Trouble in Paradise: Politics, Poetics, and Music in Okinawa and Hawaii

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I. Introduction

In popular portrayal, the island groups of Okinawa and Hawaii are viewed as paradisiacal sites of exotic tropical beauty where the native cultures and peoples are by nature welcoming, warm-hearted, and peace loving. Indigenous "neo-romanticist"[1] and exogenous orientalist representational processes, capitalist interests, and cultural politics are together at work in complexly interwoven fashion in these idyllic imaginings, which of course also often touch a chord of truth among the experiences and feelings of many who live in or have visited these places. In both Okinawa and Hawaii, popular music participates in the construction of such beautiful and beatific images, complementarily offering residents and sojourners relaxing, healing, and enlivening soundscapes.

I have elsewhere commented on how a loosely defined "Uchinā Pop" genre of musical practice in Okinawa plays a part in the construction of images of Okinawa.[2] However, as is the case in other places as well, the (self-) imaginings given voice in popular music are not univocal in their descriptions of Okinawa, nor is everyone uncritical of the performances of identity related to the recent popularity of Okinawa and Okinawan music. For example, in a song called "I'm Japanese/I'm Okinawan" (*Ore wa Yamatonchu/Ore wa Uchinanchu*) the Okinawan folk guitarist Sadoyama Yutaka sardonically sings:[3]

> I'm Uchinanchu, come all the way to Japan
> To spread Okinawan culture, at the Dome
> If you just dress up in ethnic costume, with sanshin in hand,
> For only that, Japanese people will pay you money

When you can make a load of money,
You've got to go ahead and rake it in
I'm Uchinanchu

俺はウチナーンチュはるばる来たぜ大和に
オキナワの文化を広げる為にドームへ
三弦片手に民族衣装で着飾れば
それだけで大和ン人は金を払ってくれるんだ
稼げる時にガッポイガッポイ
稼いでおかなきゃナー
俺はウチナーンチュ

Indexed by Sadoyama's criticism of other Okinawans is the multiplicity which characterizes contemporary Okinawa identities and politics. However one approaches Okinawa, there is a complex intersecting and overlapping of cultural consciousness, double or triple, and of at times hotly contested political position, such that some speak of "multiple Okinawas."[4] This multiplicity is also musically refrained, and it is increasingly difficult to talk in a single voice about "Okinawan music." Musicians in/from Okinawa play traditional court music, traditional and contemporary folks genres, Uchinā Pop, jazz, hard rock, hip-hop, dance-beat and punk, with bands such as Orange Range, Mongol 800, High and Mighty, HY and others currently most nationally prominent.[5]

In this paper, while recognizing the multiplicity of musics and identities in Okinawa and Hawaii, I discuss subsets of songs which complicate neo-romanticist or orientalist audiences to the musical practices of each place, especially as these intersect with and index ongoing cultural-political issues. In particular, I will be focusing on songs that insert critical voices into the musical public spheres of each location. For Okinawa, the primary site for my musical explorations, I map some of the songs that have sung of the sorrows of war and protested the continuing sufferings of Okinawans arising from the presence of American military bases and armed forces.[6] My main focus will be on songs recorded during the past decade, from approximately 1995. For Hawaii, my interest is in songs and performances, especially prominent in the early to mid 1990s, which lamented the loss and called for the restoration of sovereignty for

Native Hawaiians. In both instances, my goal is to consider how musical practice in these two peripheral localities has been ongoingly constructing complexly contexted, contested, and contradictory sites of cultural memory and resistance that regardless, or because, of their minority voice need to be carefully listened to, especially by people from American and Japanese centers of economic and political power and imperialism, for whom orientalist desires too often otherwise foreground exotic images and ignore if not exclude recognition of the trouble in paradise.

II. The Poetics of Okinawan Protest

The year 2005 marked the sixtieth year since the end of World War II, a war which connected Okinawa and Hawaii in complex ways, with the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor initiating direct American involvement in the Pacific War and the 1945 Battle of Okinawa coming toward the end of fighting between American and Japanese forces.[7] This tragic tying together of Hawaiian and Okinawan fates, however, was itself predicated upon late nineteenth century American and Japanese imperialist expansion. The (semi-)independent Ryūkyūan Kingdom was unilaterally "disposed" of by the Japanese Meiji Government in 1879, while the independent Kingdom of Hawaii was overthrown in 1893 by American businessmen with the support of U.S. marines and was annexed by the United States in 1898. In 1900, the same year that a small group of Okinawans arrived in Hawaii to work on sugar plantations,[8] Hawaii was made a Territory of the U.S.

A. Nuchi du Takara: Life is a Treasure

The World War II Battle of Okinawa was the defining event in contemporary Okinawan history. It lasted from late March, through late June when organized Japanese fighting ended, until early September 1945, when the Japanese military in Okinawa formally surrendered. Some 150,000 Okinawans,[9] including nearly one-third of the population of the main island of Okinawa, perished as a result of combat, disease and hunger, suicide (including "compulsory group suicide"),[10] and the actions of Japanese soldiers. As Hein and Selden note, "The Battle of Okinawa is the most traumatic event in Okinawan history and the most controversial

site of remembrance in contemporary Okinawa."[11]

The conflicted, complicit participation of Okinawans in the cultural, political, and other processes leading up to and including the Battle of Okinawa remain traced in a series of songs including "Ikusa o uramu haha" (A Mother's Bitterness toward War) and Fukuhara Chōki's famous "Gunjin bushi" (Soldier's Song). I elsewhere discuss such songs in greater detail,[12] but here wish to briefly introduce three songs written in the postwar period that lament the loss and suffering of Okinawans because of the Battle of Okinawa and thereby give critical voice to Okinawan cultural memory. The first song is "Himeyuri no uta" (Song for the Himeyuri), which extends to ten verses and sings (not in Okinawan dialect but in Japanese) of the 219 teenage higher-school girls who served in the Himeyuri Student Nurse Corps, and most of whom died. This song and commentary on it reflect the conflicted nature of Okinawan memories of the battle, with the girls' deaths portrayed in terms of both patriotism and victimhood. Uehara Naohiko, however, suggests that "Himeyuri no uta" should be heard as an anti-war protest song, indicting the nationalism that lead to their deaths.[13] The first two and the concluding verses are:

Himeyuri no uta[14]	
It is widely known, the story	広く知られた　沖縄の
Of Okinawa's Himeyuri Unit	犠牲になった　女学生
Of Girl Students who were sacrificed	姫百合部隊の　物語
The two lines of loyalty and piety	二筋忠孝　胸に抱き
They held in their breasts	鉄より堅き　日本の
Harder than iron, Japan's *yamato-damashi*	大和魂の　桜花
Cherry blossoms	
.....	
At last, honorable deaths, the Himeyuri girls	とうとう玉砕　姫百合は
Together in their graves, are they crying?	地下で共に　泣くかしら
Sad and lonely crying, summer cicada	淋しく泣いてる　夏の虫

Tsukayama Hiroki's "Nuchi du takara" (Life is a Treasure) is less am-

biguous in its description of Okinawan experience during the battle. "Nuchi du takara" itself is an Okinawan phrase frequently invoked by anti-war and anti-military base groups, and is commonly attributed to Ryūkyūan King Shō Tai at the time of his 1879 forced abdication to Japan. Tsukayama's song works as a critique of both American and Japanese militaries, the latter especially in the second verse which in part indexes Okinawan experiences of violence at the hands of Japanese soldiers.[15] Sung in Okinawan dialect, the song is a locally situated protest against war and appeal for peace. The second and third verses are:

Nuchi du takara[16]

....

To survive the war, we hid in caves	いくさ凌じゅんでぃ
But the caves also became hells,	ガマや籠またしが
the houses of devils	
Truly, we must tell of the war	ジントヨー語てぃいか戦
Truly, life is a treasure	ジントヨー命どぅ宝
Twice, that hell,	二度とあぬ地獄
we must not repeat	繰り返いち那ゆみ
Let us pray for eternal peace	永遠ぬ平和　御願さびら
Truly, we must tell of the war	ジントヨー語てぃいか戦
Truly, life is a treasure	ジントヨー命どぅ宝

The third song I wish to introduce that narrates Okinawan memories of wartime experiences is "PW bushi" (or, "PW mujō"—PW Lament). Though sung to different musical accompaniment, this sanshin-based folk song lyrically closely resembles "Yaka bushi," words to both having been composed at the prisoner of war camp at Yaka village established by the American army. These are still perhaps the most often re-recorded songs originating from and narrating the Battle of Okinawa. Koja Misako has, for example, recently included "PW mujō" on her 2005 CD *Kuroi ame*, while Kina Shoukichi recorded "Yaka bushi" on his 1998 CD *Akainko*. These songs mournfully sing of how Okinawa was turned by others into a battlefield and how Okinawan people struggled to survive. Both songs sing of sorrow deepened by thoughts of homes and villages

destroyed by fighting and by worries about the safety of relatives.[17] The first, third, and final verses of "PW mujō" are:

PW mujō[18]
How bitter, Okinawa, made a battlefield
All the people with sleeves wet (with tears), how heartless the world
恨めしや沖縄　戦場にさらされ
多くの人々の袖を濡らす　浮世は無情なもの
....
Praying for victory in battle, we hid in the mountains
But now I'm held at Yaka and cry, how pitiful is a PW
勝ち戦さ願い　山ごもりしたが
今は捕われて屋嘉で泣く　PW哀れなもの
.....
If only there had not been this thing, war
This pitiful figure, I/we would not have become, how pitiful is a PW
戦さというものさえ　無かったならば
哀れこんな姿に　ならなかったのに　PW哀れなもの

"Yaka bushi" and "PW mujō" lament the suffering of Okinawans because of war and thus continue to act as appeals for peace. More directly stated pleas for peace have been a frequently voiced theme in postwar Okinawan music, though the tenor of such appeals has changed somewhat, reflecting changes in political context.[19] The pre (1972) reversion song "Heiwa no negai" (Prayer for Peace) combines a call like that in "Nuchi du takara" not to forget the sorrows of war with appeals for a peaceful Okinawa and for Okinawa's return from American Occupation to Japan control. As Taira has argued, many Okinawans expected that return to Japanese control, with its Article 9 inscribed Peace Constitution, would also lead to the departure of the American military.[20] As such, "Heiwa no negai" combines anti-war and, more obliquely, anti-base sentiments. The final verse is:

Our thoughts one, beloved Yamato	思事や一首恋しさや大和
The happiness when finally we return[21]	やがて御膝元戻る嬉さ
Ah, let us together, for this island Okinawa	でぃー我ったー此ぬ島沖縄
Pray for Peace, for this Okinawa	平和願らな　此ぬ沖縄

B. Jidai no Nagare: Okinawa in the Flow of Time

On May 15, 1972, administrative control of Okinawa was formally returned from the United States to the Japanese Government. Just as Okinawa's political affiliation had shifted from Japan to America at the end of World War II, and had earlier changed from that of the Ryūkyūan Kingdom with China to that of Okinawa prefecture with Japan, so again were Okinawa's fortunes determined by the actions of and agreements between more powerful controlling nation-states.

A number of songs describe Okinawa's changing location as its fate has been battered about by more powerful others. One of these is the often re-recorded "Hiyamikachi bushi," written by Taira Shinsuke after he returned to Okinawa from the U.S. in 1953. "Hiyamikachi" is now commonly played at a high "*kachashi*" tempo and encourages Okinawans to get up even if they keep falling and to be proud of being Okinawan. The Uchinā Pop group, the Rinken Band recorded a song in 1993 called "Yu-Yu-Yu/You-You-You"[22] that in some ways may be heard as variation of the fast-tempo "Hiyamikachi," calling for its listeners not to "forget your gentle kindness," despite the changes in the world. And, the recent song "Obā jiman no bakudan nabe" by the group Begin, may perhaps also be heard as a playful invocation of the same *nuchi nu sūji* spirit of celebrating life.[23]

Among such songs commenting on the changes of world or era, most famous is Kadekaru Rinshō's early 1960s "Jidai no nagare," which satirically describes the transition from Japanese to American control and influence. "Jidai no nagare" begins with the famous lines, invoked also in the opening to "Yu-Yu-Yu":

From the Chinese era to the Japanese era	唐ぬ世から大和ぬ世
From the Japanese era to the American era	大和ぬ世からアメリカ世
This Okinawa sure does change a lot	ひるまさ変たる此ぬ沖縄

Kina Shoukichi's 1980 song "Akisamiyo!" recorded eight years after Okinawa's reversion to Japan, similarly comments in comical but critical fashion on Okinawa's relations with China, Japan, and America. In 1998, Kina recorded "Shin-jidai no nagare," an updating of Kadekaru's

original with revised lyrics written by political activist Chibana Shōichi.[24] While Kadekaru's song satirizes the changes of the world "from the Japanese era to the American era," the more overtly critical Kina-Chibana revision focuses on post-reversion changes and failures to change. The song comments on the loss and confusion suffered by Okinawans as a result of shifts from American to Japanese currency and driving regulations, and it criticizes Japanese capitalist and American militarist exploitation of Okinawa. The lyrics to the second and the final two verses are:

Shin-jidai no nagare[25]
.....
Under American control
I thought absolutely no thanks
But having returned to Japan
I have no idea which of the two is best
アメリカ統治下は
まっぴらごめんだと思っていたけど
日本に戻ってみれば　どちらがよいのかは　まったくわからない
.....
The sea in the past was Okinawa's
We could enter whenever we chose, but
Now it is under the control of the resorts
海も昔は沖縄のものだった
私たちもいつでも入れたけれど
今ではリゾートの管理下になってしまった

Everything changes, and is changing but
What doesn't change, is this island of military bases
When will it be that things will change for the good?
何事も変わりに　変わっているけれども
何も変わらないのは　基地の島という事だけだ
いつになったら良くなってくれるのかと

With hands together, I pray to the Ancestors
ご先祖様に手を合せ拝んでいる

C. Okinawa o/e Kaese: Return (it to) Okinawa

While songs such as "Yu-Yu-Yu" and "Obā jiman no bakudan nabe" are significant in their inscriptions of Okinawan memories of war and *nuchi nu sūji* celebrations of life, "Shin-jidai no nagare" more fully resonates with ongoing Okinawan criticism of the continuing presence of large American military bases and forces, which remain in Okinawa under treaties and agreements signed between the Japanese and American Governments. As is well known, nearly 75 percent of U.S. military facilities are concentrated in Okinawa, occupying nearly 20 percent of the land of the main island. As of 2003, some 26,282 American military personnel and 1,679 civilian employees were stationed in Okinawa, accompanied by 22,865 family members.

As expressed in "Heiwa no negai," introduced above, many Okinawans hoped that such occupation of Okinawan land and accompanying threats to Okinawan lives would end with reversion to Japan in 1972. However, as "Shin-jidai no nagare" critically remarks, such hopes for the reduction or removal of American military bases have not yet been realized. Symbolic here is the controversial, much protested and yet unrealized 1996 agreement to "return" Futenma Air Base to a new facility near Camp Schwab, adjacent to the town of Henoko.

Although actual relationships with or feeling about the American bases and military personnel vary among Okinawans, common sentiment is for their reduction, such that this burden is not unfairly shouldered by Okinawa, if not for their full removal. "Shin-jidai no nagare" is one of a number of Okinawan songs that especially since the mid 1990s have voiced anti-base criticisms. Such sentiments flared when the controversy over the forced rental of Okinawan land for U.S. military bases became heated, especially after then-governor Ota Masahide refused to sign documents authorizing continued American use of the land and in reaction to the rape in 1995 of a young twelve-year-old girl. As I discuss elsewhere, emblematic of Okinawan calls to end or lighten the presence of the U.S. military bases was Daiku Tetsuhiro's re-recordings of the Reversion Movement anthem "Okinawa o kaese" (Return Okinawa), in which he famously rephrased the refrain to "*Okinawa e kaese*."[26] This simple change of article transformed the meaning of the song, and po-

tentially suggests the return to Okinawa not just of base land, but also of other intangibles such as safety and perhaps even some form of sovereignty. More recently, in 2004, Kina Shoukichi recorded a song entitled "Kana-ami no nai shima," (Island with No Wire Fences) which less stridently but nevertheless still fervently calls for the realization of Okinawan prayers to live free of military bases. The first verse, for example, sings:

Kana-ami no nai shima[27]
The life giving sea, cleanses the island, tomorrow's island
All the weapons that are trying to steal
But the thing they cannot take away, is our fervent prayer
Do-do-don
Do-do-don
Just as the waves cross to distant places
Tomorrow's island, the island of tomorrow
Sometime, sometime, certainly
Without wire fences, an island will be

いのちをそだてる　海が　島を洗う　明日の島
すべての武器が　うばおうとして
うばえないもの　それは　わたしたちの熱いねがい
ドドドーン
ドドドーン
波がどこまでも　わたるように
明日の島　明日の島
いつか　いつか　かならず
金網のない　島を

The U.S. military bases are not just a physical appropriation of resources (of not just land, but also air and sea space). Their presence is accompanied by everyday threats to local environments and to Okinawan people's personal safety. Between 1972 and 2003, for example, there were 275 U.S. military aircraft related accidents, including some 40 crashes. In August of 2004, a large American transport helicopter crashed onto the urban campus of Okinawa International University, lo-

cated adjacent to Route 51, one of Okinawa's primary north-south transportation arteries. In addition, there were some 5,269 reported crimes committed by such SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) status persons between Okinawan reversion to Japan in 1972 and the end of 2003. While the majority have been petty thefts, there have also been 977 cases of aggravated assault and 540 violent crimes, the latter of which between 1972 and 1995 included 12 murders as well as 111 reported cases of violence (including rape) against women and girls.[28]

As mentioned above, in September of 1995, a twelve-year-old Okinawan girl was beaten and raped by three American servicemen. The brutality of the rape of this young girl shocked and angered people throughout Okinawa, at a time of already heightened tensions surrounding the U.S. bases. Another song by Kina Shoukichi, "Shōjo no namida ni niji ga kakaru made" (Until There's a Rainbow around the Young Girl's Tears), describes a desire to help soothe the tears of a young girl, who though not named is clearly meant to be the twelve-year-old girl raped by the American military men. The first verse of "Shōjo no namida ni niji ga kakaru made is:"

Walking, walking, looking for Something
I've climbed up to here, but still
In my heart, the flowers that had been blooming
All at once have withered
Tears flow out, without stop
I want to give my heart to you
Until there is a rainbow around the young girl's tears,
Let's sing

歩いて歩いて何かを求めて
ここまで登ってきたけれど
心の中に咲いてた花が
ひとつとつぜん枯れました
あなたに私の心をあげたくて
少女の涙に虹がかかるまで唄おうよ

D. Sengo Zero-Nen

The presence of American military bases and facilities; the ongoing struggles of Okinawan protesters to have them reduced or removed; the recent struggle to prevent the relocation of Futenma Airbase to the Henoko area; the everyday possibility of crashes and accidents involving American military jets, helicopters, and vehicles; the everyday possibility of personal and sexual violence involving American military personnel; the discovery of unexploded World War II ordnance; the war related memories of older family members; the stories told and recorded that tell of Okinawan experiences in the war; controversies over the public representation of the Battle of Okinawa; the local places forever marked as sites of war memory: for these and other reasons there are people in Okinawa who like author Medoruma Shun feel that the war has not yet truly ended for Okinawans, even now sixty plus years after the end of fighting and over thirty years since the reversion of Okinawa from American to Japanese control.[29]

Sadoyama Yutaka opens his revision of the popular "19 no haru" (Spring of 19), which is critical of both Japanese and Okinawa forgetfulness and pretentiousness, with the lines:

> When Japan remembered Okinawa, fifty years had passed since the War
> If at this point you're going to talk about Peace, return us to Okinawa as it was
> 大和が沖縄に気づいたのは戦後五十年過ぎてから
> いまさら平和と言うならば元の沖縄に帰してよ

This song appears on his important 2000 CD, *Sabani*, which contains a number of acerbic, cynical, and sardonic songs commenting on contemporary Okinawan experience and (false) consciousness. I leave fuller discussion of Sadoyama's work to another occasion, but here I want to point to his complexly composed but Okinawan positioned criticisms of self-serving Japanese, American, and Okinawan actions.

The coldness of Japanese and American actions and attitudes towards Okinawa is also scathingly criticized in a song called "Nasake

shirazuya" (Heartless Bastards), recorded by the otherwise largely non-political choral group, the Nenes, directed by China Sadao. The immediate context for "Nasake shirazuya" includes the rape of the twelve-year-old girl in 1995 and the mid 1990s struggles by Okinawans to regain control of land occupied by U.S. military bases. Set to an ironically light pop melody, this song calls in Japanese for its listeners to live in harmony together with other people and chastises Japanese politicians and America for forgetting the past so easily and being so uncaring towards Okinawa, even fifty years after the end of World War II. The song ends by repeating the refrain:

Nasake shirazuya	
Fifty years, fifty years	50年　50年
All you who forget so quick and easy	喉元過ぎれば忘れる人よ
You heartless bastards you	情け知らずや

Singer Koja Misako, a former member of the Nenes (though she had left before the recording of "Nasake shirazuya") released a mini-CD in 2005 called *Kuroi ame*, on which is recorded "PW mujō" and several versions of the title track, "Kuroi ame." This song was composed by Sahara Kazuya, now Koja's partner and producer, and was originally recorded by the Japanese performer Sakuragawa Tadamaru on his 1991 album *Ullambana*. Sahara composed "Kuroi ame" after joining a "Peace Festival" organized in Bagdad in 1990 by wrestler-politician Antonio Inoki.[30] The black rain in the song thus originally referred most directly to the missiles and bombs dropped during the first Gulf War, but by ready allusion also to the black rain that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atomic bombings of those cities.

Koja's recordings and performances of "Kuroi ame," however, index as well the "typhoon of steel" that fell on Okinawa during World War II and the continuing crashes of American military aircraft. The association of "Kuroi ame" with the Battle of Okinawa is lyrically accomplished by the insertion after the second verse of an interlude in which Koja sings the final verse of "PW mujō" coupled with a *ryūka* (8-8-8-6 syllable poem) of her of own composition. The lyrics to the first verse, interlude and the final verse of Koja's recording of "Kuroi ame" are:

Black Rain[31]	
Rain keeps falling	雨が降る降る
Rain pours down	どんと降る
The sky is dark	お空は真っ暗　鉛色
Who knows where this rain	どこから降るのか
is coming from	わかりゃせぬ
Hooy, hooy, hooy, hoo	ホーイホーイホーイホー
Hooy, hooy, hooy, hoo	ホーイホーイホーイホー
....	
If there was but not this war	戦さというものさえ
	無かったならば
This sad figure	哀れこんな姿に
I/we would not have become	ならなかったのに
By but the two characters (of "sensō")	ただの二文字に
Life is taken	命を取られ
Those surviving left to cry	残されて泣くのは
Are the children	子供なんですよ
....	
Rain keeps falling	雨が降る降る
Rain floods down	シャンと降る
Will it be sunny tomorrow	明日は晴れるか
Will it rain tomorrow	また降るか
We can only pray to	てるてる坊主に
the fair-weather doll	いのりゃんせ
Hooy, hooy, hooy, hoo	ホーイホーイホーイホー
Hooy, hooy, hooy, hoo	ホーイホーイホーイホー

The intertwining of a more universally composed anti-war message with Okinawan particularities is further enhanced when Koja has introduced or interlaced live performances with personal comments referring to the crash of an American transport helicopter into the campus of Okinawa International University in August 2004, to her own childhood memories of witnessing the crash of an American B52 bomber, and as recorded on the mini-CD, to memories of her father, who died while

working on the U.S. Airbase at Kadena. Koja's narration, acting as prelude and spoken interlude accompanying a live performance of "Kuroi ame" recorded on this CD, is roughly as follows:

Prelude:

The song I'm about to sing is called "Kuroi ame." From the first time I sang on stage until here today, how many years have passed? The first time I sang on stage was when I was about five years old and this year I'll be fifty-one, so I've been singing for forty-plus years. In that lifetime of singing, I've had lots of various experiences. Today, during this short time, there a lots of things that I can't fully describe. In the town where I live, Kadena, there is a large American military air base, called the largest in East Asia. Inside that military base there are many people working, and outside, we are living. American jets that had taken off have on a number of occasions crashed. Among those times when planes have crashed, the most terrifying was when I was a young elementary school student, when a B52 with black wings crashed. At that time, I remember thinking, even though I had not experienced war, ah, Kadena has been hit. That frightening memory is, after all, impossible to forget no matter how many years pass. This year, it makes sixty years that, throughout, we've been told of how Okinawa suffered as the site of the sole land battle [on Japanese home soil]. It might appear as though it is now [a time of] peace, but in Okinawan, [the war] hasn't ended. Inside the heart of Okinawa, paradise has yet to arrive. With my prayers embraced in this song, "Kuroi ame."

Interlude:

My father worked inside of Kadena airbase. While on his way to work [one day], my father was run over by a military truck and died instantly. At that time, my mother was twenty-eight, my father was thirty, I was four. My mother and I have both lived as best we could. But, my mother passed away at sixty-seven. Now, I have a child and grandchild, and when I have the strength to look back and think about the past, my father['s death] is so mournfully regretful. I think, if there hadn't been the war and Okinawa was as it had been

> in the past, my father would surely even now have happily been taking loving care of me. My most loved, most loved father's memory only have I held in my heart and lived. Therefore, children like me will only have sad memories, so after all having their parents healthy and happy is best.

Koja's narrative here is many layered and multivocal, interweaving personal and Okinawan cultural memory; intertwining past, present, and future in criticism of war; and appealing for peace both in Okinawa, where the war has not ended even after sixty years, and more universally.

There are a number of other recently produced songs that similarly recall Okinawan experiences of war and repeat Okinawan desires for a peaceful existence at home and elsewhere, thereby also reminding us of the ongoing local importance of such memories and of struggles to achieve a less militarized and more peaceful present and future. Like "Kuroi ame" making reference to rain is "Sora ga shiranai ame ga futteita " (A Rain the Sky Knew Not Fell) included on a 2004 CD by Kamiya Chihiro.[32] In 2000, Daiku Tetsuhiro recorded "Okinawa kagayake" (Shining Okinawa)[33] that sings of a future, shining Okinawa, that has been able to put its past sorrows to sleep and that will heal hearts and teach the world about peace. As the liner notes to this CD point out, "Okinawa kagayake" must be understood within, and as a positively phrased and future-oriented statement of resistance against a political context in which the real, foreseeable future of Okinawa as a "discarded stone" (*sute-ishi*) burdened with the continuing presence of American military bases appears likely to remain unchanged. And, in 2001 the punk-rock band Mongol 800 recorded "Song for You" on their two million plus selling CD *Message*. Sung in English, "Song for You" pleads for listeners not to repeat past mistakes and asks "how many boys [will] be killed by fuckin' wars." It concludes with a positive vision not unlike that in "Okinawa kagayake" of Okinawa/the world as "Forever green. Forever blue/Never end LOVE and PEACE and SONG."[34]

III. Poetics of Hawaiian Protest

As suggested earlier, the cultural-political interconnections and par-

allels between Okinawa and Hawaii go back to late nineteenth century Japanese and American imperialist expansions. There are many interesting contemporary musical interchanges that bridge Okinawa and Hawaii, reflecting and enacting the embodied and emotive intimacy between the two. At the annual Okinawa Festival sponsored by the United Okinawan Association of Hawaii, for example, there are nearly two full days of performances of Okinawan dance and music by both local and visiting Okinawan performers.

Relevant recordings on the Hawaiian side include *Chibariyo Hawaii 1998*, featuring performances of a range of mostly Okinawan folk songs; "Nami kaji" by a band of the same name composed of younger Hawaiian Uchinanchu but much influenced by the Okinawan Rinken Band; and, Keali'i Reichel's recent "Ka nohona pili kai," a remake of the song "Nada sōsō," music for which was originally composed by the Okinawan band, Begin. On the other side, Okinawan recordings that lyrically or musically invoke Hawaii include Okinawan *min'yō* folksongs describing migrating to or visiting Hawaii, such as Fukuhara Chōki's "Hawaii bushi"; CDs by Hirayasu Takashi in which he collaborates with guitarists Bob Brozman and Yoshikawa Chūei to produce Hawaiian textured "Okinawan" music; the *Sons of Ailana, Vol. 1* CD by guitarist Yano Kenji and vocalist Shima Sachiko; Amami-Oshima born (Nakano) Rikki's 1998 CD, *Miss You Amami*, which features Japanese slack-key master Yamauchi "Alani" Yuki; and, the compilation CD, *Alohasai*.[35]

Such music is interesting and important, not the least as musical expressions of the hybrid creativity and experiences of diaspora that in many ways characterize both Okinawa and Hawaii. However, I want here to focus more directly on songs by Hawaiian musicians that like the songs discussed above are significant as cultural-political expressions of (in this case indigenous, Native) Hawaiian identity. The songs that I introduce below were primarily recorded in the early to mid 1990s. This was a period of heightened activism by Native Hawaiians and their supporters, focusing on the restoration of some form of sovereignty and on access to land, including that long promised to Native Hawaiians. These are ongoing issues.

Israel Kamakawiwole, formerly of the group Mākaha Sons of Niihau, wrote and recorded several songs with the themes of cultural pride

and sovereignty. Among these are "Living in a Sovereign Land," written and originally recorded by The Hawaiian Style Band, "E Ala E," and "Hawai'i 78." The last of these songs asks in English for its listeners to imagine how the King (understood from the song to be Kamehameha I) and Queen would feel should they return to modern Hawaii and find it so changed and realize that "our people are in great, great danger now." The chorus sings:

Cry for the gods[36]
Cry for the people
Cry for the land that was taken away
And then yet you'll find, Hawaii

The 1990s witnessed a peak of activism and of musical expressions of political and cultural protest in part because of the marking in 1993 of the one-hundredth anniversary of the American overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy. The group Olomana, on their Na Hoku Hanohano Award winning 1991 CD *E mau ana ka ha'aheo* (Enduring Pride),[37] sing in memory of the last monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani, and of contemporary calls for the restoration of sovereignty. The final verse of "Walking in the Queen's Garden," for example, goes:

On the palace grounds our people met today
To speak of the appeal you made when they stole your rights away
Did you hear the voices joined in singing
Hawai'i Aloha proudly ringing
Here I am before you in this garden
I feel you close to me
Raindrops fall softly in your garden
Is it you Lili'u...crying
Are you listening Lili'u?

One of the most fully political CDs from this period is *Hawaiian Nation: A Call for Hawaiian Sovereignty*,[38] produced by Steve Kramer, Peter Apo, and Jeff Rasmussen. Internationally popular Keali'i Reichel later re-recorded the anthem song from this album, "Song of Sovereign-

ty." The first and third verses appeal:[39]

Sing a song of sovereignty—wherever you may be
Throw your voice upon the wind and let it ring
Join the voices of the ages in an ancient melody
It's a song you shouldn't be afraid to sing
.....
We are native to this land—let us all walk hand in hand
We are children of the sea—you and me
We are joined by the spirit of ancestral dignity
Sing a song—sing a song of sovereignty

Also very directly political were the interrelated projects by singer-songwriter Henry Kapono, his 1992 CD *Kapono* and the video *Sovereignty: A Celebration of Life*. Both take up the issues of sovereignty and land rights in songs such as "What is Sovereignty?" and "Broken Promise," the latter of which received two Na Hoku awards (for Single and Song of the Year). On the CD, Kapono begins the first of two versions of this song with narration recalling that Queen Lili'uokalani was overthrown by a group of American businessmen backed by the U.S. government. Making reference to the Hawaiian Homes Act (also known as the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act), he also comments that in 1921 the U.S. Congress apologized to the Hawaiian people and promised to return a portion of state lands, but that thousands of Native Hawaiians were even in the 1990s still waiting to be able to live on those lands. The first verse of "Broken Promise" sings:

Sonny, Sonny's been waiting
Look what's happened, look around
look who's running this crazy town
look who's making all the laws
look who ends up with it all
Sonny's been waiting
Sonny's been waiting his turn in line
Sonny's been waiting
Sonny's gonna wait until he dies

How would you work it out, what could you do?
How much would you take if it were you?

While this song protests the long wait among Native Hawaiians for access to lands promised to be returned to them, other songs (including "Hawai'i 78," above) lament the loss of free right of use of land lost to mainland capitalist tourist development. Kapono thus records and gives new meaning to the song "Last Resort," originally performed by The Eagles. The Pahinui Brothers (Bla, Cyril, and Martin, sons of the legendary Gabby Pahinui), meanwhile, include a recording of "Waimanalo Blues" (Nanakuli Blues), recorded in the early 1970s by the group Country Comfort (among many other recordings). Echoing the protest against the resort development in Kina Shoukichi's "Shin-jidai no nagare" (above), this song concludes by lamenting:

'cause the beaches they sell[40]
to build their hotels
my fathers and I once knew
birds all along, the sunlight at dawn
just singin' Waimanalo blues
and also Nanakuli blues

IV. Conclusion: Cultural Politics of Memory and Resistance in Popular Music

For most of us, Okinawa and Hawaii are places of tropical beauty and touristic pleasures, and such as well are dominant self-images constructed in the popular musics of each place. However, the songs introduced above insert an important subtextual contrapuntal that requires recognition and consideration, that should trouble the paradise view of dominant gazes and encounters. Though differently focused, these songs perform cultural political work as intertwining sites both of memory and of cultural resistance regarding difficult pasts that continue to intrude into the present, that continue to call for action as people in both places attempt to move toward long dreamed of futures.

As sites of cultural memory, the Okinawan and Hawaiian songs de-

scribed in this paper—and others not heard from here—bear three aspects. Firstly, many of them make direct or indirect reference to the historical past, at times colored by a nostalgic (neo-) romanticism—to Okinawa before the war (including in some songs reference to the Ryūkyūan Kingdom) and before American military presence; to Queen Lili'uokalani, the Hawaiian Monarchy, the stealing of the kingdom, and subsequent American broken promises. Secondly, many of these songs also inscribe contemporary experiences and artistic reactions to them—the suffering of local people during the Battle of Okinawan and afterwards in POW camps; the rape of a young Okinawan girl; the crashing of aircraft; the loss of land to military bases and tourist resorts; the waiting of Native Hawaiians for the right to live on Homestead lands. And, thirdly, many of these songs describe dreams and desires for futures that at last overcome difficult pasts and troubled presents: of a shining, peaceful Okinawa, free of military bases; of native lands and rights returned and of a sovereign Native Hawaiian Nation.

The memory work that these songs perform thus intertwines past, present, and future. In part, this involves, as other politically contexted and charged memory work does elsewhere as well, mobilizing memory to help address present issues of and contestations over cultural and political experience and identity. As Barry Schwartz notes regarding contested American commemoration of the Vietnam War, "To remember is to place a part of the past in the service of conceptions and needs of the present."[41] However, these memories and mobilizations participate not just in contemporary contests and attempts at resolution in the present, but in cultural-political debates over desired futures. Thus, as George Lipsitz has written more generally of the messages and products of popular culture: "At their best, they retain memories of the past and contain hopes for the future that rebuke the injustices and inequities of the present."[42]

Okinawan songs describing local experience during the war and over the long and ongoing course of American military control and occupation, and Hawaiian songs commemorating the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy and lamenting broken American promises, however voiced, may thus be heard as songs of protest, as sites of cultural-political resistance. This is not, however, to say that all Okinawan or Hawai-

ian cultural practice or products should be seen as instances of resistance, even those that emphasize local cultural distinctiveness and difference, as I have suggested elsewhere in reference to Okinawa.[43] As Michael Brown argued some time ago, "A myopic focus on resistance...can easily blind us to zones of complicity and, for that matter, of sui generis creativity."[44] Brown thus cautions against simplistic "paint-by-numbers" analyses that lead "inexorably" to conclusions that the actions of subordinate peoples are sites of resistance.[45] And, when one is dealing with popular musical production and performance, even music from the margins, it is important recognize the potential contradictions involved in music making that is connected with the capitalist culture industry.

At the same time, it remains important to recognize the critical political meanings and uses of many of the cultural practices and products of colonial, postcolonial, subaltern, peoples. I stress this because of the intellectual and political dangers inherent in a priori resistances to resistance, here, especially as they implicate interpretation of the practices, performances, and products of Okinawan and Hawaiian musicians. In another manuscript in which I also discuss a number of the Okinawan songs introduced above, most particularly "Nasake shirazuya," I suggest as I stress here, that they be heard as sites of resistance. One reviewer of that manuscript wrote in response to this:

> Well, yes, but I really get tired of every gesture being valorized in cultural studies analyses as a form of resistance.... After all, these songs do reach us courtesy of a massive music industry and are consumed by a wide range of listeners...who have various motivations for listening and who respond in strikingly different ways. In other words, to what extent do these songs function as meaningful resistance, and to what extent are they largely self-satisfied gestures on the part of both singer and listeners?[46]

In terms of "Nasake shirazuya," I have also been cautioned by a scholar resident in Okinawa that its inclusion on the *Akemodoro unai* CD by the Nenes reflects the influence of the Japanese producer of the CD, which would lend support to the above reviewer's resistance to re-

sistance. I understand such caution. However, as culturally and politically contexted products that rather obviously criticize particular dimensions of the unequal power relations involved in such contextualization, "Nasake shirazuya" and similar popular musical performances need to be taken seriously as giving voice to cultural, political, and ethnic criticism and, thus, resistance. Likewise, to insist that the political significance of cultural products or performances by artists living under conditions of (post) colonial domination be read in terms of their direct political functionality, or to reduce them to commercial commodities, is to risk denying the cultural political significance of these performances and products as such.

This is, furthermore, an issue that has significant implications beyond the Okinawan and Hawaiian songs that I introduce here. Instead, as suggested by my attempt to describe some of the cultural-political parallels between Okinawan and Hawaiian songs of protest, to deny the work of these particular cultural performances as sites of political resistance by implication endangers an a priori theoretical-political rejection of the critical cultural politics of mass-mediated cultural production among potentially all other colonized and indigenous peoples. This would involve scholars from/in political-economic center states denying meaningful political critique and resistance in the music of, to give just three examples: the Australian Aboriginal lead band Yothu Yindi, whose work includes CDs such as *Tribal Voice* and *Freedom* on which appear songs calling for indigenous political and land rights and cultural respect; the Native North American inspired work of rock musician Robbie Robertson; and, the group Walela, featuring Rita Coolidge, whose self-titled CD contains songs of Cherokee and Native American suffering and pride, including one song entitled "Wounded Knee," recalling both the massacre of 1890 and the confrontation of 1973.[47] And, to deny the political significance of popular cultural production—whether, as among the songs introduced here containing explicitly stated political content, or not—among such people living under conditions of (post) colonial domination, is also to risk denying the meaning of other actions by local musicians, including for example the death of Hawaiian musician and activist George Helm, who died at sea while protesting U.S. Navy control of the island of Kaho'olawe and its use for bombing target practice.

It is important to recognize the multiplicity of voices coming from any cultural space. Not everything need be read as resistance. However, to deny the Okinawan and Hawaiian, and other, political criticism and resistance that is in fact given expression in popular musical performance in the present risks rejection of their memories of their pasts and of their hopes for their futures. More broadly, such imperialistic scholarly denial risks silencing the laments, cries, and prayers coming to us from people we would thereby reduce to being happy natives living in untroubled paradises found.

NOTES

[1] Kumada 1998 and Kumada 2000.

[2] Roberson 2003.

[3] Sadoyama Yutaka, *Sabani*, Transistor Record TRYS-006-23, 2000. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

[4] See Ota 1997; Inoue 2004; and Nishi and Hara 2003.

[5] For further discussions, Roberson 2006 and Roberson 2003.

[6] For a more detailed discussion with a longer historical timeline, see Roberson forthcoming.

[7] The complex inter-relations between Okinawa and Hawaii are further embodied in the war and immediate postwar experiences of and relations between Okinawans who as Japanese nationals who had been temporary sojourners in Hawaii and of Okinawans permanently resident in Hawaii who were born or had become naturalized as American citizens.

[8] For a discussion of songs that lyrically or musically reflect Okinawan diasporic and other connections to Hawaii, see Roberson unpublished manuscript.

[9] Okinawans civilian deaths numbered over 94,000, including 38,754 common citizens and 55, 246 civilian combat participants recruited as back-up support for combat soldiers. An additional 28,228 deaths occurred among soldiers of Okinawan origin and Okinawan army employees, the latter including student, nurse, and (civilian) defense corps who did not necessarily differ greatly from other ordinary citizens. See Okinawa Prefecture 1991; Shima Tsuyoshi 1997, pp. 100-101; and Ota 2000.

[10] Field 1991, p. 61.

[11] Hein and Selden 2003, p. 12.

[12] See Roberson forthcoming.

[13] Uehara 1986, pp. 127-28.

[14] Lyrics by Komune Saburō. Translation based on Radio Okinawa 1994, pp. 82-83. See also *Nuchi moeru uta: Okinawa 2001*, Nippon Columbia Co. Ltd., COCF-13891-6, 1996.

[15] How to represent Japanese military violence against Okinawan civilians and compulsory group suicides in public commemoration of the Battle of Okinawa became a much-contested issue in the late 1990s, especially when Okinawa's New Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum attempted to modify displays critical. See Ishihara, Oshiro, Hosaka, and Matsunaga 2002; Figal 1997; and Yonetani 2000.

[16] Lyrics and music by Tsukayama Hiroki. Tsukayama Hiroki, *Nuchi du takara-Yomitansan basha muchā*, Marufuku Records, CCF 83.

[17] Bise 1998, p. 184.

[18] Lyrics from Koja Misako, *Kuroi ame*, Disk Milk DM006, 2005.

[19] See Roberson forthcoming.

[20] See Taira 1997.

[21] The original here reads, "*Yagati uhizamutu muduru urisa*," implying the return of a child to the safety of a parent's care.

[22] Lyrics and music by Teruya Rinken: Rinken Band, *Banji*, SR WAVE, SRCL-2728, 1993.

[23] Chris Nelson has discussed the importance of postwar Okinawan comical and musical *nuchi nu sūji* celebrations of life. See Nelson 2002 and Nelson 2003.

[24] For more on Chibana, see Chibana 1992 and Field 1991.

[25] Kina Shoukichi & Champloose, *Akainko*, Nippon Columbia, COCA-15326, 1998.

[26] See Roberson 2003.

[27] Kina Shoukichi, *Washitiya uibiran washitiya naibiran*, EGO Music, ZTEGR-2019, 2004;

[28] Okinawa 2004; Nagamoto 1997, p. 205; and Arasaki 1996, p. 204.

[29] Medoruma 2005.

[30] Yoshizawa 2004.

[31] Translation of main verses by Kurota Nagisa, included in liner notes to Koja Misako, *Kuroi ame*, Disk Milk DM006, 2005. Translation of interlude by the author.

[32] Kamiya Chihiro, *Tinjāra*, Campus, MYCD 35013, 2004.

[33] For more, see Roberson forthcoming.

[34] Mongol 800, *Message*, Highwave, HICC-1201, 2001.

[35] See: Fukuhara Chōki, *Chikonki-Fukubaru*, Marufuku, ACD 3006, 2003; Hirayasu Takashi and Bob Brozman, *Jin Jin/Firefly*, Riverboat, TUGCD 1020, 2000; Hirayasu Takashi and Yoshikawa Chūei, *Uto ashibi*, Respect Record, RES-54, 2001; (Nakano) RIKKI, *Miss You Amami*, Sambinha RICE ORR-701, 1998; Yano Kenji and Shima Sachiko, *Sons of Ailana, Vol. 1*, Qwotchee Records, QRCD-001, 1994; *Alohasai*, Aten Recordings, GOCU-4011, 2004.

[36] Composed by Mickey Ioane. Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, *Facing Future*, Bigboy Record Company, BBCD 5901, 1993.

[37] Olomana, *E mau ana ka ha'aheo (Enduring Pride)*, Better Days Records, BDRCD002, 1991.

[38] Steve Kramer , Peter Apo, and Jeff Rasmussen, *Hawaiian Nation: A Call for Hawaiian Sovereignty*, Mamo Records, MRCD-3, 1990.

[39] From Keali'I Reichel, *EO Mai*, Punahele Records, PPCD005, 1997.

[40] Written by Liko Martin and Thor Wold. Lyrics from The Pahinui Brothers, *The Pahinui Brothers*, Panini Records, 39476-2014-2, 1992.

[41] Schwartz 1982, p. 374.

[42] Lipsitz 1990, p. 20.

[43] See Roberson 2003.

[44] Brown 1996, p. 733.

[45] Brown 1996, p. 732.

[46] Anonymous reviewer's comments on Roberson, "Memory and Music."

[47] Yothu Yindi, *Freedom*, Mushroom Records, HR-61-451-2, 1994; Robbie Robertson & the Red Road Ensemble, *Music for" The Native Americans,"* Capitol Records, CDP 72438-28295-2 2, 1994; Walela, *Walela*, Triloka Records, 80129-8-2040-2 4, 1997.

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