the Marines. “I needed a rite of passage….the Army promoted themselves as a rite of passage, as a way to see the world. The Air Force is different. It’s a bunch of hardcore government employees, like the coast guard. They don’t get stripped down like Army.”

He considers himself a “country boy” and had always enjoyed the rural milieu of his home in South Carolina. He had learned a little about Okinawa before coming because he was drawn to world history. “I knew about the Battle. I knew Japanese were good at electronics. I didn’t know Okinawa and Japan differences…Then I got to Okinawa and I was like what is this? I liked it because I felt at home here. And as soon as I got here I thought if I could leave the military, life would be good here.”

**Trinity**
Trinity’s hair was picked out as far as it could stretch. I met her at “Klimax Cafe” in Chatan across from Camp Foster, a popular site for Americans because of their bilingual menus and offerings of American style pancakes and bacon. A round halo of
an afro framed her striking angular face. She had an air about her, confident and funky like her retro style. Her towering height above everyone around her also added to her demeanor and her semi-rebellious nature. “I’m kind of a hippie. Afro, bell bottoms…I didn’t drink the kool aid so I’m a fringe player. I’m always skirting the line just right there on what I can get away with. If you’re not supposed to do it, I’m right there on this side of doing it. I’ve always been that way and this is the place you can do it.”

Trinity’s family moved from Louisiana in the Great Migration northward and found their way to Detroit. She grew up mostly in the town of Dearborn where racial tensions ran high between White, Black and Arab Americans. She recalled going to a drive-in movie theater and falling asleep during the movie. Upon waking, the side of her car was emblazoned with the word “Nigger” across it. That was just one of the many experiences she said were regular occurrences. She joined to leave Detroit. “I would probably be in jail had I not left. Following a long tradition of people going to jail on my dad’s side.” She chose to enlist as a Marine. “It was the chessboard commercial that came on at 2 am. I was high as a kite. This knight reared up and I was like, ‘yes, I can do that.’ That’s how I joined.”

She became “a lifer” or someone who makes the military a career, leaving when they are eligible for retirement benefits. She had become pregnant and to take care of her child, she continued to re-enlist. “I couldn’t go back home. Every four years is a struggle and I do it.” Her persistence in the military has surprised her friends who did not believe she could do it. “I really hate the system. It’s a major discussion every four years. You become a certain lifestyle and they get accustomed.” But there was something about Okinawa that kept her for requesting this “post.” Safety was a major factor. “We did three years stateside and asked to come back. We wanted a safe environment for our kids”. I find myself doing things I would never do in the states. I don’t lock my doors. I’m more apt to do that [lock doors] out in town than on base. I feel secure here.”

**Ray Jackson**

I was introduced to Ray Jackson through a friend who thought he might offer interesting insight into the expatriate workings in Okinawa in various capacities. Ray first arrived in Okinawa as an enlistee in the Army. He eventually left and came back as a missionary. Now he works as a pastor of a mixed (American/Okinawan) bilingual church. What emerged in the two interviews I conducted with him shows a more in-depth cultural practice of the expatriate network. In off-base Christian schools and churches, the mapping of Okinawa as ‘ours’ is prominent and widespread and part of a larger tradition of normalized transformational contact.21 Although many Christian churches in Okinawa have been engaged in peace actions and some have taken a

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striking lead in anti-base positions, many of those led by pastors from the US tend to stay away from these movements.\textsuperscript{22}

I believe in defending the freedoms in the Constitution but I don’t believe in Americanism—the American ideal that we’re the greatest, we’re the best. I believe it’s a bunch of baloney. I believe every culture is unique in how God has allowed it to be shaped and put personal value and treasure in them. They all demonstrate something of God. As missionaries, we have to be able to shed what we think is a worldview and then understand where they speak from and allow God to speak through us. American missionaries don’t understand that. They say, all you have to do is have this slogan, have a good positive attitude and they’ll be a path to your door. It doesn’t happen that way.

Ray attributes what he considers to be an extensive problem with the expatriate community in Okinawa regarding this naturalized idea of “cross-cultural” exchange to come from the culture of expertise. In Okinawa, he notes that because the military diaspora is so mobile, anyone with a few years on the island is considered an ‘expert’ and this he found to be a prominent feature in what he terms, “the missionary compound complex:

They are wise in their own eyes… For example, at OCSI [Okinawa Christian School], the staff around them is Japanese and they had a riff in that staff for years. And never knowing how to deal with it…they’ve just accepted it as normal. They say, the Japanese…that’s how they are. Their [OCSI] solution is ‘God called us here to be the leaders and you should have the grace and the faith and the trust to follow us if you’re true mature christians…’

We then discussed the rise in other churches that line the base perimeters and their attempts to do “outreach” to Okinawans.

Ray: They actually think they are multicultural when Okinawans come to their church. They want to share the gospel. They take the mandate. . .They have concerts, a BBQ. Instead of learning Japanese, making Japanese friends. But to reach Japanese, you can’t be white, you can’t be Black. You’ve got to give up.

MC: Do you think this is related to the military bubble world? Do you think they become closely intertwined with the inner workings of that expat community?

\textsuperscript{22} See for example work on the following leaders Toyama Seiken - Head of the Social Welfare Department of the Ryukyu Government; Nakazoto Chosho - Director of the Okinawa Christian Institute; Higa Yoshio - High Official of Ryukyu Cement Company, Chaplain Matthews - anti-war crusader in the military; Yonashiro Isamu — Head Pastor at Itoman Church and organizer of the first anti-base movement through the YMCA. I am grateful to Professor Daniel Broudy for providing this list of names and these notes for my reference.
Ray: Totally. There you go. There’s that dependence. One of the things that happened for us was to cut that umbilical cord. Humans are made that way...we have to have hope and have something to grasp. For Black people, it’s their community. For those on the military base, that’s their livelihood. Unless you’re willing to put that reliance on the alter, you know, there’s a certain degree of insight that you’re never going to know. The only reason I’m given this view is because I put my own on the alter, sacrificed. . . I’m not an expert here but I have enough insight to see what God is doing in my life. I had to give up my worldview.

“Bird”
I met Bird through a mutual friend. He was managing a club/cafe in Central Okinawa in the Sunabe seawall area and we would meet at the breezy cafe where other Black military or expatriates would stop in to socialize. “When I was little, always— I knew I seen the military in my life” he remarked when I asked about militarization on the island. He began with the Detroit riots. He remembers the tanks in his neighborhood as a child, the guardedness of adults around him as they moved past him, the men manning those tanks, waving out at the children and his mother pushing him away and making sure he did not return the greeting. He remembers the anger in that moment but did not quite remember what it was about until he read about it years later as an adult because “nobody ever talked about it, they just wanted it to be over, nice and sweet.” Despite the animosity people around him felt about the military and their history of containing protesting residents so violently in these boundaries, he wanted to join. “My mother said ‘Don’t join!’ and that it ain’t our fight. That it’s the government’s thing. She believed Muhammed Ali—that ain’t have nothing do with regular people here.”

He joined the Marine Corps at twenty-three and when he was sent to Okinawa he said upon arriving he just wanted to see the tourist image he had been sold on:

I wanted to see Okinawans in kimonos, eating some rice, doing some karate. . .That’s what everybody come over here thinking. Everything was green, like a jungle almost back then [1987]. We got on the back of a truck to Camp Foster and then they said, ‘this is where you gonna sleep, put your things away. But the first thing we did was walk to Naha. Down 58 all the way to Naha and walked back, looking at car shops, just looking.

Later he realized he would have very little time to look. His job took up most of his days and the labor was boring. By the time the day was through, he would only have a short time in the evenings and weekends to explore. The racism he experienced within the Marine Corps at the time was intense and so stifling so that he and other Black men would almost exclusively socially gather off-base frequently whenever they had a chance. He once brought a very large sculpted black panther he had bought in Thailand to his barracks to stir up a conversation around race and to poke fun of the racism thriving in the Marine Corps at the time which he noted were mostly “southern
white rednecks from the South.” There was a sense of security off-base. He eventually made Okinawa home and continues to live there as he says, “in exile.”

Another former Black Marine and later TV personality in Japan and popular blogger, Eric Robinson (real name), told me that Blackness in Okinawa as performed by military personnel there had to do with the freedom “to be a brother safely.” That is Blacks there he said usually realize soon enough that others are interested in their Blackness, a commodifiable form so they play on it and perform it. “It’s like a fantasy and it’s a lot safer—I’m not gonna get jacked by a, b, or c. It’s like being in a fishbowl.” Once the tourism metaphors are ruptured, the security narratives also weaken. This desire to “set up shop” or to continue to re-enlist in Okinawa upon arriving was something I heard from many of the people I interviewed. For many of them, their narratives described the desire to exist securely within multiple modernities without fearing the repercussions of their own dislocation, of being exterior to contemporary forms of self disciplining they experienced back in the U.S. And although for many of these people, traveling overseas was still new, being in other areas later did not raise this same sense of freedom they felt specifically in Okinawa and the kinds of kinship they felt in Okinawans’ own displacement lodged between two modern racial states. The tourist metaphors and the military tours on the island do not account for these forms of displacements. What does seem to account for them is the discourse of Okinawa as a military heritage site and the forms of nostalgia and loss which accompany it.

**Shima Gaijin (Okinawa foreigners): Okinawa is Now My Home**

Seira Johnson, a young Okinawan base worker who self identifies as a *shima haafu* (island mixed person), told me in an interview that she has heard the the term *Uchina gaijin* (Okinawan foreigner) being used by several long term expatriates and military dependents who went to international schools off base and who stay on the island to describe themselves. She believed they began to call themselves this as a slight variation of the term *baka gaijin* (stupid foreigner) which she says more young men also claim. “We Okinawans say *baka gaijin* because so many military guys do stupid things — raping, drive like crazy, drunk all the time. . . They hear old Okinawan guys say ‘go *baka gaijin*, go home.’ I have friends who are drifters and they put a sticker on their car

![Image](image-url)

“Baka gaijin” (stupid foreigner) written in kanji with the Okinawan prefectural symbol. Photo courtesy of interviewee Seira Johnson.

with kanji for *baka gaijin* with an Okinawan symbol next to it.”
Seira suggested that they then started using “Uchina gaijin” (Okinawan foreigner) or “shima gaijin” (island foreigner) as they got older and more serious about making home in Okinawa, claiming the island as their own by using the indigenous name of Okinawa that is used with more endearment. It is a term I heard by a few expatriates on the island and have read online by long-term expatriates.\(^{23}\) In these kinds of practices of belonging, a claim to the island is being made in a way that makes many activists uncomfortable\(^{24}\) as a militarized mindset continues to prevail and dominate.

Chalmers Johnson (2000) once wrote with outrage that American military officers are given extensive “hardship living” allowances, implying that these soldiers are stationed in Okinawa or have the desire to stay because they are primarily consuming a lavish and/or touristic Okinawan experience, engaging in outdated war games. While this may be true for some officers with outdoor decks larger than the average Okinawan living room, or private military contractors with high overseas living allowances with their ceiling to floor glass walls overlooking the ocean, the reality is that the experiences of soldiers in Okinawa are much more diverse. Those that stay or find ways to renew, retire, find work and live “in the economy” as living off-base is sometimes termed have created off-base routes and narratives of Okinawa such that those who are in Okinawa for much shorter stays latch onto making the off-base military narrative complicated as it mixes with larger Orientalist, colonialist claims of Okinawa. Many US Americans who have lived in Okinawa long-term and or who have retired there after the military have created an intricate mapping of Okinawa which further (and sometimes inadvertently) reifies settlement practices and the creation of an “off-base base.”\(^{25}\)

At the same time, they are reminded that they have nothing to fear because an American bubble exists so they can return to “all the comforts of home.” It is here where the contradiction of modernity lies in the logics supported in tourism — between the fragmented displacements of the tourist and the wholeness one is expected to recuperate in these experiences with the Other. In Germany, anthropologist John Hawkins (2001) noted that military personnel who extended their stay near the bases were called “homesteaders,” drawing on the image of self reliant, go-getters, in a somewhat harsh, inhabitable environment. Hawkins found that many US military personnel in Germany on short-term stays found off-base Germany to be difficult and therefore stayed in more isolated American enclaves on base in reaction to a sense of anxieties provoked in the face of difference. While in Okinawa, there are similar single soldier, immobile “barrack rats” and others who rarely leave, there are many others who not only venture outside the contained base spaces but push their cultural comforts further with them as they move outwards.

Other anxieties in the early relocation process consolidate the narrative of off-base before arriving. Online forum discussions on Okinawa Hai, an active blog and

\(^{23}\) See for example, an online article (Dudley 2009) “Uchinanchu…No, Shima gaijin” a long-term expat wrote, “It is undeniable that I will never be able to declare that I too am Uchinanchu by birthright. However, I take solace in being able to claim a similar, local variant – shima gaijin (island foreigner).”

\(^{24}\) See the following chapter on Masaki Tomochi’s anti off-base base “kichi gai kichi” movement.

\(^{25}\) See Chapter 3 on kichi gai kichi (off-base bases).
forum site on Facebook clearly reveal that military are not solely concerned with where the best diving spots are located, as they are with housing, schools, whether to bring their curtains, understanding the restrictions on driving, or the traffic from one base to the next. Perhaps this is why Erik Cohen characterizes the military abroad as a divergent type of expatriate community, a “loose or fuzzy term capturing that category of international migrants who fill the gap between the tourist, on the one hand, and the semi-permanent or permanent immigrant on the other” (Cohen 7). Like the mass tourist, the expatriate uses the environmental bubble as refuge to come back to after exploring unfamiliar surroundings (Cohen 38). He notes this bubble is not a replication of home because “home is not an exportable commodity” yet Mark Gillem argues that in fact, the military environmental bubble in places like Okinawa actually does attempt to replicate home and finds its deliberate suburban aesthetics is just one of the many tools for strengthening its empire in its spatial design.

This replication of ‘home’ and its cultural aesthetics are critiqued by many long-term expatriates who sometimes no longer fully need the expatriate bubble off-base. For some of these critics, their narratives are similar to those of Tomochi and Matsuda, as strengthening the militarized routes of power. Later below, I detail those accounts of those who are fully invested in the maintenance of that system. The first set of narratives however raise two points to consider: 1) The military expatriate bubble adds to the illusion that they are positively contributing to Okinawa by interacting and engaging in “cross-cultural” friendship activities. This is a critical aspect of the broader security narrative which relies on the normalized image of the guest/host binary as discussed in the introduction. Going off-base to ‘friendly’ sites reinforces the touristic and in doing so, also reifies the assumption that an equal exchange is taking place. “We are helping their economy,” “They would suffer if we were not at their restaurants,” “They need Americans to go off-base.” These are common phrases I heard repeatedly in interviews about the businesses in the bubble community. 2) The expatriate bubble is not only an ‘American’ bubble but a definitively military culture deeply permeates its cultural practices. Norms of military hierarchy abound, military jargon and acronyms are commonplace, the cultural understandings of addressing one another and security parameters are normalized.

For some expatriates who have stepped further from the military environmental bubble, the critiques they launch are telling of how settler mentality is clearly imbricated in the occupation mindset of Okinawa as a base.

On U.S. American military expatriates:

If you take a big mold of jello and put a rubber glove on, stick your fingers in it, that’s what they are doing. They can feel the jello is cold, they’re in the community but they’re in places like Coco’s or Yoshihachi, that are frequented by so many Americans that they’re in there, but not in there. And then there are others that really get out, and range out and can stop at any little restaurant and do any little thing and not just, ‘my mama-san brought me some goya.’

There are people who never leave base. They go between Foster and Kadena. They are so tied to base that the only Japanese they know
is ‘konnichiwa’ and they think that means ‘show me your id card.’ Because the gate guard says to ‘em, konnichiwa. See what I’m saying? They go to church and go to the PX. And then go home. There are a lot of rubber glove wearers.

Retired marine, works on base with SOFA status.

There are a lot of Americans who have businesses here but they cater only to Americans. They shop exclusively on base if they are retired and all their friends are mostly Americans. A lot of them tend to be white.

Former soldier, business owner in Okinawa

Most of the Americans who stay here, they still work for the government so they still have that mindset of the government. They shop at the commissary and the BX. They don’t make any attempt to learn Japanese. They are married to an Okinawan woman and insist that she learn English. They send their kids to Okinawa Christian School in Yomitan or a church school but still only associate with other Americans so their world is related to the military. A lot of them are retired guys. Quite often they are still arrogant. “If it’s America it’s gotta be better” kind of mentality. I work with several who just don’t eat Japanese food and they don’t make the effort to do it. One guy I know -his son could speak Japanese and when he did he would go ballistic, ‘speak English dammit-You’re American!’ He would not allow him to speak Japanese.

Former soldier, now contractor for base and off-base jobs

Leroy (see above), for example, insightfully noted that the Army’s attempt to transform his identity and produce new symbols on which he could rally around backfired. He cites his religious upbringing as informing his beliefs about his sense of displacement once he joined:

My mom wanted me to be freer than she could be, not carry all that emotional baggage around as a Black person in the US. I never really thought about Black identity. I think growing up as a Jehova’s Witness, you’re either in the truth or in the world so my identity of anything—until I moved back with my dad, I was with this group, in a subculture. It was pretty strict. That was more my identity than a Black guy.

His parents were poor but eventually became middle class. And because of that he says he had a difficult time with other enlistees. “People can smell that I’m middle class. A lot of the Black guys here grew up in the ghetto. A lot of these guys here are not quite convinced that I’m Black. They look at me and I’m suspect.” Leroy’s mother was aware of the pitfalls of self disciplining many Black individuals have learned to do
in a racializing society (changing one’s diction and behavior in predominately white company) and how it become a cultural praxis. “The elephants—you tie them up when they’re young and when they’re big, you just tie up a piece of rope and they don’t break it. It’s institutionalized. My mama worked hard to teach me. Not to say “sir” for example. She worked hard to break me free. I don’t know my place I guess, but they know their place.” Leroy’s awareness of the trope made it difficult for the Army to break him down:

I never considered myself to be military. I mean I was military but I just never took to the indoctrination because of the way I grew up. I was just already programmed to be kind of anti. Not antimilitary just anti... The Army, they say you that you’re nothing unless we tell you you’re something. That’s deep. You walk in and they take your hair, and they
strip you of an identity to just a rank. As you progress through the rite of passage, you are slowly treated better and you start doing things they like and you get praised. That’s how it works.

Besides his reticence, they were able to partially break him and it took recovery time to become a civilian again. “Because the way I was brought up, the programming didn’t really stick long but for your average guy it’s different. But, basic training, it stays with you. It becomes a part of you if you are a soldier. The knowledge stays. They say you need as many years out of the service as you were in to recover.” Leroy’s recovery time happened away from the bubble community of expats who he believes form these tightly knit communities as a way to recover and enter into a new civilian identity. For many claiming a shima-gaijin or uchina-gaijin status then, settlement mentality is complicated by the fact the diverse class, racial, geographic and gendered experiences of many of the settlers. What seems to be the common theme among their experiences is the adherence to the stronger national security rhetoric which organizes a hegemonic understanding of space and time (binaries of East/West, linear progress of time/ modernization) and are still bound as locatable subjects in a regime of extraterritorial states. That is, these various military expatriate settlers within these various extra-legal sites (which are held together by the disciplining forces of the the United States and Japan) are still prone to having their actions shaped in such a way that the status quo of base operations are never seriously threatened. This is precisely why scholars such as Aihwa Ong have paid such great attention to how narratives of those deemed “flexible citizens” or subjects out of the reach of the state and cautions researchers to analyze both “flexibility and governmentality under conditions of globalization” (Ong 1999: 113).

Military Dependents
Because the massive military infrastructure and the inevitable relationships that have built up along the fencelines, several generations of military dependents have grown up in these communities as “military brats” and also contribute to this sense of loss, some actively circulating the claims that Okinawa was better under U.S. control, as part of the ‘good ol’ days’ when Okinawans were better off, and attempting to legitimize these claims by referencing their length of time spent on the island. In my own interviews with several military dependents who had grown up on the island, many had no plans to leave but were trying to find ways to continue to stay by locating SOFA jobs on base.

Some active duty parents I spoke with also mentioned that their older children had already asked if they could stay on Okinawa when they eventually PCS’d. The competition for high paying SOFA jobs on base is stiff as the preference for many of these positions go to military spouses to keep morale high within family units on more temporary tours. Although some of these dependents are comfortable and mobile off-base, the majority depend on the base for their everyday needs and tend not to speak or write Japanese fluently enough for jobs with Japanese companies. Many I spoke with have a specific narrative of Okinawa that they also circulate narratives reinforcing the concept of Okinawa as a “strategic security site” and under SOFA rules, must be cautious in what they say or where they go. Many have been educated only in base schools or their entire livelihoods moving from base to base. Others go to private schools near the base which still tend to spout dominant US military narratives.
As Cynthia Enloe (2000) has noted, militarization is an everyday kind of practice for most US Americans—from the kinds of GI Joe toys we buy our children to the star wars cereals they eat. For military dependents, it is an even more heightened practice as they internalize the rules for base living and hierarchies (stripes, promotions, and reverence, curfews) to having fluency in military acronyms and recognizing drills, threats, and loopholes in regulations. They also tend to internalize the historical underpinnings of what Okinawa is as a “station.”

In his work on consuming heritage, Nelson Graburn remarks that for ‘colonial brats,’ imperialist nostalgia is not direct but that “pro-local identifications for the children are probably strongly ‘Oedipal’ antagonisms…with a dose of ‘inherited’ and probably unconscious guilt” (Graburn 78). Citing Haya Bar-Itzchak, he explains “some young Israeli sabra defended and tried to save aspects of Palestinian culture, particularly agricultural landscapes and certain native trees and plants, against Jewish ‘modernization’, which their parents were trying to carry out” (77). This type of “pro-local identifications” that are highly romanticized and tend not to address broader issues of structural violence is notable in forum discussions of military dependents. I chose the three interviews below to illustrate these various circulating memories and claims to the island. I have chosen the first excerpt as it illustrates a common way in which others have talked about the limited scope of the island through the base world, the mostly uncritical romanticized idea of the island as a base, as well as the intense nostalgia and framework of how militarized narratives become circulated. The second showcases the complicated settlement of a rebellious dependent of a high ranking captain who rethinks romanticized narratives of the island after moving further from the base world for her livelihood. The third demonstrates the gendered dimension of “soft power” settlement by military spouses and the harsh retribution of “unruly” spouses who attempted to rupture the romanticized, settler imaginary of Okinawa.

Louise Williams

An acquaintance and relative of a close friend sat down with me for an interview. Every time I saw her, Louise Williams always spoke lovingly of Okinawa as her long lost home. She brought me old military history books of the Battle of Okinawa and plaques of the island mapped out by bases, much like the ones I grew up with in my home. She had grown up on the island as a “military brat” and would recount endless stories to me about growing up there. Her father was a helicopter specialist and did four tours to Vietnam. She talks lovingly of Hatsuko, the family “mama-san” who she spent most of her time with at home in Okinawa because her mother worked full-time, so much that she learned Japanese at an early age. Her emphasis on multicultural communities within the base added a layer of complexity to how narratives of base ‘hosts’ are internalized. Despite the fact that an obviously diverse population exists on bases, a particular security narrative dominates:

26 See Lutz (2001) on how a International Folk Festival in the very multicultural base town of Fayetteville, North Carolina not only visually parades countries of American military intervention and occupation — Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, Okinawa, and Panama and also enacts a “radical flattening of racial hierarchies” (77).
L: When we had to leave Okinawa I didn't want to leave. I told my mom that Hatsuko was my real mother and that really hurt her...The Okinawans are good people-really good people. I distinctly remember that we we flew out of Tokyo, how different the people were there from Okinawans. In Tokyo they were standoffish and there was no smiling. I remember that clearly.

M: Did you feel aware of all the gates and the boundaries between Okinawa and US? The fencelines?

C: To me—it was so natural because I had grown up being used to gates and showing your military id. It was like a white picket fence in front of your house. It's, here's your home and when you pass the fence, that's you going out into the world—except the guys had guns and they would check your father's id in the car and they would salute him. And that was the life of a dependent child. The base was so mixed too. So many different cultures on base. We were really the first integrated society—the military bases. Moving into the civilian world is when I first experienced real hard racism. I was in a bubble in Okinawa. Totally protected.

M: When you were going through the base educational system at the time, how did they talk or teach you about concepts of freedom or why you were there on the island? Through festivals or other activities?

C: That was interesting. So many of the stories we were getting were based on military stories. There were stories of kids—like in war torn countries. And they would try to get across there are kids like you all over the world, almost like they were preparing us with a warrior mentality. Everything was pretty white washed.

M: I'm not exactly sure of what you mean. Can you explain a bit more?

C: Like we got a lot of the Anne Frank stories, or I remember the story of this kid being separated from their family in Norway. And how they survived and personally I didn't care for them because I like happy ending stories. They try to prepare you for the hardships in life because our dads were in Vietnam. So... like we practiced bomb raids. That gets you on edge eventually. We would practice curling into fetal balls under our desks and the teacher would walk around to make sure you were getting it right. I mean I'm a teacher and we don't even do it to that extent for earthquake drills. It just begins to create a certain mentality.

Racism in the United States also affected where they would move as it did for other interracial families as interracial marriage was not even legal in all states until the Supreme Court decision of 1967. The lumping of certain mixed families onto certain bases in the United States must certainly affect how the gendered narratives of places
like Okinawa, Korea, or the Philippines where many of the foreign nationals were women. I distinctly remember for instance, how many of my mother’s friends spoke of Okinawa through security terms they had learned from their husbands, depending on their spouse’s rank and how secure they were financially through military benefits.

While dependents like Louise moved around from base to base after Okinawa and continues to refer to Okinawa mostly as a “station,” others like Tasha McIntyre, felt a stronger claim to the island and eventually moved back to make it a permanent home as an adult. After her parents divorced, she moved to Okinawa with her father, a Captain in the Marine Corps who was being stationed there. He had started a new relationship with an Okinawan woman who eventually brought her own children to live with them in their new blended family unit. She learned to speak Okinawan inflected Japanese from her stepmother and new stepsisters and reveled in the attention she got as a white gaijin girl who eventually came to speak fluent local Japanese:

T: I was very rebellious. I spent a lot of time running the streets. Have you ever heard of ERD — Early Return Dependents? They send them back to the States—troubled dependents.

M: So they sent you back?

T: They tried to! I just kept running away from home and would disappear into Okinawa. I would go with friends for a month or two. This was in high school. But most dependents stay around base or so but I would just disappear into Okinawa.

M: Because you spoke Japanese—it made it easier to go further from the base?

T: Yah! Well they caught up with me one time. I was in an establishment off base and they caught up with me and by that time my mother and stepfather had also got stationed here and because my father were all stationed on Okinawa, they sent me back to live with my grandmother in redneck boondocks in the States.

After high school, she joined the Army to try to get back to Okinawa (her first choice had been Air Force because she would have a much better chance of being stationed in Okinawa but she ultimately chose Army for other personal reasons.) She thought if she could be stationed in Korea, she could make “hops” (military space available trips) to Okinawa for frequent visits but this only happened once. The nostalgia she had for Okinawa began to grow. She eventually signed up to teach English on the island and made her way back to Okinawa. She described the transformation of moving from a

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27 One informant told me that bases on the west coast and in Washington state were typically where most interracial families and transnational families were placed in the period before 1967 when the supreme court repealed all states from banning interracial marriages.
worldview where national security talk is normalized to opening her eyes to her own previous “settler mentality.”

T: I was born in a military hospital. There was not a day in my life that I didn’t have a military id until I was twenty-seven years old. I was very patriotic.

M: Born and bred military…

T: Yeah—My idea was that everybody in the world wanted to be American. And man was I was in for a rude awakening just after 9/11 and there are all these foreign nationals from other countries I was working with and I was offended when I heard anti-American stuff in front of me from these other folks. I was like this is like going into someone’s house and talking about their mother.

M: So your image of the US started to chip away. Did your idea of Okinawa shift also?

T: I think the longer I stayed, the more sympathetic I became towards Okinawan perspectives. Americans speak about Okinawans in terms of how nice they are, so nice and they’ll do anything for you…And anytime you say that all of a race, all of a culture is like this or that…it’s just not true. It’s bad. Sometimes these Americans have this colonizing, patronizing aura. So usually Americans come here and only are in touch with Okinawans who are in service to them. People bringing their groceries to the car, cleaning their homes — but they don’t come in contact with the highly educated, professionals working with other professional Japanese people, you know? So you have this nice little old lady to come and scrub your house you get a very different idea of what and who Okinawans are.

M: Can we talk about your return to Okinawa as an adult and as a civilian and whether you feel like your perception of what Okinawa began to shift in that process or soon afterwards upon arriving on the island?

T: Mine has completely shifted. I came here very — I voted for Bush. I came here with my right hand over my heart, America the beautiful. Now I won’t have anything to do with the Republican party …I think something happens to you when you’re teaching at a Japanese school and you have to interrupt class because you can’t hear a word that you’re saying or a word anyone else is saying because American jets are flying overhead. I was filled with such a sense of shame and sadness. That was at XYZ

28 High school bordering a base in central Okinawa—name coded to further protect the identity of interviewee.
HS and we would have to stop class and I felt like they were looking at us like 'uhh-Americans.'

Now Tasha lives full time in Okinawa working at a non-military related company. She and her her partner and baby have to be especially cautious of their movement within Okinawa. As a lesbian family, there are no legal guarantees that she will be allowed to stay once her work visa expires as they are not legally recognized as a family unit. Okinawa is where she expects to settle long-term and now circulates a new meaning of Okinawa to others. Instead of reproducing the same dominant security narrative commonly touted by some of the Kubasaki alumni with whom I spoke for example, she explains a more complex story of triangulated bullying politics:

M: What do you say to your friends who are still in the military world about Okinawa—for example when they say things like, ‘We can’t leave Okinawa because of North Korea or China.’

T: From an American point of view—it’s like why are we footing the bill for this? Our finances have gone to hell and we should stabilize our own GDP and industries. Many Okinawans feel like there is no threat. The threat is manufactured from America. North Korea don’t have the funds to come over here and do anything. They’re starving there. They’re gonna come to Okinawa? Okinawa is willing to take the chance and we should let them. But mainland Japan is not willing to take the chance and I think Okinawans mistakenly think Americans are staying here as an American decision when it’s Japan just as much. This would never happen in mainland Japan!

**Patsy Greer**

Oftentimes, military spouses had a much more delicate role to play than children. Patsy Greer arrived in Okinawa as a military spouse, also labeled as a "military dependent." Donna Alvah has documented the specific ways in which U.S. military spouses were largely brought to overseas bases between the 1940’s to 1960’s as a form of ‘soft power’ to “present a more humane side of the U.S. occupation and control” (Alvah 2007: 177). The policies pressured these women and children to maintain “compliance with military goals and encouraged them to view their interests as separate from those of local women, thus defusing the potential for women’s united protest” (179). Patsy did not fit this role well and found military life to be jarring to her former independent lifestyle in San Francisco. When her husband asked her to go to Okinawa where he was drafted into the Army, she reluctantly decided to leave her job at the hospital only if he would agree to move off-base when she arrived. She was bored with the routine of military life and the tourist discourse used to entice her to the island soon wore off. Her husband encouraged her to take up photography. It brought her closer to Okinawan women’s interests as she redirected her gaze on immobility of certain subjects and on displacement of military personnel.

What was happening with me—it was sort of eye opening. I was raised basically in the 50’s and where America was the good guy, we had the
good ideas. My parents were very Republican, very conservative. I came here just totally becoming aware of a different culture, a different system [military]. And finding myself a ‘dependent.’ For some reason this was a significant thing. I couldn’t have my own library card. If I wanted a book and I would have to say I’m a wife of Sergeant XYZ. What do you mean I can’t have my own library card? What was also interesting was seeing these women [military spouses]…you had to be alone in the states first, you had to move yourself and be totally responsible for all this paperwork and you had to have nine copies of everything and then as soon as you get there, you’re treated as an idiot. As if you can’t do anything, it’s all your husband. I’m like hello? What do you with all these women who were all alone, and take care of 3 or 4 children who are alone for a year before they are with their husband and have to take care of everything, and then you come here…I was very, very aware of this.

She opened her photo album. The enlarged black and white prints she had shot and developed herself were striking. She began explaining what each photo meant to her and how this patriarchal practices she faced in the military began to look other practices of injustice, social and economic.

I was upset about how they threw Okinawans off their farmland and they built golf courses. I started taking pictures. I took this picture of ‘Off-limits to unauthorized personnel’—basically the Okinawans. This is me becoming aware of what is right and wrong. So I took this. This is the secretary at the job where my husband worked. This was a housecleaner. The things women could do…

Her photos of Okinawan base workers around her, Black men like her husband who became involved with the Black power movement, photos of the GI movement and the People’s House for dissenting military members, and mostly photos of women from the US and Okinawa taking part in a growing feminist movement. She also became actively involved in a newly formed safe house she helped to create for abused women (in an off-base location) and her photography actions there began to draw attention. Her husband’s supervising officer summoned her and began questioning her about her work and her movement in these various spaces. She was upset with their intimidation tactics and it only emboldened her. She began to teach women (both US American and Okinawan women) photography which she said was empowering because it brought her out of a rut as a “dependent spouse.” She moved through the towns on her bicycle and began photographing women in the countryside, details of American women’s style such as photos of women’s military suburban styling from their clothes to their long nails—which she said was a testament to the fact that those who could wear them that long were not washing their own clothes or doing housework because they could hire underpaid female labor. While on the move, she also took notice of the kinds of detours Okinawans had to take daily. This led her to becoming more interested in Okinawan labor movements as she moved through these spaces with camera in hand.

My husband told me, ‘if you go on strike with them, you might be sent home.’ That was sort of fuel for me … At 12:00, everyone got up from work, put on their armbands and we got up and walked out together. We were outside the gate and it was very empowering to be in a snake dance.
You connect to each other at the elbow and you walk very close to each other, walk very slowly and move like a snake and why you have a thousand people doing this, it was powerful—the power of a group and focusing on one thing.

We walked for about a mile and there was a speaker and it was diverse. It was not a violent thing. The only bad thing is that when we were sitting out there and listening to the speeches, the military on the hill were taking pictures and they had their big big cameras. And one of the lawyers was sitting with us and he had a mirror and flipped it and burned the guy’s lens.

As predicted by her husband, she was caught on surveillance, her photo was taken, and her husband were reprimanded for his inability to “reign in his wife” and sent home in 1973, the year of the reversion and just a few years before the International Marine Expo, which was an instrumental event held in Okinawa to further shape the tourist imagery of Okinawa as a resort and the continued security arrangements. The impairment of a small section of the scopic regime’s vision, burned with a reflective tool of a US American was a serious offense. The deliberate disruption of the gaze was not
a “maneuver” that the military had hoped for in this military spouse. How could the usurpation of more farmland or flipping of elections be downplayed with bright resort photos if one of their own “unofficial ambassadors” went renegade?

**Conclusion**

These extensive interview excerpts and detailed descriptions of tours and exhibits demonstrate that Orientalist conceptions of Okinawans are not cloaked but normalized in everyday settler imaginations. Unlike in stateside cultural logics of nuclear discourses where militarized practices like nuclear proliferation is erased, displaced, or made exceptional to US life (Masco 2006), in Okinawan expatriate communities, those logics of fear are underscored and sometimes managed through tourist discourse but more often through the structures of loss and nostalgia that are circulated in the form of exhibits and strongly recurring narratives which mark in group belonging and settler privilege. These narratives tend to mix with the sedimented cold war logics which mark surrounding Asian countries as irrational, part and parcel of the Othering process that Anthropologist Hugh Gusterson (1999) notes further reifies the binary between an imaginary us and them. He notes, “This presumption that the Third World body politic cannot control its military loins is, I believe, a coded or metaphorical way of discussing a more general lack of control over impulses, a pervasive lack of discipline, assumed to afflict people of color” (Gusterson 1999: 127). In settler imaginaries this presumption and binary hardens and states of exception become the norm and shapes the imaginary of “off-base” spaces as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.
Panel 2: Ricocheting “Security”

When Michael was a young boy in South Carolina, he lived with his grandmother because his mother could not afford to keep all the children together under one roof. His grandmother, who is now in her late 80’s, had grown up under the dehumanizing effects of Jim Crow laws and the terror of white supremacy. The Ku Klux Klan regularly paraded confidently through the town’s streets well into the 1970’s and his high school completed its sloppy integration process in 1972.

The stories of these Jim Crow era practices and civil rights era storms were passed down to Michael. They informed the more updated forms of these supremacist ideas today: in the legacy of inequality in education; the fear of unburdened movement through “the white side” of town because of hawkish racial profiling by some white policemen; armed white neighbors who engage in “stand your ground laws” with the intent of racial policing certain spaces; and also the ghettoization of black communities where crime and violence hindered his movement.

In his neighborhood, Michael learned how to hustle as did many of the young men around him. When I asked him why he joined the military, he paused momentarily, thoughtfully and began a tale of his grandmother. A vivid memory unfolded of her sitting on the edge of his bed and softly urging him to leave town for his own survival. At the age of 18, just six days after graduating from high school, Michael walked into the Marine Corps recruitment office and said, “Ok, let’s go.”

While stationed in the US, he heard that Okinawa was the place to go for dreams to come alive. He heard fellow Marines tell him, ‘That’s where you need to go man. You can do your music there.’ To support this claim he added:

   It's less competition. There's no violence here. You can go out and do your craft without worrying about dying. When I got here, I told everybody I was like hey...outside the stresses of the job — you can live here, and it not exist, in a good way. . . I've never been to a place where you can walk down the street at 3 am, in an alley and feel safe, like nothing is gonna happen. It's a different love here.

Quick to catch himself and aware that his reflection may appear like an elitist touristic displacement, he added, “But maybe I don’t know threat. So what’s familiar to me to be threatened, I don’t recognize it. I am not from here, so maybe my sensors are not going off so I don’t know the nature of the threat.”

He reflected on a grazing feeling of familiarity, and with it, a more grounded displacement, one that made him more abruptly aware of militarization erupting alongside the glossier hybridity message he had been introduced to earlier. On a tour at the Peace Memorial Museum he explained how he felt this acutely, “I feel disrespectful being in those places.” He said he imagined what his grandmother would feel if someone who represented all the oppressive violence of militarization (as on display in the museum) in “her space.” He explained, “I already know, I already can feel it without them saying anything. I saw an older lady there and thought of my grandmother. I’m more than this.” The interpellation as a Marine in that moment was troubling for him, a comment he would return to often in our talks. In that touristic space, where the mapping of Okinawa as a Marine heritage site was being drawn, he felt an intense dislocation. And yet, when we talked more about the purpose of his being in Okinawa, he
snapped back to the more dominant narratives of “national security” and those multi-
generational memories of similar displacements were easily pushed aside to include the articulations of “but we’re here to protect them” and this is a “necessary strategic site.”
Chapter 3: *Kichi gai Kichi*: Off-Base Bases and The Cultural Logics of Trespassing

The fan had a tic. It would nervously twitch to the wall on the right and then correct itself, turning left to give some relief to patient bystanders in the cramped, humid office. 

“Hai, dozo (please have some) tea. And candy for kids, it’s ok? Here’s the military allowance chart. What is your rank again?”

![Housing allowance chart](image)

Housing allowance chart for SOFA status holders. Photo taken by author, November 11, 2011.

The laminated card she pushed toward me contained three columns — one with rank and title and two others with correlating figures in yen. The housing agent, an older
Okinawan woman, was ready for business and had the firmness and efficient abruptness of a person well experienced from the years of working with military personnel. Bordering my chair in the cramped office were military men and women in fatigues, other Americans looking at available housing or with yen in hand to pay their monthly rent.

I answered, “Well, we don’t have rank. We are not military.” Her look of confusion and then frustration was a look I came to know well in the following month of desperate house hunting in Okinawa. The agents did not know what to make of us, a foreign US American family in search of long-term housing in Central Okinawa and who were not connected to the military (nor through the well known JET program or other teaching facilities). Some sent us away immediately, not interested in working outside a military system which generated significant income through the system of housing allowances paid for by some US tax dollars, and possibly the Japanese sympathy budget. Others took a chance, “Meet me at the parking lot at Legion Gate. I’ll take you to see some places.” Legion Gate was not on the map of Okinawa I had bought at the Japanese bookstore in Naha. Legion Gate, Gate 2, the McDonald’s gate, the Commissary Gate were only a handful of place markers that those in base spaces assume most US Americans can anchor themselves in Central Okinawa. The off-base housing market and the military settlement practices has created deep grooves on which the routes of militarization can maneuver.

In this particular style of mapping Okinawa and settlement, there is normalized narrative claim to the island. The demarcation of a contained “on-base” space from an equally contained “off-base” space is not always clear and what many anti-base activists and scholars call “spillover” has shaped the terrain of extralegal norms and the cultural logics employed to deal with them. This chapter documents several practices and narratives which encapsulate the making of an ‘off-base’ space — from suburban ethos and encroachment outside base boundaries to variant mapping practices which are telling of flexible transcultural logics along the fencelines. By documenting some of these practices and narratives of fenceline spaces, and the narratives of extralegal practices and states of exception “off-base,” I document the ways in which the movement in these sites of security become understood and stabilized through racialized and gendered narratives of “off-base.” I argue that in the routine cultural markings of an off-base space and locale, the power and legal territories of the military extends through shadow economies and has the capacity to further Orientalize Okinawans. Off-base becomes a site that is gendered, racialized, and discursively positioned as a distinct militarized space.

Suburban Encroachment Off-Base: Planning Occupation
Mark Gillem, a professor in architecture, a planner, and a former active-duty military officer, uses the term “military diapsora” to describe not only the dispersion and movement of deployed soldiers but employs the term to point to the spatial power of design and settlement patterns inextricably linked to their movement (2007: 74). In his

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29 Professor Masaki Tomochi has been researching how much of the Japanese funds funneled to Okinawa known as the “sympathy budget” for hosting the military bases is dedicated to military off-base housing. There is a great deal of secretive, ambiguity around these numbers.
book America Town: Building the Outpost of Empire, Gillem carefully documents how US American excessive consumption practices and suburban ethos of conformity is “wholeheartedly adopted” by overseas military base planners. This section briefly summarizes some of his key findings in regards to suburban planning in Okinawa.

The spatial design and military landscapes of settlement reflect the strong desire and “aggressive application of a familiar spatiality,” which he argues is made legitimate through Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) and security treaties (80). In his survey of key military base planners, he found that although they espoused the belief that bases overseas should reflect local planning and development patterns but were hindered by regulations developed in Washington D.C. One of the inherent rationales behind this blockage is a nuanced form of Orientalism and the fear of too much flow through what is considered dangerously ambiguous borders of cultural movement. Gillem suggests that policymakers believe military overseas need familiarity or the possible risk of “going native” may ensue30.

The wire fences along most of the bases make internal activities along the perimeters visible to those without base access and also make for vivid narratives about life politics along the border. Driving around the main roads31 bordering the larger bases in central Okinawa such as Camp Foster and Kadena AFB, one can easily view in plain sight heavy military equipment, military personnel in training exercises, shoppers moving in and out of the commissary with their full baskets being unloaded by older elderly Okinawan men and women donning an apron with “TIPS WELCOME” printed across their chest. One could also easily witness children playing on large playground structures or chasing soccer balls across the spacious, manicured lawns that butt against the barbed wire fences. As my uncle drove me around Central Okinawa, he pointed out the southern side of a Marine Base in Ginowan and the empty residential buildings lined along the fence. “Look at all that green land on that side. And look at all of us crowded over here on this side—like ants in the cracks of cement.” It was a narrative I would hear circulated in various forms by many Okinawans living in the Chuubu area. The spatial differences of such visible privilege is what gives rise to serious questions about sacrificing land for security. The spillover which ensues from these designs illuminate the norms of land use, of colonial mentality in claiming the island.

The military claims to the land is made possible through complex security imaginaries of the island and practices, some translocal and others wholly built in Washington D.C. For example, Gillem has documented how AAFES (Army and Air

30 This is not a new practice. Anthropologist William Beeman has documented how Orientalism comes to be further rooted in places like the State Department and military institutions. For example, he says some of the workers in these institutions use the word “clientitis” to describe those employees who take the extra time to learn about local cultural processes and go out of their way to learn the language and meet people outside of their expatriate bubble. Those who get “clientitis” are not normally rewarded and are instead transferred to a completely different region because it is believed that they “must have become dangerously sympathetic with the people of the host country and may be impaired from carrying out United States interest” (1989: 52).

31 Especially Routes 58, 329, and 330 through central Okinawa.
Force Exchange Service) in particular has bullied their way into grabbing more land use on many bases worldwide. A well experienced US base planner recounted to Gillem one of the many ways privatization affects land consumption:

“AAFES planners ask for a small site to get approval from the base, then come back later with a plan that requires several times the area initially approved. At this point, AAFES refuses to change sites since they have already invested design funds and any change would be a ‘lost effort….AAFES usually gets their way” (157).

At Kadena Air Base, AAFES has “the highest grossing BX in the world” (Gillem 2007: 91) and the Dallas corporate office demanded Captain Murrey, an architect on the base, to find an extra 350,000 square feet to move more product into a super-sized suburban style big box store. They refused to accept any less land and Gillem concludes that this type of demand for spatial behavior yielding to corporate demands “gives a new meaning to ‘military-industrial complex.’” (92).

In other instances, base perimeters are drawn with American suburbia planning in mind (Gillem 162), dispersing the population to minimize the effects of a potential hit from a bomb for instance. This model was born out of the cold war and fears of a nuclear attack. Gillem argues that in the post 9/11 era, this model was heightened and new “stand-off” distances grew extensively. Planners rationalized that these distances were critical in preventing installations and military from being harmed in possible attacks on the perimeter of the fences with the growing ubiquitous and ambiguous ‘war on terror’ and along with this logic came “policies that increase land consumption” (162).

This land consumption based on a suburban layout is then normalized in the language of security.

After the 1995 rape case discussed in the introductory chapter, SACO was to address, among other issues, land disparity use (Gillem 242) yet one of the more prominent outcomes of this special committee was not a substantial overhaul of land use and base structures but a lucrative deal for the US military. As Gillem starkly points out, “what started out as a response to a rape ended up being a major housing construction program, providing new homes at no cost to the new American Empire and its representatives” (247).

In an eye opening analysis of a survey performed by an engineering consulting firm in Okinawa for the US military, Gillem found that the recommendations for this newly approved military residential master plan starkly veered from the desires of the survey respondents. The surveyors attempted to determine how military residents would feel more ‘at home’ — in dense towers or quadplexes or tower units, with yards or visual privacy. Gillem noted that in order of preference, most preferred visual privacy, accessible parking, and lastly pedestrian pathways yet the designers misread and or/ ignored the residents desires and increased the number of parks and pedestrian pathways and gave residents larger yards with less visual privacy. The pathways however led to no where in particular and were not integrated well so that work, shopping, and residential spaces still remained separate only accessible by car, increasing traffic and car dependence. Survey respondents specifically preferred to have less segregated spaces so that they could more easily access schools and
shopping from home. The designers ultimately built their master plan on suburban logics, using transportation standards and rates normally applied to suburban areas in the US with single family units, not multi-family homes and thus were able to justify wider roads with a projection for traffic congestion with these newly built multi-family units (251). Gillem points out a statement by the Wing Commander at Kadena as a classic example of suburban erasures of the stake of militarization and claims to the land:

‘And with all we do on Okinawa, we need to remind ourselves that we are only guests on this wonderful island. Impacts to their cultural sites, their farming, their livelihoods and their environment need to be minimized as best as we can.’ (252)

If minimized land impact were truly a high priority, the green space and increased number of parks and pedestrian pathways” in this suburban ethos could be reverted to Okinawans. Gillem argues that the stark misreading of the survey indicates that the designers all along intended for a suburban plan. This legitimizes and cloaks the claim to the land through the normalization of residential security.

Gillem however, praised a Chatan-cho developer from the Japanese mainland in his assessment of the master plan for Military Family Housing (MFH). He noted the Japanese developers were able to make much more efficient use of space in a much more dense environment and offered residents there the preferences they desired in the housing survey mentioned above plus more amenities. Residents have their own yards in a single family detached home and easy access to shopping and public transit. What he fails to mention is significant. Those residents in this “successful” off-base development are almost all military. Despite the fact that these developers could make more efficient use of the space, they are not rented to many Okinawans on an average salary. The spillover of suburbia planning then exceeds the base and affects base towns like Chatan-cho, creating an extension of cultural bases outside the official areas of “containment” of the bases. The SACO plan then doubly backfired on Okinawans, first in stalling to make substantial changes to military land use but moved forward to generate new military housing. Secondly, the suburban design of that housing landscape pushed away those whose voices were ignored in the survey who then took their housing allowances off-base, affecting many Okinawan residents in the Sunabe-Chatan area. This has generated feelings from anger to surface level tolerance from many Okinawan residents there.

The suburban ethos in off-base spaces is encouraged so that military lessen any feelings of disillusionment or alienation. Forums online such as “Okinawa Hai,” as well as those formally instituted by the military, provides advice to those ready to move to Okinawa or those already there. The topics on housing clearly generate the most comments and questions. Snapshots of homes in various neighborhoods offer the online military audience of what could be acquired off-base. Guest bloggers usually provide detailed information on matters such as the drive-time to base, the density of other Americans in the area, the square footage of the home, parking issues, and whether American cable TV is available.
Off-base becomes an extension of the base world managed through the medium of Okinawan or Japanese mainland housing agents, usually women. All problems are directed to these English-speaking “hosts” who have an especially nuanced understanding of shadow economies and states of exception. As their corporate success depends on increased movement of military off-base, they are also invested in selling the suburban comforts of “home” off-base in an exotic Japan. The many housing websites dedicated to military related individuals looking for off-base housing illustrate this clearly with their detailed description of military approved rentals.

While I was at a playground with my children in Chatan, I spoke with an “Army spouse” as she called herself who had just moved to Okinawa. She had hoped to stay off-base because her husband’s rank would allow them to rent a home with enough room outside to put up their trampoline. I was surprised that such an item was shipped to a dense site like Okinawa. She confided they were looking at a place near Torii Station in Yomitan precisely because they could get more land. She rationalized her movement off-base was in one sense, a way to help “the locals” and also a cultural experience for her family, “a local immersion.” I met with others who fiercely held onto this logic. On playdates or parties at these off-base homes, I noticed some “off-base” homes were tucked away among mostly Okinawan residents while the majority were in a community of other US military related personnel, creating a very visible American

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32 To my knowledge, no ethnographic study has been conducted on women in the housing agency industry in Okinawa and the gendered labor that occurs in these fenceline spaces. It could potentially have an enormous effect on our understandings of shadow economies in militarized spaces.

33 See Gerald Figal (2012:179) on how women in hospitality positions such as tour guides, “masks the implicit colonial relationship” in the economy of exchange between “host and guests” in Okinawa. This slippage can also be applied to housing agents who “serve” military with housing allowances.

34 See Donna Alvah’s *Unofficial Ambassadors* for a more nuanced research on how military families were used as ‘soft power’ in the occupation of Okinawa and taught to think of themselves as helping an Orientalized “local.”
enclave, like those in Chatan-cho. When I met Professor Masaki Tomochi, I knew exactly what he meant when he used the term “kichi-gai kichi” or off-base base to describe much of this type of settlement spillover of US Americans into places like Chatan-cho as will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Locating Off-Base**

“Off-base” is a potent marker in Okinawa. In that single term, it denotes not only a spatial border but a particular temporality, a location in hegemonic western markers of modernity, and an indexical relationship to the openings and closures of official marked borders. Off-base, although referring to that which is outside the border of the bases, is an ambiguous space, especially around base towns that requires a particular erasure of violent displacements of Okinawans. Consider this example from my field journal entry:

![Store sign outside Camp Foster in the city of Chatan.](image)

35 More research is needed on the maneuvers around SOFA rules and increased setter movement. While doing fieldwork, I heard a number of troubling allegations that US military with SOFA status were finding ways to manipulate the housing system to buy Okinawan land with their housing allowances. I was told this is a direct violation of the SOFA laws which prohibit land purchase with these allowances and yet it is happening. In my conversation with a housing agent, she confirmed this was happening.
My aunt pulled me to her side on the tatami mat where she unfolded large maps of what is now the Naha Airport and also one of the Self Defense Force facilities, partially and formerly the US military Air Base and before that the Imperial Japanese Navy’s base. “This is where your dad worked.” Unfolding another map, she looked at me and said almost defiantly, “Now this is our map.” No longer a swath of empty white space labeled with current semi-militarized facilities, this map marked plots of lands with names of the families which used to live there before they were displaced. Pointing to a small rectangular piece of land against the ocean’s edge she said, “This is your mom’s old home. Where our family’s bones were. We had to find them and bring them here.”

This displaced community of Ômine in which my mother came of age, has an active association which regularly gathers for undokai (sports meets) and assembles their own local history books and maps of their occupied lands. It is in this kind of practice of active remembrance — from remapping these sites with new maps that plot former
residences to photo books of family tombs that were displaced — that the full erasure of these now on-base sites as previously unoccupied areas persists.

In their displacement, they were expelled not just to a new contained area further east, but into a new spatially significant territory marked as off-base. The making of this security concept was a new one. Shimabuku (2012), has poignantly noted that a biopolitical technology was developing in the territorial marking of ‘Off-Limits’ spaces. Shimabuku has argued, that many Okinawans found little recourse in their resistance against military colonial administrators and resigned themselves to survival within an all oppressive system:

No longer was it an issue of whether or not to reject the US military wholesale, but rather how to best negotiate the terms upon which land would be leased to the US military. Similarly, it was no longer feasible to adhere to the ideal now how to best negotiate the boundaries of territorial, in tandem with the bodily control over the sexual relations between GIs and Okinawan women. This marks an important distinction between a discourse of ‘off-limits’ that negotiated these boundaries at the moment of defeat and accentuated this subjective technology (365).

The multiple changes these petitioning Okinawans endured in the early post-war years required a concentrated effort to re-teach Okinawans how to think of their island differently, and simultaneously as a military site for training, launching weapons and troops, as a site of peace, and as a tropical resort. This was challenging as it engendered a form of political and cultural multiplicity of what off-base would come to mean over time. Also it was not easily recuperable under any single domain of meaning through the State (as discussed in chapter one regarding tourism consciousness). Not only were Okinawans taught how to approach the contained spaces of the bases as “Off-Limits” but were taught how recognize the hailing as outsiders from their own lands. This production of a new geography of walls required a new mode of interpellation, that which rendered Okinawans as trespassers at the fencelines.

Although scholars have documented what these processes have meant for Okinawans, not much research has taken place over how military narratives of “off-base” (as a colonial and militarized locale) have also shaped the terrain of power as performed in the daily practices along the fencelines, nor has extensive research offered how they may tentatively or more strategically latch onto more lasting Okinawan spun narratives of spaces of security.

It is not just the discourse of off-limit spaces that has sharpened the sensibility of trespassing in off-base spaces but also the productive discourse of check-points and semi-porous border crossings. In dominant neoliberal military narration, the base is a necessary site for inhibiting violence and terror worldwide, thereby creating peace. Okinawa becomes parcelled into sacrificial zones to the extent that check points and surveillance are normalized practices of modernization. Okinawans are expected to make do with inconvenient detours or when their civilian population become targets in war games as will be discussed below. At the same time, they are also discursively

36 See Figal (2012: 178) on how the US military was framed in pre-reversion tourism as a prime example of Okinawa’s modernization.
framed and Orientalized as “tropical islanders” having free movement nor impacted negatively by base presence in a significant way.

Much like in “crime talk,” security talk also consolidates stereotypes and prejudices of those who cannot move fluidly through check-points, locating those outside “secure” gated sites as ‘naturally’ outside the jural realm of state protection. Teresa Caldeira (2000) tackles this type of imbrication of violence and narration in her analysis of crime talk in Sao Paolo which “both counters disruptions caused by violence and mediates and exacerbates violence” (39). She argues that inequality inherent in crime narratives helps to produce social segregation and its affects are manifested materially:

Prejudices and derogations not only are verbal but also reproduce themselves in rituals of suspicion and investigation at the entrances of public and private buildings. As people’s thoughts and actions are shaped by the categorical reasoning of the talk of crime, its influence spreads, affecting social interactions, public policies, and political behavior. The symbolic talk of the crime visibly mediates violence. (39)

As in Sao Paolo, narrations of violence in Okinawa and the technologies of security which accompany them persist in check-point practices where the veneer of an open, democratic flow is manufactured. Okinawans are at once considered infantile, docile, and inert37 while also surreptitiously marked as suspicious, manipulators, cunning, and lazy38. Off-base for many military is spatialized as an ambiguous entity that is not quite base and not quite sovereign. It is that which “we are not” yet “that which we can have.”

While I was in Okinawa, twice an uproar ensued when local newspaper Ryukyu Shimpo39 pointed out how Marines in two different camps were intentionally blurring on/off base boundaries. In February 2012, Marines on Camp Kinser were pointing their rifles outside the fences “in a firing position.” Residents who lived across the street were alarmed as were pedestrians and drivers on one of the busiest roads in Okinawa, Route 58 at the sight of armed men in this firing position. In August 2012, Marines were spotted again and photographed hiding in the grass off-base pointing their weapons toward Rt. 329, another busy, well used road. Residents were enraged by these Marine war games. It was learned that they were actually aiming at amphibious vehicles moving from Camp Schwab to Camp Hansen, damaging part of the civilian sidewalk not included under base jurisdiction. The comments generated from many of the military I interviewed and especially from long-term military expatriates after these incidents are telling of how Okinawa off-base spaces are more forthrightly recuperated and militarized when security talk ensues. “When North Korea attacks, they’ll be glad we had these

37 Donna Alvah (2007) details how spouses of US military personnel wrote about Okinawans they encountered as subservient and childlike.

38 The State Department’s Director of the Office of Japan Affairs, Kevin Maher, was fired for his remarks to a group of students from American University on a trip to Okinawa. He was reported to have said, “Okinawans are masters of manipulation and extortion of Tokyo” and “Okinawans are too lazy to grow goya.”

guys training like that” a young active duty Marine confided. Another US American base worker with SOFA status told me the paper should not have published the story in the first place as it was to create more anti-American sentiment:

> It’s not just the US we’re here to protect, but Japan too! They are so stupid. These guys train like this all the time. Why don’t they say anything when the Japanese Self Defense Force trains with the Marines? They should be happy that we’re doing this. The Japanese can barely hold their guns the right way when they come onto base to practice with our Marines.

A 2011 Marine Corps publication, DVIDS, described these activities as necessary in this age of insurgent warfare, “In 2006, the Marine Corps sought to increase offensive spirit and to become predators, not prey - the Combat Hunter program was born.” The article describes how the training develops the Marine’s ability “to assess a situation or an area for any threat before advancing their position” through the process of ranging, and thinking “like hunters.” Ultimately this was rationalized as a necessary skill to outsmart enemies who do not engage in conventional modern warfare. This prized predator mentality built into these types of counterinsurgency war games allows for a racial and cultural mapping to be transposed onto Okinawans. As Lutz (2001) has shown in her work, the staging of these games onto those “off-base” allows for “cultural slippage between home and enemy” (104). In Fayetteville, North Carolina, for example, Lutz explains how simulation games in civilian populations outside Fort Bragg included the production of a “mythical” territory report. The working narrative of this “make believe” community for those engaging in these secret espionage trainings revolved a group of people written up as a a solid US ally but with “an enormous amount of latent hostility” which could potentially “manifest itself in a violent or revolutionary movement” (103). The full description of this community Lutz explains, was uncanningly striking to the Lumbee Native Americans who lived just south of the base. Thus, while war games on civilian targets are expected to simply “teach them how to think like the enemy” as noted in the Marine publication, the slippage that produces a stronger scopic regime of power (see Chapter 1), surveilling potential unrest in the real community surrounding the base, actually creates a sharper distinction of what could always already be trespassing bodies.

When I interviewed military personnel about how they moved through the gates into this space of “off-base,” I was attempting to understand how they were producing a fragmented “place.” For some military related personnel I interviewed, they expressed their movement off-base, as a movement into this “global,” non-American Othered space. In some cases, as documented in the interview excerpts below, off-base meant experiencing an Orientalized vision of Okinawans as a friendly people with a static culture. In security talk however, the slippage occurs where those romanticized people are excluded from the democratic ideals of peace and security because they no longer fit the “social taxonomies” (Stoler 1995: 9) shaped within military liberalism. Okinawans went from a friendly people to a population to be managed, outside the fence and in that

40 July 8, 2011
process, the exclusionary criteria for what a “secure” American is mapped into the discourse of security talk. This is something that happens in most colonial conditions. Ann Stoler (1995) has solidly made the case that discourses of race and sexuality in reference to European colonies not only outlined the bourgeois in the metropole and colonies but essentially mapped the interior of the nation, “They marked out those whose claims to property rights, citizenship, and public relief were worthy of recognition and whose were not” (8).

The following interview excerpts further elucidate some of the points above regarding off-base spaces and identity:

Interview with active duty, Michael Johnson, Marine based at Futenma
Mitzi: Is the base gate the boundary for you—where America stops?
Michael: It is. You can live on the base and never realize that you’re not in America. Never. Never have to use yen, you can go to the movies, grocery store. It’s pretty much what I do.
Mitzi: Can you map out areas here that off-base yet feel like you’re still on base? Like places that are more comfortable for you? Those that are not?
MJ: It’s like D.C. It can feel like D.C. [Washington D.C.]
MC: What do you mean? D.C.?
MJ: Like U Street in D.C. Like with the lofts and the rich people. They not even paying attention to me. I’m not payin’ attention to them. We know we’re here. That’s what being inside the wall feels like.

For Michael, the uncomfortable acknowledgement of power-laden invisibility, the out of syncness that hovers at the walls is what marks the boundaries of the base. Michael’s sense of containment is linked to his feelings of being out of place in the U.S. and links that his understandings of “off-base” power differentials.

Interview excerpt with active duty female Marine:
Mitzi: I find the mixture of Okinawan/base culture along the fencelines really interesting. Like around Suninawan seawaall\textsuperscript{42} and near the…
Trinity: You mean the base housing hole?
M: Yes! Ha. That’s what you call it?
Trinity: That’s all base housing really. A bunch of Y-plates over there. I live on base. When I got here, they weren’t living there out in town. It goes back and forth.
M: Do you feel a major difference when you go off-base?

\textsuperscript{41} For a more detailed description of these interviewees, see chapter “We Call it the Rock.”

\textsuperscript{42} Sunabe seawall area is located in Chatan-cho where many US military, SOFA status employees live.
Trinity: There is a difference. When I’m leaving the gate, especially when I’m not in uniform, I’m like we’re out! Especially the further from the base. Especially past Sam’s Anchor and past Naval Kadena. Mitzi: Do you feel that as a woman, you can move through Okinawa differently than a lot of these guys? Trinity: I do because when I take off my uniform, nobody knows I’m military. When I pick my hair out, I’m just some chick with an afro. I’m not necessarily a military person. And that’s a blessing of being a woman. We let our hair down, we don’t have an association with military. Nobody gonna come up to me and say, ‘hey GI go home.’ Men can’t escape that — with a short hair cut, fresh shaven face. Even if they try to get out of the military or from other branches where in off duty they can put on earrings, or don’t shave, they still can’t hide. I can shirk it - yuck, get it off me. I enjoy that flexibility. I enjoy being a woman. Prime example, I was coming home from work—traffic was backed up on 58, so I came back through here. There were two marines walking in civi’s (civilian attire) and one of them—he wasn’t bright anyway ‘cause he had a big ol’ eagle and anchor tattoo on his back (marine corps emblem). And he didn’t have a shirt on. So I yelled out my window, ‘put your shirt on Marine.’ Cause you can’t walk around like that—it’s a direct violation of the liberty policy. So you can’t pass for a dependent with that tattoo. It just illustrates that you can’t hide. I can tell by your haircut you a Marine. You can probably duck a little bit but you can’t fully hide.

For Trinity, off-base was to some degree a space of liberation from the confines and restrictive culture of the military. Her ability to move off-base was critical to her happiness in the military she later told me. Like several other long-term military personnel or contractors I interviewed, she liked exploring new restaurants away from the military crowds and found it exciting to be among “the locals.” Off-base was distinctly non-American, and de-regulated from much of the Marine rules she detested and her gendered mobility that gave her an ability to demilitarize herself among civilians off-base was a reward for her. Yet when I asked about anti-base protesters, a different sense of flow and movement off-base is explained in terms of economic base dependence that is frequently repeated by many military in Okinawa:

Mitzi: What do you think of the protestors?
Trinity: I think they’re hilarious. I do. Like at that last protest, they had bullhorns and I was like, yeah, ok fight for your rights. And I had no clue what they were protesting. And I’m under the impression that all the protesters are from the mainland and not even from here. What are they protesting? The bases? I mean what would happen to the economy? I mean even if the military gets locked down, even for a little while, two days will mess up their economy. If we pick up and just left, what would

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43 Sam’s Anchor is a restaurant further south of the central area bases and Naval Kadena is a group of stores just as one begins to head towards Yomitan, marking the end of the central cluster of bases northwards.
happen with their economy? I think a lot of mainlanders would come here. That’s why the mainlanders are protesting.

In thinking about the cultural productions around these militarized fencelines, Caren Kaplan’s grappling with “the local” is useful for understanding the complex articulations of off-base as a site that can simultaneously be fluid and also static. In her engagement with several postmodern geographers and cultural studies scholars including Kevin Robins and Stuart Hall, Kaplan suggests:

“…the local is not really about a specific intrinsic territory but about the construction of bundles or clusters of identities in and through the cultures of transnational capitalism. Whether the ‘local’ is seen to be fluid and relational or fixed and fundamentalist depends upon one’s position or enunciatory situation vis-a-vis economic, political, and cultural hegemonies. This is, perhaps, one of the greater paradoxes of the global-local nexus: The local appears as the primary site of resistance to globalization through the construction of temporialized narratives of identity (new histories, rediscovered genealogies, imagined geographies, etc.), yet that very site prepares the ground for appropriation, nativism, and exclusions” (160).

I argue that this construction of “off-base” in Okinawa must be understood with this paradox in mind. The following section builds on this notion of this paradox and highlights the latter possibility of global-local sites of identity and spatializations.

**Trespassing Off-Base**

Because they were not sure how to classify me, the housing agents generally started with units at high rental rates. As I learned later, these were rental offset with high subsidies. We were shown some listings for homes usually for higher ranked officers, Department of Defense teachers or private contractors with high housing allowances would be able to afford. At those rates, we could choose from a beach front condominium, a home with a grassy lawn, or a spacious American-style kitchens with ovens large enough for extra large commissary turkeys (one builder later told me these things matter to prevent culture shock and alienation and was ultimately, a matter of security.) A couple of my relatives further in the south of the island asked me halfway jokingly if we would rent one of them and add to the social architecture of creating larger militarized zones.

Upon realizing those properties were not remotely feasible for us on my meager fellowship earnings and scarce savings, I was taken to those on the opposite spectrum. Apartments above gas stations where toxic fumes wafted through windows, apartments with mildewing tatami mats abutting spooky neglected *ohakas* (family graves). I could already hear my mother’s voice, hauntings are bad where spirits are not cared for by

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44 Professor Masaki Tomochi is currently researching the exact figures and stastical analysis of “sympathy budget” allocations that are designated for off-base housing and construction for SOFA status designees’ off-base.
their ancestors, so keep moving! For several weeks, we shuffled around various agencies, from those catering to non-military and those strictly dedicated to military families. The assemblage of Okinawan spaces from the vantage point of a newcomer using these military systems became more lucid through this housing search. Piecing together information from housing agents, friends, relatives, and online forums, we quickly learned which neighborhoods to avoid: those under noisy military flight paths; where single enlisted men or young single officers congregated and tended to party loudly into the night; where traffic slowed due to movement from off-base personnel flowing onto bases for work and when regular Okinawan civilian traffic started later in the morning; where areas had a high probability of military contamination (Mitchell 2013.) This kind of participant-observation was crucial in learning about the mapping process that happens for many newcomers to the base and the conversations and practices I overheard while sitting in those offices were telling of an assemblage of practices I had been keen on documenting—US military settler practices off-base. Although the housing search moved slowly and was an exhausting and mostly frustrating experience, the process was a critical part of how I came to better understand the narrative of “off-base” spaces and how the notion of Okinawans as trespassers provokes anxieties and also racializing and social inequalities that is mediated through the discourse of national security. I listened intently to the framing of certain spaces of the housing agents and in the past several years, have monitored housing forums on Okinawa Ha. What imaginaries and critical narratives were being accessed in Okinawa by military personnel to further refine the space of off-base and to socially recode the effect of encroachment as a naturalized hybridity and cross-cultural friendship? What was being coded as trespassing in these spaces off-base when the friendship discourse wore thin?

Okinawans are expected to learn detour routes (literal and subjective) around militarized closures and practice sessions. They are also expected to know what could potentially fall under “at your own risk” areas. For example, some women are expected to normalize certain spaces as being dominated by the ‘boys will be boys’ mentality. Akiko Urasaki, a poet, artist, and popular entertainer in Okinawa explained to me that going into certain places like Chatan-cho near Sunabe where the Americans are concentrated in a residential off-base development, can be akin to trespassing. “Yeah, I feel out of place. Like it’s not my home.” Her intimate knowledge of “military speak” has helped her navigate this militarized geography and reposition herself within these masculine sites and to negotiate these feelings of trespassing. This uncomfortable feeling of trespassing is what fueled Professor Tomochi Masaki’s activism work around the concept of off-base bases (kichi gai kichi).

A friend and local activist and scholar took me to meet Professor Masaki Tomochi at his office at Okinawa International University. I was struck by his immediate

45 I did this mostly as a participant-observer in trying to determine what kind of housing would work best for my family and for prime fieldwork interactions.

46 In the chapter Chuuto Hanpa: A Radical Flow Manifesto, I explain how Urasaki is also drawn to the “exotic feeling” that arises from the inherent dangers of being caught trespassing incorrectly.

47 See Carol Cohn (2004) for a more nuanced discussion of “nukespeak.”
openness. He spoke passionately for the need to make substantial, radical changes in Okinawa through a strong decolonial research praxis. When I told him about my research, he grabbed a USB drive and downloaded all his materials and findings from his own research on off-base housing and handed it to me bidding me to make it do good work, a rare move in a sometimes territorial academic world. Tomochi, a vocal anti-base activist, is also a scholar of mathematical behavior and chaos theory. He has been using his skill sets in the slowly growing independence movement, documenting US military statistics, particularly in the quickly transforming housing boom aimed at foreigners and wealthy mainlanders. In essence, he is tracing extra-state network practices along the bases, the ghostly trails of money in the housing market, and how the displacement of Okinawans are affected by the increased military settlement ‘off-base.’

When he returned to Okinawa after receiving his doctorate in California, his walk around Sunabe was a disturbing one. Although the seawall has long been a popular gathering site of US military personnel, he noted a different feel of surveillance, of ownership, and settlement. It was not simply the identical US suburban style architecture of the newly built homes which gave the area an even more pronounced Western neighborhood feel but the Y-plates of the vehicles parked neatly in front of them, the return of officers and base contractors from base to “off-base,” the little English speaking American children dropped off by base school busses in these areas made him take pause. It was the effect of military “encroachment,” that unsettled him. Encroachment is a term the military uses to describe civilian development surrounding military bases, especially the build-up around runways where potential airfield damage is riskiest. Tomochi has flipped this term to directly point at military pushing into civilian “off-base” spaces.

He encountered Shoji Matsuda, former head of the Sunabe Community Board one day while wandering through the area to further observe these new practices. They instantly became allies as Matsuda relayed how he had put up large signs that read Kichi gai Kichi (Off-base Base) at the intersection of one of the streets leading to the neighborhood. Besides the act of challenging the act of settlement, it also functioned like a de-colonial touristic marker, not meant to direct, but to confuse and challenge those walking that path. I could not help but think it was akin to the way Okinawan ishiganto markers are placed on streets to confuse itinerant evil spirits who venture onto crossroads. As a resident who lives a few blocks away from this space, he would walk there frequently and find that his sign was removed by residents or housing agents and he persisted in placing them back up. It was a direct challenge to what could be termed “settler colonialism,” (a concept that will be discussed in the following chapter). It also challenged the notion that their presence was simply a casual border crossing but an invasion.

“It’s the real American Village” said Matsuda in an interview with me in Professor Tomochi’s office on a particularly humid afternoon. The thriving flowers he had brought me as a meeting gift seemed to already be quickly wilting in the heat.

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48 American Village is a large tourist destination and shopping center filled with “American” souvenirs and clothing in Chatan, only slightly further south from this residential area of Sunabe.
That particular part of Chatan called Sunabe is near the seawall and accessible to many shops and restaurants. The breeze from the ocean there is sublime. It is a popular diving area and attracts many Japanese mainlanders who have set up their storefronts along the wall. This overflow of military related Americans moving off-base into his town has transformed the community. The housing agencies have tried to minimize the frustration that residential leaders such as Matsuda have raised. In reaction to complaints that these Americans do not contribute to the monthly fees for activities related to further community development — such as youth activities or continued cultural building resources, the housing agencies which placed these Americans in these homes began offering payments. He refused the funds and made it known that he would not be bought for complacency on this matter. His stance was firm and he was eventually replaced by someone who was more “flexible.”

He explained with a steady gaze my way, “This is how the military base operates. They get local, quiet support in this implicit way. Okinawans quietly stand by while the base operates everyday for war, even during “peace.” This affects Okinawans. Americans don’t understand this. Okinawans went from Ryukyu, Yamato, to America-Yamato — because we have no power. We tend to give up. *Gaman shinai* — we give up to keep our life going. That’s how Okinawans learned to live, to survive.” He continued to discuss his dealing with the housing firms in Sunabe in his former role as a residential community board leader and the tensions that ensued. “There are many housing firms in Sunabe. There are so many outsiders living there….and the grandchildren take the land from their ancestors and build it up — for money.” He seemed hurt as he said this.

This is precisely what Shimabuku raised in her grappling with “petitioning subjects” — and one that Matsuda and many other activists are faced with when they encounter young people who would prefer to fine tune their petitioning abilities. An Okinawan woman in her mid 20’s who translates for military in off-base negotiations termed these petitioning practices as “hustling” in the game of power:

> “We Okinawans are just natural hustlers. Why not make some money off these Americans if we can? Before the Naicha (mainland Japanese) do it? Instead of leaving Okinawa to find work, we should stay here and be the ones taking advantage. This is our land, our home after all...The bases aren’t going away. They never will so we shouldn’t be ashamed of making money off them.”

Masamichi Inoue would call this a form of “radical appropriation.” He explains this as a form of reparations with a seed for future movement-making against the violence generated by globalized military power in Okinawa. He suggests that Okinawa should take “sympathy” funds from Tokyo as compensation, not as an exchange for “hosting” the US bases. This is a political maneuver that he believes will allow anti-base activists to address the concerns and fears of the financially insecure working class, and simultaneously allow the pro-base sentiments to be “grafted onto the soil of Okinawa’s oppositional memory concerning Japanese colonialism, the war, the US military, and servicemen” (213). He argues that doing so will produce a more unified Okinawa which does not ignore political differences within the island but accepts a partial militarization to exist as a diverse public sphere builds enough strength for a sharper revolt. As
explained in the following chapter, Aihwa Ong’s model of radical public spheres of “flexible Chinese” who also navigate the triangulation of racial positionings transnationally to rework the notion of trespassing citizen is an aspirational model for some Okinawans who implement transcultural “transfigurations” along the fencelines⁴⁹. Both Inoue and Ong are quick to point out that the national anxieties over labor and the ability to maneuver racializing identities that will could potentially lock them out of economic activities does in fact release the tension of being locked into a particular localizing, place-based identity but it still does not alleviate the concerns over violent displacements, inherently built into the concept of trespassing.

Matsuda raised the issue of trespassing in off-base zones as a painful embodied sentiment that the whole of the island is militarized through the acts of settlement and further human encroachment. “Americans rent these apartments and bring a lot of problems to the neighborhoods. I don’t feel safe walking around there.” He believes more resolutely than ever that the military are aggressors. “They are never sorry about all that they destroy in their training— the environment, the mountains, the corals.”

**Limbo Status and Jural Inconsistencies**

“Do you see this fence? It’s the old fence, the old boundary of US military land. Just a little farther back is the new military fence. That land in between has been reverted back to Japan, but they kept this old fence for some reason.” O-san, a Yomitan resident I had just interviewed, wanted to show this to me because I had explained to him that I was interested in how people in his area make sense of militarized spaces, live with detour mentalities and checkpoint cultures, and how these shape imaginaries of Okinawa in particular ways. He was eager to show the boundary to me as it illustrated how material demarcations persist in limbo states in Okinawa and how residents are sometimes unclear if they are trespassing, physically but also culturally.

“The maps say this is now Japan,” he said with some hesitation as he inspected the newly mended fence. ‘Keep out - US Army Facility’ and ‘Restricted Area’ signs were posted ominously on the fence. He looked concerned. “I was just here a few months ago and there used to be an opening here—the fence was open here, a hole right here...”

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⁴⁹ See Chapter 4 and 5 for a more nuanced discussion of Paul Gilroy’s use of “transfiguration.”
so us residents could pass through it easily. I’ve been going through this area for years.” Although the fence had been repaired, there was an opening to the space in-between on the other side. “I wonder what they are trying to do?” His eyebrows furrowed. The weeds on the fence curled around the wires.

An elderly woman slowly jogged by on the narrow strip of land between the fences, passing a plot of newly tilled crops growing on what looked like an old military airstrip. O-san, a self-made historian and avid researcher of all things Okinawan was brimming with curiosity, so I was not surprised when he called me the next day and said he went to the Japanese Self Defense office in Kadena to unearth some answers. He had taken with him some of his maps and asked some officials directly (after passing through several checkpoints and had obtained the many passes necessary to get answers) whether that particular area belonged to the US or to Japan. He said they hesitated with their answers, looked him up and down with suspicion, but he eventually learned, after much persistence on his part, that the maps in his possession were wrong. Yes, the land had been “returned,” but these tracts were still not officially signed off as being Japanese.

They were in a limbo existence awaiting signatures for their final return. He explained to me, “It’s like when a married couple file for divorce and they live separate lives while they await the judge’s signature to officially declare the end of the contract. The paperwork is in that weird limbo state for some reason.” When he asked the officials if this meant he was trespassing on that land, they indicated that technically yes he was, but no one minded if it was just being used for everyday causal use—like farming or jogging on but not for devious matters.

This resident then proceeded to tell me about all the areas he knew of off the top of his head that were like that—areas in the north where “jungle warfare training” occurs and roads are open to local civilians but where military priorities could trump civilian use in an instant for whatever the military deems a security issue. The roads can be closed

Photograph taken by author.
down suddenly without notice, so residents are then required to take rather inconvenient detours.

*Kichi gai kichi* then is not just the obvious spillover of the base such as noise pollution\(^{50}\), nor is the making of an off-base base landscape not solely the settlement of military pushing the housing market development into places like Kadena, Yomitan, Chatan, and Ginowan. It is also about the cultural norms of settlement and the logics which accompany that movement outside the fences. It is about the normalization of militarization through a particular spatial and narrative ordering. It is about the ways in which narratives of Okinawa will continue to circulate within highly mobile military communities and then dispersed into the greater public sphere in the US regarding Okinawa as a site that has been staked out and claimed for “global security” purposes at the expense of local Okinawans.

These types of ambiguous spaces in the borderlands of the bases is what many anti-base activists and scholars take the position that there is no such thing as “off-base” but only off-base bases. They mobilize around the idea that Okinawa is a base itself, wholly militarized and the demarcations to separate non-base use is a trivial one. Ms. Matsuda said in an interview, “Watashi tachi ne, kichi no naka de sunde iru ne (It feels like we are living on a base).” While barbed wire, surveilled fencelines have long protected those with SOFA status from being justly punished for crimes committed outside the fences, there is also no full closure and the blurring of these fencelines, of the jural, of the movement in-between persists below the radar of scholars who tend to focus on an “authentic” Okinawa in a contained “off-base” space.

Mr. Matsuda had insisted I talk to his wife to get a different gendered perspective. As a woman’s activist, she might have other point that she might want me to consider he added. Indeed, she offered a more nuanced feminist perspective of security and trespassing. For many women in these off-base bases, the boundaries where one becomes a gendered trespasser is much starker. Feminist peace activists\(^{51}\) in Okinawa have often directly challenged the logic of security by asking, “Whose security” when women and children are so vulnerable in militarized zones. As the off-base base spaces encroachment stretched out with the increased mobility of soldiers into residential areas, women in particular became more localized in the homes, feeling unsafe for walking in the streets. Families separated. Even before this period, as the Korean War began, US commanders increased forced “resettlements” more vigorously (Eiko 2003: 230). Ms. Matsuda’s home in Chatan was formerly included in Kadena Town but the airbase cut it into two locales. Chatan was a significant agricultural area before the war but by 1946, nearly the entire area was heavily militarized and by 1947, some displaced residents were allowed to come back from the overcrowded camps they

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\(^{50}\) See Gilem (2007: 34-70) on the enormous impact of spillover. Also see Yoshida (2002) for a detailed analysis of spillover from 1945-1972.

\(^{51}\) Women for Genuine Security is a well organized feminist NGO based in the US which brings together women worldwide working against militarization and challenge the logics of security at these interstices of global-local. They are one of many organizations which question the taken for granted notion of masculine security that puts women at risk in militarized zones, especially in regards to sex trafficking, environmental health risks which predominately affect children at a disproportional rate, and the risk of sexual assault and domestic abuse for women on/off base.
had stayed in for those years only to find their rice paddies and sugar cane and sweet potato crops replaced with concrete and barbed wires (Yoshida 2002: 60). Matsuda described how decade after decade, the furusato (hometown) became disrupted and the sense of displacement is exacerbated by surrounding violence. Community networks and block activities become scarcer. “It wasn’t a good place to raise a family anymore. Many from this area went to Yanbaru...After the reversion, we had hoped that we could live like normal human beings again.” The reversion came and she felt like nothing changed. The noise pollution continued. The law suits in which she was involved all three times left nothing to be desired by her or the other plaintiffs. In Okinawa, some activists and leaders like the Matsudas focus on these types of displacements, the internal trespassing and cultural uprootedness through encroachment of bases into off-base spaces.

A young Okinawan woman in her mid 20’s and now an off-base housing agent said, “I think some military, especially active duty sometimes try to flirt me [sic] a lot too especially when I visit Starbucks coffee or cafes in the Chatan area.” She had created a mental map of what areas might illicit those feelings of trespassing.

In my interviews with several active duty and retired military, I was told told that most of their fellow Marines were well aware of a sexualized tourist cartography of the island. One Marine said upon arriving, “I knew which beach to go to to meet the mainland girls,” the ones he said would specifically come to Okinawa to seek out Black military men, and “which ones for Okinawan girls.” In my interviews, I also began to notice sexualized spatial mapping more clearly— which clubs, what gates, which days, which university, and what Starbucks were known pick-up sites and how they came to be submerged under touristic “friendship” discourse especially when attention was drawn to these interactions and various forms of harassment that would sometimes ensue. I also noted that these interactions were often erased from the guest/host discourse replete with sexist language blaming “girls in the wrong places” if negative attention was drawn to these practices.

In October 2011, towards the end of my year-long stay, two Navy sailors on a cargo delivery in Okinawa, raped and robbed an Okinawan woman on her way home. The public outcry was intense. Some of the other residents in my apartment complex in Central Okinawa were US military and affected by the curfew enacted in the aftermath. They told me how unfair it was to get punished with a strict curfew for two “bad apples” who were not even regularly stationed there, the rationale being that they were more of tourists than those assigned long-term. One was upset he could not go to a bar that evening “to meet some chicks” because he would have to turn around and go home early before the curfew.

The next morning, just outside my apartment, along a popular route leading to several beach resorts, the words “No Rape” painted in red, dripping from each letter like blood, were scrawled across a building with short-term condominiums rental units for mostly US Americans in transit and mainland tourists on extended stays. Citizens patrols were organized and groups of Okinawan residents walked the neighborhoods in their bright vests. The public reminders in the form of these signs, the heightened language of curfews, and checkpoints grind against the touristic spatial metaphors which highlight military as mobile, diverse guests, turning the discourse of trespasser back around onto the military.
While many anti-base activist organizations in Okinawa focus on the language of SOFA, and security arrangements which allow for the sustenance of US-Japanese militarization to persist, others focus on the law as produced within this system to be ineffective and null. The Comaroffs have argued that postcolonies, usually referencing countries in Africa, “are saturated with self imaginings and identities grounded in the jural” (Comaroff 2006: 26). In Okinawa, because the jural continues to be dominated by extensive legal fictions which are said to protect democratic freedoms of local residents, some activists find organizing within this realm to be a futile exercise of positioning. Among the many striking examples of this form of tyranny, one of the clearest for me is that of the forced land leases signatures when Governor Ota was in office.  


“We Can’t Reach:” Untouchables and Closures at the Fencelines

52 USCAR and Tokyo demanded Governor Ota to sign in lieu of protesting land owners to continue the lease of farmland to the US Military. When Governor Ota refused and took his case to the Japanese Supreme Court, he lost and in a dramatic turn of events, Tokyo de facto approved the bases to continue leasing the land to the military while landowners and local governing officials reacted in astonishment and anger in what was likened to “eminent domain” policies in the U.S.
This cynicism and marked lack of faith in the law turned many toward away from what Masamichi Inoue calls “life politics” which could account for the “new, flexible, small-scale resistances and everyday subversions by autonomous citizens who were loosely networked—often even fragmented—not so much by ideologies of emancipation or causes for revolution as by desires for identity and culture” (20). No longer being able to successfully address structural issues and numerous instances of the extralegal practices of the military through state law, several anti-base organizers appealed to the United Nations and international environmental entities for protection of the land and cultural heritage. This movement toward life politics then was not a complete desertion of the law but organizing through “emancipatory politics” (Inoue 2007:21) was not enough to make inroads for improved change that could be felt in routine daily life. Organizing around cultural difference, an essentialist “We are Okinawan” (as discussed in Chapter 1) was one of the strategies employed to counter oppressive forms of rule in the shadows.

For many Okinawan residents who are forced to navigate in the ambiguous spaces where militarized governmentality thrive, there are moments when what was seemingly porous become impenetrable. I have chosen the following interview excerpts because 1) they are exemplary of other similar stories I heard regarding the lack of clarity over military jurisdiction and regulation and 2) it provides a clear example of the lack of faith that anything can be done to resolve specific issues through legal means as the root of the problem was born in the space between the space of “off and on base.” The interview was primarily in English with sections of Japanese I translated.

**Emi’s story**

Emi, an Okinawan woman in her late 20’s sat with me for an interview at Ryukyu University to explain what it meant to be an Okinawan woman driving a Y-plate vehicle.
on the island. Her husband identifies himself as *Hafu* (Japanese and white American) but grew up mostly in Japan, and is now an officer in the US military. Their Y-plate car grants them mobility and the power to move on and off base with ease.

This visible marker quickly identifies one’s power to maneuver through these spaces. As an Okinawan woman driving a y-plate vehicle, she is very sensitive to what this means and has made it a habit to park in the back lots at the University of the Ryukyus further away from particular buildings such as the School of Law and Letters, which tend to attract more radical students against the base:

I always hope that people don’t look at my plate when I drive. If I go to Naha, you don’t see a lot of y-plates. I don’t want them to see me. They don’t know the stories now. It’s like we are more foreign. But in the Chubu (central) area with the bases, I see a lot of y-plates but people know the stories. They don’t look at us Okinawan women with y-plates with a good image…Like maybe if I got divorced or my husband left me maybe they look at me like ‘you shouldn’t have married a military guy.’ I know some people might think this way. Especially the people who have bad experiences. I hope that people don’t look at my plate. These kinds of images make me feel like people don’t want to see me as a military spouse.

We discussed her practice of speaking to her husband strictly in Japanese in public, even though it sometimes easier to communicate in English. She explained doing so seems to warrant fewer stares and diminishes the chance she will be interpellated as a “base” person, “I can’t wait until we transfer to the base in Europe and then I can speak to him in English again. I won’t have to worry about people seeing me as a military spouse off-base.” The stories that provoked the greatest anxiety for her highlighted how once porous areas face sudden closures: when men and women divorced, when citizenship issues of children came into question, when men or other women took advantage of confusing military regulations and extra legal black holes to position them into vulnerable spaces of intimidation; when “military-speak” becomes too inaccessible for women with basic English language skills to demand justice. “We can’t reach, we can never reach over the fence when we are in trouble” she said. It is in these moments when this very international woman who had traveled to the United States to study and globally sophisticated becomes more Orientalized, localized — at the interstices of the fences.

As someone who through her marriage connects her to the military so intimately, she is interpellated as a sexualized base person. “I care about how people look at me because I care about the image of the military.” The image stains her.

Even though we were alone in a private room, she lowered her voice to a near whisper to relay her stories of how the fences become flexible and then resolutely non-porous. She spoke of how women in particular get caught in the process of opening and shutting gate pincers:
I have another story. I had a friend she was in her 30’s, working on base as server at Chili’s. We made a lot of money there. She didn’t speak much English. But she was a great worker so she was doing ok. She started dating—I don’t want to use this word but, “a marine guy” from Camp Hansen who was like 10 to 15 years younger than her. I’m using this word not to be prejudice but, “a young marine.” That’s how we say. He was not allowed to drive, always curfew, but she started dating him.

Maybe he had a good time with her. Because she can come pick him up and he can stay at her house on the weekend. She actually had a difficult time dating guys because her English was not good but with him, he was young and didn’t care—just enjoying themselves. She got pregnant and they married. It was ok at the time but during his assignment in Middle East, he was gone for couple of months and she got sick. But she didn’t speak enough English for military wife.

Not long after her friend gives birth she learns that she has stomach cancer but supposedly her husband urges her to wait for him to return to Okinawa to have the surgery done. When he returned, the cancer had progressed rapidly and it was too late for the surgery so she was only able to proceed with the chemotherapy. Her son was a year old when she died. Her husband was also known to be a playboy, partying at clubs and having affairs with other women while his wife was undergoing chemotherapy. His wife was aware of this and tried to divorce him so that with guaranteed custody in the Japanese system, her parents would be able to assume custody after her death. She found the English legalese and the formality of military paperwork to be exceedingly difficult but was slowly on her way to filing. She died before she could ultimately complete it. Emi said the father took custody of the baby.

The baby gave him a chance to live off base. He could now drive. He could have so many benefits with a kid. So that’s how we feel. My friend’s mother, the grandmother, was so worried about the baby. She was the one took care of the baby all the time when my friend was sick. She always wanted to see the baby but the father didn’t want to keep in touch with them. She worried.

The grandmother hired an investigator who followed the father. One evening she received a phone call from the investigator who informed her that the father left the baby alone in his home while he went out. They called the police who unlocked the door. The baby was asleep and they found that the man had given the child cough medicine to keep him asleep while away. They tried to take him to court but the investigator said the father started hiding the baby on base and they were unsuccessful in locating the child. Having exhausted their funds and finding very little support to navigate transnational/military law, they ran out of options.

“They can’t reach.” Eri’s eyes watered as she remembered her best friend and her family. “I wanted to help her but I didn’t know what to do. We can’t reach. If there is a way to reach, we don’t know what to do.” This kind of confusion lends itself to a borderland practice of “hustling” as mentioned earlier—just below the radar of the panoptican.
Penelope Lawson\textsuperscript{53}, an off-base lawyer explained to me how military law also required a sharp sensibility of off-base/on base finesse of fenceline logics, especially in relation “dead beat dads.” As a former military officer and JAG lawyer, she is well oiled in the workings of hierarchy and pressure points which make people act closer to the intention of the law. In her dealings with active duty military who refuse to pay for child support or who harass her clients who are seeking justice, she has learned the multiple ways some move behind the walls to hide. In these situations, the on and off base binary stiffens. For example, in order to deal with an Okinawan client who was being harassed by a former boyfriend she had to use nonconventional means. She told him:

“‘If I ever find out you’ve been in touch with her again, I will let your command know that you got this woman pregnant and you are already married, because adultery is a crime in the military.’ So he backed off and I think he paid her like 800,000 yen for hospital visits and that was in the settlement. I would have gone to the command on him but the Okinawan girlfriend didn’t want to get him in trouble. But I needed to threaten him. That’s the leverage that I have.”

In another instance, she did write to the General regarding a man on active duty who slipped through the grasp of the law:

“Because Japan doesn’t have a child support program, nothing with any teeth at least— you go to the court and say I want a court order to force him to pay child support. They say ok ok, pay her $300/month and then he walks away and says ‘I’m not paying her anything.’ There’s no wage garnishment, no taking the passport away, none of that. So then this guy starts saying, ‘that baby not even mine.’ So I tell him, ‘look, I’m going to write to the General,’ which is what I did. I said, ‘You have an E-9 who is supposed to be a model for your younger troops to emulate and here this guy has gotten this woman pregnant and not financially supporting this child. All we want is for him to take the DNA test and it’ll put the whole issue to rest.’ The general never responded but this guy called me and submitted to the DNA test so the General must have said ‘you need to take care of this.’ Well, he was the father!”

A young Okinawan woman I interviewed told me she frequently dated military guys when she was in high school. When she broke up with one particular Marine, he threatened that he would disperse her nude photos to her high school and her parents if she would not see him again. Nervous, she told her new boyfriend, who also was in the military. He informed her that she just had to play the game and take his bluff. “He taught me. He said, ‘that guy is so stupid. You know his rank, his barracks, you have his information. Tell him you’ll go to his commander and tell him that dude slept with you when you were under age and that you’ll cause some mess.’ It worked. He never messed with me again.” In these kinds of instances, a cultural know-how of on-base systems gave her some leverage off-base.

\textsuperscript{53} Pseudonym
One US American base worker relayed a story to me regarding an incident at an off-base sushi restaurant, Yoshihachi. It is a site known for serving a largely military clientele. She and her friend became increasingly uncomfortable when a group of Marines began to make sexually lewd remarks at her friend’s pre-teen daughter. When they would not back down she shouted out in an assertive voice that drew the entire restaurant to a standstill, “Marine! Marine! Who is your commander?” She said, it worked. “Somehow when you talk to them like that, they snap into bootcamp mode or something. Those kinds of commands shake them and they start thinking immediately of their hierarchy.” She laughed that this linguistic and military cultural strategy and remarked it is a skill crucial for women to position themselves and that “off-base” people could and should learn these things to further reach the inner fencelines.

When Emi explained (above) that “they cannot reach,” it is this space of impasse where the not so distant memory of men of drunken military drivers hitting Okinawan pedestrians and “escaping” on-base and the contemporary stories of Okinawan women (and sometimes under aged military dependents) climbing into trunks to be sneaked onto the base past the checkpoints, only to be trapped and date raped once at the barracks. Whether it occurs on a large scale or not, it is apparent that the stories circulate enough to produce a specific narrative about a base space that is unreachable to protect those “on tour” and to reproduce the norms of containment mentality “off-base” as well.

In the next chapter, “Chuuto Hanpa and Radical Flow,” I further outline the ways some Okinawans manage this movement between opening and closure and how they attempt to challenge the liberalist friendship discourses of movement along the fenceline.

Boke Cartographies and Uprootedness

Blurred fencelines are a prominent theme in Okinawan literature, poetry, artwork and anti-base actions. Mao Ishikawa, a well known and sometimes controversial Okinawan photographer, has many books and exhibits directly focused on military fencelines and culture. She notably toys with boke themes and spaces, and ambiguous fencelines in her exhibit entitled “Fuck You Fence.”

Various subjects are photographed along the fences in positions, action poses, and/or with particular objects which make a statement on how one feels at that intersection of this seemingly static border. Her work toys with the the notion that fences are normalized, that Okinawan roots belong outside the fence, that Okinawa is beyond the barbed wires, and that it is Okinawans who are like weeds encroaching

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54 I heard this story in a number of interviews when I asked interviewees what stories they heard about checkpoints… From three different military dependents and many former military personnel, especially Marines.

55 The Japanese term boke (ぼけ) has several meanings, but the one being implemented here builds upon the meaning used in photography for the aesthetically blurred area outside of the depth of field.
upon the bases. In her flyer, “Fence” is written in katakana, emphasizing the foreign importation of this boundary of containment while the expletive and its accompanying exclamation marks are in English and all capitalized. Okinawans have incorporated many forms of “GI English” into their lexicon of words and this phrase is specifically implemented as a more aggressive attack on the structure of militarization rather than the individual targeted in former “Yankee Go Home” slogans. The fences are not naturalized in her works but sometimes they are sometimes ambiguous—internalized, regurgitated, and always present. It is a special play on the notion of roots.

Both US military personnel and Okinawans regularly deploy concepts of local roots (as discussed in Chapter 4) and the naturalized “authentic” ties to the soil when highlighting the contentious battles over territory and displacement. For example, in 1958, before Okinawa’s reversion to Japan, the Shuri High School baseball team dug up some soil while on the mainland during a national tournament. USCAR, perturbed by the symbolic potency of this soil being dug up and brought back to Okinawa, pettily forced the team to dump the dirt into the ocean before disembarking in Okinawa (Hein & Selden 2003: 21). Liisa Malkki (2001) has argued that these “arborescent” conceptions of nation and culture “are associated with a powerful sedentarism in our thinking” (61).

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56 This is a dominant narrative in many military forums. Okinawans are said to have built their homes and schools around the perimeters of the fences, putting themselves at risk. The erasure of forced removal and razed villages is potent.
Malkii argues this taken for granted, nearly invisible sedentarism is potent because of the implications of how nations and scholars conceive of the violence of displacement. In Okinawa, this is also evident. Military usage of botanical metaphors used to describe displaced Okinawans have erased the violent processes of forced removal. Rarely seen within military generated materials on the history of Okinawa are bulldozed farmlands and property owners in protest to make way for base facilities. Okinawan displacement is characterized through the botanical imaginary of “transplanted” Okinawans. Inherent in this metaphor as Malkii has argued is that “transplanted” subjects can still make community and thrive elsewhere “as it is all the same” Okinawan soil. This supposedly amicable ideology of liberalism with it supposed commitments to freedom and equity in fact solidifies a new order of thinking of naturalized social inequalities on the island.

Okinawans are sometimes thought of as squandering away the off-base land they have “given” because they lack strong educational systems, lack modernized or sophisticated corporate infrastructures or lack a strong work ethic. This thread of thinking is inherent in propaganda materials from the early occupation period as well. They idea that Okinawans must simply be taught to live within their newer, more modern facilities through the staged benevolent actions of military spouses for instance as Alvah has discussed extensively in her work (2007). Yet Okinawan narratives regularly and directly address being violently “uprooted” into this new space and territory of off-base bases.

Malkii argues that while metaphors of “transplantation” usually apply to privileged expatriates who can persist in a healthy manner in new soil, the uprooted subject is considered to have damaged roots, “roots that wither, along with the ordinary loyalties of citizenship in a homeland” (62). She further argues that the “pathologization” of people who are thought of as uprooted make them suspect within new nation-states. In Okinawa however, some anti-base activists cautiously toy with the notion of stressed roots within a greater transnational, diasporic network to highlight that off-base “transplantation” is a myth and instead make efforts to reclaim the land beyond the fencelines, those occupied by the military. Inoue (2007) argues that in more contemporary protest movements in Okinawa, Okinawans see themselves as part of a more diverse public sphere — a more global, cosmopolitan uprooted, network of Okinawans. James Roberson terms this sphere as a “diaspora space” in reference to Avtar Brah’s work on identities: “The creative tension of home and dispersion marking the discourses of the Okinawa diaspora are not only dislocated within dispersal but are relocated at home in Okinawa, thereby also making the Okinawan homeland itself a diaspora space. (Roberson 2010: 447—singing Diaspora article). There is a tension

57 See welfare mentality comments made by Kevin Maher, former Office of Japan Affairs Director, to a group of university students. See footnote #74.
between this idea that Okinawans are naturally and historically mobile,\textsuperscript{58} and the notion

\textsuperscript{58} See for instance Allen Christy’s work (1997) on how just before WWII, Okinawa was especially known through the “bodies of its laborer women” who often pedaled their goods in trade. This gendered mobility was limited by Okinawan elite who desired to distance themselves from other colonized peoples of Japan and believed transforming the feminized imagery of Okinawa to a more masculine one would lead them closer to modernity, less discrimination, and therefore offered higher wages for male Okinawan workers on the mainland (Christy: 151).
that Okinawans are rooted not only spiritually but territorially to the island, their furusato, to the bones and placenta buried below their family homes. The dance between the sedentary metaphysics of authentic Okinawans (see chapter one) and mobile transplantable Okinawans can be clearly seen in military discourse of off-base spaces.

As Gerald Figal (2012) has demonstrated in his work, the literal transplation of non-native plants and reliance on botanical metaphors have added to the intense erasures and blurring of militarized borders. On one hand, the mass introduction of coconut palm trees and other toropikaru (tropical) plants and flowers was part of the deliberate transformation of the Okinawan landscape to create an ‘off-base’ nangoku feel (tropical) as further discussed in chapter one. On the other hand, the planting of these plants also served to camouflage the bases considered unattractive by locals and tourist developers. Figal notes that what Okinawans call the kichi no hana (base flower), or kyōchikutō (Indian Oleander), were planted along the base perimeters as part of beautification efforts (114) and recently some tour guides now make subtle, critical references to these hedges on the fencelines, making fun of this naturalized erasure. When passing Camp Foster for instance, Figal reported the tour guide explained that the plants are to hide the base and the “Warning Danger” signs ironically apply to the plants, “Now, entirely as base plants, a strange aroma seems to come wafting over from the other side of the fence.’(189)” In these Okinawan derived metaphors there lies the implication that these highly toxic transplanted plants are indicative of unhealthy, pathological militarized fencelines.

Botanical metaphors and sedentarist metaphysics are potent in Okinawa in terms of how off-base spaces are conceptualized as are cartographic analyses. As O-san in the “Trespassing” section above has found of off-base space border-mapping, there is a performative aspect involved with the marking of that space on/off base. Okinawans police themselves away from enacting “devious matters” in these liminal sites and in doing so, the off-base space has the potential to expand productively, further blurring the legal boundaries of militarized on-base spaces. When Ms. Matsuda said as Chatan began to transform into a major base town and they would stay in their homes more as more soldiers moved freely in their neighborhoods, the off-base base was already expanding.

I spent many weekend afternoons at the beach in Chatan with my children and had multiple conversations with lifeguards and local Okinawan residents regarding the bad behavior of some tourists but mostly young military groups of single men and women partying on the beach. I witnessed the many times a MP had to be called in when soldiers refused to listen to posted rules. It was obvious it made not only Okinawans upset but it sometimes embarrassed other military families.

Matthew Sparke, in his engagement with Timothy Mitchell’s work on colonial geographies in Egypt, refers to this type of delicate practice of colonial and modern ordering of spaces as “enframing.” This process, he argues, involves a “process of spatial abstraction that simultaneously occults the process though which abstract space becomes represented as discontinuous from the lived spaces of everyday life” (465). The ambivalent narration of borders and cartographic negotiations, he further argues,

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59 See Figal (2012) on how nangoku is not simply a rendering of a tropical image but a nostalgic colonial South Seas imaginary, “a vestige of loss” (14).
(in dialogue with Hommi Bhaba) is not always made legible through postcolonial theories which tend to easily reject colonial geographic productions of space and

fencelines. As Okinawans have had very few successful legal wins against the US-Japan security arrangements, the everyday, lived cartographic negotiations are more informal along the fencelines.

“The Land of Misfit Toys:” Military Containment

“They should stay on base,” Rika Davis,⁶⁰ told me in reference to US military in Okinawa. Rika, a mixed race Okinawan who grew up primarily on Kadena Air Base and daughter of an Airman and Okinawan mother was talking about containment of military in “their space” or on-base. She had decided to stay in Okinawa while the rest of her family moved back to the US. No longer a military dependent, she lost her SOFA status and began a small business off-base through her connections in her Okinawan-based

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family. Without SOFA status, she saw a different side of living in Okinawa without her ability to easily flow through the fencelines and found military spatialization to be troubling. Rika resolutely stated, “I am not anti-base. I’m pro-military. We need the bases here. I believe that 100%. But there are problems.” Her stance unexpectedly aligns with claims made by many anti-base feminists and other peace activists regarding containment. She found the housing situation to be one of the most contentious areas of the military in Okinawa and that military encroachment off-base needed to be addressed urgently.

“Okinawans live in run down apartments with no yards and are lucky to have parking spots. Seeing all these vacant houses with huge yards on base, only to look around off-base and see these new, huge, gorgeous houses and apartments being reserved for SOFA people with housing allowances is a slap in their face….I even heard on the Commanders Corner on AFN radio a few years ago, the Base Commander saying that there were too many vacant houses and towers on base and his goal was to try to encourage people to live on-base instead of off-base. In the very next breath, he said ‘but you know there are beautiful homes off-base and if you don't want to live in the towers, get a dog so you can get a waiver to live off base.’ Incredible! The base commander was giving tips on how to get around the housing system…. They are causing a nuisance to the Okinawans living in their area. Police get calls from Okinawans complaining about loud parties every day of the week and say they can not do anything because the military and GS fall under the protection of the SOFA agreement. We lived for a year in such a situation. The Okinawan police had their hands tied, and the MP's wouldn't do anything about it. So, if no one can keep these people in check off-base, why are they allowed to live off-base and cause so much distress to the Okinawans in their neighborhood!

In the literature distributed by feminists working against military violence against women, the argument is made that, “Military personnel are trained to dehumanize “Others” as part of their preparation for war. This process, and the experience of combat, can make them edgy, fearful, frustrated, alienated, or aggressive—negative feelings that are often vented on host communities, especially women” (Kirk & Frances: 249). In essence, most peace activists have a strong belief that militarized training turns them into predators, precisely what some specific military training is prized for doing as noted earlier in the Combat Hunter Program61. Political scientists Cynthia Enloe, Katherine Moon, Gwyn Kirk, and many others have made convincingly similar arguments in their in-depth studies on “military mentality” especially towards women62.

In the 2012 “Statement of Protest against the Sexual Assault on an Okinawan Woman and Demand for the Withdrawal of U.S. Military Forces”63 issued after a Marine

61 See the poetry of former Predator Drone operator, Lyn Hill, especially her poem “Capacity.” An especially provocative excerpt can be found here: http://swedenburg.blogspot.com/2013/09/drone-life-3-lynn-hill-on-capacity.html

62 See the following chapter for further elaboration.

sexually assaulted an Okinawan woman on August 18, 2012, the issue of military movement off-base was questioned by Okinawan women’s activists yet again. “Why are US combat personnel allowed to freely roam around outside of the bases and enter local neighbourhoods? Why is the provision of a safe living environment for women and children not treated seriously?”

I raised this issue during an interview with a former soldier who has been living in Okinawa for over a decade. He was a person highly critical of the US military base presence and the systems of militarization at work along the fencelines. He had seen a segment of video footage of my interview with Ms. Matsuda for a separate project and seemed disturbed that she would raise the issue of off-base movement/settlement as an anti-colonial issue. I explained that they had more in common than he seemed to believe but he was perturbed that even raising the issue of military movement off-base to question the parameters of “security” and the narration of what that meant was “disingenuous.” His previous soft spoken voice and cool demeanor were instantly gone. He scooted to the edge of his sofa in his office and became increasingly animated and emotionally charged as he spoke:

Them making this idea of rape and other things Americans do ok, is first of all, is as hypocritical and disingenuous as anything can possibly be. In any given day you’re going to have Japanese commit just as many rapes - more, the same crimes, everything in their own society. For them to levy this kind of complaint against Americans and then single us out as being some kind of disease on the island is wrong and not a correct view. They use that — it's simply being used to build a case against the bases not being here. Ok? I don’t know why they do that because it disingenuous and Americans are not going to believe it. Why don’t they make the real case? Why don’t the Okinawan people come to the realization if you allow these bases to stay here, at the very first sign of a conflict, Okinawa is first strike and this place is gone in sixty seconds. That’s the case.

The fact that a couple of Marines raped a girl is bad. It is. I am not condoning rape. But how silly is that when they have their own police blotters with rape cases and abuse cases and robbery and murder and violence. But with Americans all of a sudden, ‘Oh no, get rid of the bases.’ It minimizes the real danger that you’ve got a vital, a vibrant Ryukyuan culture with 700,000 people in this little place and you have all these bases and the first place China is going to attack is right here and they can take this place out in a matter of minutes. It wouldn’t take that much. Our first Marines are here, our FA team…”

His preference for the stronger hegemonic security narrative was evident here and readily dismissed the argument feminists near bases worldwide have used— that the culture of sexist, military training negatively affects Okinawans off-base and women on-base as well.

64 Filmed by Kate Hawkins and Tory Jeffay for the Question Bridge-inspired segment shown at the Nappy Routes and Tangled Tales event in Ginowan. See chapter one for more information on this event.
One female Marine explained of her fellow unaccompanied Marines stationed further north on the island there is indeed a reason to be wary of certain Marines who practice combat roles more rigorously:

“Most people are scared of the Marines up there. It’s the land of misfit toys. It’s so far away. They don’t get away. When they do get away, they lose it. They have a short time to get all their partying in before the curfew. . . . They are not free to move about the cabin. They are stuck, no luxuries. They have to a liberty buddy and be back by midnight. I even have to have a liberty buddy but I have a little more freedom with my buddy. I’ve always called it that. The land of misfit toys.”

A former soldier who continues to live in Okinawa with his girlfriend told me:

Coming here (to Okinawa) straight after boot camp is a trip. You’ve just had a psychological breakdown from training. Okinawa is a place you don’t know anything about, you can’t drive, you have no family, you get homesick. You go nuts. Boot camp is now 13 weeks. I used to be a kind of shy kid… and after 8 weeks of basic training, I felt invincible, semi-crazy, like I was bulletproof. I didn’t feel human anymore. It was like outta a comic book or something. Like when I went back home, I felt like if anyone stepped to me, I might kill ‘em. That’s what basic training does to you. Now they added on more weeks of training? I can’t imagine what those guys are like. Pretty scary. They get dumped right here onto Okinawa all hyped up like that.”

Another former soldier and now business owner off-base who has lived in Okinawa for over two decades explained how difficult it is to “remove the military training” to become integrated into civilian life again and that this could be a potential problem in terms of expatriate military settlers who tend to bring their military lifestyle and processes of thinking into “off-base” spaces:

You have to remember—these are not Americans. These are ex-service members. Americans grow up with a certain kind of brain and they literally become transformed. They got twenty years of this programming. They say it takes as many years as you were in it, the same years out of it to recover. So if you were in it for twenty some years it takes twenty years to become American again—that's what they say. They form bubble communities because it takes a long time to get out. For those of us in for a few years, we can recover quickly. But they’re not Americans. You can go to Tokyo and find a lot of Americans but it's like an international community which is a different dynamic right? But here in Okinawa you don’t really have any American bubble communities— you have ex-military bubble communities and in that community you have those who were a retired and those who got out soon after enlisting. These guys were transformed. You have transformed Americans… (emphasis mine).

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65 Interview from preliminary fieldwork trip to Okinawa, July 2003.
Let me tell you something -- I can probably still shoot marksman if I wanted to do. This is the thing about it--if you are soldier and went to basic training, it stays with you. You never forget. It becomes part of you. Now I don't have that military ethos...that's gone... a lot of people have a hard time getting rid of that. But the knowledge stays.

Now when you have someone who has been transformed and they are in a different community and then they get out--they respond differently than an American civilian coming here. The way they look at the world is different.

For some activists like the Matsudas, Professor Tomochi and Takazato Suzuyo, one immediate step that could be taken (along the way to base removal from Okinawa) is to further separate these “transformed Americans” from moving into civilian areas. When I went to volunteer to read children’s books at a local library in Urasoe, a densely populated urban city where the marine base Camp Kinser blocks west coast access through the town, I was explicitly asked if I had SOFA status because of their strict policy to not accept military related volunteers. They did not want to end up in an advertisement under a caption highlighting “Okinawa-US friendship” as a sign of proof of its warming position. Separation of military from civilian in this and many other cases was obvious.

Mark Gillem warily concludes in his work, “the new American Empire practices avoidance.” That is, the US military bases are moving further from densely populated civilian sectors not only because they rationalize a more remote location will reduce the
chances of being hit by urban terrorists but because military personnel are increasingly being viewed as mercenary-like and not to be trusted in off-base situations.” Although highly critical of the military practices in places like Okinawa, he firmly believes that military movement off-base and the inevitable “cultural contact” is necessary for soldiers to understand “their neighbors.” This is a highly problematic issue for many Okinawan activists who often challenge this belief that a systematic cultural friendship can be produced when the structure of violence continues to prevail and replicate itself.

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66 This is developed in the concluding chapter.
Panel 3: Incomplete Sovereignty, Fragile Security, Strong Love

At the time of the interview Chieko was 63 years old.

Her speech swaggered. Married to a Black man since 1978, she had picked up the sing-song black diction of her husband and from years of working with Black men in bars in Koza. She was visiting Okinawa and trying to find a way to move back. Tired of being in debt in the US, she was eager to return to the island and live a simpler life. “You should interview her before she goes back to the US” my friend suggested. “She’s lived a long, hard life here on the fencelines.”

She was open to doing the interview but also wary of what I wanted. We sat outside a local cafe in Chatan. She asked sweetly but with an air of hesitation, “So what kinds of things are you looking for?”

I left the interview open ended and like most interviewees, she started with a linear sequence of major life events, “I was born in Yakena, near White Beach. When I was three, I moved to Koza City, over by the police station. My sister was born in a cave during the war.” And like with most interviews, the linear line broke after early childhood. “I was scared. Americans were not good, and they didn’t exactly say why they weren’t good but when I was a teenager I became interested in learning English.

We moved through different spaces and there was an entanglement in our stories as she asked about my mother’s departure and her marriage to a Black man. What was the push factor for her she wondered? She found strands of undeniable similarities between their stories.

She grew up in a devastatingly poor part of Koza. “When I was 17 years old, I ran away from home.” There was a silence. We skimmed past this period, the push factor too uncomfortable to utter but I could sense by the way she rushed over this, that something still made her wince. She spoke of dark zones around the base.

She had after all, grown up with adults sending her repeated warnings as a teen that she should stay clear of the bases and the people associated with them. I asked what kinds of things she heard and she answered, “My mom and dad didn’t really talk about it — in a bad way but from others, I kept hearing they are not good. Not exactly why—but that they not good. I don’t know how to put it.” This was a common theme. My own mother used to say that it seemed uncomfortable for adults to talk about the dangers of rape, drugs, and being taken advantage of as a young person in these militarized spaces so there was a vague notion of danger. I asked what spaces in particular were off-limits and she answered quickly and directly, “BC Street and Gate 2 street.”

Her introduction to racialized spaces was also formed at first by rumors circulating the area. “There were not many black men then in the military but I was scared because of what we were told. My ex-husband would point to them and say ‘Black men grow tails at midnight.’ I heard this. And lady who with white men better they say. You can feel
without them telling us. I used to play cards with an Okinawan lady. One time I took my second son with me to play cards and he had light skin. She didn’t know I was married to Black. And she was just looking at him and then me. And she say, ‘How can you marry to a Black? Right in my face. I said, ‘Woah!’ I couldn’t express my feeling because I didn’t wanna have no conflict…”

As she became more comfortable with me and as I shared stories about growing up in the US South and we laughed at all the funny things my Black relatives would say to my mother, she returned to the days she ran away from home:

   I was so naïve, didn’t know anything about men. . . I thought this guy was in love with me. He was Okinawan. He was a gangster. I didn’t know before, but to make long story short, he was using me. He beat me, and in front of my mom and she cried. He was always jealous. I tried to divorce him but he wouldn’t let me. He put me working in the bar on Gate 2.

For six years, he pimped her to the bar, taking all her paychecks and doled out an allowance to her:

   “I didn’t know English at all. I tried to commit suicide. I woke up in the hospital. My son was three years old at that time. I was glad I didn’t go [die].”

Her husband was embarrassed by this suicide attempt and finally allowed her to divorce but he stalked her incessantly, threatened her and broke into her new apartment she sometimes shared with a new GI boyfriend she had met. Her ex-husband broke in one night when he was away and raped her.

She told me this history of sexual violations from working in the base world. And the perpetrators were not only men but also women, some who worked in these same spaces with her and were addicted to drugs or fueled by jealousy. Some of those attacks left her immobilized, and beaten, and left in an unconscious state.

She witnessed the famous Koza Uprisings from a bridge outside a bar where she worked. And long before she was submerged in the base zone bars, she bore witness to and was the target of multiple sexual assaults as a child before finally running away from home for good.

Hers was such an intense tale and as an anthropologist and connected to her through a family friend, I was not clear how to include such personal tales or how much detail to inscribe. As I fumbled over her tale, writing and deleting passages, I later asked her directly how I could include her stories. She explained in a circular way that her goal in telling me this (over a period of two separate three- hour long meetings) was partially to convey how complicated life was for her along the fencelines and that her relationship with a Black Marine, a product of this intensely violent space, gave birth to a new life for her. She ultimately wanted her story to be in this project so that it could contribute to a realistic landscape of militarized spaces I was painting. Towards the end of our
conversation, she added, “I kept thinking, it is ok for me to have this happiness? I thought I wasn’t good and he brought me up.” Her tales of her time in Detroit and other cities in the US did not paint a starkly juxtaposed land of oz. It remained gritty and tales of racism, poverty, and debt remained throughout in the US context. Hers was not just a “there are good military guys too” trope but an insertion to dominant narratives that these borderlands were tricky for all who walked through them.

Her story is not a common one for all Okinawan women but one that is representative of women who were or are situated in an economically fragile environment along the fencelines and are especially vulnerable to structural violence born in base-towns and coupled by Okinawan structures of patriarchy. To brush these narratives of violence side in the name of “not yet advice” reinscribes patriarchal authority and limits that which is nameable as violence to be bound primarily by scripts that use women’s bodies to depict the fragile sovereignty of Okinawa.
Chapter Four: Base(ic) Racialized Bodies Along the Fencelines

Introduction: A Scene from a Stroll

I was showing my mother around my neighborhood in Central Okinawa. She had just arrived from the US and was visiting me for a few months. She grew up further south in the Naha area and had not been back in many years. This part of Okinawa, which had been a former military base in her teenage years and where I was now living while doing fieldwork for a year, was foreign to her.

We passed a popular playground adjacent to the beach. Kids played on a life-sized replica of a British ship that had crashed off the shore of the town in 1840 and for which another was entirely rebuilt by the townspeople for the surviving crew to return on their journey. The monument is described as a testament to the town’s spirit of openness, their *yuimaaru* (spirit of mutual help) highlighting the carefully crafted and sanitized image of an international, inclusive town. My own two mixed children blended in well with some of the other obviously mixed Okinawan children scrambling up the steps of the mast. We stopped at a couple of beachside vendors and my mother spoke in English on impulse. “This doesn’t feel like Okinawa.” She intermittently muttered on how organized, straight, military-like everything seemed. They were unlike the narrow, meandering alleys in Naha replete with *ishiganto* markers used to confuse evils spirits believed to travel along straight paths like these.

An Okinawan woman who seemed a few years older than my mother, perhaps in her mid 80’s, was crocheting on a bench facing the ocean. She showed us the doily she was finishing. The conversation shifted seamlessly to arthritis. And then not as easily, with a slight glance at me and back at her needles she announced very dryly, “My oldest daughter married a kokujin (black person). They are in North Carolina.” Perhaps the intricacies of what that racial detail meant in that base town cluttered with young Marines and mainland Japanese tourists could only be expressed in an Okinawan language. The immediate language shift from Japanese to mostly *Shimakutuba* (Okinawan language) halted my eavesdropping on the spot. Their voices lowered in tone, occasionally muted by a roaring US military jet overhead. The sun quickly dived into the ocean we faced, the closing act of an uneasy scene.

Later in my tiny concrete apartment, my mother summarized that soft, staccato conversation. The woman was content that her daughter and granddaughter could live in the US but distraught that Okinawa was not ready for them so they can be near her as she enters the last years of her life. “It’s still too hard here. Too hard to live here if you are part Black. Too hard for the mama too,” my mother explained. Always ready to play

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67 See Makoto Arakaki’s essay on the evolution of "Uchinanchu spirit" or sometimes called *yuimaaru* as articulated in the Okinawan diaspora (Arakaki 2002: 138). This is an Okinawan term.

68 *Ishiganto* are small stone slabs erected at T intersections with Chinese characters to ward away bad spirits, a belief imported from China.

69 *Shimakutuba* is the Okinawan term for Okinawan language (as opposed to the Japanese term that might be used: *Shimakotoba*.)
the devil’s advocate on this topic I offered a stale, noncommittal reply, “I know lots of people who are Black and Okinawan here and they seemed to have figured out how to make things work for them now. Didn’t you see all those mixed kids at the park today? Mixed people are more popular now. There are more of us. It’s not a big deal like before.”

“Ageee. They must have a base pass,” she countered. You don’t know how it really is here. Okinawans don’t like Blacks or anything mixed with Black.” I grumbled, said she was stuck in pre-reversion Okinawa, that my experiences in Okinawa had been largely positive. “Black is different now. Mixed is different now,” I argued, even though I knew quite well that many mixed Black, and other mixed Okinawans as well, have had exceedingly emotionally complicated relationships with family or have had intense struggles with belonging, severely caught in transnational truth claims imposed on their bodies. The new symbolism I was attempting to convince my mother existed, a war survivor who grew up in the intense post-war era as Okinawans were engaging in a critical battle of crafting their identity as simultaneously racially diverse and also non-threateningly homogeneous (Koshiro: 112, Hein & Selden 2003: 20), was something I knew to be grossly obscure in Okinawa. I kept those other stories of struggle (and some of my own) to myself attempting to draw out other possibilities of hope from her.

Always the suspect of good will, especially toward mixed people she dismissed my argument, “For business. The ones who are nice are good businessman. You have no idea. You don’t know what they say behind your back. People think about war, somewhere deep down when they see you.”

Later, as a way to assuage her jagged statements, and perhaps because she worried her candor might have been too wincing for me, she said softly, “but look at Jehro. He’s a mixed Black haafu and Okinawans love him...maybe, it’s better. Maybe people will change because we Okinawans are nicer than naicha70 (Japanese person from the mainland)—we always take in people from all over.”

How does one counter claim such as these? How do mixed Okinawans move between the various discursive formations of Blackness, dominant mixed race discourses, calcified security imaginaries along the fencelines? In what ways does the celebrated, neoliberal discourse of multiculturalism and openness in Okinawa grind against the realities of mixed Okinawans who continue to live in the presence of the bases? Is the fate of Black Okinawans really resting on the success of a Black American Japanese enka singer in hip hop attire? How do mixed Okinawans simultaneously fluctuate from being positioned temporally as nearly futuristic and also anachronistically as “military residue?” These questions give this chapter its direction in attempting to bring intelligibility to how vacillating racializing experiences in militarized spaces, especially for mixed Okinawans are complicated by the attempts to foreclose ambiguity strangely enough, in the spirit of inclusiveness. While the previous chapters focused on displacement and transfigurations along the fencelines, this chapter seeks to look at transnational concepts of race in flux by focusing on mixed race Okinawans and Black military in particular.

Drawing on the concepts of “camp mentality” as theorized by Paul Gilroy, I briefly

70 Okinawan term. Some mainland Japanese in Okinawa find this term to be stigmatizing but many Okinawans use it as a way to differentiate ethnic Okinawans from mainland Japanese.
explain how some mixed Black Okinawans navigate between racial “encampments” and how their sense of flux is distinctly shaped by memories of war, resistance to militarized encroachments on the island, diasporic disruptions to camp thinking, and transnational racial formations. I first point to some of the dominant tropes of Blackness in Okinawa and then offer several excerpts from ethnographic interviews I conducted with Black Americans currently living in Okinawa. I also share examples of how some of the mixed Black Okinawans with whom I spoke make sense of their own spatial and temporal dislocations along the fencelines.

**Between Camps**

In his book *Between Camps: Nations, Culture, and the Allure of Race*, Paul Gilroy discusses the various types of “camps” and camp mentality, both literally and conceptually for the modern nation-state. He defines camp-thinking as the particular type of belonging which is constituted by the consolidation of various forms of nationalisms, even opposing ones, that have “shared patterns of thought about self and other, friend and stranger; about culture and nature as binding agents and about the technological institution of political collectivities to which one can be compelled to belong” (82).

Although Gilroy acknowledges the importance of class-based camp theory specifically referencing Kluge and Negt’s work on the proletarian public sphere, he is more concerned with other divisive factors which can also conjure camp mentality—“the lore of blood, bodies, and fantasies of absolute cultural identity” as well as ideologies of race and nation (83). These latter forms of divisions also form the complicated web of camp mentality in Okinawa where seriality is oftentimes demanded in the form of an “authentic” hybrid-like Okinawanness.

On a global scale, Blacks and Asians have both been the constitutive outside of the formation known as “the West.” Besides the obvious genealogical disparities between the two concepts which hold those groupings together, they have both been constructed through irrational differentiation against a form of Whiteness constituted as being “of the West.” Both have become dislocated in the present. This is what makes embodied forms of Blackness in “Asian spaces” so complex. Blackness in Okinawa, because it is situated within multiple modernities, can emerge from the excess of the homogenous imaginary “of the West” yet may also emerge because of the excess as a defining symbol of military power and domination within models of modernity as produced more locally in Japan.

Masamichi Inoue has explained in his work on Okinawa and US militarization that a post-cold war identity as a diverse, “confident and planetary” shimin (citizen) has developed within the public sphere and moved away from the notion of a homogenous, “collective Okinawan consciousness of ‘we are Okinawans’” which was “grounded in the concept of exclusive and unitary Okinawan ‘people’ (minshu)” (63.) While the more contemporary identity incorporates a sensibility of a diverse body of citizens, sometimes Okinawans find it necessary to articulate their discontent with the ongoing security

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arrangements between the US and Japan with appeals to “the people” whose ethnicity and rooted and spiritual indigeneity are assumed to be well defined (Chibana 2013:149). These forms of identity are articulated as necessary forms of protection from heavy handed neoliberal encroachments of the US-Japan security arrangement as well as from a touristic landscape which tends to celebrate and instigate cultural appropriation and depoliticized static imaginaries of Okinawans as “different” from mainland Japanese (Figal 2003).

My own analysis of the interviews I conducted appear to lead to the conclusion that these forms of racial encampments recuperate and solidify around appeals to blood more so than culture when the US-Japan security apparatus squeezes Okinawa to sacrifice yet again.

Drawing from Gilroy’s work on race and encampment can reveal dynamics of contemporary transnational racial imaginaries because it is a site that is literally dominated by physical “camps” in the form of US military installations. Of all the US military bases and facilities in Japan, seventy five percent are located in Okinawa. There are thirty-seven US military bases and installations concentrated on Okinawa, which occupies a prefecture that makes up only one percent of the population of Japan (and continues to grow consistently unlike a vast number of other prefectures in Japan) and has less than one percent of the land area of Japan. Even when efforts are made to “reduce the burden” and bases are returned to civilian use, they remain off-limits because of the high levels of military contamination preventing civilian infrastructure development projects. Road and residential expansions remain stunted until the very sluggish clean-up process can be funded and instituted (Mitchell 2013).

The militarization of the island is described by many Okinawans, especially those who are most vocal against the bases, as a space that literally circumscribes civilian movement and severely restricts self-determination due to the security pacts which largely railroads local Okinawan opinions to the margins. Annmaria Shimabuku has noted that the total defeat in Okinawa in this regard meant people were forced to “petition” themselves and “absorb power” to survive with the everyday forms of militarization that engulfed their surroundings and created a landscape of “off-limits” spaces (Shimabuku 2010b).

The everyday impact of militarization, from the noise pollution to passing the barbed wires that point outwards towards Okinawans, the colonial mentality which persists in bureaucratic acquiescence and back pedaling from some elected politicians who bend under pressure of Tokyo and from the heavy handed approach of mainland politicians eager to assuage the demands of the US Department of Defense has engendered a powerful image of totalizing power. In a space where fencelines are ubiquitous and visible and the disruptions of checkpoints and detours, even in the metaphorical sense, become so commonplace, camp mentality thrives in ways it does not in mainland Japan and therefore the indexical relationships of the mixed body in

72 Shimabuku cites Tomiyama Ichiro’s theoretical work on the technology of the shinseisha (petitioner) in her own engagement of the Okinawan subjects who could negotiate in a productive form of power (Shimabuku 2010b: 367).

73 see McCormack 2014.
Okinawa are always mediated by the fluctuating racializing concepts inherently embedded within national security rhetoric. And because Blackness in Okinawa is always on the move, particularly in relation to the black militarized male body in uniform and because of the circulating narratives of the contrapuntal relationship of the Black body and temporal and spatial insecurity within the US nation-state, some mixed Black Okinawans are interpellated into militarized spaces in ways Black Japanese mainland people are not.

The experiences of dislocation for mixed Okinawans tend to be more pronounced along the irrational and divisive binary of the West and those considered to be the constitutive outside of it. The powers of the political technologies that locate certain subjects within the public sphere as “non-western” and as aliens to not only a particular place, but as outsiders of the present sharpen the sense of dislocation for mixed Okinawans. Gilroy (2000: 57) and Naoki Sakai (2000) explain these technologies similarly. Sakai argues that the “voyeuristic optic” implemented widens the division between “the West and the Rest” (797) by systematically denying them both to be analyzed on the same field. Sakai argues that the eminent model of modernity is highly contentious in this regard and is wary of how the binaries of outdated modernization theories which rest upon the historicism of civilizing mission concepts continue to persist in contemporary working theories of modernity. The sedimented parameters of modernity are worrisome for him because they become frequently raised to further reify divisions between “the West” and “the Rest.” This is significant for mixed race studies in Okinawa because it is a site where security narratives frequently draw upon these stark divisions, reifying racial encampments especially for mixed people and Okinawans, rationalizing continued military presence.

In the case of Okinawa, the stakes involved in securing not only fencelines but the ability to encourage people to police themselves around them, depend on the continued discursive dominance of modernity whereby the historicist models discourage other possible conceptions of contact. Annmaria Shimabuku adeptly applies this theoretical question to the particular colonial positioning of Okinawa and what that means for mixed Okinawans. Through her extensive discourse analysis of Diet discussions to media and popular literature, she found that time and again, “Amerasians have been represented as the evidence of a violation of state sovereignty” and this persistent problematic results in the failure “to entirely register the condition of ‘total defeat’ in a colonized people such as Okinawans who were not able to wrest free from the chains of colonialism in the post Potsdam Declaration (1945) era” (Shimabuku 2010a: 3)

For some mixed Okinawans, the acknowledgement that these types of failures and the constant transformations are practices all Okinawans must endure is critical to their full belonging as Okinawan hybrid citizens. It is a complex one as it involves a filtering of other violent forms of contacts spurred by structural violence of intensive and persistent military base presence and contact. Sakai argues that modernity is not simply about contact, whereby certain subjects remain passive receivers of a set of adopted

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74 See for example Anthropologist David Vine’s (2011) discussion of the explosive comments about Okinawan’s being lazy and brown skinned “extortionists” by the head of the US State Department’s Japan Desk. The binaries of western and non-western, were clearly evident in Maher’s statements.
characteristics but it is a process where both parties are transformed, “Modernity is not a stasis, the state of some societies that can be specified by a set of characteristics. It is, rather, a kind of violent transformative dynamic that arises from social encounters among heterogeneous people.” (Sakai 799). This is a delicate acknowledgement as it has the great potential to clash with the more serial forms of Okinawan indigeneity which are sometimes evoked in discussions regarding heritage, independence, and spiritual traditions.

To study mixed race in Okinawa and questions of identity requires attention to the constant reconfigurations of that which is defined as “insecure, non-Western” spaces and attention to how various transformations are being invoked to recognize and hail mixed people against their own imaginary of cultural differences as a result of their dynamic contacts with people across Asia and with US military personnel. Mixed Okinawans, especially mixed Black Okinawans, must constantly navigate these multiple planes of displacement and their lives are affected by how they themselves participate and/or dodge the expectations and desires within those fields of meaning.

Black Tectonics in Okinawa and Koza Rumblings

The racial landscape of Okinawa has emerged unevenly with its tectonic-like convergences and sliding plates of racial meanings rubbing past each other, creating new formations and rumbling fault lines between the two racial states of Japan and the United States. Cities like Koza, now known as Okinawa City, was just one of these new outcroppings which erupted outside of one of the many US base facilities on the island, became a particularly racializing space. Koza, particularly in the period just before the reversion to Japan, became a saturated space of blackness. Meanings of Blackness partially diffused from this space to other areas of Okinawa. In interviews I conducted with several former military personnel who were stationed in Okinawa during this period of racializing governance, Koza was repeatedly described as a significant site of disparate meanings of Blackness which eventually consolidated themselves into a masculine, sexualized field. While sometimes operating as a sign of American domination, bodies marked as Black were also the excess — a dangerous excess that created in some moments an even more volcanic terrain for some mixed black Okinawans and those intimately proximate to them.

Scholars who have written on race relations, especially in relation to Black GI’s in Okinawa always point to Koza as an important racializing site mainly because it was one of most prominent central areas of Okinawa near several bases where racial segregation in social spaces were so prominent. Within that city, military personnel and businesses that catered to them, aligned themselves in segregated racial spaces. The “Black area” as many former military personnel recall, was the area called Teruya.

Teruya is an important site to understand the ways in which race and camp thinking operated in Okinawa. From that understanding we can better articulate how mixed Okinawans move between these encampments and access the openings and closures in them to adjust their own racial dislocations in transnational camp mentalities.

Teruya had several monikers depending on the user’s background as Wesley Uenten (2010) has explained. Many of the Black military personnel I interviewed called it (including my father who was stationed there in pre-reversion Okinawa) “Four
“Four Corners” or “The Bush.” This was a site where Black American soldiers gathered during their off-hours. Uenten described many intimate exchanges between Okinawans and Black soldiers in these spaces. It was a space considered off-limits to whites just as many more areas were off-limit to non-whites. Bruce Leiber, a former MP and Jewish White American who regularly patrolled Koza recalled in an interview with me that “The Bush” was not a place for Whites to get caught alone:

A white soldier wouldn’t go in there. Even as a patrolman, we always worked with a black guy. I wouldn’t dare go there myself. I even heard of taxi drivers taking an unsuspecting white guy and drop him off there, just to mess with ‘em.

One retired Black marine I interviewed, Sammy Brown, recalled “The Bush” as a turbulent yet secure space for Blacks. When Sammy arrived not long after the reversion, he explained that it was still “jumping,” and was a lively haven for Blacks. He admitted it was not like the pre-reversion site that his brother told him about when he had been stationed in Okinawa earlier, but noted “Black spaces” were still vibrant. Sammy explained that it was Teruya where Black men would go if they wanted to reinvigorate one’s Black American soulfulness:

Sammy Brown: If you wanted to get connected, you’d go down to Koza Crossing, Four Corners. We also called it the Underground. You see Gate 2 was where all the Whites

Mitzi Carter (MC): I heard this was name derived from the term “going into the Bush in Vietnam, and that going into Four Corners was like—going into combat—going into “the Bush.”

SB: No! It meant the African jungle. Wild, because of the brothers. Because of us Blacks. If you didn’t wear the colors, you couldn’t walk in some places.

MC: What colors?

SB: The colors sistah! The African colors. We used to have bands that we’d wear around our arm too. Even in the Bush you had territories. It was based on who controlled it. And if a girl worked in this certain territory with one mamasan, she wouldn’t cross over to another side. And as a male, you didn’t disrespect mamasan. . .

We then talked at some length about his experiences in stocking off-base bars with goods from the base, and how his own background in working in organized crime in the US gave him the some leverage in working with local Okinawan yakuza who profited off the base and worked in the liminal base borderlands. He discussed the power of women who moved commissary products through Black men.

MC: And what about black women? Did they hang out there?
SB: Not even! There weren’t many black women here then, not really…I knew this one sista though. It was her, an Italian, and a Spanish-a Mexican girl—they were like call girls on the side, making bank. Big money. They were E-5’s in the military. They were in high demand out here. That was after Vietnam. One night when we were out, I saw this brother yell at the sista saying, ‘you ain’t nothin but a high priced ho.’ And then he smacked her. By the time he came back for second contact, she cut him like six times, working that butterfly knife better than a Filipina! All you could hear was ‘click click click.’ I tell you what, those sistas could work those knives. They would keep ‘em in their bras, in their hair, down by their ankle.”

Sammy’s stories of this intensely encamped Black, masculinist, sexualized space was bolstered by the stories his own brother told him of Teruya. His brother was also a Marine and stationed in Okinawa a few years before he had arrived. In contrast to his own racial consciousness, he explained that his brother’s racial development shifted in these types of encampments:

“He felt that Blacks had to stick together. He felt that the military was for whites. You know, they used to say in Vietnam ‘we know this is not your war.’ He was what they called a Bushmaster. Vietnam changed him completely. He was no longer my twin.”

It was in this space, where conceptions of Blackness strengthened in its overt visibility. My mother also talked about how Koza as a site that helped to organize those various meanings of Blackness she had acquired haphazardly growing up in Naha. The narratives of Koza as a space where racial tensions played out so publicly and with such defined racial categorizing supported and configured a naturalizing idea of race where those who were “by blood” a racialized subject marked as Black and prone to violence were somehow naturally incommensurable with people of other “blood.”

She was not the only one who has felt these feelings at various pivotal moments when they merged with other historicizing notions of people in these militarized spaces. In my discussions with many Okinawans who came of age in the late pre-reversion period, narratives of racial tensions erupting from Koza and a few other base towns seemed to add another layer to the already existing tropes of Blackness which emerged from the Occupation Era. The widespread publicity and notoriety of the “Koza Riots” also known as the “Koza Uprising,” (Uenten 2010) for example, helped to channel the images of Blackness.

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75 The Bushmasters were a group of soldiers affiliated with the Black Panthers and according to Uenten, had a membership of over a hundred in 1969. They actively participated in the Teruya community with service acts —organizing a blood drive for an Okinawan woman, collecting money to compensate bars and restaurants when Black soldiers did not pay, protecting white soldiers who needed to move through the black area safely, and helping in orphanages (Uenten 2010)

76 In a short video project I produced with the assistance of filmmaker Tony Nguyen, I interviewed my mother about the ways in which Blackness was articulated in her earlier life in Okinawa. This video was produced in 2011 with funding from The Center for New Racial Studies Grant.
Anthropologist Rebecca Forgash has argued that strong tropes of Blacks and Filipinos existed from occupation-era stories when they were notoriously segregated and poorly trained. She explains how they were largely remembered as violent rapists while white occupation era soldiers are often remembered as warrior/liberators who came with great material wealth, power, and food. She also noted that US military history helps to perpetuate some of these tropes in and out of Okinawa noting that it largely “interprets crimes committed by African-American soldiers in particular within the discursive framework of mid-twentieth century race relations in the US, rather than as a result of the violence of war and the power inequalities inherent in military occupation more generally” (Forgash 2004). In short, the circulation of these powerful racial narratives latched onto those turbulent narratives of racial incommensurability overheard and seen around base towns. Yet, this narrative is not always stable. Some of Forgash’s interviewees, as well as many of my own, explained racism in Okinawa, especially geared towards Black men was a practice of survival within a larger economic and social system of power of white supremacy. In Okinawa, this move blames the Japanese racial state while Okinawans are thought to simply be playing by the rules of racial modernization efforts to talk back to Japan. The black body becomes the site of the jockeying of positions within this logic. Masamichi Inoue (2007) argues that this type of movement of positioning the state through racialized bodies is not new nor is the fact that this is manifested through security discourses. He writes that as Japan became more financially secure, the U.S. increasingly put pressure on Japan to insert itself in its military geopolitical affairs for “global security” and that “When this pressure became intertwined with Japan’s (Japanese men’s) century-old desire to become and behave like the powerful (Western white men), the premise of the ‘peace constitution’ became difficult to maintain both internationally and domestically” (64). Perhaps this is partly why militarized spaces are so interwoven with racialized norms carefully erased under liberalist notions of peace and also precisely why it also becomes a radical site of racializing hope of rupture.

**Black Dissent and Racializing Hope in the Heart of Darkness**

In the Vietnam War years and just as the movement for reversion was pushing forward, Black dissent became better organized on and off base. Some Okinawans expressed a quiet form of solidarity with these Black servicemen who loudly expressed their anti-racist protest, with the hope that they would understand their plight and possibly instigate radical change from within the confines of the military system. Yuichiro Onishi found in his extensive research that although some Okinawans openly practiced Jim Crow-like protocols, refusing to serve Black GIs altogether, a solidarity between black and Okinawan men began to emerge that spoke to the “unresolved struggles with the systems of domination” (Onishi 2013: Kindle location 3059).

In my own experimental focus groups and public forums I conducted in central Okinawa with a mixed group of Black military personnel, military expats, and Okinawans, a particularly striking tale of these struggles with systems of white supremacy and militarism emerged from those activities. Political scientist Douglas Lummis briefly took on the role as as a translator in this reversion period between some dissenting Black Marines and dissenting Okinawan base workers and explained that a
nauseating meconnaissance transpired when these two groups gathered to talk among several issues, transracial solidarity. As he sat in this room, between these two parties, he felt that the types of fragmentation that both parties experienced could not link within the same field of analysis. The disconnect was frustrating for all involved according to Lummis. The Black GI’s in these talks were so focused on fragmentation of the body and racism, more along the lines of racial encampment, while the base workers focused on fragmentation and imperialism more closely aligned to class-based encampment and the two could not meet on a similar plane of analysis.

A former politician and community leader in Chatan, Matsuda-san (see Chapter 3), told me that as a young man, he worked on a military base in central Okinawa and found it to be a humiliating experience. He believed by laboring on the base, he was complicit in the violence enacted on others, whether they were accidents on other Okinawans, or the consequences of weapons being sent to other nation-states. He was particularly frustrated with Black Americans who worked for the military because he believed most did not see that they were being used, treated as pawns in the larger capitalistic military industrial complex.

There was a let down to some degree for those like Matsuda—the hope of liberation, the spirit of rebellion transposed onto black bodies was supposed to challenge the colonial forms of modernity which had racialized Okinawans as Orientals and second-class Japanese citizens. That spirit of masculine dissent was expected to fully challenge the very idea of encampment by that act of transnational transformations which Sakai argues is necessary in these kinds of interactions.

A prominent hip hop music producer I interviewed who goes by the name “Unkle Kaya” believed that the kinds of compromises many Black men, who worked as DJ’s and/or rapped off base in local clubs, were significant and ultimately led to a watered-down soulfulness. He said he came to the conclusion that the creative form of resistance, the playful and soulful lyrics that transformed the hegemonic control of music entertainment in the clubs and radio in the early 80’s, especially on the mainland, could not be fully transferred as long as these men were in green. Having worked with many types of hip hop artists, he felt that his hope in finding a disruptive (nearly revolutionary) sound in Okinawa emanating from or through collaboration with these artists from the base was a lost cause because he felt many had no sense of their own history. “A lot of them were from the countryside, from rural areas” he concluded, based on his logic that hip hop emanating from urban centers at the birth of hard rap were drawing from black power and icons of resistance in ways that had not moved into rural areas yet. The US Marines, which is the largest branch of the military in Okinawa, still tends to draw many of its black members from rural areas of the US South where socioeconomic conditions for Black Americans remain devastatingly unequal that some analysts consider entry into the military to essentially be a “poverty draft.”

Kaya expressed his frustration in working with “military Blacks.” “They were nice people, nice DJ’s in the military, but they were just government issued” (emphasis mine). The limits on what they could say and express in their music, their freedom to connect to others through a masculine and rebellious styling of music he expected

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77 See Onishi’s discussion of the heterosexist norms underlying these forms of Black masculine dissent in Okinawa (Onishi 2013: Kindle location 3154-3155).
became prohibitive he suggested, precisely because they were within a system which attempted to diffuse the potential power of consciously acting upon a shared sense of dislocation with Okinawans. Doing so would be a potential security breach of the encamped security zones.

Even for those Okinawans not interested in the idea of Black dissent or anti-racism, there was an understanding that Blackness circulated sloppily and was caught in the frameworks of structural violence. In his short story “The Wild Boar That George Gunned Down” Okinawan writer Matayoshi Eiki, depicts the madness of incessant violence in an Okinawan base town in the Vietnam War Era. Eiki uses a White American main character, George, to describe the inescapable Joseph Conrad-like “heart of darkness.” Unlike in Joseph Conrad’s novel where the colonized have no significant voice of their own, the Okinawans and Black characters alike resist George’s racist positionings. Eiki, all too aware of how non-white, transnational practices of Othering was happening in Okinawa, highlighted George’s whiteness and the character’s thoughts of civility and modernity, which George assumed to be rooted in that whiteness, against the stark darkness (of people and sites) and primitiveness along the fencelines. The Okinawan brown-skinned bar workers who speak back with painful precision, an old, dark Okinawan man with unflinching piercing eyes, the black men and women who force George into submission when he accidentally wanders into “the black zones” of Koza, hardened by their own brute war mentality. All the characters are slightly marred themselves, somewhat tainted and mad, as if their physical proximity to this occupied site has made them so. Eiki’s decision to align Blacks and Okinawans against George, who sees them both literally as animals, especially in these off-base militarized zones, illustrates these types of jagged connections some Okinawans imagined to be possible.

Generally, mixed Black Okinawans were not assigned this same hope because they have been feminized and positioned as having little to no agency to articulate, let alone reposition their dislocation between camps. While the hope of black radicalism and a conscious soulfulness was pinned onto black bodies to help engender a creative language for resisting Okinawans in the reversion period as Onishi has researched, mixed Black Okinawans positioned between camps were treated like empty vessels, culturally lacking the “emotive and intuitive” (Onishi 2013: Kindle location 2628) soul necessary to resist the high stakes of racializing encampments.

Lisa Akamine, a Black Okinawan woman in her mid 30’s, told me that her late mother worked in the sex industry in Koza to support her and her sibling and would retell stories about the Black people she would encounter on the job:

She would only hang out with Blacks because she said she connected with them more. There’s was this white guy who was talking to her about a job. She couldn’t understand him. She had to get a black guy to come translate. The white guy got

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78 See Chapter 5 for a more enriched discussion about the limits of military rappers.

79 See Onishi’s (2013) rich discussion of soul as a political and poetic aesthetic for survival (Kindle location 2628).

80 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the interviewee.
upset and said, but we’re speaking the same language. And she said, well, I don’t understand you. I understand him!” She would be offended by racist comments. Even on TV. We would think of it as normal but she would get upset. Like she would get mad if we would step back three times if we saw a black cat—superstitious stuff. She’d say, ‘why’d it gotta be a black cat!’ Why can’t it be a white cat? She was more Black than us! She would go to the club and had this t-shirt that said ‘Soul Power.’ She loved going there with that on. If a club owner would tell Blacks they couldn’t come in, she would try to fight them.

Her memories of her mother’s particular fondness for Black Americans made her laugh. She explained however that this did not make for a natural alliance with Black Americans nor did the modalities of liberation transferred onto the space of Koza and black power make her feel empowered. Her sister, she explained is still not comfortable around Black Americans and is not interested in getting to know them.

Base(ic)ly Mixed

Ai Taira, a Black Okinawan woman who was raised mostly in Tokyo but recently moved to Okinawa said, “Being half Japanese and half Black was easy. Being half Okinawan and half Black is hard.” Attributing some of the difficulties to the legacy of war memories, racism, as well as the difficulties of maintaining the particularly close knit systems of kinship which exist for many families in Okinawa, she found it to be an especially difficult place to be mixed and Black in particular, on the island.

Her mother’s family hailed from Itoman, a place severely devastated at the end of WWII when desperate fighting, mass panic, compulsory suicides, and starvation pushed toward this southern region of Okinawa. Her mother’s family was enraged that their daughter married a Black American man. “It was obviously worse that he’s African American. It might have been a little easier if he were White but either way, they were upset.” Not long after the brutal rape of a twelve year old school girl by three Black American Marines in 1995, the topic of black violence lurked uneasily in some conversations with people she would encounter. “War sticks to us,” she said and glanced uneasily around the Starbuck’s in American Village where we sat as if to ensure her words, some generalizations, and the direct talk of racism, did not fall upon the wrong ears.

This stickiness of war seems to resonate more strongly for mixed race people in Okinawa than in other areas of Japan. Kyle Ikeda (2012a), in exploring Medoruma Shun’s literature through a less exile- based notion of Marianne Hirsch’s “postmemory” and more through a lens which takes into account being intimately familiar with war sites and daily reminders of past and sustained violence vis-a-vis the US-Japan security alliance, argues that war and memory are inscribed in subtle, daily practices in Okinawa. In his reworked lens which he names a “geographically- proximate postmemory,” Ikeda argues:

81 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the interviewee.
For Okinawan second-generation war survivors raised in Okinawa, memory fragments of the traumatic past are always already anchored and received within a concrete and intimate knowledge of the sites of the war. While the horrific events of the war may lie beyond the experience of the second- and later generations in Okinawa, the locations, landscapes, and environment in which they occurred have been directly felt, sensed, and experienced over extended periods of time during the formative years of childhood (55).

He further explains that war sites are not the only stimuli which can trigger painful memories but a “confluence of conditions” which are complexly connected to the landscape and daily practices within these layered warscapes.\(^{82}\) I add that certain mixed race people also become part of these conditions and are sometimes seen as a site of war themselves not only for second-generation war survivors but for following generations whose families continue ritualistic, communal practices of remembrance and who continue to circulate stories of war and its direct effects as a normalized practice of sharing.

For some of the people I interviewed, this seemed to be painfully true. Their embodied linkage to war and current security arrangements of the state is yet another reason that the so called “haafu boom” enjoyed by some mixed race people in mainland Japan is not fully applicable to mixed Okinawans precisely because of the saturated memorial practices which abound on the island and whose primary goal is to prevent the erasure of these acts so as to circumvent (further) militarized mentalities that lead to the kinds of trauma experienced in Okinawa. Shimabuku has noted that participation in public anti-military protest is rare among Okinawan Amerasians (2010a, p.144). A direct engagement with issues of security by a subject who symbolically embodies proliferating militarization is an intensely frightening prospect for mixed race Okinawans who are particularly vulnerable to being hailed as “base(ic) body.”\(^{83}\)

For instance, when I organized a public forum in Central Okinawa in 2012 to raise issues around mixed race issues and security logics in Okinawa, Byron Fija, a well known Amerika-Uchinanchu (American-Okinawan) as he now identifies himself, warned me this would be a delicate task as many mixed Okinawans have found it exceedingly difficult to even articulate the two subjects on the same field of analysis. “You have to be careful, it is hard to discuss these things in public when you have an American face but belong in Okinawa.”

To further elucidate this point, I will use the rest of this section to explain some of narratives which were raised at an event I organized in Okinawa called “Nappy Routes and Tangled Tales.” I framed the event as a public yuntaku, an Okinawan style conversation\(^{84}\) to talk about living between racial encampments and started with the stories of mixed Okinawans so the rest of the discussions would be cognizant of the

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82 See Carolyn Nordstrom (1997) for a nuanced discussion of “warscapes.”

83 This is a term I have used to describe those subjects who are dependent on and hail from the US military.

84 For more elaboration on yuntaku forms of communication at this particular event, see Carter, 2013, pp. 18-21.
intimate and complex field of meanings around security for those who usually are
affected by these policies first. It was held in central Okinawa in a popular “art space”
and cafe/bar in Ginowan. In attendance were mixed Okinawans who lived completely
disconnected from the base, those who grew up as a US dependent or largely
dependent on the bases, US military personnel, Okinawan anti-base activists,
professors and graduate students from local universities, and other local residents
generally interested in the topic. What emerged that evening was a mixture of rich tales,
none which, fortunately, could lead to a definitive conclusion about “the Okinawan mixed
person” but tales that proved that dislocation, precipitated by variegated factors, was a
prevalent issue for most of those who spoke up.

An Okinawan graduate student recalled how the time around Irei no Hi, the day
that marks the end of the war in Okinawa, stood out as an exemplary moment when her
non-normative racially mixed body was more pronounced. “They would show pictures or
movies and some teachers would say American soldiers did this or that and they would
turn to me and ask ‘So Mary, what do you think about it?’ What?! Me?! Every year,
every year” she lamented. Denny Tamaki, the first racially mixed Japanese to be elected
to the Japanese Diet, eloquently described how the process of hailing him as a base(ic)
person in-between camps was halted by refusing to recognize the stagnant positioning
of him as “not quite Okinawan.” In his introductory statement to the audience he
remarked:

I was born in 1959. Okinawa was unstable after the war. We were using
Okinawan currency, called B-yen and then in 1959 the currency changed to
dollars. In the 1960’s, were were dealing with the Vietnam War. B-52’s were
going to Vietnam to bomb. It wasn’t really about me feeling a certain way, it was
about how Okinawa was feeling about all these political events around the world
and they took it out on me. When I was in Jr. High, I was bullied by the older kids
and I fought them back to keep my identity. They didn’t call us “half” back then.
They called us “Amerika” — meaning you are not part of us. So I was called
Amerika and then I thought, “No! I’m just me and then with that kind of mindset, I
didn’t care what people called me. But it was just outer protective armor. Once I
was able to create that protection, I got married and had a child. And that’s when
I really felt like an Okinawan.

In her research with several Okinawan Amerasians, Shimabuku found this sentiment to
be a common theme. Shimabuku argues “Embodying material violation produces an

85 There was a pre-event online and participants were participants were encouraged to submit
anonymous questions and answers for other participants. This model was based on the documentary
project Question Bridge (www.questionbridge.com). Also, to prepare participants, I screened a short video
I produced and directed with the assistance of two professional documentary filmmakers in Okinawa at
the time (Kate Hawkins and Tory Jeffay) who I contracted to film and edit the piece. The video included
excerpts from interviews ranging from topics of militarization and security issues in Okinawa to questions
of belonging and mixed race. Translation was provided for the transnational crowd which filled the space
completely.

86 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the interviewee.
immense sense of alienation in Amerasians . . . from their own bodies” (2010a, p.159). Is it possible then to negotiate an identity that is crafted in between racial encampments to counter this form of ricocheting anger upon the body of mixed Okinawans? The idealistic haafu discourse did not necessarily help all mixed Okinawans in their own sense of hybrid belonging.

Fija, in an intimate exchange with Tamaki, described his own hesitation with a universal ideal of a mixed Japanese and the singularity of being mixed race in Okinawa. “Maybe there’s no mixed race problem. Or maybe the problem is really deep. It’s even taboo to talk about it. I don’t like to use konketsuji (lit. mixed blood child) or haafu (half). I say Amerika-Uchinanchu. . . I also promote Okinawan as a language, explain that it’s not a dialect and then I have to tell people not to call me half. I want them to recognize that I’m Okinawan and I also teach them Okinawan.”

Fija reiterated this point throughout the night. His language ability gives him negotiating strength to be included within the public sphere not only as shimin, but as part of the older collective identity of minshu.

What Tamaki and others who spoke up that evening were able to do was to create a spoken collage of memories, invoking tales which explained how they have been situated as outside and how they can be drawn back in through the specifically Okinawan traditions and memorial practices, as painful as they may sometimes be. These non-linear tales raised the issue of militarization as bearing a significant imprint on their belonging and non-belonging and it was through this specific form of dislocation where they could shape a new community that has slowly been forming over the past decade, not necessarily because of a “haafu boom” that may be happening elsewhere but in many ways, in spite of it.

Fija for instance, rationalized that there was no grand celebration for Tamaki by mixed Okinawans when he was elected to the Diet (largely on an anti-base platform) because there was no uniform mixed Okinawa community who could cheer for him. Fija celebrated privately. He asked a Black American sitting in the audience if he had cried when Obama was elected. The young man said he did not but his grandmother did. Likening Tamaki’s win to Barak Obama’s election for some Black Americans, he lamented, “he would have been celebrated like Obama.” The haafu boom did not help mobilize mixed Okinawans along the fenceline then. Tamaki seemed humbled yet grateful as Fija offered these words.

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87 See Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu’s detailed chapter on Byron in When Half is Whole (Shigematsu, 2012, pp.61-79) for a nuanced discussion of how Byron conceptualizes shima haafu (island half) and how he can authenticate himself as Uchinanchu through Okinawan language.

88 In some ways, this is reminiscent of the layering of memories filmmaker Takamine Go's film Tsuru-Henry whose main character, a mixed Okinawan man rearticulates himself through multiple memories of Okinawa. See Gerow (2003) for a rich discussion of the performative renageki strategies and the creation of new expressions of identity.

89 After the forum, a group of mixed Okinawans formed a closed Facebook group that has grown exponentially to forty-one members as of mid-January 2014. They now meet monthly in Okinawa.
Base(ic) Proximity and Barbed Wire Racialization

How does dislocated Blackness then operate for mixed Black Okinawans in close proximity to US Bases in Okinawa? What about constructs of Whiteness in these spaces? I asked this of Ai Taira. She said she was highly conscious of meeting a few of her American friends at a sunflower festival in Futenma, in a field near the highly contested Marine base most Okinawan residents want unconditionally closed. She explained it would be too stressful to be there with them and that her mixed body would be highlighted even more. She described how she is already conscious of the gaze that is locked onto her body and that being near “kichi hito” would mark her as less Okinawan and more Black, more military. She preferred going alone which allowed her to reframe gazes upon her through quiet, subtle body movements—taking up less space, speaking in Japanese so others could overhear. In this way she felt she could better connect to other Okinawans. “I’m always connected to the war, to the base. No way around it” she told me.

Lisa Akamine90 told me that she was all too aware of how in some spaces, she is closely aligned to the base shadows. When she was younger she noted that perhaps her body mannerisms, and her style gave her away as being culturally Okinawan and less racialized as Black American. As she aged, she tended to be marked more often as a Black American until she spoke with her noticeable Okinawan accent. She attended one of the public focus groups I organized on Blackness in Okinawa.91 She listened as participants talked about transnational Blackness in Okinawa from the point of view of an expatriate or as a civilian Black American.

When we met up later for an interview, she explained that she found some of those conversations to be challenging for her and she questioned why some of the Black expatriate men with mixed Black Okinawan children hoped that their children would simply “just be” Okinawan. She was equally disturbed that some of them chose to only passively teach them English, defaulting to mostly the mother’s language of Japanese. She worried that they were duped by the “haafu hype.” She lamented, “That was very sad for me to hear. He’s the American father. He has options for them. Why raise your Black mixed kids like a Japanese person? He is the source. I just kept thinking why would you want to do that? It’s going to be harder for them later.”

Harder, perhaps because of the “geographically proximate post-memories” Ikeda points to in his work. Her experience of being positioned in the “kurai” (dark) space of the memoryscape,92 that near-touristic area of not wanting to offend others because of what she may evoke by her mere highly visible black mixedness, was one of the factors of that sadness:

90 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the interviewee.

91 This was the first of three public forums I organized in Okinawa. This bilingual event took place in Chatan, Okinawa on May 4, 2012.

92 See Lisa Yoneyama’s discussion of politics of “taming the memories” of war in Hiroshima, in particular the tensions between dark “kurai” memories of war, death and terror, and “akarui” (bright) and cheerful peace used in urban renewal and development project slogans (Yoneyama 1999: 43-65).
When I graduated [high school] . . . I accepted that I am mixed and that I can’t really live like a Japanese, an Okinawan person. So whenever I looked for a job, I have to work on base or dealing with Americans. There was no way I could work at a Japanese company as a Japanese person. I would need to speak English working there dealing with Americans. The only place I worked that was not near the base was at a Japanese hotel. But still, they had me dealing with American customers only. It was just something I had to accept.

There is a palpable difference between those who have base access and those who do not and I raise this point because this is one of the factors that is productive of racial meanings in militarized spaces. The closer one is in proximity to base, the more racial meanings become imbued with one’s access to these spaces. This is yet another reason why mixed race in Okinawa has a starkly different trajectory of meanings from “mixed” racial concepts in other areas of Japan. The relationship to the bases are much more spatially and racially inextricably linked within Okinawa than in the mainland.

In the discourse of the ideal *haafu*, mixed Japanese are portrayed as worldly, futuristic, capable of transversing state disciplining. The terms like “bridge people,” are prized and circulated into popular media and by some *haafu* themselves. Conferences, online forums, and magazines also contribute to the mediatization and consolidation of that identity and yet there are also strong voices of critique emanating from within that “community.” The critique that is usually launched points to the daily realities of *haafu* on the “wrong side” of this highlighted flexibility. Those racialized subjects tend to be “mongrelized” or according to Yukiko Koshiro, discursively marked as lacking in physical or mental capabilities because of pseudoscientific research about mixed race that abounded well into the post cold war years (Koshiro 1999:159-200). They were deemed provincial, temporarily stuck, evoking pre-reversion violence and bearing non-simulacra gritty markers of colonial wear and tear. The hybrid concept of “mixed” has quietly revived some of the meanings of the pre-reversion “mongrel" by marking its own borders—the constitutive outside to mixed is no longer just non-mixed, pure racial camps, but also the non-serial mixed. That is, those who do not readily align themselves into a uniform, easily hailed “mixed” person who is expected to have these futuristic, post-racial, neo-cultural traits of being more than “just” Okinawan, is then marked as more locally and racially locked between camps. Sometimes this practice occurs by recreating and strengthening those racializing binaries in communicative practices such as in interviews. Those mixed Okinawans who fail to meet these idealistic *champru* qualities then are at greater risk of operating in even more potent

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93 See Charles Briggs (2007) on communicative practices and hailing subjects into racialized subject positions vis-a-vis interviewing and mediatization processes.
spaces of modernities which surround their darker bodies, around the “bunkered” race.\footnote{I attribute this phrase to an US American expatriate and cafe owner, Daryl Mitchell, still living in Okinawa. In our conversations about race, he sometimes observed the tight border patrolling around privilege through whiteness that is sometimes expanded in the base “bubble world” and in the military expatriate community which have settled in Okinawa. He would call these processes the reincarnation of “Archie Bunker” — the complex White character from the 1970’s hit TV sitcom “All in the Family.” The character’s open expressions of bigotry and his particular sayings came to be known affectionately as “Bunkerisms.” In toying with this popular icon from this period and the concept of a militarized bunker, I am attempting to invoke how these ideologies of race become accepted and dismantled in humor but also reified and guarded through discourses of national security.}

For example, in my interviews and conversations with more outspoken mixed Okinawans with SOFA status and/or consistent base access, several of these vocal people seemed to scoff at the problems of non-belonging faced by mixed shima haafu. Following are excerpts from interviews with mixed Okinawans who live on the base:

“They like to see themselves as victims, complaining about their identity. Don’t they know we were treated like crap too? They need get over their pity party and move on. If they have issues with “half” or “Amerasian” — they need to get over it. That’s what we are! We are half. We are Amerasians—American and Asian. Be proud of it.” — White Okinawan woman, late 40’s.

“I always know [who is shima haafu]. If you gave me a line up, I could tell instantly who grew up here without base access and who can move on/off base.” — Black American Okinawan who lived on the base, mid 20’s.

An Okinawan base worker who self identifies as a shima haafu observed that mixed Okinawans on base are organized and proud and in many ways see themselves as defining “haafu” in Okinawa but in a more hegemonic way. “The Americanized half love being Okinawan. They love getting tattoos with Okinawan symbols. They make t-shirts that say “Halfie 098.”\footnote{098 is the prefix used to call Okinawa land lines but interestingly enough, the 0 preceding the 98 is only added when calling from outside Japan, another indicator that they are responding to how they are hailed from outside the state. They are proud of being half.” The shaping of this racializing term then in some ways circumscribe shima haafu\footnote{Literally, island (Okinawan) half. This term generally refers to a mixed person with little or no base privileges as looked at from an insular, position of privilege.} as obscure. This neoliberal desire to encapsulate difference as a commodifiable form of hybridity has angered those who cannot fully benefit from this process and still, even as adults are infantilized and feminized.} The shaping of this racializing term then in some ways circumscribe shima haafu as obscure. This neoliberal desire to encapsulate difference as a commodifiable form of hybridity has angered those who cannot fully benefit from this process and still, even as adults are infantilized and feminized.

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Ai Taira for example shuddered when I asked her about the term double\(^97\) which tends to operate in this limited way in Okinawa. She responded, “People try to make you feel better by not calling you half. They try to call you double. But at the same time, making you feel like you’re half...If you’re half Black in Japan, ain’t no way you’re double anything.” In her case, being a mixed Black Okinawan woman meant having to grapple with being hailed as “war residue” as she called it, rather than a celebrated hybrid.

**Chuuto Hanpa**

For those mixed Okinawans who are pressured to identify themselves racially, whether to participate in the this celebrated disavowal of “kurai” memories of war and insert themselves as “akarui” representatives of a heterogenous modern and progressive state or to protect themselves from the heightened sense of alienation (Murphy-Shigematsu 1991), the possibilities of a blowback are real. When mixed Okinawans rally around the logics of race, even in a supposedly benign, celebratory form, are they at risk of being disposable when the logics of security warrant purity? Paul Gilroy, with atrocities of Rwanda on his mind, makes the argument that relying on racial identity in well defined encampments where otherness is threatening is a tenuous project as it makes people more vulnerable to further entrenching camp mentality. The rallying cry to organize around the body this way he argues, “reveals a deep desire for mechanical solidarity, seriality, and hypersimilarity. . .People become bearers of the differences that the rhetoric of absolute identity invents and then invites them to celebrate. Rather than communicating and making choices, individuals are seen as obedient, silent passengers” (Gilroy 2000: 103-104).

When I asked Lisa about the more contemporary meanings of the term “mixed” in popular circulation and whether it was a term she used to describe herself, she seemed hesitant, “Back then they thought of us as Black Okinawan or White Okinawans. Now we are all mixed I guess — with music videos and stuff...” She expanded on the ways she shifts terms and identifiers, always at the cusp of transnational positionings:

“I started trying to use ‘mixed’ recently. . .Before, I just said, “haafu.” When Americans come up to me and ask, I say I’m Okinawan. When Japanese people ask when I’m speaking Japanese, I say I’m mixed. ‘Cause with Americans - they already know I’m mixed when they ask so if I say I’m mixed, they’ll go ‘with what?’ So I just go ‘head and tell them I’m Okinawan. It just depends on the situation. If I just don’t want the conversation to go further I say I’m Black and Japanese. I look American but if I drive a kanji plate on the base, people are always looking, trying to figure out the situation...Now I think positively...Back then, I didn’t like the unnecessary attention. Now I say I’m different.”

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97 As Professor Naomi Noiri has noted in her work, the term "double" is not based on the “The concept of essentialism that assumes Amerasian to be American and Asian by birth” but that in using the term they can “cultivate multiple identities depending on child’s experience of movement across national borders, family life and working life” (Noiri 2010: 175) This term however, has been widely utilized in neoliberal discourse to foreclose difference and the original intent becomes obscured.
The term “mixed” as well as “double” seemed to limit her ability to evade the problems with absolute identity and seriality Gilroy mentions above. It also flattened out the specific issues of being Black Okinawan, a concern that I have noted for myself in the US context regarding the term hapa. Throughout the interview, she seemed more at ease using Black Okinawan to describe herself against the experiences of some of her friends who she called ‘White Okinawans,’ especially when relaying stories about her years as a youth in Koza (Okinawa City). When she began to enter the labor force, the realities of her Blackness and socioeconomic barriers were starker:

LA: “On the phone they would say yes but as soon as I walked in you could see on their face. I was conscious of how people would look at me. My last name is Akamine so they just don’t expect me... They were nice but you could just see in their face, it’s not gonna work out. I applied to about thirty places. I would have to buy resume paper each time because they don’t return it to you. And you have to take a photo for ¥600. I would have to color copy [the photos] and explain to them I was sorry but I couldn’t afford it anymore. It was for mostly fast food restaurants.

MC: What do you think they were thinking as they gave you that look when you walked in?

LA: I’m pretty sure it was because I am mixed with black. My half white friends would get those same jobs. Then I thought — white mixed kids were prettier. In our eyes, we looked good but in Japanese eyes they looked more accepted. Now, they think we are cool because of TV stuff but back then, we were never something to look up to like white mixed kids are now. We never got that.

Lisa explained that in her early teenage years, she and her sister were not invested in the “haafu boom.” They learned however that they could later use their positioning as being hailed not as as a desirable, commodifiable haafu but as Black American and hip. By mimicking various aesthetics of Blackness she had acquired from working on base after she graduated high school. she found she could maneuver through multiple displacements she felt depending on where she was in Okinawa. In some ways, Black American aesthetics could root her more closely to Okinawa in uncanny ways. This outward cultural dressing served to temporarily shift her body into a different temporal site of power, not mixed as anachronistic but different and soulful.

For instance, Lisa said that when she is near the bases in Central Okinawa, she is seen more like a “base-person” and lays some blame on mainland Japanese women for perpetuating that type of hailing. “There are a bunch of Americanized Japanese girls working around the base, like in housing...those are the girls who date only American guys.” She said with frustration, “They are much nicer to Americans than Okinawans. If I start speaking Japanese to them, they won’t be as nice to me as they are with Americans. Anyways, now they just start speaking English to me . . .Back then,

98 See Shigematsu-Murphy’s blog post http://www.murphyshigematsu.com/2012/02/01/are-hapa-white-asian-americans) for more on my engagement with this issue.
people would assume I speak only Japanese. I think it might be attitude. I got more Black attitude now” she said slyly. In these instances, she said she used these acquired forms of masculine Blackness as an empowering way to position herself against mainland Japanese women working in base affiliated jobs and whom she saw as looking down on Okinawan people.

This ability to shift, to be vague, to remain slippery between camps, allows some mixed race Okinawans who feel this camp mentality gripping them to maneuver around modern forms of racism which is also evasive. This slippery form, Ann Stoler argues, has a “polyvalent mobility” (Stoler: 69, 89) and is able to draw its power from a multitude of representations and imaginaries in its quest to provide a definitive truth claims about past or present inequalities not just from a singular crisis point (Stoler 91). Lisa’s translocal tactics have to remain just as slippery as the modern forms of transnational racism around her.

Her location between camps was frustrating as she came of age but now she is able to communicate those sentiments with greater ease, “My relatives would say I’m not quite either -- not perfect in either [the US or Okinawa], which is hard because I’m a perfectionist. I’m in between, not whole, not completely on one side or another. I’m chuutohanpa.” Chuuto means "halfway" or "along the way." Hanpa means "to be on neither side and be vague." Chuuto hanpa indicates the state of things are left unfinished or the state of someone or something that is vague and unclear. As will be discussed in the following sections, these articulations of halfwayness, are quietly being channeled through a disruptive form of diasporic connections to Blackness and Okinawan cultural sensibilities along the fencelines.

Nana Uehara, a business owner who resells Okinawan-made products to mainly military communities told me that some recent newcomers from the mainland who have moved to Okinawa in her community just north of Nago refused to sell goods to her because she will resell them to military personnel. She was upset that these particular business owners casted themselves as more locally tied to the island and protective of Okinawa than her because of her racially mixed background and because she believed they thought her sales was a sign of complicit approval of US base presence. She explained, “I can understand if Okinawans do this [refuse to sell their products to her], but not Japanese. They don’t understand how complicated it is.” This complexity is a difficult position to articulate for Okinawans who are forced to engage in both contesting a type of representation which casts them as suspect and also the Okinawan political landscape of checkpoints and detours as complete resisting subjects.

In her Foucaldian analysis, Shimabuku (2010b) argues, “Okinawa is not a repressive space of confinement, but a productive space that allows, encourages, and even requires circulation to take place in order to protect the population from things such as “the anxiety of unemployment and danger.” It seemed as though Nana was upset by these particular newcomers’ closure of this productive space, of the potential circulation, how it has become a delicate practice in check- point spaces, and that she at the border of that site, is yet again misunderstood, not benefitting from any form of “trickle down” haafu boom discourse. She has aligned herself with other local Okinawan

99 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the interviewee.
vendors who are highly critical of militarization as well as the colonial-like shape tourism has taken in her town yet carefully treads about semi-porous markets that cater to base towns. She makes it known that she is Uchinanchu and that her mixed background affords her the capability to move through the island between Okinawans and Americans. In this way, she is able to launch a critique that is similar to Lisa’s in that she can position herself against outsiders with her “flexible citizenship.”

Diasporic Dislocations and Futuristic, Fragmented Halfwayness

Okinawan mixed identity between camps has the potential to merge with disruptive diaspora identifications. Gilroy posits that some forms of diaspora create fissures in racial camp thinking because they are not necessarily subject to the same forms of disciplining and demands for seriality as the nation-state. Diasporas are productive of tensions and “disturbs the suggestion that political and cultural identity might be understood via the analogy of indistinguishable peas lodged in the protective pods of closed kinship and subspecies being” (Gilroy 2000: 125).

Okinawans, in comparison to other prefectures in Japan, have largely adopted a discourse that celebrates a diasporic identity as shaping a distinct Okinawan worldview, one that is seen as international and welcoming and most notably, one that sets them apart from the mainland. Makoto Arakaki notes that the Okinawan slogan, bankoku shinryo no tami (a people bridging all nations) is foundational in Okinawan identity and that it is reinforced in the diasporic and diverse Okinawan community worldwide (Arakaki 2002:131). The celebration of champuru cultural influences and practices of Okinawa has come to be widely celebrated throughout the diaspora. Although this syncretic consciousness is sometimes appropriated and marketed for touristic consumption (Angst 2001; Roberson 2003), reproducing inequalities for women and mixed race people in Okinawa in particular, the more radical forms of this type of reimagination and rearticulation of itself “betwixt and between” as James Roberson has shown in his work regarding Okinawan popular music (2003: 218) is precisely where mixed Okinawans can challenge their own in between-ness on their own terms. Sometimes this chuuto-hanpa-ness is reworked in diasporic destabilizations of encampments.

For example, one Black Okinawan man whose parents met in 1948 in Okinawa and grew up largely in the base communities, wrote me the following about his teenage years in pre-reversion Okinawa:

“I believe I moved about the cities, small towns, and villages with poor Japanese language skills (and manners) with confidence because I belonged on Okinawa... It wasn’t just that my father was stationed there as his job. He requested the assignment so that we could be with our “Uchinanchu” family members. So, as far as I was concerned the main reason we were there was because of our Okinawa heritage” (emphasis mine).

100 See Aihwa Ong’s (1999) characterization of flexible citizenship and the transcultural logics in the making of mobile subjects in Asia and the U.S.
This is a sentiment I heard by other mixed Okinawans who grew closely linked to the base. In many ways, militarization is obscured and normalized in these mixed race base communities and this is clearly evident in mixed Japanese forums that are English dominant. The self-exotification and self-Orientalizing strategies that are sometimes incorporated into the production of an emerging diasporic hapa identity tends to reinforce not only modes of whiteness but the dominant Japanese-US narratives of security. Yet, this sense of privilege and confidence in rooting themselves to the island and to a future, distancing themselves from the traces of occupation mapped onto their body was appealing to people like Lisa and others with whom I spoke.101

Two mixed Okinawan sisters who grew up in Okinawa and continue to live there but who are intimately connected to the US military base have confidently created new social values for themselves within this diasporic spirit. As descendants of well known yutas (Okinawan term for shaman/psychic mediums), the sisters and their female family members have relied to some extent on their confidence in their transnationality to challenge their claims to totome (Okinawan term for inheritance rights) and also keep kamiya (building for ancestors’ spirits) under a female head of household, a practice that is very rare in patrilineal Okinawan munchu (Okinawan term for family clans). They are proud of their detailed knowledge of Okinawan ancestral religious practices and incorporate this into their rooted sense of belonging to the island and although they are dependent on the base for their livelihood, they are highly critical of the ways they see militarized practices negatively affecting Okinawans, from housing to environmental issues. For mixed “base(ic)” Okinawans like these sisters, yuimaaru sensibilities102 are highlighted and the cultural essentialism based on a shared pride in not only in local difference but also in an opening of the public sphere. This is precisely where Masamichi Inoue suggests the revolt of the public sphere will occur for all Okinawans and what makes the US-Japan security apparatus fearful, when there is a gelling of “global citizenship” that is that is “grounded in and orchestrated a collectivity of cultural sensibilities and historical experiences within Okinawa, Japan, and beyond” (2007, p.220)."

The following section highlights how one Okinawan woman uses this diaspora formation of Okinawanness and Blackness to stake a futuristic claim in Okinawa for her Black Okinawan daughter.

Rieko,103 a young Okinawan woman from Shuri, met her non-military affiliated Black American husband while studying abroad in the United States. He died in the US after their child was born. As a single, widowed mother, she returned to Okinawa with her Black Okinawan child and soon became the target of quick assumptions which code her as a kokujo, (a derogatory term for a woman who exclusively dates Black men and stylizes herself with stereotypical Black American urban hip hop fashion in order to attract these men) with a “PCS Baby.” A “PCS baby” is a term that circulates within

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101 Murphy-Shigematsu also found a cautious linkage to other mixed people throughout the Okinawan diaspora (2012: 70-71).

102 See footnote 68.

103 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the interviewee.
some younger military circles. It derogatorily marks children as abandoned when a serviceman “permanently changes stations” (receives orders to move to a new base out of the country.)

Rieko realizes her daughter will almost always be marked as being “of the military.” Being part Black in Okinawa sometimes means walking in that space of militarized Blackness, of constantly experiencing transnational fragmentation. She is already postured in a defensive mode when she ventures onto base—aware of how an Okinawan, male, gate guard for instance, is perceiving her when she requests a base pass with her mixed child. “I can tell what they are thinking and that’s why if a guy signs me in, I like to start arguments with my friends in front of them [gate guards]. So they know, I’m not a ‘yes, hai, I love you’ kind of girl. I want them to know that I can speak for myself. I don’t want them to think I’m one of them. These are my people, Okinawans. They are worried about me. I don’t want them to be worried.”

Aware that when together, they will most likely continue to be marked through a sexualized, racialized and gendered lens, she teaches her child to connect to Blackness outside the “encamped” meanings, outside the consumable, “Keepin It Real” blackness that is over-sold on Gate-2 street in Okinawa City.

She attempts to return to the circulating global blackness, with intentionality and taking the more radical forms of black empowerment and linking to a type of Okinawan radical indigeneity. In another separate interview she explained further:

When people see me and her, they have this whole story laid out like, ‘she got pregnant by a black soldier who is PCSing Okinawa, had a baby and he left somewhere and her daughter is not loved and now she’s abandoned from her parents cause she married a black man.’ It’s all laid out. It’s not just in that little gate space but every time you pass someone that looks at me and my daughter. I create an atmosphere that says we are happy and secure in who we are. I think I do that a little more than others.

While studying in the US, she found that in identifying as Okinawan as opposed to Japanese, she was able to better connect to other people of color by releasing herself from the grips of nationality. With this logic, she teaches her daughter not to call herself half-Black nor half- Okinawan and instead connect to this radical form of Blackness that she finds more encompassing of her feelings of dislocation:

I teach her that she is Black. She’s Black, not half, not mixed... It’s just propaganda to split us up so they can feel like they’re the majority of this earth. It’s a concept that all is one. It’s broad and people don’t get that but I do know that my daughter is Black. And Okinawan. I embrace all the cultures she was made in. I tell her that with those words. I tell her I love that and I love you.

As if echoing the spirit of Akira Arakawa, an influential and radical student leader in the years of the reversion push who sought solidarity with people of color suffering under the legacy of white supremacy and support Okinawans in their struggle against further militarization and mainland positioning of Okinawans as second class citizens. According to Yuichi Onishi, Arakawa believed “Okinawans had to categorically reject
'Japaneseness,' and reach out for a new ontological category. He and other intellectuals theorized the emancipatory potential of Okinawans’ distinct ethos, identity, history, and experience, calling them to find a mode of belonging other than the one provided by the U.S. and Japanese nation-states and the reversion movement itself” (Onishi, Yuichiro, 2013: Kindle Locations 2521-2525).

Rieko, fiercely proud of her Okinawan ethnic identity, links with other people undergoing intense struggles of dislocation within the nation-state. “When I say I’m Okinawan, not Japanese, I am connecting myself to something bigger. . . . By saying I’m Okinawan I am freeing myself to connect with Black people, with Chinese people, with others. . . . I don’t have to limit myself to Japan. . . . Black Americans didn’t understand that until I explained it was was like saying you’re not African American, you’re Black. You’re connecting to something bigger.”

While Rieko was direct and deliberate in how she invoked this form of “third world consciousness” that is layered in much of Okinawan ideologies of resistance, other transnational parents find it an uneasy topic to raise. One Black father of two Okinawan Black children who works and lives away from the “base bubble,” told me that he noticed one of his kids never colored himself dark in his self-portraits at his public Okinawan school. When I asked how he talked about this with his child, he fumbled. Even as a man from a rural, segregated small town in the US South who could otherwise talk about the nuanced racializing practices of his town, he did not know how to raise the topic of being Black in Okinawa with them, as if it were a taboo topic. “It was just something we never, ever talked about.” This avoidance was not due to a lack of involvement in their lives. On the contrary, he talked to his children regularly and was active in their schooling, shuttling them about to all their extracurricular activities and talked to them about most other subjects with a great deal of openness. This was one topic he said that he felt he did not know how to broach within the heavily militarized space of Okinawa.

My mother once told me that being Okinawan was complicated because she wedded a black man, had black mixed children, and as the only daughter in the family, had left the strong family munchu obligations demanded of daughters behind for other women in the family. Returning was always accompanied by the pangs of patriarchal nationhood holding her at bay — a stall from a full return. How could someone thought to be so militarized through sex be reincorporated into this new space? Navigating the course of jealousy and derision, unbridled joy and forgiveness, my mother would sometimes say returning was too stressful. After not being in Okinawa for over a decade, she returned for the diasporic Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival (Sekai no Uchinanchu Taikai) which occurs once every 5 years. It is a grand production that draws thousands of Okinawans and their descendants to the island. She arrived as an official participant with her badge and prefectural welcome package. In the act of becoming a spectacle, her brothers and other family members watching from the sidelines, and in her performance of being a diasporic returnee, she said she was able to take pride in her internationalness. Her body no longer wore the dank musty camped uniform. The militarized blackness that had infiltrated her identity as the mother of black Okinawan children was subsumed by the celebration of her champru (mixed) international body.

I looked upon her photos of her on parade with some amusement, pride and yet a suppressed sadness. There in her requisite oversized cowboy hat and the Texas lone
star flag waving above her, my mother beamed as walked through the streets of her
country, waving at cheering Okinawans welcoming her home, claiming her body and
those around her, some accompanied by their American (predominately former US
military) spouses, some with their racially mixed children. The participants seemed
overjoyed by the reception and the bustling emotion around them. At first, seeing the
video clips had a bit of a chilling effect. This syncretic group, this celebrated champuru
mix of people being celebrated in this way has the potential to be transformative of the
public sphere. However, the dirty push factors of their migration off the island, including
the intense militarization of the land and the resulting consequences of that process,
was mostly muted, according to many of my friends who attended. The drumming of the
rhythmic eisa seemed to pull participants back into the fold of unitary clapping and
masculine performance of the drummers, back into the collective dream of this
imaginary, non- racialized identity of “we Okinawans.”

However this organized return was also an entry point for my mother, and
possibly others with similar histories of being closely linked to Blackness through their
marriage or children, to begin the process of recoding herself on both racial and
gendered fronts by hacking (see below) — on minute levels — camp mentality through
innovative diasporic language. Gilroy has argued that the diaspora has the potential to
initiate the necessary “tensions between here and there, then and now, between seed in
the bag, the packet, or the pocket and seed in the ground, the fruit, or the body” (125).
That is, the disruptive power of diaspora can loosen the nation-state’s grip on a
requirements to belong to a camp, especially racial coding in the murky in-between
spaces between camps(84).

Those who occupy this space of Blackness in Okinawa and who are affected by
the thrust into the irrational binary of “West and the Rest,” by virtue of being discursively
positioned as not quite Okinawan and not quite “Western” seem to find that even the
consequential historicist narrative of progress is blocked for them unless alternative
spaces can be open through futuristic imaginings. For people like Lisa, the best way to
make this leap is to repeatedly talk about her dreams of being famous and imagining
herself beyond the nation-state, “I used to always joke about being the first really
famous black Japanese woman but then Krystal Kay came on the scene. But she’s half
Korean so I guess I still have some time to be the first Black Okinawan!” To release
herself from that cuckhold of the spatial and temporal stagnancy, she has to jump the
techniques of racial categorizing which localize her to a militarized space. She maps
herself onto a glossier, commercialized ideal of mixed Blackness. To imagine herself as
futuristic is to in fact to partially share the touristic playbook of Japanese mainland
driven tourism organizations and the US military public relations divisions—sanitize the
military presence, the violence and memories attached to her presence, reshifting the
post-memories of war elsewhere. However, she only allows that secure narrative to
venture so far.

Lisa, in addition to several other mixed Okinawans with whom I spoke of the
same generation, relayed a distinct trajectory of hope. No longer fine with the discourse
which lodges them as naturally stuck between encampments, nor fine with the narrative
of a singular origin story, they exceed those expectations through diasporic imaginaries.
Lisa Yoneyama calls these storytelling forms disruptive because repeating them “makes
it possible to imagine multiple possibilities in the past.”

Conclusion: Transfiguring the Memiorscape

I have attempted to describe only a few of the multiple forms of dislocations and memories of Blackness at work in Okinawa, particularly for mixed Okinawans. I point to the ways Blackness moves along fencelines and how people who occupy those intensely racializing spaces find belonging by cautiously rooting themselves locally through fluctuating imaginaries of citizenship and through multiple diasporic meanings of Okinawan belonging and difference.

Trinh Minh-Ha asks in her work on borderlands and dislocations, how is one able to “negotiate the line that allows one to commit oneself entirely to a cause and yet not quite belong to it” (Minh-Ha 2010: 55)? It is a question I have asked myself in borderland spaces and one that draws me back to those moments when the forms of hybridity I am expected to occupy and perform ultimately clash with the painfully excess of the discourse of modernity so deeply prevalent in militarized talk in Okinawa. For many of the mixed Okinawans with whom I spoke for this project, especially Black Okinawans, where blackness shifts along an overbearing militarized space and also a space of radical solidarity (that emerges in particular sites like Teruya), that negotiation of the line is always in flux. It requires creative “hacking” of the memoryscape.

Ruha Benjamin has argued new social values can be made through explicit movements towards “civic hacking” or the re-writing of cultural codes (as opposed to cultural code-switching) and that process requires, “mastery, collaboration, and creativity...These insights and skills allow us to subvert the system and make it do something it wasn't meant to do. (Benjamin 2013). This is very much in line with what Paul Gilroy called “the politics of transfiguration” in which an “imaginary anti-modern past and a postmodern yet-to-come” is formed in the performative, hacking of modernity. “It’s basic desire” he argues, “is to enact the new modes of friendship, happiness, and solidarity that are consequent on the overcoming of the racial oppression on which modernity and its antimony of rational, western progress as excessive barbarity relied” (Gilroy 1993: 37-38). It is what Rieko does when she talks about creating “an atmosphere” around her for the sake of her own futuristic claims on belonging for herself and her daughter. This is what Tamaki and Fija do in private, but especially in their public personas when they access their Okinawan language to subvert systems of understanding of the habitus. It is what Nana and Lisa do when they use their overt difference to ground themselves as Okinawan against newcomers. It is what Black military personnel do when they have regularly morning meetings to talk about Black radical consciousness in Okinawa to understand their own spatial

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104 See Yoneyama’s discussion of how some testimonials are transformative in that they they continue to participate in the popular “never again” call inherently part of the majority of Hiroshima hibakusha testimonials but as Yoneyama argues but call for a different form of critically imagined hope (Yoneyama 1999: 135).
dislocations against those of Okinawans.\textsuperscript{105} These transfigurations are also supported with the rise in social networking and as mixed Okinawans continue to form diverse communities and recode themselves as Uchinanchu with epiphytic\textsuperscript{106} capabilities of pushing past fencelines and slowly transfigure the racial encampments.

Dislocated Blackness then can draw on the diasporic \textit{yuimaaru} sensibilities and a shared pride in not only in local difference but also in an opening of the public sphere. This is precisely where Masamichi Inoue suggests the revolt of the public sphere will occur for all Okinawans and what makes the US-Japan security apparatus fearful, when there is a gelling of “global citizenship” that is “grounded in and orchestrated a collectivity of cultural sensibilities and historical experiences within Okinawa, Japan, and beyond” (220)."

\textsuperscript{105} I joined in on some of these "Wednesday Breakfast" sessions with a regular group of Black men and one Okinawan woman in a local cafe in Chatan. This group was made up of expatriates and former Marines and dependents with SOFA status. They were instrumental in helping me to produce the public forums on Blackness in Okinawa.

\textsuperscript{106} The abundant banyan trees in Okinawa begin as epiphytic organisms. Their small seeds can germinate above ground and send roots around their “hosts” sometimes obscuring it entirely. It is my localized adaptation of Giles and Deleuze’s multi-centered, multi-dimensioned concept of rhizomes.
Panel 5: Why did she leave? Why did you come?

I couldn't help but smile at all the tell tale signs that the owner of this nail salon had deep base connections. The space was cluttered with PX goods—boxes of Glad ziplock bags, tea bags locally sold only in the commissary. On the phone I overheard her remind a customer in broken English, 'you'll need to make your next appointment early, I fill up around Marine ball time.'

She understood the rhythm of the base events, the movement of people on the other side of the fence.

This sharp tongued, woman zig zagging and buffing away at my callous heels wondered what line of work I was in to have such rough feet. “Marine?” she asked, obviously quite accustomed to mostly servicing military clients. After telling her about my research, she paused with a slight smile searching my face for clues and then asked the inevitable, “haafu?” With my affirming nod, she transitioned to Japanese and began her barrage of questions, partly out of habit of passing the time while working and perhaps to position me.

I told her my mother was from Oroku, down near Naha. She hinted a bit condescendingly that this indicated she was from a wealthy family. “They have base money and they are gaaju (Okinawan term for hard headed, stubborn) those Oroku people.”

I joked back that she shouldn’t be so quick to judge because my mom was originally Oomine folk, and later more Uebaru than Oroku.

“Ok—not so gaaju then” she teased back.

Having established some rapport, she was mostly interested in why my mother had left the second time after my sister was born and was now in the US and I gave her a very brief summary which for most people, had the effect of slowing these personal inquiries. “She left” I explained, “because she thought it would be too difficult for my older sister in Okinawa.” But this woman wanted to know what year they left, seemingly poised with a counter argument in her pocket. When I explained it was just a few years before the reversion, she quickly let down a defensive edge and agreed, eyebrows furrowed with some heaviness, that it would have been hard then for a half Black Okinawan outside the base world to not suffer to some significant degree. And so close to the once active Naha Air Base where a flood of Americans streamed from the island onto Kokusai street and surrounding areas.

What I rarely offer in these casual conversations is that her decision was an intensely complicated one over which she struggled for many years. It was one that required gambling on the racial climate for Black Okinawans in the near and long term future. Will she ever be accepted as Okinawan? Will she always be singled out not only as Amerikaa (mixed American) at school but also kokujin (Black)? Who could she marry
when she grew up? How will she deal with the politicized anger and life politics surrounding the bases? These questions never seemed to have a positive answer no matter how many times she toyed with them and her years in Okinawa away from my father gave her a chance to see what those future years might look like and they indeed seemed bleak. Although her family, unlike many other women in similar situations, offered to generously and fully support them if she could finalize the divorce as she had intended, she later explained to me as an adult that Blackness in Okinawa, and therefore, being mixed Black Okinawan, was too saturated with a mix of memories, circulating transnational, racialized tales and anxiety and anger at the colonial conditions under which they lived.

These tales have led me back to Okinawa with a diasporic lens to my research. I not only want to pose the simple, “what if she had stayed” question but to use a critical racial framework to think through the complex postcolonial conditions which have and continue to shape multiple experiences of life for mixed race Okinawans on the island. To pose the “what if” question is tricky and it is often asked in journalistic projects which follow an adoptee or “returnee” to the space where they might have been raised had they not left to “elsewhere.” There are multiple problems with this approach including unconscious Orientalism, reification of an immobile East/ West binary, sloppy analysis or sidelining of place-based workings of race in Japan. I am great risk in repeating these and err on the side of caution preferring a more porous approach and conclusion.
Chapter 5: Radical Flow and *Chuuto Hanpa*

While surfing the internet for upcoming events to attend around fenceline areas in my early fieldwork period, I came across an ad for a bilingual poetry jam called “Flow Manifesto.” It had just taken place in the city of Ginowan, just outside the Futenma Marine base. I was struck by the photos from the event which featured American military poets (mostly all Black American) alongside Okinawan poets and performers. Although the site did not explicitly explain how the organizer, Akiko Urasaki, imagined “flow,” it largely focused on linguistic borders separating those from both sides of the fencelines which was a disrupter of “flow.” The various internet crumbs seemed to lead the audience to the conclusion that language was one of the dividing gaps for understanding a shared feeling of resistance and pain.

This struck me as not being the typical, propaganda “friendship” activity that could easily be sponsored by commercial nor military interests. Intrigued, I jotted down a reminder to call the venue’s owner to see if he would put me in touch with the organizer whose photos streamed across the site.

The next day I made a hair appointment at a salon that had long been on my list for fieldwork sites to engage in participation/observation. There at “Oriental Magic” just a few blocks from my apartment, Black women from the base moved in and out the salon. The owner’s answers to numerous phone calls attested to the nervous energy of their movement to this off-base locale, “Don’t worry, I’ll send someone to pick you up at the McDonald’s parking lot.”

As I waited under several plastic bag of thick hair weaves for sale I saw the young woman from the “Flow Manifesto” website, watching over her obviously Black Okinawan daughter’s hair being meticulously braided by a young Okinawan woman. With some nervous and excited energy, I approached her and told her about my project and how I had come across her site and she responded with excitement and great interest. Over the year, our relationship quickly moved from research aide and informant to confidante and friend.
In our exchanges, we shared multiple stories. She told me about her love of hip hop, her attraction to Black urban cultural forms, Okinawan local ruggedness, and her knowledge of “Supreme Mathematics” she had studied intently in the US. I shared stories about my mother, my understandings of Blackness along the fencelines, how I feel my way through Okinawa as a Black Okinawan American, and my process for finding a way to document this practice of flow that at once sidesteps traditional routes of power in ways that only get recuperated back into a binary of pro/against base logic. She introduced me to her poetry, event organizing, young artists working along the fencelines, business owners, and her process of movement through this complex landscape. Akiko showed me the shadowy worlds most journalists, activists and academics are not aware of or choose not to document in order to make the case for or against bases. She taught me that there is a type of interaction, a cultural practice along the fencelines that is gritty, soulful, and for her, distinctly Okinawan in its flexibility. Through these interactions with Akiko, the contemporary practices of flow or what I call “chuuto hanpa” along the fencelines became much clearer.

In this chapter, using the stories of Akiko and my encounters with several other Okinawans and long-term foreign residents, I argue that “flow” in Okinawa is shaped as much by the techniques to control resistance against the US-Japan militarized presence as it is by the cultural savvy to see past the processes implemented to produce the regimes of truth that create and sustain a militarized environment. I also argue that in the neoliberal attempt to highlight and commodify an ethics and practice of ambiguous champru (hybrid) naturalized friendship along the fencelines, an unexpected and radical form of in-betweeness has been developing in spite of and in response to these sites of production.

This chapter explores these more radical transformations and how new circulations of desire, metaphors and nostalgia are making for more permeable entries into the hold on truth making in Okinawa. Drawing from the concept chuuto hanpa introduced in chapter four, I will further explore the articulations of “multiplicity,” (Lowe 1996), hybridity, and concepts of “flow” along the fencelines of US military bases and how some of these mobile actors are engendering alternative ways to frame their own mobility, flexibility and displacement through new imaginaries of citizenship and nation. This chapter also serves as the conclusion for the dissertation. While the previous chapters focus on the the compartmentalization of Okinawa into on/off spaces, the narratives of violence which naturalize and legitimate an Okinawan coloniality, and the racialized displacements, and critical ruptures of security narratives along the fencelines, this chapter will look at how some attempt to use the fencelines to flow through a chuuto hanpa practice of disrupted, radical “flow.”

**Militarized Friendship and Stunted Flow**

In Chapter 4, a mixed raced interviewee described how her family describes her as being chuuto hanpa, a Japanese term that broadly means neither here nor there, incomplete or in the process of becoming. The notion of flexibility inherent in this term can be applied to how many Okinawans in these intimate spaces along the fencelines live in a heavily militarized space. This form of ‘in betweeness’ is specifically shaped within an extralegal site with the lingering threat of displacement for the sake of an ideological national or global security.
The awareness of their multiple positioning as subjects lodged awkwardly in these partial sovereignities and manipulated in these sites is evident in many Okinawan literary works such as Tatsushiro Oshiro’s “The Cocktail Party,” a play that focuses on the unraveling of delicate US/Okinawa interpersonal relations after the rape of an Okinawan woman by a US military soldier. The play targets the concept of “friendship” discourse that is showcased at the military cocktail party. Michael Molasky has noted that the resurfacing of this play in the 1990’s, after the rape of a twelve year old schoolgirl by three US Marines was especially significant given this rape occurred after another official “friendship” gathering between high ranking military officials in Okinawa and Japanese defense and business leadership (Molasky 1999:50). It was the classic example, he noted, when “fact imitates fiction imitates fact.” In the “The Cocktail Party” friendship is foremost categorized under the umbrella of networking activity among Okinawan and US military elites but later the setting for this veneer of friendship takes on a more violent sheen whereby even previous Okinawan benefactors of militarized privileges are suddenly at risk of violence.

Friendship in most colonial situations is managed as way to superficially monitor the boundaries of discourses that may emerge in these social situations of contact and also to function as “proof” that there is some form of agreement between those thought of as host and guest. This was clear to me as I spoke with former base workers and also those mixed race Okinawans who take more the unstable contract jobs but who do not have SOFA status and are especially anxious and cautious of even appearances of criticism of the bases. For example, one mixed race Okinawan attended a seminar on Agent Orange at a local university with me and was distraught that the news cameras would regularly pan the crowd, and would sometimes hover on us, the only identifiable foreign people in the audience. Even though she was ultimately a solid military advocate, she feared that merely attending an information session would instantly mark her as suspicious. After the event she became distraught and begged the cameramen to mask her face in the newscasts. As someone financially insecure, a job loss from the base would make it impossible for her to stay on the island with her Okinawan family as she has never been able to secure a Japanese job because of her inability to write fluent Japanese. As noted in the last chapter, dependents were often sent home for these kinds of engagements off-base. Friendship, then is limited to a militarily approved form, one that ultimately supports the US-Japan interests.

Military flow also depends on the management of making gendered spatial spaces and the production of hegemonic “coercive harmony” (Nader 1990). As Linda Angst has explained in her work, the deployment of carefully controlled narratives of peace and “akarui” (bright) discourse for modernization and tourism projects tend to erase the darker side of militarization. Those narratives are carefully managed through a technique of governmentality in friendship discourse as well and this is clearly evident in the spatial management of women in particular. Shimabuku (2014) has argued that the traffic of women in the years between 1945-1947 was intense and unofficially managed, she argued, between the time when Okinawa was still an

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107 See for instance Ann Stoler’s (1997) very clear examples on colonialism in Southeast Asia on the forms of governmentality which to some degree produced, managed, and directed “friendship” through colonial discourses of desire.

108 See Chapter four
ambiguously undefined territory in relation to both Japan and the United States (2014:360). As fears of communist power was generated to new heights in 1947 and the US moved from a loosely defined trusteeship to a long-term base (restoring Japanese sovereignty and offering “residual sovereignty” for Okinawa) under the conditions of the treaty signed in San Francisco in 1951, Shimabuku notes that new prioritized attention turned to the management of bodies for sex. The flood of soldiers onto the new bases being built across the island and the complaints from local Okinawan residents of the sexual violence, surveillance and censorship of Okinawan organizing that were not USCAR friendly, starvation put Okinawans into a tight spot (Shimabuku 2014). Shimabuku argues this restricted range of resistance to these forms of heavy handed occupation conditions was what led Okinawans to “petition” themselves to the US authorities, such as Major General Joseph Sheetz, for sheer survival. This in turn she notes, made the Major General Sheetz appear generous for allowing Okinawans to have such a “privilege for Okinawans to prostitute themselves” (365). Releasing “off-limit” areas primarily for unofficial prostitution could only be instituted at such a large scale through the discourse of friendship promoted through military top-down language:

After seeing how off-limits areas profited from the infiltration of GIs into the community, northern Okinawa also petitioned Sheetz to lift the Okinawan ban. According to Ikemiyagi Shui, village leaders justified their request to the US military by stating, ‘contact with Americans would promote democratization,’ ‘friendship with American officers would edify English language studies’ and ‘friendly relations would heighten the level of trust between the villagers and American officers’ (Ikemiyagi 1971: 43) (Shimabuku 2014: 365).

As the occupation of Okinawa continued after the official reversion period, many Okinawans lost faith that real change was possible through Japanese law. This is why Shimabuku’s point on the constant absorption of the extralegal back into the law (see Chapter 1) is so important and why a radical chuuito hanpa-ness is instead accessed by some actors along the fenceline, playing on both local sentiments of as well as global cosmopolitanism. This allows them to enjoy the framing of them as international while being careful not to have that recuperated into a complicit form of friendship.

It is why Urasoe library for instance, focuses on international programming but is unwavering in their decision to not allow US SOFA status volunteers from the military (to read books to children or tutor adults in English) at their facilities.109 The possibility of being captioned in a propaganda “friendship” photo with military already discursively deflates stances of resistance. The field of meanings rendered in these instances allow for only a limited possible range for responses of self-representation, and a limited range for utterances that can be made to understand these groupings. That is, inserting themselves into this scenario, this contemporary lifting of off-limits sign removals, makes one vulnerable to being interpellated into an idealized vox populi directed by years of militarized crafting of this space as democratic and neutral.110

109 See description of my encounter at the library in chapter three.

110 See chapter one on my discussion of Charles Briggs work on the formation of the vox populi through ideologies of communicability.
Militarized crafted friendship tends to rupture as it did in the play “The Cocktail Party,” when actors expect to move past these hegemonic forms and articulate their discontent with newly triangulated discourse.\textsuperscript{111} The partial sovereignties become increasingly clear that freedom can only be reached in the moments of standing barely out of view of the “scopic regime” as described in Chapter 1. How is it possible to circumvent these closures of the public sphere using the very limits of friendship discourse? \textit{Chuuto hanpa}-ness is about dodging this particular form of positioning in the direct spotlight. The following sections addresses a few individuals who exemplify these new modes of resistance using a \textit{chuuto hanpa} praxis.

\textbf{Akiko’s Flow Manifesto: Linguistic Breaks}

Despite the fact that pro-base/anti-base binary continues to be reified in many mainland and US military dominated discussions regarding the Okinawan political climate, in the mundane daily life more complicated understandings of hybridity in these spaces are expressed and negotiations of positions along the fenceline are common and carefully articulated, less they become recuperated back into the stale pro/anti base binary. I employ Lisa Lowe’s definition of hybridity to help elucidate these mobile identities. Lowe defines hybridity as “the formation of cultural objects and practices that are produced by the histories of uneven and unsynthetic power relations…it marks the history of survival within relationships of unequal power and domination” (67). Lisa Lowe’s (1996) conceptualization of hybridization in immigrant communities in the United States as not simply being “the ‘free’ oscillation between or among chosen identities” (82) is particularly useful in thinking about this notion of flow in Okinawa. Like Lowe, I argue that beyond the he “material traces” of transnational movement and social/economic displacements, \textit{chuuto hanpa} ways of being should be analyzed as an active process of negotiation of Okinawan multiple positionings against US-Japan security arrangements. Lowe argues that this kind of practice is always on the move and the appropriation of a single snapshot in time and place deflates the power in its ability to transform:

It is the uneven process through which immigrant communities encounter the violences of the U.S. State, and the capital imperatives served by the United States and by the Asian states from which they come, and the process through which they survive those violences by living, inventing, and reproducing cultural alternatives (Lowe 82).

These concepts of hybridity and flow, tweaked for a \textit{chuuto hanpa} practice in Okinawa, allows for a broader range of positions to be articulated by individual subjects.

\textsuperscript{111} Masamichi Inoue(2007) has also noted that US officers and enlisted soldiers also express loneliness in the face of encouragement from base officials to “seek friendship” with Henoko residents because 1) their dollars did not go far in Okinawa any longer (as they had in the 1960’s) and they could no longer afford to do much off-base; 2) tighter curfews were enforced for Marines staying in Okinawa less than six months and their chances for interacting with residents were limited; and 3) Marines eventually found that the commercialized “friendship” activities were staged for both pro-base community leaders and military officials’ propaganda efforts hence making soldiers feel more angst when they faced realities of their isolation on base after long hours of rigorous training for a meager salary (117-125).
Akiko for instance expresses this range in her artistry and personal life. Given her background as someone who has worked on and along the fencelines, she has not only occupied but engendered multiple positions in her dealings with US military personnel of varying positions as well as Okinawans of diverse backgrounds. Upon first glance, her goals to increase Okinawan personal interaction with US military could be taken as an overwhelmingly pro-base position via the discursive mechanics of “friendship” politics. In addition, her strong belief that language (specifically English fluency) is the vehicle to a form of modernity that can ultimately challenge the current hegemonic militarized landscape could also be interpreted as a sign of complicity and ducking the calls by some anti-base activists to directly challenge structural violence. Yet, Akiko directly does challenge staged “friendship” and militarized flow unexpectedly so that it cannot be co-opted and her practices remain radically slippery.

Akiko merges two distinct ideologies of language in her conceptualization of flow. On one hand, she views language as haven been imbued with a specific form of power and authority that excludes those considered in many ways to be premodern (Okinawans and Black Americans) who still are marked by their vernacularized speech and characterization. Under this ideology, purified English and Japanese usage then are thought of ways towards a modernity deployed by Washington D.C. and Tokyo and serves as a marker for a temporal break from premodern traditions. She understands that in Okinawa, the combination of US/Japan security logics are tightly bounded to notions of modernity and tradition based on ideologies of language purification. Akiko however, also fully embraces intertextuality in language and the multiple readings of security and positionings of Okinawans as both minshu and shimin as discussed in previous chapters (one and four) through a vernacular “not quite proper” she accesses in her music has the power of sidestepping the authoritarian grips along the fencelines. These two ideologies are briefly discussed below.

Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman (2003) have argued that this particular notion of purity is based on John Locke’s powerful ideology of language as “referential, bounded and homogenous” (301). They argue that this camp locked onto the idea that “the lack of a fixed, stable code makes it impossible for people to think clearly or understand one another, thereby precluding the achievement of consensus and rationality in political processes and raising the specter of civil war” (302). This means that the producer and receiver of words must imagine the same sign (37) and a deviation from those signs was considered a threat to modernity. Modernity then was considered to be possible by reducing language to symbolic mode (37) and the later rendering of those who were thought of as incapable of replicating those same signs (those still stuck in the field of tradition/premodern) were racialized and considered to be threats to the nation. Nowhere is this more pertinent than in militarized landscapes. In agreement with Briggs and Baumann, I believe language often assists the disavowal of racism or inequality in its own erasures in the articulation of modernity through purification. This makes it difficult for social justice activists to make claims that Okinawans are being unfairly victimized because of Orientalist or mainland Japanese stigmatization of their ethnic difference. Akiko is aware of

112 Briggs and Bauman offer clear examples of the English Only movement in the United States which utilizes this language ideology along with “hybridization logics” to replicate racism while slipping past critiques of racism in this liberalist rendering of modernity.
this potent ideology in Okinawa and finds it necessary to semi-internalize it as a weapon of resistance. For example, she told me, “Everybody here in Okinawa should be fully bilingual, bicultural. We’re in Okinawa! You can’t be taken advantage of when you can translate for yourself.” This form of refiguring the Other into a “worthy” subject who can spar with those in power is part of the purification ideology of language. The notion of “flow” in this light, operates along this liberalist articulation of language that is reconfigured in Okinawa today, yet with some extreme caution as will be discussed later below.

This belief in empowerment through language led Akiko to develop a series of well attended bilingual spoken word events she called “Flow Manifesto.” These events brought together spoken word artists she had come across from the military and well established artists, musicians and poets in Okinawa like Kakumakushaka, someone she had collaborated with on other projects. These were to some degree, a renewed transnational, artistic yuntaku-kai (see Chapter 1). “There’s a lot of misunderstanding and non-communication. All we know America to be, here in Okinawa, is the military. All the communication we have is about law, politics. But there’s no communication on the individual level.” Her vision was to bring these particular groups (Black military and Okinawan residents) together with the hope that their similar forms of “rooted” experiences and uniquely situated position would allow them to find common ways to promote greater resistance to the notions of purification embedded in language ideologies as well as repositioning themselves in the current security apparatus. She would act as a cultural mediator by translating both English and Japanese poems or songs and projecting those translated words onto a wall behind the artist as they performed, just as fleeting as the spoken word. As someone well versed in African American vernacular language, she was able to do this almost seamlessly and in so doing, further reified the notion that through these shared translations, common signs could be interpreted by all at the venue, once mediated by her.

In regards to the the hybrid notion of language that Akiko often invokes in her conceptualization of “flow,” meanings are not uniformly coded. Akiko often speaks about flow along the fencelines in terms of how some Blacks and Okinawans operate within an alternative mode of modernity while also invoking Otherness that relies on some sense of pre-modern tradition. This is most notable when she highlights the possibilities for real economic and political liberation for Okinawans through a transfigured soulfulness (see Chapter 4: 109) that is couched between hegemonic spaces of primitive and modern. Her own soulfulness seemed to hinge on her ability to access a less “proper” grammar and structure, “There’s no transition between how I speak in English and Okinawan. I don’t speak proper Japanese. . . I speak like that in English too.” Flow, in this sense, is about the linguistic gymnastics of mastering nuanced intertextuality. She finds it especially potent to indexically recode signs in a field of forces through the performative acts like rap music which she uses to draw on a vernacular

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113 Kakumakushaka is an Okinawan rapper who has taken a strong anti-base stance and has met in a public dialogue with Cornell West. Yuichiro Onishi has argued that West’s rendering of Okinawan’s as “Blues People” missed the power of Okinawan articulations of anti-base resistance which draws from multiple modernities. (Onishi 2014).
outside to what she calls a “Tokyo sound” and to reel in on the feelings of a primordial-like

soulfulness shared with Blacks\textsuperscript{114} and/or spiritual Okinawan indigeneity. To describe this articulation of flow, she often uses the example of how a particular artist who has performed at several of her events enlivens some of her young Okinawan audiences:

When Life spoke about his struggles as a Black man in America, and when Okinawans feel that through his words, they can have a whole new expectation on American Black men and vice versa.

Her events suggest that through the conceptualization of a cosmopolitan, modern and dialogic, spoken language between these two marginalized groups, challenges to language ideologies are possible and moreover, racism embedded in the more dominant language ideologies used to bolster security logics can be exposed.

\textsuperscript{114} See Chapter 4, especially in reference to Yuichiro Onishi's discussion of the concept of soulfulness in Japan.
Flow, Friendship, and Cosmopolitanism

Articulations of the more radical visions of flow as discussed above are often collapsed with a commercialized friendship that has long been at the center or propaganda efforts to tamper Okinawan protest against the US-Japan security arrangements on the island. This is frustrating for people like Akiko. She insisted:

The military don’t know Okinawans outside of lectures, hearsay and through fake-ass friendship base tournaments. There is a lack of information. All these Okinawan girls on the street messing with these military guys have more information than the politicians. I bet you they don’t understand PCS — what season it is, the “Green Line,” the pay scales, the cultural life of military.

Knowing this, like Ishikawa’s “patrols” as demonstrated below, was a key to survival and or gaining economic success along the bases. When the US-Japan security discourse concerning “friendship” and “the natural flexibility” of Okinawans are invoked in such a way that expects Okinawans to take on the burden of hosting bases thereby suppressing other discourses which protest these arrangements, the only alternative for people awkwardly situated within these partial sovereign spaces is to find vulnerable sites within the normalized parameters of this discourse to take advantage of this arrangement to survive. This is the crux of what chuuto hanpa-ness and Lisa Lowe’s multiplicity encompasses—“the redefined lack of closure” (Lowe 1996: 70). Inoue Masamachi also points to this type of practice in more economic terms as “radical appropriation” (see Chapter 4) yet his form of in-betweeness accounts less for everyday practices along the fencelines than for broader political identity crafting for anti-base platforms. Lastly, within an orientalist framework, this practice is often vaguely yet potently labeled as a form of manipulation as former State Department’s Director of the Office of Japan Affairs, Kevin Maher, clearly illustrated with his now infamous statement that “Okinawans are masters of manipulation and extortion of Tokyo” (Vine 2001).

Akiko’s concept of flow has a secondary meaning. She aspires to alternatively brand Okinawa as a powerful agent with its own economic and spiritual power to be independent. Perhaps her notion of flow began while imagining the lives of her grandparents, who like many Okinawans during WWII, were living abroad in Peleliu (now Palau), one of the many Japanese colonies during the war, working as laborers when the war commenced. The stories of their transition back to Okinawa in such a chaotic time informed her understanding that Okinawans have long been mobile people and that its history of international trade, negotiating tributary relationships with the Qing imperial officials and the Satsuma clan, and years of cautious navigation between these delicate relationships with those with more fire power have made them masterfully skilled international diplomats. Her own father was born by candlelight as the US

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115 See Shimabuku (year) for her discussion of how Okinawan Civilian Administration officias in the early occupation years were positioned at the “limits of sovereignty” (364) and their range of resistance against numerous “Special Proclamations”

forces had bombed the Japanese colonial outpost. The memories of war and tales of the complex movement of Okinawan laboring bodies throughout Japanese colonial outposts in this period are prevalent in the making of champru discourse. The imaginary of Okinawans as international, mobile bodies, naturally capable of cross-cultural communication because of their history in this pre-war era is prevalent and can sometimes sloppily naturalize the issues of power and raison d’être for US base presence. Yet Akiko’s flow morphs in ways too radical to be easily inserted to be appropriated by more traditional touristic as well as militaristic discourses of friendship.

Her active promotion of chuuto hanpa cosmopolitanism to block the co-option of “friendship discourse” is evident in her television program “Shikina TV.” It is a U-stream show that has only aired one episode thus far with the aim to produce more and showcase Okinawa’s homegrown talent and “everyday local people.” Together with Hitosa Kakazu, a well known comedian and historical fact checker for the film industry in Okinawa, they intended to produce a show that was gritty and lighthearted. It would be a “casual hangout” of Okinawans assembled in this particular area of Naha City called Shikina, enjoying food, jokes, and yuntaku (Okinawan conversation—see Chapter One). Shikina, Akiko explained, is a historically significant site in the history of Okinawa. It is where diplomatic affairs with Qing court officials from China occurred in an informal setting away from the Shuri castle, long before Okinawa was forcibly brought under the Satsuma rule. These affairs took place upon a hillside that was transformed into a nostalgic Chinese landscape so that diplomats would feel at home and it is said many utaki (local animistic spirits) reside there and therefore is considered to be a sacred site as well. Drawing from these two characteristics of it being a spiritual and international site of diplomacy, she started a cafe there which serves as the backdrop of the TV program.

She explained that it bothered her that Okinawans would point to her as a prime model of “internationalism” (because of her contacts with so many foreigners and her international movement) and yet not consider that they were also a historically and contemporarily a cosmopolitan people and could use this as a vantage point to position themselves differently in a militarized landscape. This claim can be empowering in juxtaposition to the linear models of modernity which often time position Okinawa as a space still lacking in the progressive economic, cultural, and political skills and resources to be independent or make its own decisions to be heard by Tokyo or Washington D.C. Shikina TV was to promote this sensibility of cosmopolitanism within this alternative form of modernity which neither hinged on US base friendship politics nor on Japan as the intermediary for cultural global contact. The TV program was an invocation of a broader public sphere, which as Masamichi Inoue has noted with great detail in his work, often excludes Okinawan’s own version of their radical hybridity (2007: 168) Akiko’s desire to tap into this form of modernity encapsulating both a local groundedness and a worldly sophistication is precisely what Inoue refers to when he discusses the anti-base coalitions in Nago as being able to simultaneously signify two formerly competing ways discourses of Okinawan identity (as minshu/people and shimin/citizen) and merge them into one, “shimin became a metaphor for hybrid citizenship that was simultaneously grounded in locality, entangled in nationality, and involved in globality” (168). Shikina TV draws on these multiple significations with its rootedness in a specific historical site and with the people who
“naturally”\textsuperscript{117} made appearances on the television. “I wanted to have Okinawan people feel like they were international.” I want to say to them, “See, you are international and didn’t even know it!”

This is not how the dominant friendship discourse is routed. On one hand, she promotes consumerist forms of “international-ness” but in the way that privileges only certain kinds of movement, capital and positions. A more inert form of international friendship promoted from many military organizations reifies the hegemonic, naturalized notion of two separate culturally, racially different bodies clearly situated along the troubling East/West binary. The outcomes for these interactions is the promotion of improved communication to lessen interpersonal conflicts so that the status-quo masculinized, militarized operations can continue uninterrupted, rarely shifted. This is the crux of US-Okinawa friendship in militarized Okinawa.

Akiko’s model of friendship and cosmopolitanism does not directly address the military on these terms. In one way, this mimics post-war tourist campaigns which sought to efface the sight of military, not necessarily because it was easy acceptance but for increased capital to be brought to a devastated island (Figal 2012). Instead, her version of multiplicity is based on a normalization of difference that only arises as potentially stigmatizing by those disturbed by the refusal to abide by cultural or racial discriminating assumptions. Akiko’s chuuto hanpa-ness revolves around the creation of a product that is desireable yet not at great risk to be sacrifice-able. The negotiations are constant—as Ong has shown in her work with affluent Chinese families who appear on one hand to have escaped some racial hierarchy in part due to their mobility afforded them through economic and cultural capital and yet are forced to contend with with the classist/racist mentalities of some of their new wealthy California Anglo neighbors who protest their residential purchases with coded racialized language (Ong 1999: 101).

One could characterize these sets of negotiations by what Paul Gilroy would call “the politics of transfiguration” (as defined and discussed further in Chapter Four). It refers to the “imaginary anti-modern past and a postmodern yet-to-come” and whose aim, Gilroy argues, “is to enact the new modes of friendship, happiness, and solidarity that are consequent on the overcoming of the racial oppression on which modernity and its antimony of rational, western progress as excessive barbarity relied” (Gilroy 1993: 37-38). The following section elucidates these claims of harnessing the circulating, often discordant, imaginaries of dislocation to side step racist logics of Okinawans through the world of rap music and hip hop lifestyle.

\textbf{Flow through Rap and “Global Blackness”}

In my discussions with Akiko, it became clear to me that her connection to hip hop was beyond a trendy fashioning of a stereotypical sub-cultural youth identity. For Akiko, her sense of Okinawanness she partially formed by some forms of hip hop was inextricably linked to the base world. This connection to a global blackness and flow has allowed her significant wiggle room

\textsuperscript{117} In the interview, Akiko mentioned that she did little to seek out such a diverse range of foreign born or mixed race Okinawans to make an appearance on her show because they just happened to be around and available. The African-Okinawan drummer and dancers on her show for example attend her daughter's school. This was the proof that
to shape messages about an independent Okinawan cultural form that is capable of resisting traditional security discourses.

Akiko told me she was always curious about base space and practices from an early age. When I asked about her first experiences, she explained her early interest and inquisitive confusion stemming from a protest:

I actually just found my first essay I wrote in elementary school. It was about the peace chain we made around the base. It was a demonstration—holding hands around it...So I wrote in the essay that while in the peace chain, I saw that there were parks and swings and a slide. There were kids there. I wanted to know more about those kids who were just like me. I always heard that war is bad, the base is bad, peace is good. But, there are kids there. How can this base be all about war if kids are there? I was fascinated about what their life was like. Then I started English classes there and that was my first interaction with the base.

Every weekend, a Korean woman married to a man in the military signed her onto base and after the lessons finished, she played with the teacher’s children. These experiences of going to anti-base demonstrations and being a base visitor of this woman, also a product of militarized fenceline landscapes, produced conflicting emotions for a young elementary aged child. When the teacher’s husband was assigned new orders, she continued English lessons at conversation schools on Kokusai Street in Naha. Most of those teachers were military related club bouncers who moonlighted as English teachers at these language schools. She recalls the terrible, unorganized lessons but said this was her first introduction to a new cultural scene of music that she was absorbing from those teachers. She was moved by the urgency in the hip hop she heard. In her interactions with them, she came across the music of Tupac and rented his CD. “I studied his slang, the way he said things.” She was drawn to the struggles of urban life and solidarity formed by it. “It was not like here. People here were not like that. I wanted people to come together and organize but there was no fire. There was no urgency. I wanted people to think of themselves as Ryukyuan.”

But that Ryukyuan identity has been carefully manufactured over the years. Most notably, the US occupying administrative bodies in the early post war years were advised (by cultural anthropologists no less118) to deliberately heighten the sense of a separate national identity and return to an “original” Ryukyuan identity. In a move not so far removed from those earlier propaganda efforts, hip hop as an oppositional identity was made consumable and by the late 90’s, this more politicized form of rap was transforming into a soundscape she found unpalatable and morphing into an emergent “Tokyo sound.”

This coopting of hip hop was something Unkle Kaya, Akiko’s former music producer and now television personality in Okinawa, also noted in a separate interview (see Chapter 4). He observed, the hip hop arriving on the island by way of Black US military in the 1990’s had a very commercial sound and what hindered the original subversive lyrics that had first drawn him in was the fact that some Okinawan audiences expected and demanded a particular kind of

118 See Chapter One on the role of US anthropologists in shaping militarized propaganda in the post-war period.
Blackness to be performed. Therefore, few non-commercialized, innovative artists could break through the off-base market in Central Okinawa. As Paul Gilroy (2000) has written, much of the commercialized hip hop music that receives the most airplay has long disrupted the musical tradition of call and response embedded, albeit indirectly, in hip hop music. The direct dialogue has been displaced and the site of the caller can be from anywhere now, the subversive messaging of the local has been recuperated elsewhere Gilroy has argued (253). In Okinawa, for artists like Akiko and Unkle Kaya, what is significant is how one responds with all the interruptions and haziness of the routes on which these sounds travels and how and why it comes to be shaped as it is now. This exercise makes the older manufactured hybridity/friendship discourse slippery for placement on to what may erroneously labeled as a copied form of US American style. By focusing on the circulation, the fragmentation, the appreciation and yet transformation of the style to make it singularly Okinawan and potently conscious of the saturated power relations encompassing everyday Okinawans along the fencelines, a label of watered down hybridity cannot stick for the sake of a base-friendly champru identity.

Akiko said, “My earlier stuff was about oppression. I was talking about the Japanese government mostly because I loved the Americans. I was always like, ‘why do we have to rely on Tokyo to do something?’ This love for some US forms of cultural practice and her frustration with Tokyo was also one of the reasons for the creation of “Flow Manifesto.” She wanted a space for Okinawans and US Black military personnel in particular to come together to create something radical and hybrid that could not be recuperated in Tokyo. “Black people are always creating something dope. I was like, why can’t we do that? I don’t want to be Black but I want to be more like putting ourselves on the map—like, hey, ‘We are Okinawans!’

In some ways, Akiko is drawn to the cultural concepts of belonging inherent in the claims and expressions of Okinawan indigeneity. There are pitfalls and potent repercussions for doing so as referenced in chapter four, particularly for mixed race Okinawans as the discourse tends to center around blood-politics and notions of purity. One of the ways she avoids the pitfalls is by aligning indigeneity to a form of global Blackness.

While in college in the United States, her African American Studies professor asked why she was taking her course and she answered, “Because Africa is the original, the source of all things.” The professor stunned by her answer, replied she had never met a Japanese like Akiko to which she retorted, “I’m not Japanese. I’m Okinawan!” The idea of connecting to other people of color, to a “global south” outside the full reigns of the nation-state was appealing to her and felt freeing. Global blackness then, much like the earlier third world consciousness, was a concept that could shape her own organizing activities.

But Akiko has captured a different sensibility of a traditional appeal to this field. Her connection does not resonate with a “corporate multiculturalism” that Gilroy critiques in his work but is applied with a form of humanism that speaks to difference and a critical translation of how Okinawans can also be future-oriented outside of the binding traps of the romanticized Okinawan “good savage”/cosmopolitan hybrid interlocutor binary. This is what she always

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attempts to convey when she speaks in public to the press and on her radio shows on the significance of transracial/transnational flow. Its potency lies in the ability to disrupt the controlling processes that make only limited meanings of Blackness legitimately acceptable for circulation or articulation in militarized settings. In these settings, Black artists can still feel free enough to make cross-cultural, public critiques of the military or directly share memories of economic or social injustices as an impetus for enlisting without fear of being chastised by a superior. It also offers Okinawans a way to observe and/or interact with those artists and audience members and find meaningful ways to think about solidarity through the shared memories of incomplete citizenship and strategies to maneuver between modernities. An Okinawan mixed media artist whose work were being featured at the site where the “Flow Manifesto” event was being held approached me after I read my poem on being “in-between.” She whispered that too often, it is considered taboo to talk about this space of flow because it can be mistakenly, and dangerously aligned with being simply pro-base. Her artwork, she explained tried to touch on this space of finding future-oriented alignment, especially with a transnational Black consciousness in mind. It made me realize that for some Okinawans, global Blackness was more radical than even many Black Americans may realize.

**Akiko and Gendered Flow**

Traditional bridge metaphors also have strong gendered symbolism. In Okinawa, women are often thought of as the vehicle for what is often marketed as friendship opportunities. As noted in an earlier chapter, the US military specifically targeted military spouses and children as “soft power” (Alvah 2007) in the occupation period. In Okinawa, women in touristic positions were the intermediary to introduce Japanese mainlanders to Okinawan difference vis a vis the base presence. In his analysis of a promotional film distributed to mainland Japanese tourist offices, Okinawa was carefully packaged as exotic precisely because of the bases and women stood in as naturalized mediators. In the film, an Okinawan clerk served as hostess to both American and Japanese mainland guests and he surmised this was an exemplary tactic, employed successfully well after the Reversion period until today, often packaging the female body as standing in for Okinawa:

> …in the instance of interaction with the Okinawan, the Japanese, and the Americans are on the same side of the host-guest relationship and share in an uneven power relationship with the Okinawans, although the Japanese and the Americans cannot be fully identified with each other. Hospitality—a form of subservience in this instance—masks the implicit colonial relationship of this scene of exchange between host and guests” (Figal 2012: 179).

Throughout the occupation period to the present, “mama-sans” in their various forms (bar managers to housekeepers) were often seen as cultural ambassadors between military and Okinawans beyond just a sexualized “necessity” and sacrifice to protect the rest of the population by acting as a buffer to “boys being boys” stationed on the island or visiting for

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120 On November 9, 2011, *Stars and Stripes*, published a story, “Iwakuni’s ‘Mama-san’ becomes Honorary Marine” and discusses this unselfish nature of this “mama-san” who acted as a mother figure to the Marines.
These imaginaries were especially noted during a special fieldwork event I held called, Nappy Routes and Tangled Tales.

Akiko and I worked together to create a bilingual call to the general public to participate first online by submitting questions to a website I made specifically for the “Nappy Routes” event. In addition, filmmakers Kate Hawkins and Tory Jeffay who were in Okinawa to film their own documentary on US militarization, worked with me to film interviewees with whom I had previously met so that some of those generated questions from the website could be posed to them and they could in turn offer their own to the audience who would gather at the Ginowan event. These filmed excerpts would function as a “conversation starter” to air at the beginning of the live event. Many of the questions generated centered around this issue of “gendered flow” and a specific pattern of targeting women in these fenceline spaces emerged. Women were specifically victimized for “not having common sense” in these militarized spaces or not being

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121 See Molasky’s example from “The Cocktail Party” and how female characters are used to orient men lost on base.
neutral enough to be a savvy cultural mediator. This was common from both Okinawan and US American respondents.

Akiko’s lyrics toys with these gendered roles and the positioning of Okinawan women as subservient or manipulatable mediators. Okinawan women have often been characterized in various military forums I monitored as being sexualized beings for being in such close proximity to fencelines or tainted for being in these militarized spaces for too long. Akiko’s song “Oki Girls” however, is one attempt to unsettle these forms of masculinist discourses. The song targets Okinawan women who date US military but does not make a moral judgement against them as is common in some discussions of these women. Instead, she targets the men and uses the song as a way to suggest that practical education for these women is needed on how the masculinist world of the military is structured so as not to be taken advantage:

A: “I talk about the nonsense of guys playing us. Coming here and thinking they can play us. I talk about a fifteen year old girl and a thirty year old woman fighting over the same guy. And this guy catches a disease and went back home.”

M: Do you get flack from some Okinawan guys?

A: Yeah, they don’t like Amejo period. Because they are easy, stupid, being played. The guys see that I’m different, I’m not being taken advantage of and some even encourage me to take advantage of them! They say, ‘hey — why don’t you do a business with them?’

Akiko takes care in playing on the sexualization of women along the fencelines. She is hesitant in claiming they have achieved some form of feminist, self-liberation in making their own choices about who they can date despite the stigmatizing characterization of “Amejo” in Okinawa but she is also makes no moral judgement on their activities for doing so. In her own image branding, she is cautious of circulating tropes of sexuality in fenceline zones. For example in the video “Cypheric Acid” she appears fully clothed in a loose Bohemian style full length skirt and extra large scarf. This is jarring as she is juxtaposed to a more “decorative” Okinawan woman with very little on and serves as the sexualized female object sucking on a red lollipop and dancing provocatively throughout the video.

Akiko also controls the image of her flexibility with US military artists from being easily inserted into the simplistic trope of “slutty Amejo” by playing on motherhood. She brings in her biracial daughter into the video and is affectionately by her side not as a prop but in an inclusive communal way. And yet, she is not exhibiting the ideological ryosai kenbo (good wife, wise mother) image of Japanese womanhood but confidently raps with the two men (who worked for the US military) in the video, equalizing her Okinawan difference through language and the

122 In an conversation with former military lawyer and current civilian attorney in Okinawa, Annette Eddie-Calligain, I was able to confirm that these types of discourses are commonly invoked in the cases she has taken.

123 See also Arakaki (2013) for a selection of primary interview excerpts where strong negative discourses of “amejo” conceptualizations emerge.
vernacular act of dissing. For example, she slipped in the line, “you didn’t have shit until the
government bought your ass…Take your masks off Mr. GI, I already checked your payscales
online.”

That particular line became a controversial point of contestation with her collaborators on
the video. She said they became upset when she posted those specific verses on social media,
drawing attention to the idea that they had “sold out” by joining the military. These were men
who rap against a large system of thinking that entraps Black people into a submissive form of
consciousness and here she boldly accused them, in a simple line, of being complicit in doing just
that. By positioning herself as a woman who is savvy enough to check their published
government ranked salaries online, she is able to deflect what could potentially come off as
“smooth talking” supposedly desiring Orientalized female bodies. This works off the circulating
trope from the days when Okinawans were much more economically insecure and women were
thought to be easily wooed by the economic might of relatively high paid GI’s. With an
increasingly class shift of enlisted military who can barely make their paychecks stretch off-base
as before, the former trope can easily be deflated by women like Akiko and activists like
Takazato Suzuyo.\footnote{Suzuyo has spoken and written about this shift in women’s economic empowerment in comparison to an
economically insecure enlisted military, many who are victims of loan sharks and high interest debt repayment
companies. CITE.}

She held her ground and refused to remove the lines from her page. “I told em, you all
are lying. I’m not lying!” Using her knowledge of military culture and local fenceline culture,
she is able to capture the attention of this cross-national audience. In my conversations with a
handful of housing agents and employees at insurance companies, I noted a similar ability to use
their intimate knowledge of military pay scales to equalize themselves through language. I often
saw this in action when I would sit in the housing offices to pay my own monthly rent and
overheard friends in the military complain of rude treatment from these women precisely
because of their lower rank.

Akiko’s lyrics poke fun at a masculinist military culture and the reality for some of these
young men. They can sometimes appear desperate in her songs and she highlights that some
women in fact have the upper hand in these situations, a positionality she insists more should
ascertain. For example, she ended her verses in “Cypheric Acid” by making fun of the cheaper
cell phone carrier with its notoriously poor reception on the bases, SoftBank, which many
enlisted military tend to have in comparison to a more widely used ‘off-base’ cell phone plan,
Docomo: “You can’t have the math to my Docomo, your bank soft money, that’s why you never
get to see me.”

In other performances, she has drawn attention to the other situations she finds comical
such as the fact that these enlisted Marines in the northern part of the island are so isolated and
on relatively stricter curfews than Marines further south. Because they are not allowed to drive,
they travel to other socially active parts of the island on the military bus “The Green Line.” In
her song she performed at the O-Club (Officers Club) at Kadena Air Force Base to a largely
African American audience, she told me about a line in her performance that got the audience
especially excited, “I’m a see you later, when you get your weight up; Hop your ass back on that
Green Line.” Laughing about this memory, she added, “And people went crazy! They loved it.” Bringing in a “kill” on a verse in rap is coveted skill and using her insertion of local, military knowledge, allows her to do that more effectively. She said, “These types of expressions give more power to local women. Things are bad, people are getting hurt. It is funny to see guys going on the Green Line all the way from Camp Hansen to Urasoe to see some girl. It is funny to make fun of these situations—the aruaru (the everyday) things in this kind of environment.

**Chuuto Hanpa is not Bridge Talk**

In a traditional friendship discourse, the term “bridge people” is widely used to deflect real social and economic inequalities in Okinawa. Aihwa Ong has noted in her work that “bridge people” discourse is often invoked locally and abroad with strong references to the comprador class as expert negotiators who act in-between “east and west.” One of the problems with this “bridge” talk in the case of the mobile Guangxi entrepreneurs she follows, is that the imaginaries that are invoked seem to refer to them as an evolved comprador-like figure and this imaginary leaves out the fact that their practices are born of the colonial condition. Much like friendship discourse, bridge talk imaginaries can be safely invoked regularly in US military publications with its symbolic erasures and connections to the conditions which have placed women as primly situated in this type of “middling modernity” (Ong 1999).

Akiko does not bridge in this way. She is more interested in a form of chuuto hanpa—a radically hybrid form of hustling within the more calcified discourses of nation, on/off base binaries and ideologies of national security. Her intimate management of her relationships with military men is a useful illustration of how these more benign forms of highly gendered
amabassadorial bridge making is unwound. In her music, she toys with the playful notion of being in-between and having a cultural mastery of multiple systems of knowledge enough to be a master hustler with skills to reposition oneself. She argues that it was her ability to speak both English and Japanese that allowed her to do this. “There is no border between the two cultures in me. And if you live here, you should have no problem doing this.” There is no bridge then, only a shifting flow of positionings. This is chuunto hanpa for Akiko and a practice she has promoted through all her activities around Okinawa.

I asked Akiko if her idea of flow was about a transcendence of categories to shake up the routinization of discourse employed to talk about fencelines, to move from the “bridge” talk. She responded:

It was always on my conscious—to connect Okinawan people. Sometimes when you’re in Okinawa you get small minded. There’s so many divisions here and you forget that they are ranks, military, Okinawan, mainland people, and you forget that we’re all one. We don’t know our enemy—we think it’s some individuals who come out here to live on base to make some money. It’s not them. It’s the new world order. It’s the people who want to take control of this earth. That’s who we should be fighting. Having a personal hate when you look at American who comes off the base and giving them a nasty look…that’s propaganda. It’s wrong. That’s why I wrote to know hip hop is to know who your enemy is. Righteous rappers are dangerous. And those in power knew a revolution was coming and then they mainstreamed hip hop…To know the history of hip hop will help you understand how we are treated as Okinawa in this country of Japan, to know about power. Because we are nothing but toilet paper to them to wipe their shitty ass. We didn’t ask them to do pearl harbor. We suffered the consequence of all this conflict. We victimize ourselves, have poor identity.

These sentiments have fueled her involvement and vision for her more recent projects. For Akiko, the culprit of the current militarized landscape lies inherently on the policies of Tokyo and vestiges of colonial ideologies and she frequently invokes the trope of sacrifice of Okinawa. This belief has strengthened her passion to support and showcase locally made Okinawan products has been growing and sprouting not from a stance of popularizing and capitalizing on an exotic, touristic image but that from what she called “ghetto ingenuity.” She regularly promotes Okinawan made fashion such as Yokang and other local Okinawan rap, soul and hip hop by way of her branding/marketing company “Cipher City” and her weekly radio show

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125 See Angst (2001) for discussion on ways “ambassadorial” efforts of women are quietly effaced from touristic efforts in places where brothels have shaped the military landscape in Central Okinawa.

126 For example, at every chance she gets, she freely promotes the works of artists who are creating “something from nothing—even using what was used to kill your family and make it into something new to keep your tradition going.” She told this to me one day while showing me an artist’s “bullet shell bingata,” a collection of military trash used to make Okinawan bingata prints.

127 Yokang recycles dead white coral from the surrounding seas into wedding dresses: http://yokang-wedding.jp
“Blank Monday” on 87.3 FM in Okinawa. She has inserted herself into the world of cuisine and started a modern Okinawan cuisine at her newly opened “Cipher Cafe” in the southern part of the island. She promotes contemporary Okinawan poetry of varying political degrees by way of her events “Flow Manifesto.” In this way, she is committed to much of the “planetary humanism”128 embedded in the anti-base activism, especially those spearheaded by some Okinawan feminists. And yet, she is not keen on calling herself one nor participating in mass rallies around the base. This is something that I noticed to be true for other Okinawans in these spaces. The rage against the everyday processes of militarization simmer and yet they channel their rage in quieter forms, sometimes mistaken as complacency but what I believe is slowly building into that which activists can capitalize on in much the same way those in Scotland have with a referendum for independence.129

In a recent Vogue article, Akiko noted, “I wouldn’t call myself an activist because I’m trying to make a little money. . .I’d say I’m an activist on the low.” This statement is telling of the delicate relationships along the fencelines. For one, she cannot make direct statements against the base without being interpellated into a particular calcified position. There is no gray area in these binaries and once she is labeled coldly as “anti-base,” her ability to actively engage people working on the fencelines diminishes. Blacklisting is a very real occurrence and translation jobs, consulting positions, side “hustling” jobs will disappear. A number of interviewees mentioned this quite bluntly to me. A twenty-five year old Okinawan housing agent explained to me that she was very sympathetic to protesters and sometimes felt inclined to join but was terrified of losing her job if she did. “You can’t slip up. You won’t get hired anywhere. Also, Japanese companies don’t want to hire you after you’ve worked on base so long because they think we are not expected to work as hard and haven’t learned good skills on base or working with Americans.”

In addition, there is the issue of the stylization of activism. In our last interview, Akiko spoke positively of activists protesting the building of the sea base at Henoko and the continued deployment of Osprey over residential areas and acknowledged their principled beliefs, “They are trying the best they can. But you know, they look miserable and hard. And I think, man, I don’t want to be like that. Whatever I’m trying to advocate, I want it to look good, fashionable. It’s sad that people focus on the superficial stuff but it’s true. The protestors looks hard, like victims, like they are angry. I want to make an impact too.” Her impact is less about a direct engagement against the military but a direct appeal to Okinawans to change into new radical, cosmopolitan figures precisely because of their position in the middle. Yet, she is ever so

128 Paul Gilroy describes this form of humanism as future-oriented because doing so directly counters the logic of white supremacy that blocks that occupation of the temporal space. It allows for alterity outside a neoliberal encampment of race (Gilroy 2000: 537).

129 A group of independence activists from the organization Ryukyu Okinawa no Jiko Ketteiken o Juritsu Suru Kai” (Committee for Establishing the Ryukyu-Okinawa Right to Self-Determination) travelled to Scotland in 2014 to monitor the vote for independence and take notes on strategies, tactics, and lessons. "As the government of Japan, we’d like to decline to comment (on the Scottish result), but a very chaotic situation was avoided and that’s a good thing. “ Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga remarked at a press conference in reference to separatists in Okinawa(Mainichi Japan, September 20, 2014).
cautious that this in-between-ness is not a stagnant, inert space but is attempting to build on the growing discourse that shapes Okinawan multiplicity with a heightened aesthetics of self.

**Everyday In-Betweeness: Flow and Patrols**

At the Ryubo Department store in Naha, a special exhibit, “Memory of Eyes” featured selected works from ten well known Okinawan photographers. The photos displayed were primarily centered on the late pre-reversion days to the present, a collage of intimate scenes of life around this intense jural shift. We unexpectedly ran into one of the featured photographers, Mao Ishikawa. I knew we had mutual friends and when I mentioned them, she readily gave us an impromptu tour of her work and discussed her own positioning as a photographer. She explained that her subjects were people she was comfortable around and vice versa. This is obvious in most of her work. In one photo, a man wearing nothing but dirty underwear and a jocular smile, stared into the lens as only a close relative or friend would. In the photos from her books, gritty close-up scenes ranging from US soldiers getting tattoos to interracial families living in tight quarters to bar workers at ease, participating in the mundane, daily normative acts all the while together, these scenes depict a quick-paced mobile, transitory world of fenceline life.

At the exhibit, Ishikawa led us to a table with her other photography book collections she had on hand. She described how her work has been a personal, visual ethnographic passion, documenting the lives of people on the move and in-between the fences. Ishikawa’s *Fences, Okinawa* has been a particular inspiration to me in that she captures that which is beyond the dominant tourist and security imaginaries to document how “flow” is framed. When I shared this with her, she paused and explained that she has long been doing what I was just now starting. Ishikawa has been walking the fencelines and these “off-base” spaces, documenting movement and life along these semi-porous borders ever since she worked in the military bars herself serving military GI’s in central Okinawa. Her intimate connections to subjects who embody racializing and sexualized militarized violence in the most intimate of ways gave her an insight to framing the complexities of life in these transnational fenced borderlands. She would continue to return to this subject matter in various aesthetic approaches but always toying with how both US soldiers and Okinawans who engage in a form of flow have the ability to usurp military rationalities yet can never quite reorder the terrain quite enough for substantial change. Her photos seem to show that is not necessarily within a forced, commercialized friendship where change is possible but in a mutual exchange of everyday activities, with an acknowledgement that the terrain on which these interactions occur is shaped by the overarching unequal power relations. For example, her photos overtly highlight the barbed wire fences, military planes flying closely to residential buildings, the ominous trespassing signs, Okinawan protesters surrounding gates while also offering photos of buzzed cut military men face painting smiling children, Okinawan residents joking with US military men off-duty, military men and women enjoying themselves off-base in a way that makes the viewer realize that they are still tenderly young.

She explained to me that when she returns to specific militarized, fenceline areas, she would ask Okinawn friends who live in these spaces, whom she called “patrols,” about recent fenceline news on the ground. Her friend, who owned a yakitori-ya (place to buy Japanese
skewered meats and vegetables) for example, would tell her that his latest set of “regular guys” were on the move to a new assignment in Australia. This vendor clearly understands military movement and deployments from this perspective. Other times, her news comes from bar workers and the bar manager, “the mama” who encouraged her to take as many photos of Okinawa along these borderland spaces and to some extent see the urgency in documenting the shifts as a historical move. In her book she quotes one of these bar “mama-sans” as telling her, “‘Mao, the bases are changing year by year. Take photos and record them as much as you can.’”

Because she can hear about militarized movements this way, she can document this kind of constant flow better in her photography, a surreal landscape caught between multiple modernities. This is not to say these interactions she captures equate to a form of friendship between these groups. It is a documentation of how the kinds of spaces where there are multiple forms of contacts and that information is transmitted, circulated within these sites and without necessarily with disciplinary consequence from state entities.

Over time, the flow of these communicative routes sometimes move beyond the control of the state. She notes in her book for example, that upon finding a rope suspension bridge that Marines use for combat training the the jungly northern training area of Kunigami, she was not quite sure if she were in Okinawa, nor what temporal space she fell into. Her description of this site had quite the feeling of Alice in Wonderland, as if the fall into the deep rabbit hole led her into a dizzying otherworld, disrupting her notions of time and space. The “keep out” signs warned her that she was venturing onto Marine property but the lack of fences and soldiers made her ponder on the ultimate crisis in which all Okinawans face:

This environment made me feel a weird sensation. Is this really Okinawa? Without our knowledge, the foreign troops are being trained for war in these beautiful greeneries of deep mountains. I felt as though I was having an illusion via time machine. Instead of being angry I was experiencing the surreal situation. (Ishikawa 2011: 21)

These sentiments run deep for many Okinawans. Confusion, anger, and the surreal nature of militarization in these spaces can be intense when the boundaries of on/off base are fuzzy as described in Chapter 2.

Over time, these “patrols” feel the rhythms and see patterns in militarized movement and reports begin to circulate into the broader discourse of fenceline spaces. These patrols see porous openings which are supposed to be concealed. Gate guards see sexual “ambassadorial” relationships that are supposed to be hidden in the bedrooms and the gendered and sexualized “diplomacy” move in and out of the base by monitoring sign in sheets and giving gate passes. Gate guards see sexual “diplomacy” move in and out of the base by monitoring sign in sheets and giving gate passes. They see ‘security’ rupture and recompose on the fenceline seams. They see the states of exception and the extralegal enacted daily, those states that do not enter the photographic representations of Okinawa in the more nostalgic photo exhibits or touristic campaigns as

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130 Cynthia Enloe’s discussion of beaches bases and bananas as well as maneuvers speak to this kind of movement of women.
described in chapter two. Through the eyes of patrols, memories are gathered and Ishikawa delivers them poignantly in her books to make a statement on Okinawa in movement. This type of “flow” Ishikawa documents is a cultural practice that is slightly off the grid of more hegemonic forms of power, yet still capable of being managed through the multiple routes of governmentality. For one, her documentation of these borderland spaces was not looked upon well by all. There was a shock factor to the grittiness, the nudity of some subjects, and the intermingling of Okinawan and military subjects engaged in what could sometimes appear to be friendly, naturalized encounters. It was a feminist approach of showing women as their own agents, much in the way Akiko attempts to do so in her songs. It was a re-rendering of the imagery of women who have been positioned as one dimensionally situated along the fencelines through forms of very real structural violence. The showcasing of flow in this case was tempered and touched a nerve many were not ready to accept nor could not incorporate into the case against US-Japan security logic.

On one hand Okinawans are positioned as diasporic, not-quite-Japanese and therefore “bridge-like” and naturally friendly interlocutors for global trade, multilateral security arrangements (ie hosting the foreign Americans) and on the other they are limited in the scope of how far they can engage in diverse public discourse concerning their own livelihood—Ospreys, environmental questions, textbooks… This is not lost on many Okinawans who have to resort to a flexibility that is situated between both positionings. In Chapter 4, Nana Uehara found that she was snubbed by some vendors who refused to sell her items that she would in turn resell to military customers. Those vendors were not Okinawan she noted, but in fact young newcomers from mainland Japan, some of whom have taken a strong and vocal anti-base position (stemming party from an environmentally conservationist stance), who she found particularly dismissive that she would engage in contact with military personnel for business. As noted earlier, this was particularly upsetting to her because she felt they were not sensitive to how delicate the routing of flow can be in Okinawa and that one is able to engage but sharply disengage with military to make sharp critiques for survival.

When I first arrived on the island, somewhat worried about surviving financially on my meager fellowship for a family of four, some anti-base activist friends suggested that my husband look for work on base. Surprised by this I wondered aloud why they would not be offended with what might be his small part in a continued militarization. “This is the reality of our situation,” an Okinawan friend who consults on an anti-base legal organization told me quite matter-of-factly. “This is how we are forced to survive here.” The fact that we were talking about these things at a flea market on the Marine base of Camp Foster, which is partially opened for these gatherings of Okinawans and SOFA status employees, only seemed to further emphasize the complex entanglements in these spaces. These personal negotiations and rationalizations that people must make everyday is indeed a part of the larger political landscape that are yanked on during the voting system. Threats of job loss and funding are prominent and

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131 The line of Okinawans demonstrate the eagerness to enter these MCCS flea markets to find a bargain from families ready to leave Okinawa or Filipino and Okinawan spouses or base workers who have found a way to capitalize on the sell of used items. Other buyer include military families on tight budgets in need of used items all gather in these kinds of places. The interactions at these sites are fascinating and tell a more complicated story of class, gender, and labor on the fencelines that exceed the limits of this ethnography.
well documented. In fact after Okinawans elected Takeshi Onaga for governor on a largely anti-base platform, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s administration announced a record-high national budget but a record cut in the amount to be allocated for Okinawa, down sixteen billion yen from the previous budget (Martin 2015). This was a clear sign from the administration, along with his widely repudiated snub of the newly elected governor who he refused to see on his official visit to Tokyo in December 2014, that Okinawa would only be considered equal to other mainland islands if it accepts the status quo militarized positioning outside of their own local interests.

Aihwa Ong has pointed out that “flexible” Chinese subjects with significant material and symbolic resources can maneuver some Orientalist discourses and disciplinary regulations of the individual (via the management of the family unit) while also using them to evade these forms. Not one to characterize this kind of movement as somehow outside all forms of governance, Ong puts into tension the various “modalities of governmentality,” from the state to the family and how they “intersect and have effects on each other, variously encoding and constraining flexibility in global (re)positioning” (1999:113). This is useful for thinking about “flow” and a conceptualization of chuuto hanpa in Okinawa. Mao’s patrols may not all have these kinds of symbolic or material resources and may have to rely on a more stealth-like approach to reposition themselves away from the disciplinary actions of the state (ie., using gossip, rumors, and base connections to move goods across the fencelines) than those like Akiko who does have a more secure symbolic capital to do it more openly.

**Militarized Flow**

The term “interoperability” is a term touted within defense circles and its broader definition is one that is often invoked in the broader civilian concepts of friendship:

1. the ability of forces from different nations to work effectively together given the nature of the forces and the combined military organizational structure…
2. the effectiveness of the combined military organizational structure…and (3) the degree of similarity of technical capabilities of the forces from different nations, reflecting their fungibility in supporting coalition military (Hura 2000: 8).

As Jon Mitchell has found in his extensive investigative reporting, this term is used by the Japanese Cabinet interchangeably with the terms “integrated” and “seamless” and has suggested that this more forthcoming alliance is a show of Japan’s nationalist fervor on the rise. Abe’s most recent brazen moves to shift into a more openly militaristic nation-state has upset many subjects in Okinawa and across mainland Japan. Seamless interoperability then is about militarized flow and security discourse as expressed in the everyday around the fencelines, is highly masculine and tends to shut down feminist concerns (see Chapter 3). This voice, which can be found in military forums online, on AFN, in pro-base Okinawan business associations all...

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132 Scholars have been closely tracking the current and present effects of the new, vague secrecy law, “Specially Designated Secrets Protection Law” (tokutei himitsu no hogo ni kansuru hōritsu) that was passed into law on December 6, 2013. Professor of Japanese law, Lawrence Repeta asserts this law will be especially detrimental for journalists or activists attempting to point out the increasing role of militarized Japanese state (Repeta 2014).
tend to overlook the major feminist concerns and dismiss them as secondary to an overarching “global threat” or relegated to the non-rationale realm and ignored. Carol Cohn’s work on “nukespeak” in the US Department of Defense is applicable for the case of transnational militarized flow in Okinawa. She argued, “The dominant voice of militarized masculinity and decontextualized rationality speak so loudly in our culture, it will remain difficult for any other voices to be heard until that voice loses some of its power to define what we hear and how we name the world – until that voice is delegitimated” (Cohn 2004: 360).” The rationale that is widely spread in both US and Japanese media is that North Korea and China are unpredictable and that the only way to prevent from invading this feminized island nation-state is with this militarized, masculine flow. This differs from a previously circulated characterization of postwar Japan as having the role of feminized victim. As Lisa Yoneyama has noted, “the amnes(t)ic remembering of the nation’s past has been closely linked to the production of memories of women and mothers as victims of the patriarchal and military regime prior to the war’s end, as as postwar victims of US nuclear and military domination” (Yoneyama 38). Increasingly with greater “interoperability” between the United States and Japan, the overlapping production of these memories as past victim and future aggressor is creating notable tensions in mediatized imaginaries of Okinawans.

In Okinawa, the challenges to the tensions and the production of the discourse of these new military flows have been enormous and there are a variety of performance and art-based forms of protest which poke fun at this type of flow being enacted and imposed on Okinawans. Jon Mitchell reported on one such form performance piece in front of the security cameras and fenceline at Camp Hansen. Between the fences and the semi-permanent anti-base protest camp, actors in rubber masks and inside a giant shisa performed their protest:

...two dozen people accompanied by a massive shīsa were in close pursuit of Abe and Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General Shigeru Ishiba. As the crowd whooped and blasted trumpets, the shīsa chomped its teeth, forcing the terrified politicians to stumble — until finally, with nowhere else to run, they were driven into the sea.

Mao Ishikawa, who directed this act and photographed it for documentation, told Mitchell:

“I want these photographs to show the many different ways that Okinawans protest — as well as the full range of their anger...On Okinawa, the shīsa is like a god that protects us and chases away bad things. The Japanese government has done so many bad things to Okinawa. It truly is the lowest of the low.”

Instead of conceding to the idea of militarized flow/seamlessness or even acknowledging the rhetoric of Okinawans as inert and defenseless, this performance plays on more indigenous folk tales and on discourses of visibility and vanishings. The confluence of a Welsh journalist (Jon Mitchell) to document the performance for a larger audience outside the panoptican, US

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133 See Hugh Gusterson’s discussion on Orientalism and nukespeak (Gusterson 1999:127)
Americans on Okinawa who supported this project, and Okinawan artists working together would normally be a solid portrayal of international friendship and hybridity supported by the base supporters and yet the anti-base message is largely ignored and cannot be recuperated into

Mao Ishikawa and crew performing a protest comedy in front of the fencelines and security cameras at the controversial site of Henoko. Photo courtesy of Jon Mitchell.

Signs of protest along the fencelines at Camp Hansen. Photo by author.

Americans on Okinawa who supported this project, and Okinawan artists working together would normally be a solid portrayal of international friendship and hybridity supported by the base supporters and yet the anti-base message is largely ignored and cannot be recuperated into
their security discourse of friendship. In this case, these performers usurped notions of neoliberal friendship and flexibility to gain leverage on the fencelines.134

The strategy of *chuuto hanpa*—being radically in between then is a way to be out of sync, just slightly out of range of the scopic regime of surveillance and management of the racial state. For example, Ishikawa’s subjects in her photos are situated in such a way that denies the Manichean logic of binarism. They are active subjects, not easily insertable into the orientalist tropes of Okinawa *champru*-ness. Ishikawa seems to suggest that Okinawans in these fenceline spaces are monitoring mobility, not passively but with some intention to dodge their own Orientalist positioning.

In the introduction to her book she notes, “When I walk around the towns I can clearly see how the US military operates as I see the soldiers movement” (3). She then maps politics of security onto the mobility of bodies and as evident in some of her later more graphic photos, the mapping happens through nude bodies.135 The memory of the eyes captures movement just off beat, just out of sync of the metronome of modernity. When Ralph Ellison (year) explains that invisibility for Blacks in the US is also about being temporally out of sync, he is pointing to this in between state where an apparition of presence hums just above our auditory threshold, and out of step with the beat. Invisibility then is being out of range of sight and sound.

“Memory of Eyes” is in some ways a form of testimonial practice to not necessarily work within the dominant time signature as Paul Gilroy would call that in-step rhythm with dominant forms of modernity, but as a way to witness the alternative beat outside the recognized forms of modernity. Her Okinawan subjects are not Orientalized or posed in such a way to represent a stagnant hybridity for *champru* campaigns:

Much like how the more radical Hiroshima narrators invoke the “never again” stories outside the domains of the "bright" touristic metaphors framed by the city in their revitalization efforts, Ishikawa and her fellow Okinawan photographers at the “Memory of Eyes” exhibit challenge the scopic, dominant narratives which outline the parameters of “peaceful Okinawa” by offering alternative tales and images of these spaces affected by war by finding beauty and humanity in those who are out of sync with them, including Black soldiers, Filipina bar workers, poor white soldiers, mixed Okinawans. Put differently, her work emphasizes a heterogeneity of Okinawa that can be fluid but also born of violence.

134 Aihwa Ong (1999) offers detailed examples of how affluent and “flexible” Chinese would engage with racializing complaints from mostly affluent White neighbors. Instead of selling their homes to a non-Chinese person, they would instead quietly upset them by donating their home to a homeless person. Unable to sidestep racial stereotypes through class, they essentially used their own understanding of neoliberal hypocrisy to retaliate.

135 This is important for a biopolitical reading of contemporary Okinawa as this collapse of the metaphor of the body and its (sexual) movement with the struggle for territorial control from Japan and the US is a common move in Okinawa as Annmaria Shimabuku (2012) has eloquently discussed.
Perhaps it was because I told her about my mixed background and how this research was a personal project when Ishikawa beckoned me to her book *Fences, Okinawa* and opened it up to her photo of a memorial at the Chatan seawall. Painted onto the wall, where layers of fading memorials by local residents and US military share this constantly transforming canvas, was a memorial note to Frank Allen, a young man who was born and raised in Okinawa and who had become a Lance Corporal in the Marine Corps. The paragraph on the cement block was written by close friends of Allen, who was killed shortly after being deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Storm in 1991. “He was half Okinawan—he grew up here,” she remarked. “He was so young and he was one of the first.” That seemed to strike her as ironic, deeply troubling, and worthy of a story that she wished to share with other Okinawans through that photo. The memorial is now painted over with graffiti or other memorials, perhaps a quick note to a lover or a pep message for Kubasaki’s volleyball team. More likely perhaps, it will serve as a unique background for “selfie” photos by mainland tourists as it has become a popular stop for capturing the exotic American landscape of Okinawa — graffiti against an iconic blue ocean. Something however in that fleeting moment has now been captured by Ishikawa and the memory of her own eye becomes disruptive.
This portrayal of in-betweeness is thematic in her work. It seeks to grapple with a modernity that is formed in the productive space of the colonial blind spot and alternative to the one framed by US/Japan security logics. It cannot be recuperated easily into the tourist narrative nor that of security logics precisely because of the diversity of her subjects. Defining security is tricky in Okinawa with because it "assumes a stable and homogenous national subject" (Masco year?: 332) and Ishikawa’s portrayals of humans caught in this complex web of militarized borderlands exceeds the dominant narrative of national security that is most circulated within military circles.

**Forced Authentic Flows**

Despite the fact that some individuals and institutions do not promote “flow” nor this type of bridge discourse, there are ostensibly authentic interactions. On weekends at Ginowan Tropical Beach, I observed large family parties of mixed generations that included mixed couples and the...
layout of food at their tables easily revealed a mix of commissary goods bountifully shared. Their interactions looked easy and genuinely inclusive. I encountered many military expatriates who participate in *moais* with other Okinawans. I participated in conversations with family members and their friends from the base side who meet at a local gas station outside Camp Foster with local Okinawans car enthusiasts and socialize in a shared space. I do not dismiss that there are constant authentic engagements between members of the US military and Okinawans, despite the belief that some anti-base activists such as Mr. Matsuda (see chapter 3) hold, that “true friendship” with people in the military is impossible.\(^{136}\)

One pastor I interviewed in the central part of Okinawa helped me to understand the mechanics of these forced notions of hybrid friendship to juxtapose against those less beneficial of structural violence. He directs a bilingual congregation and with his wife, raises mixed race children, some of whom attend public Okinawan school and another in a private international school. His mixed child in an Okinawan public school, he attested, was more accepted as wholly Okinawan and had a much healthier social life than the child in the private school. He is very conscious of a manufactured hybridity promoted in both international schools such as OCSI and at many “mixed” congregations on the island but has hope the kind of flow he believe is present at his church can emerge in other fenceline spaces where ethnocentrism makes *chuuto hanpa* practices even more necessary:

> We don’t even talk about American/Japanese bridging…we just think it’s one culture. I won’t go so far as to say we have created a new culture. It’s that we get along so well it’s not even an issue. This is what’s supposed to happen at the school but it’s not and I realize why now. There are people there who know this and we are hoping that it’ll change there as it has here.

Others have a more complex relationship with framing *chuuto hanpa*-ness for their children and find that they are entrapped with their own militarized parameters of belonging and claiming the island. As described in Chapter 4, mixed race Okinawans have to access multiple interpellations when defining themselves as Okinawans. One retired Marine sat down with me for an interview about his mixed race Okinawan child who attends a public Okinawan school. Conscious of the realities some mixed Okinawans endure at school, he tries to maintain a constant presence at her school functions so she will not be interpellated as *shima haafu* (island half)\(^{137}\) which he rationalized would boost her esteem and prevent bullying. He seemed genuinely concerned for her sense of belonging yet I could not help to wonder if his action below denied her potential edginess of her own *chuuto hanpa*-ness to deal with the sensitive topic of militarized violence as she grew older. He relayed the following story of an incident at her school:

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\(^{136}\) Matsuda in particular was upset that Okinawan cities would allow for military involvement in local traditions like the Naha *tsunahiki* (tug-of-war) as these were seemingly facetious attempts to normalize the spatial and cultural binaries between on/off base. He asked me rhetorically, “Why are the base people (*gunjin*) we are against even involved in this?”

\(^{137}\) See chapter four for a discussion on classed, racialized meanings of “island half.” Usually refers to mixed race Okinawans who do not speak English, lives with a single Okinawan mother or family member, and is economically disadvantaged.
I have an old Marine Corps t-shirt...my daughter looked at me one day, she was about five [years old]. I was brushing her teeth and had that t-shirt on and she goes, ‘kore ga warui hito deshoo (Is this a bad person)?’ Why do you think this Marine is a warui hito (bad person)? And she says, well kiita (I heard that). I tell her ‘ok, no problem, keep brushing your teeth. WIFE?! Why is our daughter looking at this WWII Marine and saying warui hito?’ And she goes ‘the school went to the Peace Prayer Park yesterday and they might have said something.’ I go to school and call out the sensei. ‘My daughter looked at my shirt with a Marine on it and said he was warui hito. ‘Ahhh, the lady doing the explanation might have said things about the Marines,’ Yadda yadda yadda.. I’m like, do you know what I do? She’s half. You know I was in the Marine Corps. That shit will stop now. Period. You are a teacher, you watch what these people are saying in our kids’ heads. My daughter is half. These kids are running around saying warui hito and she knows daddy was a Marine, how do you think that’s going to make her feel? ‘Ahhh so da ne. (oh, I see)”

While this Marine’s notion of hybridity is complicated by his concern for his daughter’s acceptance and his own relationship with her, the notion of flow is clumsily collapsed and could be translated as not being a fully formed notion of heterogeneity and displacement in a militarized zone. His work identity as a Marine is complexly integrated into his national identity and critiques of militarization are taken personally. This is just one of the many examples from interviews whereby the possibility for that delicate negotiation was hindered by strict adherences to “materialist concepts of hybridity” (Lowe 1996).

**Conclusion**

In the previous chapters, I discussed the militarized borderlands and the spaces of contact where multiple dislocations occur, the security imaginaries deployed to further militarize these spaces as sites of containment, and the multiple negotiations that occur for people most sensitive to these fragile spaces, mixed Okinawans and Black US soldiers who are also insecurely and awkwardly located in the US frames of security. In this chapter, I focused directly on a few of those actors who mediate and create these delicate fenceline spaces by directly transforming the meanings of flow and dislocation. This chapter has also detailed the use and abuse of concepts “flow” and hybridity and the deliberate shifts and transnational, cautious alliances directly under a disciplinary yet shift security optic along the fenceline.

Through the use of extensive ethnographic pieces and the insertion of interview “panels” before several chapters, I have attempted to create a bricolage of overlapping discourses and memories of fenceline spaces with a layering effect of a rensegaki. Aaron Gerow (2003) wrote that this once popular performance style mixed stage performance with film scenes (same actors) and in its most recent recuperation in Takamine Go’s film Tsuru-Henry, acts as a:

new mode of expression” for Okinawans to talk back to the appropriations of Okinawan difference. The popular film, he argues, was pivotal for many Okinawan audiences because of its specific rearticulation and localization of
Okinawan difference, the obscurity of sovereignty and its strange triangulation of security through the body of the mixed race Okinawan key actor, Henry. It allowed for a blurring of the transpacific memories, tales, and circulating discourses of national/global security and a constructed flow. He concludes adamantly that like the film, Okinawa, “wanders between the past and the present, bearing the burden of the past, yet taking multiple views to rework it into the new forms of expression (302).

This is an ambitious conclusion yet indicative of more contemporary strategies to reframe the formulation of Okinawan coloniality along the fencelines. This dissertation has also wandered between the past and present, using tales and memories of war and the traps of postmodern dystopic imaginings of global threats entrapping Okinawans through security discourses. The mapping of off-base spaces, the showcase of recuperated security discourses, and highlights of the daily maneuverings of people most vulnerable to these discourses have shown that coloniality in Okinawa cannot be framed with traditional on/off base discourse that is usually presented in postcolonial methodology.

This body of work and this concluding chapter in particular has contributed to discussions around multiple modernities and a public sphere shaped by diasporic movement and the constant dodging of Orientalist interpellations in the East Asian region. Relying on the works of Aihwa Ong to analyze the production of Okinawa as a transnational space and the “emerging regimes of normativity,” I have analyzed a broader public space between dominant racial nation states. Applying her concept of translocal publics to the type of “flow” along militarized fencelines in Okinawa offers a more nuanced description and analysis of how movement along and through fencelines are managed, manipulated, and repositioned. In chapter four for instance, I argued that while certain racialized bodies (black soldiers and mixed race Okinawans in particular) are inextricably linked to a temporal space and militarized and linked to the bases, they can usurp this linkage through both diasporic appeals that challenge race thinking embedded in traditional discourses of nationalism and through a heightened articulation of dislocation that challenges the notion of limited local Okinawan agency. In this way, “regimes of normativity” are not fully shaped by one actor but by multiple, unexpected ones. Moreover, these diverse subjects further rupture the rationalities of transnational security discourse because of the diverse values and symbols they deploy in their own articulations of personhood, ones that cannot be easily be manipulated because they do not sit neatly on the feminized “Asian” side of the “East/ West” divide. Like the diverse anti-nuclear protestors whom Hugh Gusterson describes in Nuclear Rites, these Okinawan actors and some military expatriates, and other consciously and politicized dislocated military personnel are slowly dodging military cultural norms and practices by “whittling away at the privatization of ethics, the denigration of emotion, the rationalist masculinism, and the training of the body…” (Gusterson 1996: 197).

I also explored forms of “flexible” practices such as those of US expatriate/settlers and those of Okinawans who move between the fencelines within the same fields of analysis. Doing so has enabled me to look at the conditions which precipitate those discourses that rupture traditional security narratives and support the rationales for the current US-Japan security arrangements on Okinawa. For example, all chapters attend to how militarized subject positions
can be hailed when the on/off base or for/against base binaries are accessed in discussions. In Chapters 2, 3 and parts of this final chapter, I have shown clear examples of how those binaries almost instantaneously dominate over shared articulations of displacement between US military personnel and Okinawans wary of continued base presence.

In some instances, the states of exception as detailed in Chapter 2 become normalized within military communities and many Okinawans find that in order to reshift these security imaginaries, one must resort to jestering performative, sensational acts as described in this chapter (in particular Ishikawa’s fenceline acts). The think tank New Diplomacy Initiative is a good example of a newly formed initiative which aims to wedge these militarized security imaginaries further apart. The institute’s director, Sayo Saruta, explained in a Japan Times article (Mitchell 2015) that “indifference toward Okinawa was widespread among U.S. experts and the Japanese diplomatic community in Washington” and therefore their role could reframe the discourses of security within these defense communities (Mitchell 2015).

While the military aims to do its own memory work (Chapter 2) through tours and in the securing of on/off base discourse (Chapter 3) to enhance its own rhetoric of national sacrifice, Okinawans are forced to grapple with the crisis of translation for mainland Japanese and local U.S. military officials and diplomats who report back to Washington D.C. Translation is that fragile linkage that is easily distorted or susceptible to many pressures (Rose 1999). It is in the space of translation, where governable subjects are created and where the locus of disciplinary power operates transnationally and therefore this final chapter offered extensive details of Akiko’s work to look at how as an exposition of the “governing effects on colonial conduct” (Scott 2000: 204) can be mastered subtly through rap. I have given examples of how military rhetoric of friendship and militarized crafting of “good neighbors” through concepts of flow attempt to secure the colonial spaces along the fence lines while also contrasting how some Okinawans actively resist militarization along the fencelines and how their actions can tell us more about alternative modernities outside the security optic without a heavy reliance on loosely defined “postcolonial” frameworks of analysis. “Middling strategies” can allow this particular group to duck the discipling effects of the state.138

And finally, I have been conscious of implementing a slower, thick form of ethnography attentive to the ideologies of communication at work in militarized zones as discussed in the introduction, aiming to stay adjacent to the Okinawan philosophy nuchi du takara (life is precious) that is invoked in much of the discourses of survival in the post-war period through the present in the rugged everyday life practices of people like my family in Okinawa who live along the fencelines. My hope is that this will contribute to body of work that reshifts conventional thinking about Okinawa in binaries where stale security imaginaries continue to circulate and thrive.

138 Ong warns however that the widely circulating narratives of these middling practices tend to romanticize the logics of capitalism shaped by a “Confucian humanism” and is offered as a newly emerging Asian to contend with the stereotypical Orientalized versions in operation. This over romanticization, she argues, erases real inequalities that do exist for other Chinese with less reliable social and material resources.
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