

VOICELESS VICTIMS:
NARRATIVES OF RAPE IN OKINAWAN FICTION

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INTRODUCTION

(1.1) The Long of History of Rape in Okinawa

On June 19th, 2016, thousands of people gathered in Naha, the capital city of Okinawa prefecture, in a memorial to Shimabukuro Rina, a twenty-year-old Okinawan woman whose body had been recently found stuffed in a suitcase in a wooded area in the northern part of the island. Shimabukuro had been missing for nearly two months before her assailant finally led authorities to her decomposing body, after he had confessed to raping and murdering the young woman. Although Shimabukuro's death was a tragedy on its own, it was the identity of her assailant - a former American Marine who had been working as a civilian contractor on one of the many U.S. bases located in Okinawa - that caused so many to come out that day in June. Holding signs declaring, "Past the limits of our anger" (怒りは限界を超えた *Ikari wa genkai wo koeta*), this memorial was in practice a large scale protest against not only the rape and murder of an Okinawan woman, but in a grander sense the continued neo-colonial presence of the U.S. military in the prefecture. A fixture on the islands since the end of World War II, the US bases have been a contentious issue for decades, drawing a stream of criticisms and protest regarding concerns such as noise levels and land usage. However, the most alarming concern has been the constant threat of violence, including sexual violence, committed against the local population by US servicemen. This incident, and the fact that these fears had once again been realized, brought up painful memories for the community of the 1995 rape of a school girl by three U.S. soldiers,

an incident that was mentioned in newspaper reports of the 2016 protest.¹ The earlier incident was directly discussed by the governor of Okinawa, Onaga Takeshi, who said, “After the [1995] incident, we held a mass rally where we vowed never to let the same sort of thing happen again, but we were unable to change the political structure. As a politician and as governor, I am deeply regretful of that. I am so sorry.”²

Unfortunately, Onaga's speech, which echoed the frustration at not being able to create consistent change in Okinawa and prevent future assaults from occurring, was not the first of its kind, nor is the setting where it was given. As Miyume Tanji has noted, demonstrations such as the one for Shimabukuro in 2016 - often called Okinawan Citizens' Rallies (県民大会 *kenmin taikai*) - have become a standard mode of protest in Okinawa, and due to their high rate of occurrence, a familiar scene.³ Beginning with the Yumiko-chan incident (see footnote 4) and its subsequent protest in 1955, the recurring demonstrations form not only a history of sexual assaults committed by US soldiers in Okinawa, but also a parallel narrative of the peaceful

¹ On September 4, 1995 a twelve-year-old girl was abducted and raped by three U.S. servicemen as she walked home from a neighborhood store in the town of Kin. After the assault, the men abandoned the girl at a beach in a U.S. military training facility. The girl was able to give descriptions of her assailants and they were quickly apprehended and eventually sentenced to jail time. This incident drew international attention to Okinawa and the variety of problems it has faced with the continued military presence and in many ways sparked a new wave of protest in Okinawa. For more information and an extended analysis, see Linda Isako Angst's "The Rape of a Schoolgirl: Discourses of Power and Gendered National Identity in Okinawa" in *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, ed. Laura Hein and Mark Selden, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

² “65,000 People in Rally Mourn and Demand Withdrawal of Marines from Okinawa.” Ryukyu Shimpo, June 19, 2016. <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2016/06/19/25251/>.

³ As many go unreported, it is difficult to determine an exact number of how many incidents of sexual assault have occurred in Okinawa since the arrival of the U.S. military. However, a report published by Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence, a group co-Chaired by noted Okinawan activist Suzuko Takazato, states that between 1972 and 2005 official reports estimate that more than 5,394 crimes were committed by U.S. military personnel against Okinawans. Of these incidents, over 500 were acts of “atrocious and violent crime”, which include rape and murder. “Okinawa: Effects of Long-term Military Presence.” Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence. 2007. <http://www.genuinesecurity.org/partners/report/Okinawa.pdf>

resistance to such peril that Okinawans continue to put forth.⁴ One other consistent component of this resistance is that, as Angst demonstrates, the discourse of rape in Okinawa has been deployed mostly by male politicians, metaphorically positioning Okinawa itself as the victim. This is worth noting because as will be shown later, this notion of a male-dominated discourse of the resistance to rape in Okinawa is not limited to politicians, but is extended to prominent creators of cultural products as well, such as authors of literary fiction.

However, the very fact that these protests continue to be staged serves to demonstrate that the relationship between the US military and Okinawa has not fundamentally changed since the arrival of troops in 1945 with the Battle of Okinawa. While it is true that these demonstrations and other grassroots efforts have led to tangible change, the most impactful being the reversion of the prefecture from US occupation to Japanese governance in 1972, in 2017 the prefecture is still host to over 50,000 U.S. servicemen and dependents. Moreover, the continued military presence is such an integral part of life for many Okinawans that the formal occupation that ended in 1972 has now been replaced with a neo-colonial state.⁵ Okinawans who experienced the destruction of their homes firsthand during the war are now passing away, still watching their grandchildren growing up surrounded by many of the same dangers that existed 70 years ago. The protests continue, often in a manner unchanged - masses of people gathering together and

⁴ Miyumi Tanji. *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa*, (Routledge, 2006), 70-71. Usually called the Yumiko-chan incident, this incident occurred in September 1955 when a six-year old Okinawan girl was raped and murdered by a U.S. soldier. Her body was later found near Kadena Air Base. Less than a week after the events of this incident another U.S. soldier kidnapped and raped another child, this time near Gushikawa village. Tanji states that the mass protest against the US crimes after the Yumiko-chan incident occurred at the earliest Citizens' Rally.

⁵ For more information about Okinawa's neo-colonial economic dependency on the U.S. military bases see Gavin McCormack's essay "Okinawa and the Structure of Dependence" in *Japan and Okinawa: Structure and Subjectivity*, ed. Glenn D. Hook and Richard Siddle, (Routledge, 2003).

demanding change – but, almost always non-violent in nature, a sharp contrast to the act that those gathered are protesting.⁶

What this thesis will address in greater detail is how the issue of rape has been displayed and utilized in several literary texts and examine to what degree they are in line with or subvert the male-dominated discourse within Okinawan resistance movement. I would like to discuss three Okinawan authors, writing in different eras of post-war Okinawa, who have addressed this issue. The first is Ōshiro Tatsuhiko (大城立裕 b. 1925) whose novella *Cocktail Party* (カクテル・パーティー *Kakuteru pātii*) was published in 1967 during the middle of the US occupation.⁷ The second is Matayoshi Eiki (又吉栄喜 b. 1947) and his story “The Wild Boar that George Gunned Down” (ジョージが射殺した猪 *Jōji ga shasatsu shita inoshishi*).⁸ The work was originally published in 1978 (six years after the reversion of Okinawa to Japan) but takes place during the Vietnam War, when Okinawa was still under U.S. occupation. Lastly is Medoruma Shun (目取真俊 b. 1960), who in the last 25 years has written a number of texts that have dealt with rape committed in Okinawa, including the short story “Hope” (希望 *Kibō*), first published in 1999, and the serialized novel *In the Woods of Memory* (目の奥の森 *Me no oku no mori*), which was published in a single volume in 2009.⁹

⁶ The most famous example that diverges from this non-violent model is the 1970 Koza Uprisings, which left dozens of vehicles destroyed and saw Okinawan civilians lighting buildings on Kadena Air Base ablaze. For more information on this event see Wesley Ueunten’s “Rising Up from a Sea of Discontent: The 1970 Koza Uprising in U.S.-Occupied Okinawa” in *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Setsu Shigematsu and Keith Camacho (Uni. Of Minnesota Press, 2010).

⁷ Translated by Steve Rabson *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas by Ōshiro Tatsuhiko and Higashi Mineo*. Tran. Steven Rabson. (Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California Berkeley, 1989).

⁸ Translated by David Fahy in *Living Spirit: Literature and Resurgence in Okinawa*. *Manoa*. vol 21, no. 1. 2001.

⁹ “Hope” was translated by Steve Rabson. This thesis references the version that appears in *Islands of Protest: Japanese Literature from Okinawa*. Ed. Davinder Bhowmik and Stever Rabson. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015. *In the Memory of Words* was translated by Takuma Sminkey and published by Stone Bridge Press, 2017.

It is important to state that this is by no means a comprehensive survey of rape in Okinawan fiction. The absence of a female author is worth noting, however, for as I will show, these male authors are for the most part continuing a male-dominated discourse in their texts and examining them collectively is valuable. Moreover, due to the different periods of publication, the texts reflect both the different social circumstances that allowed for rape to occur at the moments in time in which these texts were written, as well as how said circumstances seemed to prescribe the different reactions of the characters in the stories. In fact, through the very act of writing these texts, the authors themselves, I will argue, are writing against the neo-colonial ideology that remains dominant in modern Okinawa but at same time silences the female victims in the texts. Thus, it is worthwhile to consider how the appearance and existence of these texts in the larger context of post-war Okinawa serve to disrupt – and in many ways re-inscribe - the prevailing politics of the time that were by often reactions to the fear, violence and notions of inferiority perpetuated by repeated incidents of sexual assault.

(1.2) The Discourse of Rape in Okinawa

In the introductory chapter to her book, *Sewing, Fighting and Writing: Radical Practices in Work, Politics and Culture*, a historical exploration of French seamstresses in the 19th century, Feminist scholar Maria Tamboukou discusses the notion of eventualization. A component of genealogy, the Foucaultian method of historical analysis, eventualization is described by Tamoukou as a network of individual events that act as markers on a historical map, collectively determining the route that has led to a moment in time. An event is critical because it is a point in time that, “departs from good sense, the event sticks out from the ordinary, marks historical

discontinuities and opens up the future to a series of differentiations.”¹⁰ Thus, an *event* (and it is important to distinguish these notable events from the undefined events of our daily life) demonstrates a way in which we can recognize precise moments in time that have shifted the discourse of a certain narrative. Rather than viewing an *event* as a guidepost in a linear history, it is beneficial to understand it as a point that disturbs the hereunto of a particular history.

Continuing this line of thinking, I will argue that these narrative texts themselves are *events* in the larger discourse of rape in Okinawa. Thus, each narrative text that discusses and depicts rape can be seen as an *event* that acts to shift the public discourse regarding rape in Okinawa. Indeed, all three of the authors discussed in this paper are prominent names in the Okinawa literary scene, representing three of the four Akutagawa prize winners the prefecture has produced (though of the works I will discuss only *Cocktail Party* won the award; the other two authors won the award for different works). However, while the authors have been successful in raising awareness of the issue of sexual violence committed by U.S. servicemen, as will be shown, none of these texts exists outside of an established discourse. In fact, though these texts do strongly criticize the system that allows for rape to occur, and the continued inability of Okinawans to prevent such occurrences, the degree to which they reinforce rather than shift the discourse of rape varies between each text and as such these stories do not exist in a vacuum. While their status as commentaries on a moment in time is fixed, on a larger scale they are in dialogue with each other.

¹⁰ Maria Tamboukou, *Sewing, Fighting and Writing: Radical Practices in Work, Politics and Culture*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016). 23.

This larger dialogue, grounded in fictional narrative, allows one to examine acts of rape in Okinawa not as the result of a linear history in an occupied-occupier relationship, but rather as specific events that flare up in time, explosions of interactions between characters and circumstances they cannot control. These fictional narratives serve to introduce a voice into the public conversation about such tragedies that is often muted or drowned out in large public demonstrations such as Citizens' Rallies. They invite a critical examination of both the initial act of violence and the popular mode of resistance. As will be discussed in greater detail, acts of rape committed by US servicemen are often politicized in the public protests that follow the incident. Almost always the protests, which begin as visible markers of a unified indignation among Okinawans, expand beyond the scope of a single sexual assault, incorporating other components of the general frustration towards the US military presence.

Before engaging in individual readings of the texts, I will discuss what exactly about the actual act of narrative allows for a new, disruptive position towards an emotionally sensitive issue such as rape in Okinawa. In her discussion on the philosophy behind "storytelling" (which she defined broadly, ranging from personal anecdote to narrative fiction to personal essay) Hannah Arendt has spoken to how stories have the potential to bridge the gap between the political and the personal. Lisa Disch states that to Arendt storytelling both "situates our theories in the experiences from which they came and engages an audience in a different kind of critical thinking than an argument does. A story can represent a dilemma as contingent and unprecedented and position its audience to think from within that dilemma."¹¹ Arendt's ideas of

¹¹ Lisa Disch, "More Truth Than Fact: Storytelling as Critical Understanding in the Writings of Hannah Arendt", *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Nov., 1993), 665-694.

storytelling discourage understanding stories to be universal abstractions of a principal or quality. Rather, as Tamboukou argues they, “throw light on a wide range of historical, sociocultural and political structures; they ground abstractions, flesh out ideas and thus create a milieu of critical understanding.”¹² Arendt’s thoughts on stories is particularly relevant in these Okinawan texts, which seem to be challenging the reader to reevaluate the past, the present and the ever-looming future.

With this thesis, I will examine how these texts are in dialogue with the male-dominated public discourse of rape in Okinawa. I will proceed in chronological order, starting with Ōshiro and ending with Medoruma to demonstrate how rape and resistance to rape in the texts evolves over the course of roughly 50 years. In many ways these texts reinforce a male-dominated discussion of rape as a metaphor for the structure of injustice within Okinawa that the U.S. military presence has helped create. This will be clearly demonstrated in the discussion of Ōshiro’s *Cocktail Party*, where the problematic issue of the redemptive male authority and the silent female voice who lacks agency is firmly established. However, in the section discussing “The Wild Board that George Gunned Down” I will discuss how Matayoshi introduces a more nuanced approach to rape in Okinawa, one that maintains a fixed eye on the violence of the topic but also looks to complicate the power structure of U.S. occupied Okinawa. In the final section I will discuss how Medoruma has begun to reconsider the effectiveness of previous modes of resistance to rape. I will end the essay with a discussion as to why rape remains such a constant

¹² Tamboukou. 29.

theme in Okinawan fiction and consider to what degree of change we see in the discourse as presented in these texts.

CHAPTER 2

ŌSHIRO TATSUHIRO AND *COCKTAIL PARTY*

(2.1) The Mask of International Friendship

Published in 1967, Ōshiro Tatsuhiko's novella *Cocktail Party* is one of the most important pieces of Okinawan literature published during the U.S. military occupation. The story first appeared in the fourth issue of *New Okinawan Literature* (新沖縄文学 *Shin Okinawa bungaku*) and quickly gained attention on mainland Japan when it won the Akutagawa prize, with Ōshiro becoming the first Okinawan author to win the award. The story takes place during the middle years of the extended U.S. occupation of Okinawa.¹³ *Cocktail Party* explores a variety of topics of concern during the occupation such as personal connections and guilt traced to back Japanese imperialism, the inequality between local and U.S. military justice systems and the question of “international friendship” between occupier and occupied. Additionally, as will be shown in later sections, issues such as the growing economic dependency of Okinawa on the US military presence and the perceived legal impunity of members of the US military that are raised in *Cocktail Party* only become more pronounced in later literary works.

In the years since its initial publication as a novella, Ōshiro has reworked the story several times, adapting it as a play in 2011 and more recently as a film in 2016. I will be focusing

¹³ By U.S.-occupied I am referring to the official period (1945-1972) during which Okinawa was formally governed by the United States, first through the United States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands (1945 – 1950) which was then succeeded until 1972 by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) before Okinawa prefecture was reverted to Japanese authority. For more information on the structure and development of US control during this time see Nicholas Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S.-Japanese Relations*. (Texas A&M University Press, 2000).

on the initial version of the story, though Ōshiro's commitment to altering and reproducing the story in a variety of adaptations is itself a continued demonstration that he believes the problems initially raised in 1967 have still not been adequately addressed. *Cocktail Party's* depiction of the fallout surrounding the rape of a young Okinawan girl is not only a portrayal of occupied Okinawa, but it also introduces a mode of resistance that calls upon Okinawans to point out the hypocrisy and inequality of the post-war U.S.-Okinawa relationship. This reactionary mode, which in the story is illustrated through the protagonist's determination to make the rape of his daughter a public matter by pressing charges against the U.S. soldier who commits that act of rape, has remained consistent up through the present day. Moreover, *Cocktail Party* is effective in demonstrating the various ways in which the rape of an Okinawan girl has a deep impact on both the personal and societal level. As discussed in the introduction, incidences of violence and rape were repeated and a legitimate concern for Okinawans. However, as an award-winning literary text, the novella also introduces to a large audience the discourse of victimhood, injustice and failure on the part of men to protect the local female. Thus, in many ways, *Cocktail Party* both reflects the anxieties and frustrations that Okinawans felt at the time of its publication, but also reinforces much of the problematic discourse seen in the local community after such an incident occurs.

Cocktail Party begins with the story's protagonist, an unnamed Okinawan man, entering a US military base to attend a cocktail party being held by an acquaintance of his, Mr. Miller, a military intelligence officer. There are also two additional characters - a Chinese lawyer, Mr. Sun, and a mainland Japanese journalist, Mr. Ogawa – that have come together to form a casual Chinese language speaking group. The first half of the story centers around time spent at the party, with conversation topics such as the exoticness of Ryukyuan culture being discussed over

cocktails – a topic that makes the protagonist uncomfortable, as he is wary to declare anything that may distinguish himself. The party is interrupted when one of the other American guests announces that his young son has gone missing. The party disperses, breaking up into pairs to search the base for the missing boy, with the protagonist pairing up with Mr. Sun. During the pair's time walking the military complex - which is jokingly referred to as the 'family compound' (家族部隊 in Japanese) - Mr. Sun reveals that during the war he had a similar experience to the evening's events. While still living in occupied China at the height of the war, Sun's oldest son went missing, and Sun went searching for him in the nearby town. During this early moment in the story, Sun explains that he eventually found his son unharmed, however it is later revealed that while he was looking for his son, his wife was raped by Japanese soldiers. Sun's story is relevant because it not only interweaves Imperial Japan's role in modern day Okinawa – we later learn that all four men in the Chinese speaking group were in China during the war – but also because it parallels what will become the protagonist's story as well. Though both he and the reader are unaware of it throughout the first half of the story, at the same time the protagonist is enjoying cocktails on the base, his high-school-aged daughter is being raped by a young US serviceman who had been renting out an extra room on his property.

This rape is the central moment of the text, though the reader does not witness the act directly because the entirety of the story is focalized through the unnamed protagonist. We learn through an account given by the protagonist's wife (who was told by their daughter) that while the young girl was on her way home, Robert Harris, the American soldier who rented the rear apartment on the protagonist's property, drove by and called her over to his car. The rest of the account is given as follows:

The two of them, your tenant and your daughter, drove off together to get dinner in town then headed to M Cape to enjoy the evening cool. Of course, Cape M is a great place to escape the humidity in the evening, but it is 40 kilometers away from town and the nearest village is still two kilometers away. On that night though, there were no other people at the cape enjoying the evening breeze, and it is there that suddenly misfortune occurred.¹⁴

We learn that after the assault, the daughter (who is also unnamed) pushed Harris off her, causing him to fall off the embankment at the cape and “severely” injure himself.¹⁵ It is worth noting that the actual rape act is never discussed in detail, rather it is referred to as the conspicuously vague term “misfortune” (不幸 *fukō*), a narrative decision that allows the reader to remain at a safe distance from the explicit details of the act. A few days after the incident the daughter is taken into custody by the American Military’s C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Division) as a suspect in the crime against “the victim, Robert Harris”.¹⁶ Thus, the violation that began as an apparent act of friendship between a member of the American military and an Okinawan civilian and led to betrayal and sexual assault is only exacerbated by the arrest of the rape victim. The rest of the story follows the protagonist’s extended efforts to clear his daughter’s name by getting Harris to agree to testify in court that he did indeed rape his daughter, thus justifying her act of self-defense.

¹⁴ Ōshiro. 102-103. All translations of Japanese texts are my own unless noted otherwise.

¹⁵ This incident, and indeed the fallout after Harris’s injury, is similar to another factual incident in Okinawa’s history. In his essay on the 1972 Koza Uprising, Wesley Ueunten writes about the arrival of Matthew Perry in Okinawa in 1853 and the first recorded instance of attempt sexual assault on an Okinawan civilian at the hands of a member of the U.S. military, “During their stay, an incident took place that foretold the coming injustices and crimes against Okinawan women by American military personnel. The event concerned an attempt to rape an Okinawan woman by one of Perry’s crewmembers. A group of local Okinawans later pursued the crewmember, leading him to a precipice where he fell into the ocean and drowned. Upon his return [to Okinawa], Perry ordered the trial and punishment of Okinawans who were involved in the death of his crewmember.” See Wesley Ueunten’s “Rising Up from a Sea of Discontent: The 1970 Koza Uprising in U.S.-Occupied Okinawa”. 99.

¹⁶ Michael Molasky has noted that the terms C.I.D. (and later C.I.C. Counter-Intelligence Corps, which Miller is a part of) appear in the text in roman letters and unglossed and undefined, which underscores the protagonist’s perception of occupation as “abstract and secretive.” See Michael Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, (London: New York: Routledge, 1999), 55.

However, as the story progresses and the protagonist reaches out for help from his international friends - Sun, Ogawa and Miller - he is met by various degrees of resistance on their part. While eventually Sun and Ogawa do agree to help as much they can, with Sun acting as a legal counsel in a visit to Harris at the hospital, the most shocking interaction for the protagonist is when he asks Miller for help. Miller flatly refuses to help the protagonist, though as a high-ranking military intelligence officer he could have been of assistance. Miller gives an extended explanation about the importance of not allowing personal dilemmas and relationships to interfere with the larger goal of “International Friendship” (国際の親善 *kokusai no shinzen*) between various nations.

Eventually the protagonist decides to press charges on his own (against the wishes of his daughter) understanding the uphill battle it will be to make any significant argument in court while still lacking Harris’s testimony. However, it is through these strained requests for assistance that the protagonist makes his ultimate realization in the story – that “International Friendship” is a sham that seeks to selectively curate specific events in history in the name of superficially healthy diplomatic relations. This issue is something that Ōshiro addressed directly when he adapted the story for a stage production in 2011:

In the 1960s, I knew very well that it would be easy enough to protest the victimization of Okinawans by writing an angry political essay. However, I chose a different approach. I intended to write a work of fiction about this unjust system, using as the setting of a cocktail party where people of various nationalities were toasting international friendship. Thinking it over, I remembered that Okinawans, as Japanese citizens, had once been

victimizers, when Japan occupied China during WWII. I decided to write a novella that would question head-on the shifting identities of victims and victimizers.¹⁷

Ōshiro's concerns become clear in the story's penultimate scene when the protagonist, Sun and Ogawa are invited by Miller for lunch at a restaurant on the military base. While the conversation begins with pleasantries, the protagonist quickly escalates the casual conversation into pointed accusations against Miller and the very foundation of their group's friendship. Sun, growing angry with the protagonist as well, accuses him of destroying any potential for reconciliation between the four nations (and here, the protagonist exists in a dual position, as both Japanese *and* Okinawan). In the original text, the presentation of this conversation shifts from a standard paragraph interwoven with dialogue to a style similar to a screenplay:

Protagonist: No, I didn't destroy it. And it wasn't Ogawa. It was Robert Harris who destroyed it. Mr. Miller destroyed it. Mr. Morgan destroyed it.

Miller: That's crazy. You don't know anything about the logic of international friendship. Don't friendships between two countries' start with connections between individuals? The same is true of antagonisms, which are certain to occur. On the other hand, there are countless friendships, and we should try to maximize those as best we can. It is this way between all people, and though at this moment there may be resentment, we can hope for friendly ties in the future.

Protagonist: It's a disguise. This friendship you talk about is nothing but a mask you wear.

Miller: It's not a mask, it's true. This friendship is something I believe in; it's something we should hope to have.

Protagonist: What a nice theory that is, but you have never been hurt by it. Once you have been hurt by International Friendship and feel the pain it conceals you can see that it is truly just a disguise. And so, I have no choice but to expose what is hidden under this mask!

¹⁷ Ōshiro Tatsuhiro. "Why I Wrote the Play". *Program for Stage Performance of Cocktail Party at University of Hawaii at Manoa*. 2011.

Miller: What are you going to do?

Protagonist: I'm going to press charges against Robert Harris.¹⁸

Here in this climatic moment we see the protagonist speaking out against injustices in Okinawa and expressing his desire to dismantle the illusion of friendship that everyone involved is accepting for the time being, if not with total comfort. It is this incident of rape and the lack of justice for the victim that demonstrates the unilateral nature of "International Friendship" in U.S.-Occupied Okinawa.

Thus, the protagonist's decision at the end of the story to ignore his daughter's wishes and press on with charges as an attempt to destroy the "Mask of International Friendship" aligns well with the limited avenues of legal redress to incidents of rape that locals could pursue. Steve Robson has spoken specifically to the legal limitations and imbalances Okinawans faced in cases involving U.S. soldiers. In the following quote USCAR refers to United States Civil Administration and the G.R.I. refers to the Government of the Ryukyu Islands, a local legislature established under U.S. approval that maintained civil services such as the postal service and civilian courts:

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this system of dual but unequal authority concerned legal jurisdiction. A special division of courts within USCAR exercised superiority over G.R.I. courts and was empowered to try and to sentence local civilians in any case deemed appropriate by the high commissioner. Furthermore, occupation law specified punishments, including execution, for Okinawa residents convicted in these courts during crimes against U.S. military personnel or their dependents or summon as witnesses U.S. military personnel in cases of crimes committed against local civilians.¹⁹

One way *Cocktail Party* is successful in demonstrating the U.S. military occupation is

¹⁸ Ōshiro. 123.

¹⁹ Rabson 17.

showing the oppressive imbalances local residents were forced to live under, demonstrating that such systemic oppression existed in the most drastic of circumstances such as rape. Thus, it is important to recognize how the protagonist's revelation that their friendship is a farce, and his decision to rebuff Miller by engaging Harris in court is a severe act of transgression. However, we need to ask who is the one that unmasking the friendship? Who is the one that conflates Robert Harris's act of sexual assault with a larger system of injustice? It is not the victim of the rape, the unnamed Okinawan girl, but rather her father, who, in his own eyes, sees this act as a shame the he must carry, not only for her, but for all of Okinawa. As later sections will demonstrate, this is a commonality in narratives of rape written by men, with the patriarchal figure declaring it his right to make the decision on how to react to the rape of a female. In this moment the text moves from being a narrative of tragedy and injustice to one of redemption, but not for the female who was actually raped, rather for the victimized man who is shamed by his daughter's rape. The protagonist is determined to find this redemption through the exposure of "International Friendship" and does not seem concerned with how it may affect his daughter. In fact, from this moment forward he is the one that speaks for her in all matters regarding the rape and the process of pressing charges against Harris. A few lines after his declared intent to press charges, Sun reminds him that proceeding in this way "will only make your daughter suffer" - a warning which the protagonist strikes down by claiming "We're ready for what may happen."²⁰

It is important then to consider *how* the story arrives at its ending, which lacks the emotion of a family tragedy, instead with the protagonist ending the narrative at the scene of his daughter's rape where she will have to recount and relive the details of her rape. However, the reader never hears these details directly from the daughter, her voice is missing from in the text,

²⁰ Ōshiro. Ibid.

with her father taking action and making decisions for her. Murakami Yoko has discussed the silence of woman in this text, and I believe it is central to allowing such a unilaterally male-dictated ending. She points out that not a single female Okinawan character is given a name; instead all the women in this story (except for Mr. Miller's wife, who is consistently called 'Mrs. Miller') are addressed by the title of their relationship to the protagonist. (daughter, wife, maid, etc.). In doing so, she argues that woman in the story are written as though they are the possessions of men.²¹ Anonymous and with hardly a voice – there are a few instances of actual utterances by female characters, but they are limited to a few words in each instance - the female characters lack any subjectivity. They are the victims of U.S. injustice, while at the same time without the opportunity to dictate their own terms of resistance. The protagonist is without concern, oblivious that his decision to move forward has diminished his daughter's ability to reconcile and cope with her own rape on her own terms, further silencing her voice and reducing her to one more anonymous victim.

This notion of an individual act of rape as a symbol for the violation of all of Okinawa is something that has repeatedly been embraced, and effectively utilized, by citizens in Okinawa since the beginning of the occupation. However, as Linda Angst has demonstrated in her essay on the 1995 rape incident, often the voice of the individual becomes lost in the mix of increased attention to such incendiary cases. In her discussion of the large amount of domestic and international media attention the 1995 incident received Angst demonstrates how the discourse surrounding this single instance shifted in focus and grew in scope:

Most stories situated the rape not only among the many heinous crimes perpetrated by U.S. soldiers against local Okinawans in the fifty years since the war but also within a broader historical context that included colonial and neocolonial oppression of Okinawa by Japan and the United States. The *Okinawa Times*, for example, editorialized that it

²¹ Yoko Murakami. *Dekigoto no zankyo: genbaku bungaku to okinawa bungaku*. (Tokyo: Inpakuto shuppan kai, 2015). 108.

took the “sacrifice of a schoolgirl” to make progress in the movement to scale back the American military bases that occupy 20 percent of the land on this Japanese island.

The female victim, a Kin²² schoolgirl, and the rape (*her* rape), were hidden from view as they were appropriated by all sides, including the prefectural government, various women’s groups, landowners, and other activist groups throughout Japan and Okinawa. Her pain was transformed into a symbol of national subjugation with its own narrative: Okinawa as the feminized body politic, remains a site of contestation between contending political powers, local and international.²³

While Angst here is discussing a true case that occurred some forty years after the publication of the fictional text *Cocktail Party*, I raise her article to demonstrate that the protagonist’s actions in the story are very similar in method as later activist groups. While the protagonist in the story undoubtedly cares for his daughter, by the end of the story his daughter’s rape is no longer an individual matter. To quote Angst, “In short, the rape of a child is transformed into the rape of the body politic.”²⁴

In this regard, *Cocktail Party* as a literary text is an *event*, as in Tamboukou’s meaning, that justifies the silencing of Okinawan women, giving way to patriarchal powers to dictate the discourse and means of resistance in acts of rape. Again, it is important to remember the novella’s critical success both on the local and national level, something I argue established and legitimized the patriarchal dictated discourse of rape not only in the realm of fictional texts, but in the public as well. *Cocktail Party* is not just a fictional account of a rape in occupied Okinawa, it is also a reflection of the male dominated/silent female discourse of rape in Okinawa that has continued to the current day.

(2.2) Second Person Narrative in *Cocktail Party*

²² A town located in central Okinawa which houses the U.S. Marine base, Camp Hansen.

²³ Angst 139.

²⁴ Ibid.

One of *Cocktail Party*'s most distinct narrative features is the contrasting use of the formal, first-person pronoun *watakushi* (私) - "I" - in the first half of the novella and the informal, second-person *omae* (お前) - "you" - in the latter half. As to the identity of the narrator who uses the second-person address, there is a strong consensus among previous critics who have discussed the text that the narrator is the story's protagonist, the unnamed Okinawan man who narrates the events from the evening of the cocktail party. In the afterword to his English translation of the novella Steve Rabson states that the use of the second-person narration in the latter half of the story "creates a tone self-criticism" as the implied 'you' is the unnamed protagonist of the story's first half.²⁵ Rabson is not alone in observing the significance of the narrative shift, with Michael Molasky expanding on Rabson's idea and arguing that while this transition from first-person to second-person "could be read as constituting two separate narrators, the word '*omae*' in this context carries an accusatory tone best attributed to the protagonist addressing himself."²⁶ While I am apt to agree with previous scholars that the narrator is the protagonist (私 *watakushi*) from the beginning of the story, the question of to *whom* exactly this narrator is telling the story has received less attention. An expanded consideration of identity and role of the narratee will develop a more nuanced understanding of the text's larger political and social ambitions.

To begin, in regards to the immediate level of the plot, in the story's second half - subtitled 'The Aftermath' (後章 *goshō*) - the narratee (*omae*) is clearly the same protagonist from the story's first half. More than simply a medium to retell the events of plot, the narratee is also

²⁵ Rabson 125.

²⁶ Molasky. 46.

privity to the real-time internal thoughts and emotions of the protagonist as the events were occurring. For example, near the end of the story, after returning home from the police station with “your” daughter, having decided not to press charges against Robert Harris it was with “a feeling of emptiness you called Mr. Sun and Mr. Ogawa to tell them the news.” It is only logical that the person feeling this “emptiness” is the same protagonist from the beginning of the story, the one whose daughter was being raped while he was enjoying himself at an international cocktail party. However, while the story is ultimately concerned with demonstrating the protagonist’s awakening and disillusionment with the “International Friendship” he has naively engaged in, there is also room to read it as a larger metaphor for many other Okinawans who have experienced similar trauma and were unable to have their voices heard or justice served. Thus, I want to suggest that the narrator is simultaneously talking to another narratee, one that exists outside the corporeal realm of the text, that is the Okinawan reader themselves.

While relatively uncommon in comparison to first- and third-person narratives, when effectively utilized, second-person narrative can create unique set of relationships between the narrator, narratee and reader not afforded to more traditional narrative styles. When discussing second-person narrative, Douglas Schofield has noted that the distinct utterance of ‘you’ in second-person narrative acts not only to move the narrative forward, but it is also a continual, almost defamiliarizing address to the narratee. ‘You’ as a pronoun, can no longer serve as the vocative in second-person narratives, it is not stable enough to reliably single out and definitively identify *the* narratee of a text. More effective, he argues, would be to situate ‘you’ in the

appellative function, which, “works not to designate addressee, but to attract attention – which it does much in the manner of the hailing gesture of a man-in-the-street.”²⁷

This hailing gesture is of course a reference to Louis Althusser’s essay “Ideology and the State” which discusses how ideology constructs individuals as social subjects. Of particular relevance to this discussion are agents which he terms Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). These agents can represent various facets of society, such as religion (a priest), education (a teacher) and indeed culture (such as literature). Thus, ISAs are the material agents of ideology, the “realization of an ideology”, and function to disseminate and maintain the ideology which they grounded throughout society. However, ideology does not exist in a vacuum, it requires an active discourse to maintain relevancy and power, with the clear evidence of this discourse becoming visible through the act of hailing, or “interpellation.” The act of interpellation occurs when the subject to whom the agent speaks – such as the narratee of a story - recognizes themselves in the speech of the agent and thus yields their subjecthood to the ideological speech. Althusser writes:

... “Ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace police (or other) hailing: ‘Hey, you there!’

Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was ‘really’ addressed to him, and that ‘it was *really him* who was hailed’ (and not someone else).”²⁸

²⁷ Dennis Schofield. “The Second Person: A Point of View?”. *colloquy*. Vol. 1, 1996. 75.

²⁸ Louis Althusser. “Ideology and the State”. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster.

Moreover, as Kaja Silverman has argued, the use of second-person narrative not only combines the roles of narrator and protagonist that ‘you’ is engaging in the text, but it also hails the reader into the text as well, inviting their own subjectivity to be carried forward through the text. ‘You,’ she notes, is similar to ‘I’ in that it lacks any conventionalized meaning and only gains significance when placed in a discursive situation.²⁹

In fact, to see the immediate impact of ‘you’ as a vocative indicator in the text we only need to look at the first paragraph of the second half of the text, which contains *omae* in nearly every sentence:

It was on that night, probably when *you* were looking for Mr. Morgan’s young son, and had stopped in front of the metal fence of the family compound to listen to Mr. Sun tell his story. About that time, *your* daughter was at Cape M and that thing happened to her. By the time *you* had gotten home from the party, slightly intoxicated, she was in bed. *Your* wife greeted *you* with a nervous look in her face and showed *you* the school uniform *your* daughter had worn that day. It was ripped and stained in many places and *you* could see that something terrible had happened. (Emphasis mine)

By choosing to frontload the narrative with such a high number of second-person narrative pronouns, Ōshiro forces the reader to recognize the word and begin to consider who *omae* is and whom the narrator is addressing. Moreover, throughout the story the narrator consistently rebukes *omae*, criticizing their decision making and inability to focus their energy effectively and get results. Kirsten Cather has argued that rather than self-criticism directed at Okinawans, the use of *omae* is targeted to mainland Japanese readers, “The self-accusatory tone of his *omae*s suggest the redirection of his rage inward, but when read, *omae* becomes a jarring direct address to the reader that challenges any position of complacent distance. Although America is also vilified in the story, the intended recipient of this criticism is undeniably the

²⁹ Kaja Silverman, *Subject of Semiotics*. (Cary, Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1983). 48-49.

mainland reader.”³⁰ Cather cites Ōshiro’s own comments that when writing the story he felt more frustration with Japan (*yamato*) than America. However, I would argue that such a reading removes the invitation to engage in the social movement to unmask international friendship and find justice for the sacrificed daughters of Okinawa, both literally and figuratively. Moreover, putting aside Ōshiro’s authorial intent, as Angst’s argument suggests, the father’s decision to utilize the personal tragedy of a rape victim - in this case his own daughter - to expose injustice and improve the greater good of all Okinawans at the cost of the victim’s agency is in line with the history of sexual assault and social movements in Okinawa since the story’s publication.

³⁰ Kirsten Cather. “Dilution or Diversification – Okinawan Works and the Akutagawa Prize”. *Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies*. Vol. 1, Summer 2000. 51.

CHAPTER 3

MATAYOSHI EIKI AND “THE WILD BOAR THAT GEORGE GUNNED DOWN”

(3.1) Situating the Story

Published 10 years after *Cocktail Party*, Matayoshi Eiki’s “The Wild Board That George Gunned Down” is an even darker depiction of the oppressive life many Okinawans faced during U.S. occupation. However, whereas *Cocktail Party* is initially positioned in a world where friendship, or at least the façade of friendship, exists between U.S. and East Asian peoples, as will be shown “Wild Boar” immediately dismisses and notion of a harmonious co-existence between the occupying force and occupied peoples. A graduate of University of the Ryukyus, Matayoshi Eiki was born in Urasoe, and has lived most of his life in Okinawa, spending many years as a civil servant for Urasoe city while at the same time publishing fiction to growing acclaim. One of his first major works, the short story won the 8th Kyushu Arts Festival Literary Award in 1977 and was published in *Bungakukai* magazine in 1978. The story is set in US-occupied Okinawa during the Vietnam War in an unnamed base town in Okinawa and is focalized through the protagonist, George, a low-ranking member of the US military who has been stationed in Okinawa and is awaiting his deployment to the front lines of Vietnam. Filled with graphic scenes of violence and rape - both of an Okinawan woman and of George himself - the story ends with George shooting and killing an elderly Okinawan man who was searching for scrap metal near the base.

By first contextualizing the story in the social and cultural realities of US-occupied Okinawa and then moving into a close reading of the scenes depicting race and rape, I will

demonstrate that, while the text does present a version of Okinawa in line with past discourse on the occupation, with the US occupying force maintaining a strong, almost unilateral, position of power over Okinawans, the story in fact acts to complicate this power struggle. It accomplishes this by presenting a wide variety of individuals within this power dynamic – despicable and pitiful alike – an act that humanizes the characters of the occupation, bringing them out of the shadows and into public view, at times inviting empathy and a more nuanced consideration of the effect the occupation has on everyone involved. This is to say that the story forces the reader to see the occupying US force not as a singular entity, but rather as composed of multiple, unique personas with individual opinions, fears and morals (or lack thereof). Moreover, through the filter of George’s experiences in the story, Matayoshi weakens the notion of the US as a unified and omnipotent occupying force.

Before discussing the characters and events of the story, it is important to contextualize the story both in term of history and location. To begin with, just like *Cocktail Party*, the story is set in U.S.-occupied Okinawa, more specifically in a town that borders a U.S. military base. While never explicitly mentioned by name, Koza (now modern day Okinawa City), infamous for numerous bars and night clubs that cater to US servicemen, seems to be the setting for the story. Koza’s significance as a literary backdrop for fiction has been explored by scholars such as Michael Molasky who recognize it to be a site in fiction where issues of racial tension and sexual violence are explored and complicated. During the occupation in particular, occupations such as waitressing at nightclubs and prostitution were deeply interwoven into the social and economic

fabric of base towns.³¹ Thus, not only does the physical location of a base town literally lay between the two major spheres of the inhabitants of US-occupied Okinawan society – the bases of the occupying force and the communities of the occupied people – but the very nature of the economics of the area reinforce in a painful way the dynamics of an occupied landscape. This deep economic connection is something that is brought up in the first line of the story which begins, “In two days it would be payday (salary day).”³²

The Okinawa in “Wild Boar” is dark – populated by sadists wandering dirty streets lined with shattered liquor bottles, on the prowl for sex or a fight, or both. Aside from Okinawans working in the nightlife/sex industry (such as the hostesses in bars serving US servicemen), there is no situation in the story where people of different races interact with each other in anything less than a violent manner. Moreover, the story is occupied exclusively by Okinawans and Americans; there is not a single Japanese character in the story. It is an isolated setting, geographically only seeming to encompass a few blocks surrounding a military base. To be sure, the setting of the story is born out of a real past, but is also something different; this isn’t a story of Koza or Kin or other Okinawan base towns, but rather a distressing depiction of a base town at its most extreme. Regrettably, readers in Okinawa (and to a lesser degree, Japan as well) at the time would recognize this world as something relatable, as the violence of the war and the occupation were painfully real and inescapable at the time.

³¹The previously cited report by Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence estimates that at some time since the establishment of U.S. forces in the prefecture 1 in 30 Okinawa women have worked as a prostitute.

³²Eiki Matayoshi, “Jōji ga shasatsu shita inoshishi,” *Okinawa Bungaku Zenshū*, Vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1990), pp. 118

Perhaps the most chilling connection to history readers of the time may have recognized would be the impetus for the story's title. In December of 1960 an Okinawan farmer was shot and killed by an American soldier, who claimed to have been hunting. Though he admitted to shooting the farmer, the soldier claimed that he mistook the farmer to be a wild boar. This explanation was accepted by the U.S. authorities and the soldier was let off without formal discipline, a decision that caused great anger in the Okinawa community.³³ Thus, Okinawan readers of the time would surely be able to recognize the connection between what happens at the end of Matayoshi's story and the real-life incident of 1960. In a further exploration of the real historical connections within the story, Yanai Takashita has written about other incidents similar to the 1960 'wild boar' case where American soldiers harmed Okinawan civilians. Yanai posits that, rather than isolating a single event, Matayoshi's story expands the temporal backdrop, summoning up a string of events that occurred during the time Okinawans have been forced to live alongside American forces as one element of life in contemporary Okinawa.

In fact, Yanai compares the original 1978 *Bungakukai* version with the later version that appeared in Matayoshi's 1981 collection of stories *ギンネム屋敷* (*Ginnemu yashiki*) and points out that in the earlier version of the story there is another scene that seems to be referencing a true incident of the past. In this version, at the end of the story, George rationalizes shooting the old man by recalling an incident in which another soldier ran over a pedestrian with his car, apparently claiming to have been unable to see either the traffic light or the pedestrian due to the

³³ This 'man-confused-as-boar' excuse for murder has a fascinating connection with another former Japanese and US colony, the Philippines. The 1976 film *Once a Moth* (*Minsa'y isang gamu-gamo*) centers around a similar incident when a Filipino man is shot for trespassing on a U.S. military base while flying a kite. At the man's funeral, U.S. officers explain to the man's sister (played by one the Philippines most famous actresses, Nora Aunor) that her brother was mistaken for a wild pig. Upon hearing this, Aunor screams at the U.S. officer, "My brother is not a pig!", a line that has since become embedded in the anti-colonial movement in the Philippines. For more information, see, "My Brother is Not a Pig: American Benevolence and Philippine Sovereignty" in José B Capino's 2010 monograph *Dream Factories of a Former Colony* (Uni. of Minnesota Press).

reflection of the sun. George, however, knows the truth that the soldier, who was found innocent of his crime, actually ran through a stop light and hit a “middle school-ish” looking boy crossing at a crosswalk. Yanai points out that in Naha in 1963 there was an actual incident where a middle school boy on his way to school was run over by a car being driven by an American soldier. In the same way that George remembers it, the soldier was found innocent and protests flared up across the island. However, this section is deleted from later versions of the text without explanation, though Yanai suggests that, “while the removal of the section may allow more focus on the internal thoughts of George, the original *Bungakukai* edition did expand on, and really drive home the great degree of the lawless behavior of soldiers at the time.”³⁴

However, it would be a disservice to the nuanced power of the story to lay too much importance on the historical narrative of Okinawa as the guiding force in “Wild Boar” and to imply the story is merely a fictionalization of events that had already occurred. While Okinawa in the 1960s and 70s certainly did share many similarities with the world that Matayoshi has depicted, it is also clear that he has constructed a hyperbolic representation of a base town. Whether the story takes place in Koza is not as important as the fact that the setting and events of the story evoke empathy from readers familiar and unfamiliar with the details of the time. For Okinawan readers of the time, this extreme depiction of a base town affords them the opportunity to recognize truly how dire the situation in Okinawa was [is] as this extreme is not so far removed from the reality they have experienced. However, for readers without the shared cultural knowledge, the hyperbole allows an opportunity to peer into and try to comprehend the gravity of such a situation. In Matayoshi’s constructed world the factual or empirical veracity of the story’s setting is less important than ensuring that it is recognizable and understandable on a

³⁴ Takashi Yanai, “Matayoshi Eiki ‘Jōji Ga Shashatsu Shita Inoshishi’ ron: Senryō Toki Kūkan No Bōryoku Wo Megutte.” in Hōsei Daigaku Okinawa Bunka Kenkyūjo, 2016. 57.

shared cultural level, for it is in this level that readers can connect to both the immediacy of the story as well as true past events that are being referenced in the fictional narrative.

(3.2) Rape in the Story

One of the most striking elements of Matayoshi's story is the repeated reference to and depiction of rape. However, whereas in *Cocktail Party* a single act of rape was the driving force of the story's plot, in this text rape has become such a normalized element of life for the characters that its occurrence almost seems to be anticipated. Another major difference is that while *Cocktail Party* merely alludes to the act of rape – Matayoshi takes efforts to ensure the reader understands when a rape is occurring, though he stops shortly of explicitly depicting the act. The world of this story is tragic in that the repeated acts of rape imply that it is simply an empirical element of life for the occupied Okinawans in the story. There is no challenging rape as fact because it is demonstrated to be an unalterable fact, at least at the hands of those being violated. In this story the men of the occupying force rape the women of the occupied peoples and humiliate the men. Unchallenged and facing no repercussion, they act to situate themselves at the highest point in a hierarchy of power and continue their monstrous behavior not only because they know they can get away with it, but because these actions further cement their positions of power.

Sharon Marcus has discussed how perpetrators of rape systematically act to reinforce this notion that rape is somehow an unavoidable fact of life; that women are inherently rapable. She argues against the notion that rape is an empirical fact, arguing instead that it is a process that can be analyzed and undermined as it occurs. Specifically Marcus proposes that one way to do this is “to treat it as a *linguistic* fact; to ask how the violence of rape is enabled by narratives, complexes and institutions which derive their strength not from outright, immutable, unbeatable

force but rather from their power to structure our lives as imposing cultural scripts.”³⁵ One of these cultural scripts that Marcus discusses is the continual use of threatening language and physical actions (before the actual rape) on the part of men towards women that engenders a belief that they are stronger than women and thus capable of rape. In fact, as Marcus points out:

A rapist’s ability to accost a woman verbally, to demand her attention, and even to attack her physically depends more on how he positions himself relative to her socially than it does on his allegedly superior physical strength. His *belief* that he has more strength than a woman and that he can use it to rape her merits more analysis than the putative fact of that strength, because that belief often produces as an effect the male power that appears to be rape’s cause.³⁶

Keeping this in mind, let us look at the opening scene of the story, where an American soldier named Washington tortures an Okinawan hostess with a knife before raping her in a bathroom. It is clear that in this environment of the club, the GIs perceive themselves to have the ultimate degree of power and authority exhibited both physically and in their use of language. The men are red in the face with drink, have a heavy build (巨体 *kyotai*) and are quick to grab and threaten women who walk away from them for a more favorable customer: “Grabbing her with his thick, hairy hand, John yelled, ‘You’re leaving us!? Who’s going to show us a good time then? You stink of an inferior race but you aim to make a fool of us!’”³⁷ This is only the beginning of the actual rape of the woman, but it is a critical act towards maintaining a larger patriarchal script that emboldens the soldiers to continue on with their actions. What makes this entire scene so powerful is that Matayoshi depicts it in its entirety, from beginning to end, refusing to cede any of the graphic details of the incident. In doing so, he allows the full gravity

35 Sharon Marcus, “Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention,” in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 385 – 403.

36 Marcus, pp. 390

37 Matayoshi, pp. 119. The original Japanese phrase used in this sentence to describe the women as an “inferior race” (劣等民族 *rettō minzoku*) is also discordant with the tone of the rest of the sentence.

of the incident to settle in, allowing the reader to recognize the intensity of this singular event with its own individual tragedies while at the same time showing that such incidences of rape also authorize and strengthen a greater system of patriarchal power. Both of these notions are critical in understanding the greater power dynamic at play in the story because, as Marcus has shown, “Patriarchy does not exist as a monolithic entity separate from human actors and actresses...rather, patriarchy acquires its consistency as an overarching descriptive concept through the aggregation of microstrategies of oppression such as rape...A rape act thus imposes as well as presupposes misogynist inequalities; rape is not only scripted – it also scripts.”³⁸ Thus, the rape of the hostess in the beginning of the story can be seen as an act on the part of the American soldiers to further reaffirm their positions of power over Okinawan women on a larger scale.

The power that American soldiers demonstrate in this scene, however, reaches beyond women. It extends to the only Okinawan male character in the story as well. Demonstrating the degree of confidence they have in their dominion, the men refuse to offer any sort of monetary reparation for their actions, much less any implication of regret over what has transpired. While Washington is still in the bathroom raping the hostess the Okinawan owner of the club (*mastuaa*) appears and begins trying to negotiate an amount for reparation but the soldiers immediately rebuke him, threatening to have his A-sign taken away and thus hurting his business:

The owner sounded out John and the other men and as he bargained the amount of money got lower and lower. John and the men were hearing none of it.

“How about I stick you with this jackknife,” John threatened.

The owner’s nervous smile grew large and looking at the men’s faces he announced his price.

“Twenty dollars, that’s my final offer. I can’t go any lower than this.”

The soldiers were defiant.

38 Marcus, pp. 391.

The sexual assault fee. The bodily injury fee. The destruction of property fee. All that for twenty dollars. What is this, that's not even one night's worth of drinking money, George thought to himself, I want to beat down the price further. Why is this pathetic man so persistent about such a feeble sum? I don't even want to look at him.

The men glared at the owner, "The women were in the wrong. We're not giving you one cent."

Over by the bathroom the women were in a panic. Washington was buckling his belt and as he came near him the owner tried talking to him. In a dreamlike haze, Washington, with a hand that seemed as big as a boxing glove, pushed him aside as if removing a repulsive eyesore. The owner stumbled and fell over the seats backwards onto the floor on his behind.

As Washington walked out the door John gave his final parting shot, "What's the cause for the fuss anyways, we were just having a little fun. You bunch of stinkin' war losers."³⁹

This passage is notable because it demonstrates that the authority of the occupying soldiers extends beyond females; the male owner of the bar is shown to be but a powerless caricature, inept at even selling out his own people. Previously I have discussed the power dynamic of the story as based on patriarchy, with the male occupying forces dominating the female characters. However, throughout the story we see examples of how this dynamic expands beyond a male/female binary. For much of this text – barring the last scene, which will be discussed later - American soldiers are consistently shown to be the acting dominant force in situations that scripts Okinawan characters as victims. Whether it be the females that are raped, the male club owner who is portrayed to be a bungling fool or the old man who is shot dead at the end of the story, all the Okinawans in this story are subject to the will of occupying U.S. soldiers.

More troubling, while these women are repeatedly victims of rape, they also seem to be able to forget the actions of the GIs and continue to serve them as customers. This is reaffirmed

39 Matayoshi, pp. 122. A-Sign stood for "Approved" and was distributed by USCAR to businesses. Only businesses with A-Signs could serve U.S. soldiers, so the threat of losing the sign held serious economic repercussions.

in the following internal monologue from George, where he considers why he didn't step in and help any of the women he has witnessed being assaulted or raped other U.S. soldiers:

There is no way those screaming women would thank me anyways. They would just call me a wimp. It was just a month ago when John and the guys ran wild. I didn't do anything then either. Then a few days later all the women had forgotten that night and were all over those guys, flirting with them. I remembered though. What idiots, those women. That Washington in the bathroom now, they won't even stop him from coming in. Tomorrow night everyone will be cool with him and pour his drinks and let him fondle their breasts.⁴⁰

Here we see anger from George directed not only at the victims of the rape, and a sense of envy at those perpetuating the acts. This is our first insight into the unique position George has in the larger power structure, because for some reason he is atypical of the patriarchy that dominates his world. In fact, what is most remarkable about this passage is that it positions George below the women as well, those who would laugh at him should he try to help. The admission on George's part that he would be mocked by the women is also a tacit acknowledgment that he is out of position in the patriarchy at play, something wholly unexpected, for as an American, male soldier, superficially he fits all the proper criteria for superiority. This scene then, and George's thoughts and reactions to what goes on at the club, is the first crack in the perceived armor of occupied power and is the crux of the entire story. Rather than an impervious unified body, the story shows us, the force of power has weak points that perhaps cannot survive in such a surrounding. Furthermore, Matayoshi's decision to focalize the story through a character such as George, who operates outside of the script of his peers, choosing not to partake in the rape and assault of Okinawan women, acts to disrupt and subvert

40 Matayoshi. 121

the larger notion of a homogeneous, unified occupying force. This comes to full head in the story's penultimate scene, where George is assaulted by a group of black men and women.

This scene takes place immediately after George has left a love hotel, having been belittled by an Okinawan prostitute for his ineptitude as a man and tricked into paying extra for meeting. The scene begins with George walking into an unfamiliar area of town:

Red, blue, yellow, pink tight pants being held up by suspenders. Awful lot of Blacks are here, George noticed. Large, ferocious looking eyes rolling around. In the reflection of the neon lights their black faces looked sick. Thick lips spread wide in laughter, large white teeth all lined up. Seems like I may have wandered into the wrong place. The buzz from earlier was gone now. The Blacks were gathered in groups of four or five – standing around a foreign car, leaning against walls, at the entrances to shops, some in the shadows, others out in the light, with their arms around the shoulders of hostesses or their girlfriends, others with their hands wrapped around their waists or holding hands, all of them tracking George with their eyes. In the instant he was about to pass in front of their eyes he was hit with spit and chewing gum, lewd insults and provocations were yelled out. George kept his eyes forward and moved straight ahead. He did not change how he walked. Were he to speed up, he felt they would jump him. As he continued on ahead the eyes from the group of Blacks started to look like wild beasts ready to pounce on a deer.⁴¹

Shortly after this point, George is shoved and spit on, and pushed into a club. The assault quickly crosses the line from a mere physical assault into one sexual in nature as beer bottles are thrust down his throat, causing him to choke and drawing tears to his eyes. As it continues, his pants are removed and he is threatened with castration as a group of black women, women who “prance about like antelopes” and “lack any individuality, just like animals” enter into the battery:

One of the women took a kitchen knife from the counter and smiled knowingly at him without saying anything. She waved the knife in his face. It shone dully in the light. As the women wriggled and danced around his rigid body she moved the knife down near his privates and slowly moved it about. George gritted his teeth tightly.

Somehow or other, I'm going to have to kill these Black women, he thought. He was going crazy with that knife moving around his crotch. Suddenly his sight went dark. A different Black woman was now standing over him. She squatted straight down, her tight buttocks situated right atop his face.

George heard someone say, “Piss on him.” However, the woman acted like she

⁴¹ Matayoshi. 122-123.

was screwing him, moving her hips up and down and gyrating around him before letting out a loud laugh and getting off him.⁴²

What is occurring here – an act of American-on-American violence – further diminishes George’s presumed position in the hierarchical power structure of occupied Okinawa. Up until this point, the race of the American characters in the story has not been addressed, and as such the occupying force has appeared to be unified both in nationality and in race. This scene, however, breaks that illusion down and in the process disrupts the seemingly omniscient power of the occupiers by demonstrating that there exists very real struggles and obstacles in their own internal power dynamics. In doing so, by degrading the character George to such an extreme point, Matayoshi is also signaling the reader to question the absolute nature of the power structure that has been in play in the story.

The scene ends with George being robbed of all his money, thrown out onto the street and being urinated on by one of the men. In an ironic twist, it is both exactly like the beginning scene of the story while at the same time its antithesis. Many of the components from the initial rape scene are present – verbal mockery, physical beating, the use of a knife and a discussion of money – but the most critical difference here is that rather than an Okinawan woman being the victim, it is an American soldier, the supposed patriarchal master of the power structure. Moreover, the script is flipped even more by the fact that both men *and* women are acting as aggressors in the scene. It is worth noting that Matayoshi does indeed have to fall back on the disturbing depiction of the savage black to accomplish this disruption of the power structure of the story, a trope that Michael Molasky has argued acts as a foil for Japanese (or in this case,

42 Matayoshi. 134-135.

Okinawan) authors to explore issues of identity.⁴³ Still, the scene is effective in completely toppling the notion of a clearly defined role for the American occupying force in the story, as we are shown that one of its members can find himself at the absolute bottom of the power structure. Thus, humiliated by every single person he encounters, the story begins the final scene with George searching for some form of redemption and a way to lift himself out of the mire.

Ultimately, the only means by which George can consider reaffirming and scripting his worth is by finding someone he can act out on and violate. This happens in the final scene of the story, when George shoots and kills an unarmed, elderly Okinawan man outside of his base – an act for which he will presumably receive no punishment. What to make of this is difficult, as it suggests that ultimately the US occupier force is still in fact the group displaying the ultimate power in the text's hierarchy. It is the only scene of death (murder) and it is a US soldier killing an unarmed Okinawan civilian; the message can hardly be clearer. However, tragic as the ending is, it is important to consider the steps that it took for George to get to such a place where he would kill an innocent man. What has pushed George to such an action is not his position as an occupier *per se*, but rather the entire dynamic that forces him to act in such a role in the first place. Thus, one way to read this story is to see it not simply as a protest story against American forces in Okinawa (though it's undeniably that) but rather the larger complex that allows America to occupy Okinawa in the first place. Combining these elements the text is remarkable in its complexity and its bold attempt to engender a degree of sympathy in the reader towards individuals involved in the American occupation. This is to say that the story disturbs the

⁴³ See Molasky's chapter "A Darker Shade of Difference" in *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*.

essentialist notion that any group – Okinawa, American, male, female – can be rendered as maintaining a certain fixed position in this dynamic. Rather, Matayoshi shows us that not only is the occupation an active process but that any attempt to further understand it requires recognizing how the complicated processes act on and create individual characters and actions.

CHAPTER 4

MEMORY AND REACTION IN THE WORK OF MEDORUMA SHUN⁴⁴

(4.1) Medoruma's Career

An established writer in Okinawa by the 1980's and early 90's, Medoruma Shun found a much larger audience when his story "Droplets" (水滴 *Suiteki*) won both the 27th Kyushu Arts Festival Literature Prize and the 114th Akutagawa Prize in 1997, bringing a new following of readers both from mainland Japan and, upon its translation into English in 1998, abroad. In his work Medoruma has drawn on forms outside of fiction to voice resentment and anger concerning the continued U.S. military presence in Okinawa and a perceived disregard on the part of mainland Japan of the desires of Okinawans for a change in policy. This dissent appears in a variety of written formats, though of particular note are his newspaper editorials, book length works of non-fiction such as *Postwar' Okinawa - Year Zero* (沖縄「戦後」ゼロ年 *Okinawa 'sengo' zero nen*) and, in more recent years, a personal blog "From the Island Where the Ocean Roars" (海鳴りの島から *Uminari no shima kara*). Considering these different approaches collectively, I argue that the many styles and genres of Medoruma's writing have worked together to form a charged critique of contemporary Okinawa directed both externally at Tokyo and the US and internally towards his fellow Okinawans. As an author, Medoruma is not only cognizant of Okinawa's past suffering, but also understands the present difficulties the island

⁴⁴ Portions of this section have been reprinted in "Medoruma Shun: An Okinawan Voice of Unrest", in *Critical Insights: Modern Japanese Literature*, edited by Frank Jacob, (Amenia, NY: Salem Press), 2017.

faces today. This layered awareness, and the need for real changes in the prefecture, permeate Medoruma's works. In this section I will discuss two of his works that deal with rape, his novel *In the Woods of Memory* and his short story "Hope," and will examine how they portray the lasting impact of rape within the community and the community's inability to change an environment where rape is a facet of life.

(4.2) *In the Woods of Memory*

One text where the rape of a local is a central element is Medoruma's 2009 novel *In the Woods of Memory*. The novel, which is centered around repeated acts of rape against a teenage Okinawan girl (Sayoko) by U.S. soldiers during the Battle of Okinawa, is a complex work with narrative shifts in time between the war and contemporary Okinawa. After hearing of the initial rape of Sayoko, Seiji, her neighbor who has a crush on her, attacks one of the U.S. soldiers with a spear while swimming in the ocean. However, he is later discovered hiding in a cave from the U.S. military and is blinded by tear gas that has been used to smoke him out. The novel is not divided into traditional chapters, but broken up into untitled sections, with each section presenting a different narrative perspective from a different character. These characters vary from a younger childhood friend who witnessed the rape (Fumi), the local chief warden who revealed Seiji's location to the Americans (Kayo) and the grandson of the US soldier who Seiji stabbed.

One of these sections is presented as a stream-of-consciousness narrative from Seiji. Written in Japanese but also glossed in the Shimakutuba,⁴⁵ this section takes place in the early

⁴⁵ Shimakutuba, or 'community language' (島言葉 *shimakotoba* in Japanese) is the word for languages spoken in

2000s and contains Medoruma's most extensive and concentrated use of Shimakutuba in his fiction. As such, it pressures the reader to truly consider the text as an Okinawan story, for not only is *In the Woods of Memory* Okinawan in plot and setting, but the unyielding use of Shimakutuba forces the reader to recognize the text's inherent, almost metaphysical Okinawan quality. This use of Shimakutuba (or non-use on the part of characters from mainland Japan) in Medoruma's work is a highly nuanced narrative technique that serves not only to situate a character's general cultural and linguistic background, but, as Kyle Ikeda has argued, also intimates various factors such as age, gender and class.⁴⁶ The decision to include Ryukyuan language in his stories is something Medoruma has commented on before, stating that it is a conscious decision to try and create something authentically born out of one's own social environment to challenge the power structure of standard Japanese language. The use of Shimakutuba in his stories, he has said, is a "weapon that can be used in this effort."⁴⁷

Moreover, in *The Woods of Memory*, Medoruma attempts to minimize politicizing the individual act of rape, especially in comparison to earlier works discussed. Whereas the father in *Cocktail Party* co-opts his daughter's rape for larger political maneuvering and in the process silences his daughter, *In the Woods of Memory* allows the characters to narrate their own experiences and in the process show how rape has shaped their lives and their community. By spreading out the memory and impacts of Sayoko's rape across characters and generations,

the Ryukyu archipelago. In particular, Seiji is 'thinking' the Nakijin dialect of the Kunigami language. See Fija, Brenzinger and Heinrich "The Ryukyus and New, But Endangered Languages of Japan" (<http://apjjf.org/-Patrick-Heinrich/3138/article.html>) for more information about the six recognized Ryukyuan languages.

⁴⁶ Kyle Ikeda, *Okinawan War Memory: Transgenerational Trauma and the War Fiction of Medoruma Shun*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 89.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Molasky, 181.

Medoruma creates a highly-nuanced study of the far-reaching and long-lasting effects that an individual instance of rape has on a community. However, in the novel neither the rape of Sayoko nor Seiji's act of retribution are ever leaked outside the village or entered into the official records of the U.S. military unit that captures Seiji. In fact, it is revealed in the novel's final section that Seiji was tortured by his capturers when they tried to force a confession out of him, believing that he had been acting under orders from the Japanese imperial army. This final section is actually a letter written more than 50 years after the Battle of Okinawa by Robert Higa, the Okinawan-American soldier that acted as interpreter between the villagers and the American forces. Thus, the stories and recollections of the characters are individual recollections and collectively reconstruct the history of what Kyle Ikeda has labeled a "community secret." This collective effort, Ikeda continues, is a first in Medoruma's fiction, allowing the novel to extend, "beyond the private sphere of family into the larger arena of community and public memory."⁴⁸

However, while many important characters involved in the rape and the retributive fallout are given a voice, the one voice conspicuously absent is that of Sayoko. Thus, even in this ambitious text which presents a nuanced look at the extended impact an individual act of rape can have on a community, Medoruma still neglects to give a voice to the female victim of the rape. In fact, the only time Sayoko speaks is in the final lines of the chapter that is narrated by her younger sister, Tamiko, but takes over 50 years after the war. In the chapter, we learn that Sayoko was forced to give up the baby she had as a result of the rape and suffered severe psychological trauma, living a tumultuous life afterwards, openly rejected by her father for what happened to her and struggling to maintain a normal life. In the final section of Tamiko's chapter

⁴⁸ Ikeda, 137.

she goes to visit Sayoko at an assisted living facility, but struggles to maintain a conversation with her older sister as she looks out the window blankly:

“Sayako, what are you looking at?”

Without responding, she kept looking straight ahead. I stood next to her, leaning against the concrete handrail which had been made to look like a tree trunk and looked in the direction her eyes were set. The sugarcane was swaying gently in the breeze along with the leaves and slender branches of the horsetail trees. In the distance I could hear the collective rhythm of the white waves that rose along the coral reef. We were the only ones in the yard, the rest of the nursing home was silent, as though everyone were asleep. The wind from the sugarcane fields had risen up the hill and shuffled up my sister’s short, gray hair. Her eyes were narrowed but she looked happy, and she smiled. Staring at her face, I wondered when was the last time she looked so peaceful. Suddenly, her lips moved, as they she had said something.

“Huh? What”

She kept staring at the ocean, not answering. But her words lingered in my ears, along with the faint sound of the breeze.

“I hear you, Seiji.”⁴⁹

Again, these four words are the only time that Sayoko herself speaks, and even in this instance it is her speaking to the man who acted in revenge on her behalf. It is also a callback to the final line of an earlier section where an elderly Seiji, long since blind from being subjected to tear gas and torture by U.S. forces, is looking out at the ocean and he asks “Can you hear me Sayoko?” In fact, we are not given exact dates in the text, and it could be argued that this is not a single, but rather a continuously unrequited call and response between the two characters scarred, but forever bonded by a tragic act of sexual violence. In this regard, the novel’s multiple layers of narrative and remembrance are effective at displaying a network of memories, but the fact that so much of the novel concerns Seiji’s actions of redemption, and that Sayoko remains

⁴⁹ Medoruma Shun. *Me no oku no mori*. (Kageshobō: Tokyo), 2009. 202.

silent, indicates that Medoruma is still navigating in the male-dominated discourse of rape and resistance, something that is further demonstrated in his short story “Hope”.

(3.2) “Hope”

The final story in a four-story series entitled “From Stories About Koza Town” (「コザ」 / 街物語より *Koza / monogatari yori*) “Hope” is one Medoruma’s most controversial texts. The four stories were initially published individually over a two-week period in the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper in June 1999 and are ostensibly set in Koza.⁵⁰ The first three stories (“Hope” was the last to be published) are short vignettes that lack a traditional plot, instead focusing on the mundane life of a lonely man in urban Okinawa. Indeed, nothing of note particularly happens in these stories, with all of them being first-person narratives and quite short in length at about four pages. Also, intertextually they are not immediately connected, other than the possibility that the narrator is the same throughout all four and that all the stories are brief, each four pages in length.

It is in part because of this unremarkable set-up that “Hope” is so shocking. The last of four stories to be published, its position as an endcap in the series only heightens its impact because it leaves many unanswered questions about not only the individual story, but of previous three stories and indeed the series as a whole. It is the only story of the four with references to actual events, for the 1995 schoolgirl incident discussed in the introduction is directly referenced.

⁵⁰ All four stories - “Flower” (花 *Hana*), “Park” (公園 *Kōen*), “Cat” (猫 *Neko*) and “Hope” (希望 *Kibō*) - have since been translated into English at various times and in different publications. However, the first of these to appear in English was Steve Rabson’s English translation of “Hope”, which was published less than six months after the original publication in the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper..

Thus, while this story does not explicitly depict or discuss rape, the actions of the protagonist are a reaction to continued cycle of rape and non-violent resistance that has remained unbroken for nearly 70 years. Like the other stories, it is narrated by an unnamed male, however it quickly takes a sharp turn in action when he reveals that he has actually kidnapped and murdered an American child by strangulation and left the body to be found in the trunk of a car. After returning home the narrator sends an anonymous letter to the local newspaper written in “menacing red characters” that says “What Okinawa needs now is not thousands of people at demonstrations or rallies by tens of thousands but the death of one American child.”⁵¹ This line in particular seems to be in intertextual dialogue with *Cocktail Party*. In the first half of the novella, when the young American boy goes missing, the Chinese lawyer Sun and the protagonist discuss who could possibly kidnap an American boy, to which the protagonist defiantly declares, “We know that an Okinawan would never kidnap an American child.” Thus, in “Hope” Medoruma is dismissing this notion, declaring that 42 years later things need to change in Okinawa even at the sake of another child’s life.

At the end of the story the man walks to the site of a massive demonstration against the rape of the school girl – an action the narrator dismissively summarizes by saying, “80,000 people gathered here but could do absolutely nothing”⁵² – and commits suicide by self-immolation. Shocking through the final turn, the story ends with an image of middle school children kicking at the pile of ashes left by the narrator after his body has burnt through. In fact, the reader is left to believe that the narrator’s violent and misguided actions will remain

⁵¹ Medoruma Shun, “Kibō” from “‘Koza’ monogatari yori,” *Tanpen shōsetsu senshū*, Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Kageshobō, 2013), 103-104.

⁵² Ibid. 106.

anonymous after his death as he leaves no notice of guilt and there is no immediate connection to his suicide and the child's death. Moreover, the final line of the story hardly encourages a reading that the narrator will be remembered, and raises doubt as to what impact his call for violent protest will have in the long run:

Just like the fluids in the bodies of small organisms that live in a continual fear suddenly turn into poison, I had done what was natural for the island, what was necessary. When I reached the center of what had been the rally site I took out a water bottle filled with gasoline I had syphoned from the car and poured it all over myself. The smell of the gasoline stung my eyes. I took out a hundred-yen cigarette lighter from my pocket and flicked the wheel. Flames grew in the darkness, and toward the walking, tumbling mass of fire a group of middle school children ran up and began cheering as they kicked the smoking black lump.⁵³

It is difficult to negotiate what exactly “Hope” is trying say – is it truly a call to shift from the extended history in Okinawa of non-violent protest towards acts for violent dissent? Though short in content, there is a tension in the story between the powerlessness and despair felt for so long by Okinawans and disgust that a reader would feel at the unapologetic actions of the man. Many critics have paid particular attention to the title of the story, asking where hope can be found in the murder of a child or the self-immolation of a man? In fact, there is nothing immediately hopeful about the story. Rather, the story seems to come from a place with a complete lack of hope, thus driving the protagonist to the extreme edge of violence – both upon a child and himself. Additionally, in their introduction to the anthology which includes the translation of “Hope”, Davinder Bhowmik and Steve Rabson argue that “the story’s darkly humorous title conveys Medoruma’s wish for an alternative to the burden of the military bases

⁵³ Ibid. 106.

Okinawa continues to shoulder. In sum, ‘Hope’ is the author’s pointed critique of the clichéd notion of a gentle Okinawa ceaselessly depicted in Japan’s mass media.”⁵⁴

To be sure, in this text Medoruma is writing against the standard narrative of Okinawa that has for so long been expected to continue enduring violence and humiliation without any “hope” or promise of change to come. However, one question that has remained prominent since the story’s publication is whether Medoruma is actually calling for the sort of violent action seen in the text. Put another way, should “Hope” be read as a powerful metaphorical explosion of the simmering indignation that many Okinawans feel but are unable or unwilling to express? Or, is it a text suggesting that violent acts of resistance have the potential to bring about the change that so many of years of peaceful protest could not? Returning once more to the final lines of the story may give a clue as to what Medoruma truly thinks about the ultimate impact such a violent act would leave. By the end of the story, two people have died, an innocent child and a frustrated, disheartened man. Yet, we are given no indication that the man’s act will truly make an impact. Rather than ending with some indication that this one child’s death will truly stop the need for gatherings of 80,000 in peaceful protests, we are left with an image of Okinawan youths kicking about the remains of an anonymous man who meant to break them free from the fear and violence of the U.S. military presence. It is a bleak ending, and with the boys literally kicking this man into the dust, it suggests no change, rather only the continued futility of protest of any kind – violent or otherwise.

⁵⁴ Davinder Bhowmik and Steve Rabson, “Introduction”, *Islands of Protest*, Eds. Davinder Bhowmik and Steve Rabson, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016). 2.

As a writer, Medoruma has never shied away from difficult memories and realities. Rather, he has all the while scrutinized these painful elements in the hopes of finding a deeper and more fundamental understanding intended to elucidate and elevate the Okinawan predicament. This sort of greater criticism of Okinawa's ineffectiveness at changing its circumstances is certainly active in "Hope," but once more it is a male character in a story by a highly influential male writer that seems to be making a call for change. The decision to clearly situate the story in the backdrop of the 1995 incident is important because in doing so Medoruma has directly inserted himself into the discourse of rape and resistance in Okinawa. However, in this situation what is still missing a clear sense of empathy for the victims of the crime that he wants to eliminate. The protagonist of "Hope" is extreme in his desire for change, and the actions that he has taken are drastic, but they remain his, devoid of a consideration of how the victims themselves may want to react to and resist their rapes. Instead, much like the texts previously discussed the story presents the next step in resistance as being dictated by a male figure.

CONCLUSION

Why do male Okinawan authors continue to engage with this topic? I argue that these authors are aware of the emotional fatigue that Okinawans feel under the constant threat of rape – be it upon their person, their relationships or the larger Okinawan community. Moreover, while there are moments of direct calls to action, none of the texts presume to have an answer to prevent rape from occurring again on the island. Rather the fictional narratives contextualize real incidences, allowing the reader to see themselves in the story.

However, while all of these texts are immediately linked through their depictions of rape, I would argue the most significant connection is not immediately seen. Or perhaps heard is the more apt verb to describe the phenomenon. The silencing of female rape victims in these texts is clear. In *Cocktail Party* as well as *In the Memory of Woods* the two female victims are the crux of the story but neither character is able to engage and cope with the rape on their own terms. Instead both are left to defer to a male figure to avenge their tragedy and defend their honor. This also begs the question of exactly whose honor is being defended in these texts. I argue *Cocktail Party* it is quite clear that the daughter's rape is a metaphor for injustices of other entities such as the father, or Okinawan patriarchy as a whole. That something similar is happening in Medoruma's novel, published more than 40 years after *Cocktail Party*, is discouraging and demonstrates the limited progress Okinawa has made in allowing females to express their own agency in instances of violation and injustice. While it is true that to a greater degree Matayoshi is able to provide a more complicated view of sexual violence in occupied Okinawa that distorts a clear hierarchy of power in the occupation, he accomplishes this by disrupting the racial binary

in the text (American/Okinawan). Even in instances where the male/female binary is challenged, such as the Okinawan prostitute hustling George out of his money or the black female characters sexually assaulting him, the rape victims in the text are not given no chance of retribution or even shown a moment of empathy.

Each one of these narratives demonstrates differently the complexity of rape, muddying up preconceived notions of what rape is, who it affects and how to respond to it. Narratives of rape such as the ones discussed force the reader to engage with the topic and, returning to Arendt's notion of storytelling, think from within the text. However, while these texts are working to unsettle a uniform acceptance of the systems in play that allows these rapes to continue occurring they still lack a critical component to give a more complete idea of what rape committed by U.S. personnel means in Okinawa. To be sure these texts raise awareness of the issue in Okinawa to readers outside the area and unfamiliar with topic. They also offer at times highly nuanced criticisms of the injustices faced in the island, but the continued silence of the female victim in the literary texts of rape in Okinawa echoes the social public discourse that they are in conversation with. However, as seen in the tragic case of Ana Shimabukuro that began this thesis, the threat of rape in Okinawa remains real. So, presumably does the potential for the continued evolution of the discourse surrounding these crimes, both in the social and literary sphere.

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