In the second half of Ōshiro Tatsuhirō’s novella, *Kakuteru Pāi* (*The Cocktail Party*), first published in 1967, one of the American characters, Mister Miller, responds to the Okinawan protagonist’s request for help: ‘We tried hard to establish mutual friendship that went beyond race or nationality. I believe we established equal relationships on both sides. I don’t want to destroy the balance we’ve achieved with such effort.’1 Miller’s efforts in developing international friendship in Okinawa are unable to withstand the historical and political realities of the situation on the island at the time. Indeed, the rest of the narrative shows that Miller’s efforts are a sham, masking an imperialist agenda. This fictional representation of the impossibility of cultivating genuine cosmopolitan friendship in the face of inequality and injustice provides a useful starting-point for an examination of the Ryūkyū kingdom’s, and later Okinawa’s, interactions with the world outside. The historical example of Okinawa demonstrates that, while the cosmopolitan orientation is possible for small countries with powerful allies, in the absence of adequate defence it can become a terminal liability and is impossible to sustain in the colonial situation.

Cosmopolitanism, that venerable though many-faceted and constantly evolving idea, is difficult to define. Many commentators see it as a project to be pursued urgently, but some warn of its conflation with globalized

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1 ‘Kakuteru Pāi’, in Okamoto Keitoku and Takashi Toshio, eds, *Okinawa bungaku sen: Nihon bungaku no ejii kara no toi* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2003), p. 106. Further references will be given in the text in parentheses; all translations are my own, B. G.
capital. Among Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen's six main perspectives on the concept is the useful notion of cosmopolitanism as an attitudinal or dispositional orientation, which allows for action at the individual as well as national level. An even more flexible definition is that of Ulf Hannerz, who defines cosmopolitanism as 'an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other [...] a state of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity'. As Rainer Bauböck comments: 'a non-political cosmopolitanism is almost a contradiction in terms', while a cosmopolitan attitude can safely be taken under one set of political and historical conditions, it can be dangerous in another, and a cosmopolitan attitude based on unthinking aspirations of international amity is especially perilous.

Historically, Japan was the opposite of cosmopolitan: for over 200 years, from the 1630s to the 1850s, the country was almost completely shut off from the outside world. Perhaps because of this historical experience of isolation, the dominant image of Japan since the Second World War has been that of an ethnically and culturally homogenous country. The reality, however, is not so simple: this dominant ideology of homogeneity masks the presence of large Korean, Chinese, Okinawan and Ainu minorities and

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Okinawa, a chain of islands stretching from south of Kyūshū to within sight of Taiwan, is now Japan’s forty-seventh prefecture, but became so only after the Imperial Japanese government annexed what had been the Ryūkyū kingdom in 1879. Thus, Okinawa was the site of modern Japan’s first colonial adventure, one so successful as to have been forgotten by the world at large.

Up until then, in contrast to most of Japan, the Ryūkyū kingdom was cosmopolitan in its outlook, having successfully engaged with other cultures for centuries. It is the willingness on the part of Ryūkyū and later, Okinawa, to engage with other cultures as a means of economic and political survival, and the literary expression of the dilemmas that result that will form the core of this chapter.

This openness to the Other, political flexibility and keenness to trade worked to Ryūkyū’s advantage for nearly 300 years, as long as China was strong enough to provide protection, but it became an ultimately fatal attitude in the face of military aggression. The Ryūkyū Islands’ various forms of engagement with other countries demonstrate the potential rewards and peril of the cosmopolitan orientation. Ōshiro Tatsuhiro’s novella is a key text in the development of Okinawan literature which confronts Okinawan history, characterizes the difficulties of cosmopolitanism under colonial occupation and dramatizes issues of war-guilt, lack of voice and agency, and powerlessness.

The Ryūkyū Islands have experienced five periods of engagement with other cultures with differing results: the first was the choice of a tributary relationship with China in the fourteenth century, which brought protection from outside aggression, a large amount of political autonomy, and huge economic and cultural opportunities in Asia, as well as education.
for Ryūkyūan youth. The second period was the enforced engagement with military domination by the warlike Satsuma fief of southern Japan after 1609. Ryūkyū continued paying tribute to, and trading with, China, as well as paying taxes to Satsuma, while being forced to hide the changed political situation from the Chinese. The Satsuma fief gained prestige within Japan, as well as much of the profit from Ryūkyū’s trade, while the kingdom suffered economically. During this period, when Japan was closed the Ryūkyū Islands came into contact, not only with China but also with western culture through the visits of European and American ships, Commodore Matthew Perry’s among them. This situation too demanded that Ryūkyū perform a delicate balancing act, discouraging contact with Europeans and Americans while trying to avoid giving offence to these obviously powerful interlopers. The third period brought annexation by imperial Japan in the 1870s, culminating in the slaughter of the Battle of Okinawa; the fourth was post-war military occupation by the US after the Second World War; and the fifth has been the experience since reversion to Japanese jurisdiction in 1972.

After the fall of the Tokugawa shōgunate in 1868, the new Japanese government moved quickly to deal with the islands to the southwest. By 1879, the Japanese had deposed the Ryūkyūan king, forced him into exile in Tokyo and garrisoned his castle with Japanese soldiers. Henceforth, the kingdom was to be known as Okinawa Prefecture. Policies of colonial assimilation followed, and though there was a brief and ineffectual attempt at resistance by some Okinawans, others complied. Michael S. Molasky’s comment illustrates this dilemma: ‘Okinawans were not mere victims of Japanese colonialism and imperialism, for many also aspired to be recognised as fully-fledged Japanese citizens and to partake of the fruits of Japanese power and prosperity.’ The economy in Okinawa did not improve and thousands of Okinawans left for the Japanese mainland, Hawai‘i and South America in search of work. Yet Okinawans, because of differences in dress, diet and customs, suffered consistent discrimination in mainland

Japan as well as in Japanese émigré enclaves abroad. Poor economic conditions encouraged emigration and by 1938 over 72,000 Okinawans were working outside Japan. They were also used by the central government during the Second World War in sugar plantations in Micronesia, and some joined the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy.8

One of the last acts of the Pacific War took place on the Ryūkyū Islands. The Battle of Okinawa was the only land battle on Japanese territory and lasted from late March to 23 June 1945. The Japanese military prolonged the battle for as long as possible to save the mainland from the American onslaught.9 Civilians suffered terribly, sheltering in caves and tombs, and between 100,000 and 147,000 — between one-quarter and one-third of Okinawa Island's civilian population — died in the battle.10 Some were executed as 'spies' by Japanese forces for speaking Okinawan dialect, or forced to commit suicide to avoid capture.11 Other reports tell of mothers forced to kill their own children to prevent their crying from attracting American attention.

After the battle, the civilian population of the islands spent two years in US military camps. During that period, up to 20 per cent of Okinawa Island was appropriated for use as US bases and twenty-seven years of American military occupation ensued. Contact with the outside world was greatly reduced, given that travel in and out of Okinawa was subject to restrictions.12 This experience is in stark contrast to that in mainland Japan, where two years after the War, a new, democratic constitution was

promulgated, and where occupation ended in 1952. The US occupation of Okinawa ended twenty years later, and the islands ‘reverted’ to Japan, but 75 per cent of the US bases in Japan stayed in the prefecture, which occupies less than 1 per cent of Japanese territory. Many Okinawans feel that the islands were sacrificed for the good of mainland Japan during the War, and that they are still protecting mainland prefectures from having to host the majority of US bases in Japan.

Despite this troubled history, Okinawa still preserves a distinctive music, dance and religious tradition, though the dialect of Japanese traditionally spoken there is not now as widely spoken as standard Japanese. There is an older tradition of poetry written in Chinese and poetry in the Ryūkyūan language, but literature is now written in Japanese, at times with passages in dialect. While pre-war Okinawan literature grappled with the problem of Okinawan identity vis-à-vis Japan; post-war literature in general had different concerns. Okinawan writers since the War have dealt with the themes of memory, war-guilt, American occupation, and the fate of traditional life faced with modern change. Post-reversion writers have dealt with the themes of Okinawan identity, cultural discrimination, and the continuing problem of American bases.

Ōshiro Tatsuhìro (1925– ) was born on Okinawa’s main island and attended university in Shanghai, though he left without taking a degree. He worked for the Ryūkyū Government in American-occupied Okinawa, and also worked in the Prefectural Museum and began writing in his spare time. He has written novels, plays and historical studies. His novella The

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14 Okamoto and Takashi, eds, Okinawa bungaku sen, p. 5.
Cocktail Party (1967) has been described as ‘a watershed achievement in Okinawan literary and cultural history’.\(^\text{17}\)

Cocktail Party, written five years before reversion to Japan, explores issues of memory, wartime responsibility, occupation, the position of women as mediators between occupiers and occupied, and the depth – or lack of it – of seeming cosmopolitan friendship. It is significant in that it was the first piece of literature by an Okinawan to win the coveted Akutagawa Prize in mainland Japan, amounting to major recognition by the literary establishment there. The novella explicitly treats Okinawa as a former and current colony, examining the unequal positions of the colonizer and the colonized. However, Ōshiro refuses to portray Okinawans as passive victims of Japanese colonization, examining his protagonist’s role in the Japanese Army in China during the War.

The first part of the novella is set at an international cocktail party on an American base in Okinawa and the second half in a situation of extreme cross-cultural conflict. It is set at a particular juncture in the troubled history of the islands when the Ryūkyū Islands are still under American occupation, but the movement on the islands to ‘revert’ to Japan is gaining strength. The narrative involves a Chinese-speaking circle including the nameless protagonist who is an Okinawan civil servant; Ogawa, a Japanese journalist reporting on the islands; ‘Mister Miller’, an American officer who later turns out to be involved in intelligence; and Mr Sun, a Chinese refugee from the communist regime in China. Ogawa was educated in occupied China, while the Okinawan was an officer in the Japanese Army there during the War. Mr Sun was a victim of those forces, though this is only revealed later in the narrative.

The Okinawan – colonized in his home islands, and feeling unease on the base though it is in the middle of the town where he lives, and recalling the fear he had felt when losing his way there ten years before – is rendered

powerless, fearful and alienated on his own island because of the physical appropriation of space by the American military occupation. During the narrative, the same character is shown as having acted as a colonizer elsewhere, complicit in Japan's wartime rampage through Asia, and from this arises a crucial issue of victimhood which runs through the whole narrative: whether an Okinawan who served in the Japanese Army in China before 1945 can really think of himself as a victim of the Japanese. In giving his protagonist this ambiguous past, Ōshiro refuses to romanticize the situation of Okinawans by simply portraying them as victims of either Japanese or US imperialism. The post-war situation is not simple: Okinawans were implicated in Japan's colonial activities, not simple victims of their lowly position within the Japanese imperial hierarchy. The protagonist was not a private soldier either, but an officer, and comes to feel that he did not do enough to prevent the crimes of those under him. On the other hand, his homeland was destroyed in the Battle of Okinawa, and he remembers the stories of the suffering of his own people at the hands of the Japanese army, who were supposed to be protecting them.

In common with characters in much post-war Japanese fiction, the protagonist becomes inarticulate once in contact with the occupying Americans. While mainland fiction portrays the conflicts implicit in speaking English in post-war Japan, for example in work by Nosaka Akiyuki or Kojima Nobuo, the protagonist in *The Cocktail Party* has no linguistic difficulty speaking Chinese, Japanese or English, but conscious of the power differential between himself and his interlocutors, stammers and tempers during the seemingly innocuous cocktail party conversation. By contrast, Miller and Ogawa speak with assurance. The protagonist's interior voice veers between a rather pathetic delight at having been chosen to attend the party and a cynical commentary on the affectations and opinions of those he meets there. When the protagonist is in conversation with an American he has just met at the party, talk quickly turns to Okinawa's historical relationship with China: "So you have actually formed a group to speak Chinese together in Okinawa" said thin moustache in an affected voice. "Here it comes at last" I thought. "How dominant was the idea among Japanese and Americans that before the Meiji Era Okinawa was a posses-
sion of China's?" (91). Obviously, the Okinawan protagonist disagrees with the widely held opinion that Okinawa used to be a Chinese possession, but he chooses to say nothing. Later in the conversation, he tries to articulate what he feels is the relationship between Okinawa and China: he tells them of his experience in Shanghai immediately after war's end:

Immediately after the end of the War, I was in the suburbs of Shanghai interpreting part-time for the Japanese Army during the handover of supplies. The Chinese officers I was dealing with were extremely kind. When I spent time with them privately, they were also very friendly. Then, one of them asked me: 'You are a Ryūkyūan, so you're the same as us, aren't you? Why are you interpreting for the Japanese Army?'. I replied: 'Yes, looking at it with your ideas, I can see you would have that question, because here you say that from ancient times Ryūkyū was a territory of China's. However, we have been educated to think that Ryūkyū was originally Japanese territory. In the final analysis, people's ideas come from how they were educated. Only God knows the truth ...' (91)

There are smiles among the Americans at the cocktail party when they hear the comment made by the Chinese soldiers about Okinawan identity, but the protagonist analyses the situation equivocally and attributes consciousness of identity to one's education. Because pre-war education in Okinawa was the result of integrative Japanese policy, Okinawans think of themselves as Japanese. The protagonist denies himself agency in the formation of his own identity. Like Albert Memmi's colonized, the Okinawan is 'removed from history' and 'carries the burden of history but as its object'.

The problem of over-population leads them to a discussion of extreme measures taken in the past in Japan and elsewhere to control numbers, including infanticide. Ogawa, the Japanese journalist, refers to a Chinese novel that portrays a mother strangling her own child when she hears Japanese planes overhead during the War. This reminds the protagonist of stories of Japanese soldiers killing Okinawan children during the Battle of

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18 The Meiji Era (1868–1912) was when Japan opened up to the West and modernized rapidly. It was during this era that the Ryūkyū Kingdom was annexed.

Okinawa, but he changes the subject to avoid giving offence: "That happened in Okinawa too". I faced Mr Ogawa. "During the Battle of Okinawa I have heard that such incidents were commonplace. What’s more...", I faltered again. "Sometimes Japanese soldiers did it...", I wanted to say, but said: "Well, let’s drop it. We shouldn’t be talking about war when drinking" (93). The Okinawan feels he cannot voice his opinion, and changes the subject without considering why he remains silent.

Throughout the period of their engagement with other cultures over hundreds of years, the Ryūkyū Islands struggled to develop harmonious relationships with outsiders. This work shows that accommodating the attitudes of outsiders is highly problematic in the islands’ current colonized situation. The protagonist is even more confused when talk turns to Okinawan dialect, and he is unable to say whether Okinawan language and culture are local variants of Japanese culture, or independent and unique. When asked if Okinawan children speak good English, he answers that they do not, probably because of difficulties speaking standard Japanese well. Ogawa, the representative of Okinawa’s former colonizers, suggests it is because of ‘neglect’ by Okinawans, the laziness or inactivity of the colonized being one of the most common and degrading images of the colonized everywhere. The protagonist suggests that Okinawans have problems speaking English because they have not learned Japanese well enough yet. Japanese is therefore a second language for them, thereby contradicting the point he is trying to make about Okinawa having been originally part of Japan. Neither his membership of the Chinese-speaking group nor his invitation to the party on the base prevent him from having to confront his own subaltern status and its resulting impotence in the second half of the story.

An incident disturbs the superficial amity of the first part of the narrative: one of the American guests’ children goes missing, and he only calls off the search when he finds that his Okinawan maid had taken the child home to her village for the afternoon. The protagonist’s relief that the little boy was not kidnapped by one of his own people is excessive, showing how close he is to accepting the colonizer’s image of the natives as not to be trusted at best, and dangerous at worst.

The second incident precipitates his journey to greater self-knowledge. He discovers on his return home that an American serviceman, who had
been renting a room at the back of his house in which to meet his Okinawan girlfriend, has raped his daughter. There is an abrupt change in register and tone in this part of the narrative, as it deals with the protagonist’s growing horrified awareness of his lack of voice or agency in a colonial society. Where in the first half of the story he refers to himself as 私 (watashi), in the second half of the novella, his alienation is expressed by addressing himself as お前 (omae), an aggressive form of the second person pronoun. ‘On that hot, humid night, probably when you were looking for Mister Morgan’s little son ... at Cape M your daughter had been attacked’ (102). The narrative becomes a scathing internal monologue, and the tone is aggressive and self-critical. Self-censorship and silence are no longer of any use, and the protagonist’s expressions become forthright and direct. After being raped, his daughter had pushed her assailant over a cliff, as a result of which he has a broken leg. She is arrested by the American authorities, taken for questioning and charged with injuring a member of the occupation forces. Her trial will be held in English in an American military court. The rape can only be dealt with as a separate incident in an Okinawan court and, as an American serviceman, the rapist, Robert Harris, is under no obligation to appear. At the moment the protagonist hears this from the local policeman, his mind is cast back to the time ten years earlier when he got lost on the base when trying to take a shortcut: ‘Okinawan maids had given you glances of suspicion, contempt, compassion, dislike or hidden disinterest’ (105). He is alienated from his own people as much as from his native surroundings.

There is little support for the protagonist from his Chinese-speaking friends, who advise him not to persist with the rape case. Miller comments: “I think this is a pity. There is a possibility that this incident could be the cause of definite confrontation between Americans and Okinawans.” The protagonist answers him sharply: “Not just a possibility. It actually is” (106). The tone used in addressing Miller is in sharp contrast to the polite, self-effacing conversational style of the first half of the narrative. Miller then dismisses the rape as an incident between two young people – “if you think of yourself as being injured as an Okinawan, then it will only get more complicated” – and refuses to act against another American. He takes refuge in abstract concepts of international friendship and equality.
The protagonist realizes that none of these ideas has any reality in occupied Okinawa; that while his charge of rape against Harris will not succeed, rape or attempted rape of a member of the American forces or one of their dependants by an islander carries the death penalty. He finds out that Miller is not promoting international amity disinterestedly; that he works for the Counter Intelligence Corps in the American forces in Okinawa (108).

Throughout the second half of the narrative, the rape is dealt with, not only as the means by which the protagonist is jolted into awareness of his powerlessness, but also as an affront by the protagonist, the victim’s father. However powerless the father feels, his daughter has no voice or agency in the narrative: as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out with regard to the situation of women in the colonial situation: ‘If in the contest of colonial production the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as a female is even more deeply in shadow.’

The temporary solidarity as fellow Asians felt by Ogawa, Sun and the protagonist is easily destroyed when Sun reveals that his wife was raped by Japanese soldiers during the War. He questions the others about their activities in China and about their shared responsibility for the brutality there. Ogawa avoids the issue by accusing him of changing the subject, but the protagonist, as a former army officer, feels his shared responsibility, though he does recall one incident where he reprimanded a soldier for robbing a Chinese peddler and was censured by his commanding officer for this reaction.

Miller arranges another meeting, and there the protagonist confronts him with his unrealistic notions of friendship between peoples, and announces that he will press charges against Robert Harris. He says: “This friendship [...] is nothing but a mask”. Miller denies this and the protagonist retorts: “It’s a splendid idea. But you haven’t been injured”. As he leaves the military club, he sees a banner over the street commemorating the 110th anniversary of Perry’s visit to Okinawa, with the toast Perry gave then, and its irony is not lost on him: ‘Prosperity to Ryūkyūans and

The dangers of cosmopolitanism: Tatsuhiro's *The Cocktail Party*

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may Ryūkyūans and Americans always be friends.' The story ends with the beginning of the two trials, but there is no narrative closure. Cosmopolitan amity under military occupation is an impossible illusion that the protagonist is determined to destroy. The case cannot be won, but it is the only way the protagonist can resist the injustice of the occupation. His quixotic quest for justice, his appeal to universal values that go beyond his current circumscribed situation may be futile, but it gives him agency and some measure of voice. The end of the novella has him watching his daughter go through a reconstruction of the crime at the location where it happened. That she has had no say in what has happened is not remarked upon.

Ôshiro shows that expressions of cosmopolitanism, especially cosmopolitan friendship, are hugely problematic in the face of massive inequality or exploitation. Issues of memory, wartime responsibility and victimhood in Okinawa, as in other places with a history of colonial exploitation, are still highly charged. The history of Okinawa demonstrates the advantages as well as the perils of cosmopolitanism as a national attitude, just as the novella *The Cocktail Party* dramatizes the trap that shallow cosmopolitanism sets for the colonized. In doing so, the novella demonstrates the impossibility of easily achieved international amity and shows the impossibility of viable cosmopolitan relationships in situations where the participants are in an unequal position. The history of Okinawa is an example of both the benefits and risks brought about by the cosmopolitan orientation; how engagement with other cultures can allow small countries to prosper in the absence of military threat, but that the same worldview can become a terminal liability in the face of colonization. As Craig Calhoun has commented with regard to the history of twentieth-century cosmopolitanism: 'Cosmopolitanism is not responsible for empire or capitalism or fascism or communism, but neither is it an adequate defence.'