

CRG Thursday Forum Series presents...

***DEPLOYMENT, BASES, AND
THE US MILITARY IN MOVEMENT:***
IMAGINING JAPAN AND THE SELF THROUGH RACE & SEX

Thursday, March 10, 2011

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

691 Barrows Hall

UC Berkeley

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**We Call It 'The Rock':**

Circulating the Imaginary of Okinawa in the Military Diaspora

Mitzi Uehara Carter, Anthropology

My paper will explore how U.S. military personnel and their families, currently or formerly based in Okinawa (re)create and circulate narratives of Okinawa within military communities both in and outside Okinawa. I will focus on how those narratives are shaped against their own identities as US soldiers, veterans, racialized/gendered citizens, spouses, and tourists within Okinawa. Michael Taussig described the cultural productions of fear and the processes of sustaining Otherness in his work on colonial Colombia as a mix of “Indian understandings of white understandings of Indians to white understandings of Indian understandings of whites.” Likewise, I argue that Okinawan militarized and transnational space is a mix of military understandings of Okinawan understandings of US/mainland Japanese understandings to Okinawan understandings of military understandings of Okinawans.

This presentation will point to some of my general findings thus far, focusing on the framing of Okinawan difference. For instance, I argue that local Okinawan difference from mainland Japan is emphasized and celebrated within military literature and welcome videos/blogs about Okinawa for military newcomers to Okinawa, a long used political and cultural tactic that was so effectively encouraged and orchestrated by US military administrators directly following WWII to try to quiet Okinawan dissent and slow the popular momentum to revert to mainland Japan. However, when military and Okinawan relations are enflamed, the framing of difference is erased and the discourse shifts to a more global scale and fits in more with the US-Japan power bloc configuration of power.

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Being a Black MP in Postwar Japan:

Memory and Identity through Resistance and Accommodation
as a Subaltern Occupier

Fredrick Cloyd, California Institute of Integral Studies, Anthropology

The positioning of the US as a victorious occupier over the subordinate and pliant people of Japan as the defeated was a carefully choreographed affair after WWII with its precursors in imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberal capitalist expansionisms. In Japan and Okinawa, during and following the official occupation, steady anti-US violence by the Japanese was barred from being reported in the strictly controlled military and civilian media while the different racial groups in the Allied and US military were also living in violent relations with one another on and off bases in Japan, Okinawa and Korea. In this atmosphere of the occupation, my father re-imagined himself from poor African-American man to occupying military police. My mother wanted desperately to escape the ruins of Japan, both imaginatively and literally. In researching for a book on my family's life and legacies, in thinking/writing nation, culture and race--colliding together through war and re(de)-construction, how has my father viewed himself through the lens of race and nation/husband and father? What becomes prioritized? What becomes linked with frames and thoughts previously unrelated? What becomes new forms of dominance and resistance that continue or resist certain forms of justice and survival?

Delicious refreshments served!

More info: <http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/deployment-bases>