After Displacement:
Excavating Memories of Migrant Sex Workers and
Becoming Entangled with the Water Trade in Yokohama

by
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Abstract

In January 2005, a raid organized by the Prefectural Police in Yokohama, Japan, evicted independent sex trade businesses run by migrant women, predominantly from other regions of Asia in the marginalized district of Koganecho. The police and a group of local residents promoted the eradication of baishun [prostitution], using slogans about making the neighbourhood “safe” and “secure” and free of illegal foreigners and HIV carriers.

Based on the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted over nine months, this dissertation explores question, what happens after transnational migrant sex workers are displaced from the city? in two ways. Organized into two parts, this dissertation first aims to critique the processes through which the lives of displaced migrants get further erased in the “memoryscapes” (Yoneyama 1999, Riano-Alcala 2006, McAllister 2010, 2011) of the city at both material and discursive levels. I analyze the built environment, official historical discourses in museum exhibitions and municipal policies, and local grassroots cultural productions in the forms of photography, films and film festivals.

After analyzing the dominant memoryscapes of Yokohama, my dissertation brings to light the site of displacement where I encountered people of two water trade communities, one primarily Japanese and the other primarily Thai that emerged or survived in the aftermath of the police raid. Here I highlight the processes where I was “entangled” (Ingold 2008) with the local social relations and “confronted” by people in the field (Fabian 2001, p.25), having my research rejected or questioned in unexpected ways. Those moments forced me to be reflexive and turned my gaze from memories and experiences of others to my own as a site of critical scrutiny and ethnographic practice. In Part II, I attempt to share an embodied sense of what happens after displacement at an everyday interaction level, which I tentatively call an alternative memoryscape of the city.

While the two parts respond to my research question differently, they share a common epistemological premise that the knowledge I present in my dissertation emerged through my “body as a site of knowing” (Pink 2015), as I engaged with the social, sensory, imaginary and material place of my research.
Keywords: Displacement; transnational migration; memory; sensory ethnography; sex work; Yokohama
Dedication

To Mia.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I acknowledge all the migrant women, who inhabited and then were displaced from Koganecho, a former brothel district in Yokohama, in which I carried out my research. My dissertation reflects on the displacement of those women, and, I recognize, it was the fundamental condition that enabled my research. I also acknowledge people whom I met in Yokohama during my fieldwork, who dedicated their time, insights and labour to me so I could produce my research materials and write this dissertation. My encounters with them changed the way I imagined, felt about and related to Yokohama and the way I pursued my research.

This dissertation is a product of my eight years of work at Simon Fraser University. My home, the School of Communication, taught me how to engage with the world critically and how to politicize cultural and communicative processes—to see everyday meaning-making as a matter of politics and a site for social change. I thank the faculty, the staff and my colleague at the School for creating an inspiring, safe and respectful learning environment.

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This dissertation was a life-changing project—it transformed me as a researcher, an educator and a person, and this involved moments of both enlightenment and crisis. Thanks to Dr. Kirsten Emiko McAllister, my senior supervisor, for guiding me throughout this process with dedication and patience. The amount and extent of the support I received from you is tremendous. Without your dedication in research, teaching and community work, I would have had many more obstacles carrying out my project.
Your work in cultural memory, political violence, critical and creative research and writing, and commitment to ethics and justice has laid a path for me to follow. I felt strong and assured walking this path.

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Introduction: After Displacement

*The author drew this map by tracing a map of Yokohama generated by Google Maps, then adding former waterways by referring to the map “Eight Vanished Rivers,” retrieved from the official website of the Yokohama Archives of History (http://www.kaikou.city.yokohama.jp/journal/095/02.html)

“I rarely see a Japanese girl here, so I was surprised when I first found you at the table tonight. I was like, ‘All right, here is a new hire. I have to greet her!’” Shin-san
laughed. I laughed, too, holding a big glass of JINRO soju, Korean alcohol, the only drink that I was able to order within the 5,000 yen (approx. $50) flat-rate service at Pub Mary, a Thai hostess club in Fukutomicho. Other alcoholic drinks would cost an extra charge, which I could not afford given that I was visiting multiple eating and drinking venues as a regular customer almost every day. 5,000 yen was already a big investment for a graduate student to make on a single night, although it was relatively cheap compared to kyabakura, or higher-class hostess clubs, in Kannai or Tokyo. Shin-san is the only child of the pub’s mama [female manager], whose name I never learned. Mama is a Thai woman. Like many other Thai migrant women in Japan, she arrived in Japan around 1990 as a young woman and initially worked in Ibaraki for four years as a sex worker, most likely in the form of debt bondage. Mama returned to Thailand to give birth to Shin-san and a few years later she moved back to Japan, but this time settled down in Yokohama where she currently runs her own hostess club. Shin-san’s father is a Japanese citizen but Shin-san said that he had never met him, and because his Japanese father had not legally acknowledged his child, Shin-san does not have Japanese citizenship. “Without the signature of my father it’s complicated. My mom doesn’t want to see him again, so the only way remaining would be that I plead with the government to give me citizenship. Maybe my stepfather can help me out,” he later told me (11 December 2012).

This evening, on November 30, 2012, I was visiting Mama’s pub only for the second time. I was hoping to see Mama again and find an opportunity to hear what she knew about the chon-no-ma [brothel] district of Koganecho from the old days, but unfortunately, she was working outside the pub and instead I was introduced to her son, who had recently started helping the pub. While we were talking over the counter, a Japanese man, a regular, was singing karaoke. Another man and a Thai girl were holding each other tight, dancing in a tipsy-beat. I could not ignore a sense of disgust lingering inside my body about the wasted men or the thick air of intimacy that was filling up the space, but I was also already starting to feel comfortable in the space. Alcohol was helping me with being desensitized to the scene, and the space did feel
safe—all other customers were regulars and there was some level of trust in the relationships between male customers and girls. There was an order, shared rules and a code of conduct.

*drinking, drinking and drinking*

*JINRO was mixed with water, the alcohol was diluted, this is water, just fine i don’t remember how many glasses I had, water, the alcohol, diluted me my body was flowing, flowing and flowing*

"Good luck on your research!" A customer said to me as he passed behind me to leave the pub. Some *onnanoko*, “girls,” must have told their curious customers who I was, but I was momentarily perplexed by this hailing. *Research?* I was supposed to have been observing them but it was myself who was being an object of investigation, a wasted body that was supposed to be here to conduct “research.” I waited for Mama at the pub until 10 PM but she eventually did not show up. I had left my two-year-old daughter Mia under my mother’s care and I had to leave soon. My call display showed a few missed calls from home. Did anything happen to Mia? “I actually have to go,” I told Shin-san. “Sorry, Mama was supposed to have been back by now,” he looked up at the clock. “No worries. She is working, I understand.” “I’ll let her know that you visited us.” “Thank you. I will come by again.” I paid 5,000 yen, greeted Mei-san, a Thai girl, who had served me earlier, and left the pub. Shin-san came outside of the building with me to see me off. “You are always welcome here if you cannot find a professor job in the future!” “No kidding! Please!” We laughed and waved at each other.

*What is going on?* I asked myself. It was the second time on the same day that someone suggested to me that I find my life in Yokohama. Earlier that day, Umino-san, *masuta* [“master” or male owner] of the coffee bar Cups for Few in Koganecho, said that I would be good at interacting with customers, implicitly suggesting that I run a bar in Koganecho with Tamura-san, initially my “gate-keeper,” now my boyfriend. On many other occasions, I was increasingly having to negotiate or resist forces that drew
me into the world of *mizushobai* or the "water trade" of Yokohama. Drawing me. Drowning me? (30 November 2012, Pub Mary)

***

In January 2005, a large-scale raid organized by Kanagawa Prefectural Police, the municipal government, and local resident associations, evicted independent sex trade businesses run by transnational migrant women, predominantly from Asia, from the *chon-no-ma* [brothel] district of Koganecho, a marginalized district in Yokohama.¹

Yokohama is the second largest city in Japan following Tokyo, which is just to its north, and a historic port city known as a gateway to western culture and technologies during its port-opening period in the mid-19th century. Yokohama is a symbol of the nation’s westernization, modernization and industrial progress. Sex workers from non-western countries and regions just did not fit this official representation of the city. The raid completely uprooted the array of chon-no-ma in the district, and transnational migrant women who were working there disappeared from the district. While there are different explanations for why the chon-no-ma in Koganecho had to be evicted, the official justification offered by the Prefectural Police and the City of Yokohama led by its young and energetic mayor then, Hiroshi Nakata, was that removing chon-no-ma businesses, ridding the *unfavourable* element, would improve the image of the city and was necessary to prepare for the 2009 Expo and celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Port of Yokohama (see, for example, “Yokohama kaiko 150” 2005, Hatsuko-Hinodecho

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¹ As I discuss below, *chon-no-ma* in Koganecho were not directly owned or managed by a crime organization like *yakuza*, but were run independently by individual Japanese or non-Japanese *mamas* [female managers] or migrant sex workers themselves, who rented chon-no-ma units from the local property owners and operated their businesses there.
Local residents comment that the “eradication” of baishun, or prostitution, was long-awaited, particularly after the presence of “foreign” women became more visible and the neighbourhood felt less “safe” to walk in, especially for (Japanese) women and children (Suzuki 2009). The police and members of resident associations promoted the “eradication” of “baishun” with signboards on the street and a series of neighbourhood patrols, that deployed slogans about making the neighbourhood “safe” and “secure” and free of illegal foreign migrants and HIV carriers.

This dissertation is, first and foremost, about the forces of “entanglements,” lives and relations between those lives that are “interwoven” to constitute a “meshwork” of places (Ingold 2008, p.1805-1807). Despite the historical and ongoing violence, displacement, erasure, and silencing, which continue to constitute the condition of their present realities, lives of transnational migrants go on, creating new relations and places of inhabiting. Those are lives that constitute another world at the margin of the city that, as my textual enactment of a moment of my fieldwork shows above, I was drawn to and made my research practice strange when I was conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Yokohama.

This work was originally conceived as a memory project through which I would explore local practices of forgetting and remembering that erase or give shape to memories of the lives of transnational migrant sex workers who were displaced from Koganecho in the 2005 raid. Building on studies of cultural memory and cultural studies of cities in postcolonial contexts, I launched my project as a case study where I critically examined an instance of collective forgetting, a political process through which memories
of migrant women’s lives were aggressively marginalized and made invisible in the city, and explored an ethical way to remember the displaced lives. In my fieldwork, I visited the waterfront where the city’s commercial, tourist and government functions are centralized, where the dominant memories of the city are materialized in the forms of built environments, official discourses in museum exhibitions, and popular culture, but where memories of displaced migrant sex workers are made entirely absent. I also simultaneously spent a significant amount of time in the site of displacement, which includes both Koganecho and migrant communities that have developed around Koganecho, in an attempt to unearth memories of displaced migrant sex workers by generating stories through my engagement with people in the communities. While working with (absent) memories of displaced lives, however, in those communities I encountered the presence of small but vibrant communities of “mamas,” “masters,” “girls,” and their customers that emerged or survived after the displacement. They include a community that emerged at the very site of displacement in a small block of chon-no-ma units in Koganecho that now house modest independent businesses owned primarily by Japanese local residents and a Thai migrant community that survived the raid and stayed, in diminished size, across the river from Koganecho. They persistently form and transform the local “water trade”—an intimate, sometimes sexual, patronage-based business culture that exists at the margin of society—despite increased regulation and repression of local independent businesses that were marked as suspicious.

I say these communities are another world for two reasons. First, because the present reality of those communities is beyond what is containable in the official discourse of the displacement of migrant sex workers. Both sex workers and sex-related
services were supposed to have been eradicated in 2005 in Koganecho, but the water trade culture somehow re-emerged or survived in changed forms in Koganecho and its neighbourhood. In a sense, it flew out of the raid and persisted in the city in forms that are less visible. Second, I call those communities another world because they were sort of in excess of my memory project. I initially visited there to generate stories about displaced lives and gain an understanding of what a life in Koganecho might have been in the past, yet I engaged present lives and, as I discuss later in this chapter, I was unexpectedly “entangled” with them through the performance of roles in the space I was inhabiting ethnographically. In my research I was searching for the ghost (Gordon 2008, Cho 2008), the displaced lives and the socio-cultural effects of displacement that I discuss below, but I ended up being absorbed by another world of lives, at least for a short period of time. Here I was no longer an independent subject acting in the research field I initially defined, but part of the “continual coming-into-being” of the place and its lives that continue on (Ingold 2008, p.1797) (see section Emplaced and Entangled below). A series of unexpected encounters with others in the field made myself “connected to open-ended, even mysterious, social processes and uncertainties” of the ethnographic reality, which became uncontrollable by my initial theoretical formulation of the project (Biehl 2013, p.590). So powerful are the forces of lives that inhabit this world, my focus on the displacement of the community was often destabilized, and instead I found myself constantly having to negotiate everyday encounters in the present communities in order to navigate the space of water trade (see Chapter Five). Those encounters significantly affected how I pursued my research, what ended up constituting my ethnographic knowledge, and how I would present my research material. While attempting to regain
control over my life and not drown in the sea of the water trade culture—in which I ultimately succeeded as I did not abandon my role as a researcher and my degree from a Canadian institution—I came to realize that those forces are worth serious attention for gaining a more nuanced understanding of what displacement of migrant sex workers entails, what happens after displacement, how it is interpreted, appropriated or coped with today, what possibilities arise or are foreclosed. I did so through my own experience of coming to perform, even tentatively, local roles in the space of water trade and being consumed by my changing relationships to particular individuals in the community, and as a result, having my relationship to Yokohama, my research site, and my imaginary and nostalgic “home” (see Chapter Two), refashioned anew.

This dissertation is also still about memories of displaced lives that have been aggressively erased in the cultural and political processes of the production of memoryscapes—politically shaped and phenomenologically sensed landscapes of memory (see Chapter One for my definition of the term)—in which I am also implicated as a middle-class tourist, consumer, cosmopolitan student, Japanese citizen and a member of the colonizer nation state in Asia. This invisibility of memory initially compelled me to pursue this research—to question the absence (or the presence that is concealed) and possibly to unearth memories that are made invisible. Avery F. Gordon (2008), quoting Toni Morrison, argues, “invisible things are not necessarily not-there” and “investigating how that which appears absent can indeed [reveal] a seething presence” (p.17, my emphasis). Thus, part of this dissertation consists of my critique of the dominant forces that produce particular memoryscapes that further displace memories of migrant sex workers from our view. At the same time as I searched for the memories of displaced
lives, I started to realize that while Koganecho’s chon-no-ma businesses were uprooted in the 2005 raid and the communities of transnational migrant sex workers were significantly diminished due to subsequent police crackdowns, ghosts continue to shape people’s everyday practices, social-relations, collective imaginings, affective experiences and sensory perceptions of the place. By “ghost” I do not just mean displaced or lost lives themselves, but a “social life,” the socio-cultural effect of displacement (Gordon 2008, p.8; also see Cho 2008). To put it differently, the ghost is an afterlife of what was displaced, which becomes known to us through everyday, affective experiences. The ghost started to affect me and touch me in some particular moments of being in the city. As I elaborate in the last section of Chapter Five, the ghostscape of Koganecho, a particular form of memoryscape produced as an effect of displacement, is what I began to sense and imagine while I was conducting fieldwork in Yokohama: from hearing people’s stories of Koganecho from the time before the 2005 raid, collecting images and published stories of the city in the past, getting involved in local social relations, performing local roles, walking in the neighbourhood, and trying to imagine the displaced lives and looking for their traces.

The outcome of my research ended up both more modest and ambitious than what I initially imagined it to have been. Rather than reconstructing the past landscape of Koganecho by rescuing memories from being forced into oblivion (which I never attained anyway), here I pay attention to the present, the future of displacement, and engage with the site of displacement simultaneously as a space of the ghost and a world of lives that go on nonetheless. By so doing I want to create an opening in the collective imagination of Yokohama against the dominant memoryscapes of the city that is produced through
official discourses, urban redevelopment projects, and popular culture. In the remainder
of the introduction I first present the historical context in which the displacement of
migrant sex workers took place in Koganecho. I do so by describing the chon-no-ma
space of Koganecho that migrant women came to inhabit during the period from the late
1970 to 2005, and situating this, through a literature review, in a larger picture of
transnational migration of women, who started to arrive in the sexual service industry of
Japan. I will then outline the spaces of the water trade that survived or emerged after
displacement, spaces of another world that I unexpectedly encountered which became the
central site of my research. At the end I will discuss my epistemological premise that the
knowledge I present in this dissertation is mediated by my “body as a site of knowing”
(Pink 2015, p.26) and define myself as an “emplaced” ethnographer by drawing on Tim
Ingold’s (2008) notion of a “zone of entanglement” and Sarah Pink’s conceptualization of
a “place” (2015) as a site of ethnographic research. I will then offer an overview of my
dissertation with a brief summary of each chapter.

**Water Trade and Water City**

*Water Trade*

The Japanese term *mizushobai* (literally, “the water trade”), is a potentially
challenging term to use. Because the water trade has been written about by western male
authors in the 1980s in relation to Japanese traditional culture (Buruma 1984, Morley
1986), and especially in relation to *geisha* as the prototypical subject of this culture, the
term potentially exoticizes women engaged in the water trade in Japan. I did not think of
using this term in my dissertation until I completed my fieldwork and entered into the
later stage of writing, and reflected on how Shin-san, son of Pub Mary’s mama, used the term “water trade” in a regretful tone to refer to the work his mother and mothers of many other mixed-race friends of his in Yokohama. “Well, at least she isn’t sleeping with her clients now,” he said to assure me that her working conditions had become better compared to the past when she was still doing makura eigyo (literally “the pillow sale”) in order to ensure patronage. At the same time, he hardly seemed relieved by the fact that she was no longer having sex with her customers. Recalling Shin-san’s comment, I started to feel that the term is revealing of what the police raid of 2005 and other crackdowns on migrant sex workers actually failed to eradicate. The term also started to seem useful in expressing the realities of transnational migrants in Japan who continue to find ways to survive by selling water, given the limited occupational options provided for them.²

² In addition, using locally used terms, concepts, expressive forms and interpretations is politically important to me, being inspired by the “new” tradition of Asia-based postcolonial and cultural studies scholars who actively use Asian languages in their academic writings instead of simply replacing them with English by translation and use of the Roman alphabet. In the first issue of Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Chen and Chua (2000) state that as an Asia-based journal they have an Asian audience in mind, and they “do justice to…‘Asian’ languages” (p.12) by printing Asian words in references instead of phonetically or literally translating them into Romanized letters or English words. While my focus is less on technicality of referencing style, I still build on their commitment to local languages and actively incorporate local concepts in my analysis and writing, instead of just applying available English words. It is important, however, that I do so with critical awareness that Japanese has also been another imperial language in the Asian context and Japanese terms like mizushobai [water trade], mama, masuta [master], onnanoko [girl] are transnational as much as local in a sense that they have been used by migrants who engage in the water trade in Japan, which has an extensive transnational network that facilitates the trade of women from economically less privileged countries to Japan. Thus, my intention is not necessarily to empower Japanese language by treating it as a pure form of local culture but to contextualize and critique particular forms of power structure—class, gender, age, racial, colonial—that are embodied by those terms. Using locally used terms have also resulted in references to Yokohama’s pre-modern history and culture from the Edo period. By this I do not mean to suggest the presence of a fixed, unchanged and contained, exotic culture that can be geographically located in the city (a traditional anthropological notion of “culture” critiqued for example by Gupta and Ferguson 1992), but I rather wish to reject the dominantly held notion of historical breaks (pre-modern and modern, prewar and postwar, industrial and postindustrial, etc.) and reveal a persistently exploitative, local and transnational, power structure that continue to marginalize particular bodies over others in Yokohama and Japan at large.
Mizushobai is not an official occupational category and it loosely refers to a type of business whose revenue is unstable, unpredictable, and could be transient like flowing water, being largely determined by customers’ patronage (Niimura 1983, p.2291). While it broadly includes any “entertainment” work that relies on the subject’s popularity and the tastes of the community of the time, such as acting, theatre performance, art, sports and so on, the term is mostly used today to refer to sexual and erotic service work and eating and drinking businesses, such as hostess clubs, bars, cabarets, and a certain type of restaurant, that involve companionship as part of their services. Ian Buruma (1984) points out that water is culturally also associated with sensual experience in Japan; for example, “love scenes are traditionally called nureba, wet scenes” (p.61). In a narrower sense and in more common usage of the term, therefore, the term is strongly associated with services that involve intimate and predominantly heterosexual experiences, and entertainment ranging from alcohol service, sympathetic conversation, flattering, flirtation, singing, dancing, touching, any other bodily interactions, and, potentially, sexual intercourse. It is important that the term also connotes a stigma attached to the work and the socio-economic vulnerability of those who sell water to make a living. In Japan, where a rigid patriarchal structure, heteronormativity and a racial hierarchy are normalized, the water trade is sustained by women from low-income families, often from other parts of Asia, who serve Japanese men with disposable income, reproducing the structures through everyday performance of the role between server-customer, poor-rich, woman-man, and “foreigner”-Japanese (Watanabe 2000, Fujieda 2001, Chung 2004, 3

3 According to Kojien (the 3rd edition, 1983, edited by Izuru Niimura), mizushobai is “a term that generally refers to businesses that rely on the client’s favors (and whose revenues are precarious). Examples include machiai, kashizasiki [both refer to eating and drinking venues used for business meetings, which often involve entertainment services by female entertainers], restaurants, bars, and cabarets” (p.2291).
The figures of mama (female managers) and girls (entertainers/servers) are central in water trade businesses that offer sexual or erotic services. As Haeng-ja Sachiko Chung (2009) suggests, the “title Mama connotes the ‘non-professional’ and the ‘domestic’ and allows her labour (both at home and work) to go unrecognized as labour” (p.129). Female entertainers/servers in the water trade are often grouped as “girls,” which connotes the infantile, the dependent and the unskilled. This is a striking contrast to male managers at the eating and drinking venues of the water trade, who are often called by the title “master,” which implies professionalism and a higher status.

The term water trade is potentially difficult to define and can easily be misunderstood. It briefly appears, for instance, in Ian Buruma’s (1984) book on the world of fantasy in Japanese popular culture, specifically in the chapter where he discusses the relationship between “prostitution” and high art in Japan. Buruma suggests that one of the most typical subjects in the water trade would be geisha, which he calls, “the ultimate human work of art” (p.72). He notes that while there is a misconception of geisha that equates them with “prostitutes,” precisely speaking they are rather professional entertainers, who are skilled in musical instruments, traditional dancing and other forms of art. While sex was involved in many cases, Buruma suggests that in geisha houses from the Edo period, the “‘play’ was perhaps more important than sex per se” (p.76). Such play ranges from dancing and singing to the “elegant flirtation, the refined courtship, in short the ‘play’ between man and woman, romance as high art” (p.77). A geisha is thus a performer: “Her ‘real self’ (if there is such a thing) is carefully concealed (if that is the word) behind her professional persona…she usually bears the name of some illustrious predecessor; and even her facial features are hardly recognizable under a thick
layer of make-up” (p.72). Traditionally, therefore, there has always been a close connection that exists between the theatre and sex, especially in high-class geisha houses.

The term also briefly appears in Anne Allison’s (1994) anthropological study of a hostess club, the contemporary archetype of the water trade. Coming out in the mid-1990s, only a few years after Japan’s economic “bubble” burst and when recession was only starting, Allison’s study examined high-class Japanese hostess clubs as a site of business outings and entertainment for salarymen, paid for by corporations. Similar to how Buruma describes the space of water trade, Allison also suggests that the hostess club is a hidden space between the office and home, work and play, that functions as an intermediary that facilitates business relations in a more relaxed environment (p.9).

Allison acknowledges that Japanese hostess clubs are a sexualized and eroticized space where services “allude to sex” (p.8) by, for example, letting customers touch hostesses’ body parts, including briefly “patting” breasts (p.71), and attending to conversations where “references to sex were constant” (p.47). However, she also emphasizes that the “service is conducted primarily at the level of conversation” and the “job of the hostess, as both speaker and listener, is to make customers feel special, at ease, and indulged” through their skillful performance (p.8). Hostesses do this by treating a customer always as a superior by lighting cigarettes, pouring drinks, flattering, singing karaoke upon request, being amenable to whatever they say, and so on. The hostess “acts as if she were sexually romantically interested in the man,” she notes, but at high-class hostess clubs women also must remain as inaccessible, luxurious commodities (p.19). Allison emphasizes that the service cannot proceed to genital penetration or oral sex and those acts were in fact prohibited at the club she studied. The mama in that club is a respected
figure with dignity, “a beautiful, refined, desirable woman,” who flirts with customers like hostesses but with a “coyness” like a traditional lady (p.69).

However, what Buruma and Allison do not highlight in their portrayal of exotic and traditional, high-class geisha houses or hostess clubs is the fact that the water trade is based on the precarious nature of work and life and the socio-economic vulnerability of those who sell water. The term connotes socio-economic necessity for those who engage in the water trade, a situation where “professional entertainers” are ultimately still servers, who entertain and please their customers and ask for their favours, because they rely on patronage and they are under financial pressure. So while Allison (1994) notes that the term water trade “connotes fluidity—an occupation that one can float into and out of without rigidity required by other forms of employment, and a service that one can enjoy while being freed from duties and responsibilities that matter elsewhere” (p.33), this can be misleading especially with respect to the first part. In fact, Chung (2004) suggests that traditionally women working as geisha often also engaged in sex work afterwards and the “occupational boundary between sexual workers and non-sexual workers among young females were not as rigid as assumed” (p.158). As I discuss below, women who are vulnerable in Japan due to their legal, racial and class status and conditions are more likely to become involved in more exploitative situations in the water trade where they have to perform unwanted or forced sex with their customers.

Water trade is a figurative expression that is inspired by the unstable, precarious and flowing feature of water, but it is not completely unrelated to actual water. For example, according to Hidenobu Jinnai’s (1995) anthropological study, in the city of Edo,
both unlicensed and licensed pleasure quarters and theatrical entertainment centres
developed along the water’s edge. In some cases this happened spontaneously but in
other cases strategically. In fact, when building licensed quarters, the Edo government
intentionally designed ditches around them to isolate them from the rest of the city (p.98).
Spatially, Jinnai (1995) writes, the “other side” of the bridge was a “zone of liberation”
(p.92) or a “fantastic other world” (p.94) where people, primarily men, “free[d]
themselves from the daily constraints of their institutionalized communities” (p.93). But
again, it is generally perceived that if one makes a living by offering explicit forms of
sexual service, s/he is not simply soaked in the water but the muddy water. Water trade
comes with a stigma—once you are in, you are contaminated by it and it is extremely
difficult for you to get your legs out of it clean. Thus, what Jinnai calls the “zone of
liberation” is also a zone that is highly regulated by moral discourse.

The water trade, as it is defined and understood by Buruma (1984) and Allison
(1994), is not interchangeable with “the sex trade,” because the term potentially
eンcompasses a broader range of entertainment services that do not necessarily
immediately involve sex. But the term also allows us to express a theatrical aspect of the
exchanges that take place in venues where more explicit forms of sexual services are
offered, which is not necessarily immediately evoked by the term sex trade. While studies
their communicative and theatrical features as distinctive to those venues, during my
research local people told me that even in the old chon-no-ma brothels of Koganecho or
other types of establishments in the sex industry where more explicit forms of sexual
service were offered, verbal communication, emotional exchange, and performance of
gender and fictive roles were a significant aspect of such services, in addition to physical sexual intercourse.

In this dissertation I use both terms, water trade and sex trade/work, to emphasize the different nuances of experience and condition involved. Sometimes, the term sex work can be effective in highlighting particular experiences and conditions that are specific to the sexual exchange that takes place between the worker and the customer. At other times, the term water trade is better suited to expressing the worker’s reliance on patronage and the theatrical and entertaining aspects of exchange, while also alluding to the sexual and exploitative nature of the interaction. Also, in my literature review below I follow the conventions of the literature and use the term “sexual service industry” to include venues that offer different degrees of sexual and erotic service, including hostess clubs, which have been central to previous studies on migration of women to Japan. Lastly, the Japanese terms baishun [prostitution] and baishunfu or shofu [prostitute] are used often with quotation marks to highlight more degrading and stigmatizing ways in which sex work and sex workers have historically been referred to in Japan.

Water City

*Water gathers.* Yokohama is a water city. Not only is it a port city facing the Pacific Ocean—the port itself is reclaimed land on the water, which was developed by expanding a little fishing village in the late 1850s—but the city’s central area behind the waterfront also developed out of reclaimed agricultural land, which originally had a number of canals. Those waterways were used as transportation routes over the course of Yokohama’s urban development and industrialization that was made possible by the
labour of migrant men and women from impoverished regions of Japan and Japan’s former/neo-colonies (Nakata 1983, Kawamoto 1997, Oishi and Takekawa 1998, Ventura 2007, Yamamoto 2008, Nicchukan sangoku kyodo rekishi hensan iinkai 2012). While many of those waterways have already been filled for the construction of a major highway and underground railways, the two major former canals, the Ooka River and the Nakamura River, still remain, enclosing the city’s central area.

Historically, at least in Yokohama, there is a close link that has existed between the water trade, the waterways and migrant communities, that together significantly contributed to the development of the city. The areas along the water’s edge have attracted both intranational⁴ and transnational⁵ migrants, who arrived in Yokohama, found work and built communities of their own. The water’s edge attracted low-income

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⁴ This includes migration from less privileged regions of Japan in the period immediately following the end of WWII. During the Allied Occupation of Yokohama, the Ooka River became a border between the occupied and non-occupied areas; on its east side, Fukutomičho became a site of military barracks and Wakabacho an airfield surrounded by barbed wires; on its west side, shacks were built under the Keikyū Railway overpass, housing those who were most vulnerable and affected by the war because of their socio-economic backgrounds. The Ooka River attracted day labourers from other parts of Japan, particularly from the impoverished northern regions such as Tohoku and Hokkaido, who came and worked in the U.S. military base and port facilities, and stayed in affordable water hotels on the river owned by the city or people of the Korean descent (Nakata 1983, p.19). Pan pan girls, or street prostitutes, became visible in the city among American G.I.s on the east side and among migrant labourers in the west side of the river. Sex workers on both sides of the river, therefore, contributed to the post-WWII, US-led restoration of the city by directly serving American men or serving Japanese labourers working at the occupied facilities. After Yokohama’s occupied area was returned to Japan, Fukutomičho, Wakabacho, Sueyoshicho and Akebonocho became licensed pleasure districts, inheriting the sex trade culture that flourished during the occupation era (Nakakusei 50 shunen 1985, p.443).

⁵ The area enclosed by the Ooka River and the Nakamura River is characterized by a visible presence of transnational migrants today. It officially belongs to Naka Ward but also partially to Minami Ward. Naka Ward has the highest concentration of registered foreign residents in the city of Yokohama, and when I began my fieldwork in January 2012 the number accounted for 15,430, or 20% of the total number of registered foreign residents in the entire city of Yokohama. This also accounted for 10% of the total population of Naka Ward. Minami Ward marked the third in the number of foreign residents, accounting for 7,729, or 10% of the total number of foreign residents registered in Yokohama (City of Yokohama, 2015). The actual number of transnational migrants should be higher if we are to include unregistered (undocumented) residents.
migrants because, based on the stories I heard from local residents, it was avoided by those with economic means and other residential options for the fear of flood and the poor condition of the land. Not surprisingly, places like Koganecho, Wakabacho, and Fukutomicho, the lower-end of water trade districts along the Ooka River, developed in the post-WWII era and still continue to offer migrants not only affordable places of residence but also muddy jobs in the water trade.

Koganecho, gold town, is a narrow district extending less than 400 metres along the Ooka River, which flows into the Port of Yokohama only 1.5 km away. Developed under the Keikyu Railway overpass and along the water edge, Koganecho has been one of the most marginalized and stigmatized places in Yokohama particularly after the end of WWII. While commercial sex was criminalized under the Anti-Prostitution Act of 1956, it was tolerated in Koganecho by the police until 2005. As I describe in detail in Chapter Four, Koganecho had been inhabited by low-income families and poor migrants from within and outside Japan. In the first few decades after the end of WWII, Japanese and Korean Japanese women with low-income family backgrounds found their economic means in Koganecho’s water trade businesses housed in an array of barracks, or chon-no-ma [literally, a little space or a short period of time], that occupied the space underneath the overpass. Chon-no-ma businesses from this time usually had a mixed function of pub and brothel; customers would drink and eat at the counter downstairs served by a mama, chat with girls to warm up their interactions, and go upstairs for sex.

According to non-fiction literature written by local authors (Danbara 2009, Yagisawa 2014) and stories I heard from people I met during my fieldwork, as the
Japanese economy grew, from the late 1970s onwards and especially after the Plaza Accord of 1985 that resulted in the increase in the value of yen, the space started to absorb young transnational migrant women, initially from Taiwan, then from the Philippines, Thailand, other Southeast Asian countries, Mainland China, and even from South America and the former Soviet block, replacing aging Japanese sex workers. In many cases, they found their temporary home in Koganecho to earn an income and support their families back home. There were also many international students studying in universities in Yokohama or elsewhere, who found working in chon-no-ma an efficient part-time job for earning their tuition and other expenses (Yagisawa 2014, p.66). Changes happened not only in terms of the demography of the women but also in their services.

Chon-no-ma units that were built in the early 2000s barely had dining services; customers would negotiate a price at the door directly with girls and go straight upstairs for sex. Pink coloured fluorescents illuminated the entire district, making it into an exotic and fantastic world, and girls attracted male customers in different costumes, ranging from “skintight outfits to high-school uniforms, China dresses, bikinis, and kogyaru (highschool gal)-styles” (Danbara 2009, p.272), and performing different characters.

As the Japanese economy grew, Japanese women who were predominantly becoming middle-class housewives in the male-dominant corporate employment system, were no longer required or encouraged to work outside the domestic space. Fujieda (2001) notes that unlike in the pre-WWII context, today Japanese women are “free to choose” whether they want to enter the sex trade and they are “least likely to be forced into prostitution or into sex work” (p.23). She offers an example of “enjo kosai,” a phenomenon that started to become visible in media reports in the 1990s, where teenage girls voluntarily participate in the sex trade by having sexual relationships with middle-aged men with disposable incomes. Referring to “enjo kosai,” Ueno (2003) writes that it was new in two senses: that teenage girls from middle-class families were entering the sex market; and that they no longer did it out of poverty (p.319). However, a more recent publication by Aoyama (2015) reports that due to the economic recession and an increasing divorce rate in Japan, a new reality is emerging where Japanese housewives and single mothers enter the sex trade out of economic hardship (p.284). During my fieldwork between 2012-2013, I also encountered or heard stories about Japanese women frequenting Koganecho Riverside, who are single mothers and engage in the sex trade.
By the end, in the 1990s and into the 2000s, Koganecho was inhabited primarily by non-Japanese women, making its tiny chon-no-ma quarter the most diverse, transnational, transitory and vibrant part of the city, serving men from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, including white-collar salarymen, small business owners and working-class men. While most customers were Japanese, there were also migrant laborers from China, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Iran, Brazil and Peru (Watanabe 1997). Since the 1990s, the most visible of all were Thai women. Thai women did not only work in the chon-no-ma district of Koganecho but also worked in hostess clubs managed by Japanese, Taiwanese or Thai women in the pleasure district across the river. Khai, the master of the Thai Restaurant whom I spoke to, said that women tended to stick with either “straight sex work” at chon-no-ma or hostessing and did not switch their occupations from one to another (personal communication, 27 November 2012), but Watanabe (1998), who conducted interviews

7 Studying Korean hostess clubs in the European Village of the Minami District of Osaka, Chung (2009) notes that these clubs are multicultural spaces, populated by Korean women who are themselves diverse in terms of their citizenship and immigration status in Japan (p.133). It is also a multi-gendered space where part of the service is offered by men and sometimes transgender hostesses and a multi-lingual space characterized by Japanese-Korean bilingualism. This is also true in the hostess club in the lower-end nighttime district of Fukutomicho, Yokohama. Watanabe (1997) reports that one of the Thai hostesses she interviewed worked for a club managed by a Taiwanese mama (also see Aoyama 2007, p.272 for another case in Tokyo). Watanabe (1998) points out that mamas, who run hostess clubs in Yokohama, are often migrant workers themselves and their nationalities included Taiwanese, Filipino, Korean and Thai (p.218). The transnational space of the migrant-run hostess clubs extends beyond those particular establishments. For example, Chung (2012) offers a compiled list of Korean ethnic businesses that developed according to the needs of hostesses, such as Korean restaurants, boutiques, beauty salons, rental video shops, unregistered taxi services, grocery stores and so on (p.197). The same was true in Yokohama’s Thai community where Thai independent businesses flourished in the 1990s when Thai women accounted the majority of the women working in Koganecho’s chon-no-ma district.

8 In January 2012, the population of Thai residents officially registered in the city was 293 in Naka Ward and 247 in Minami Ward, together accounting for 36% of the total population of registered Thai people in the City of Yokohama. In January 2005, when the police raid occurred in Koganecho, it was 239 in Naka Ward and 220 in Minami Ward. However, those numbers do not reflect the presence of undocumented migrants, who accounted for the majority of the women who were working in Yokohama as sex workers. The actual number should have been much higher but there is no statistical data available.
with five Thai women working in Yokohama in the 1990s reports a case where a woman who initially worked at a hostess club in Ibaraki moved to Yokohama and started working at a chon-no-ma. This suggests that the movement between occupations did exist among Thai women. Around this community of Thai sex workers also developed Thai businesses such as food delivery services, dining places, gambling venues, karaoke bars, nightclubs, grocery stores, video stores and underground banks. They were clustered in Wakabacho right across the river, creating a Little Bangkok where Thai sex workers spent time outside of their work.

A hierarchy existed between women with different nationalities and ethnicities, reflecting and reinforcing the racism that persists in Japan. I often heard that Southeast Asian women were regarded as less desirable than East Asian women by Japanese men, creating a structure where the former had a lower status and offered their service for lower fees. In addition, a woman’s national or ethnic background, combined with her age and trafficking status, was closely linked to her position in the water trade (Chung 2004, p.185). In many cases transnational migrant sex workers entered Japan through the trafficking system (see below), but in Koganecho after paying their “debts” back to brokers and mamas, many women became “free-lance” sex workers (Watanabe 1998, p.118) and managed their chon-no-ma businesses independently. It then became common to see cases where Taiwanese girls, who had initially worked for Japanese or Korean Japanese mamas, became mamas themselves and hired young Thai girls.

Koganecho was sometimes the first point of entry into the sex trade for migrant women and sometimes not. With respect to Thai women, many had already been in the
sex trade back in Thailand or had arrived in other parts of Japan where they entered the and later moved to Koganecho. Koganecho was partly regulated by yakuza, who did not directly own or manage the sex trade in the district but protected and policed chon-no-ma businesses in exchange for “street fees.” Chon-no-ma businesses were usually run independently by mamas and girls who were not members of a criminal organization, and they operated their businesses by renting the chon-no-ma units from local property owners (those owners were anonymous and they were never identified during my fieldwork). By the early 2000s, there were roughly 250 chon-no-ma underneath and along the Keikyu Train overpass. Each chon-no-ma was shared by two to four women, depending on the number of rooms in the unit, and they usually took turns by alternating day and night shifts. Koganecho was “open” twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week until chon-no-ma brothels were evicted in the final raid of 2005.

Migration and Water Trade: Literature Review

The arrival of transnational migrant women in Koganecho can be situated in the wider context of the migration of women into the water trade in Japan that started in the late 1970s and accelerated in the 1980s. There is a tradition of sociological, anthropological and feminist studies that has been examining the relationship between transnational migration and the sexual service industry in Japan. These studies are important to review here as they offer a big picture of the conditions under which migrant women have traveled, worked and lived in Japan. There are roughly two streams of research that address this subject: studies of human trafficking (Dinan 2002, ILO 2005, Otsu 2004b, 2007, Inaba and Saito 2005, Muto 2006, Saito 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, Shared Hope International 2007, Dean 2008, Inaba 2008, Ono 2010, Yokoyama 2010,

In those studies, women from the Philippines and Thailand have attracted the most attention due to their statistical significance. Filipina women have made up the majority of those who were allowed entry to Japan by government-issued “entertainer visas” that enabled them to legally work for six months at “theatrical and musical performances and other forms of show business,” which in practice have included hostess clubs and strip theatres where female servers perform varying degrees of sexual service (Komai 2000, p.314; also see Kikuchi 1994, Ball and Piper 2002, Satake and Da-anoy 2006). The number of Filipina entertainer visa holders continued to increase from 18,905 in 1996, 60,933 in 2000, to 82,741 in 2004 (Yamazaki 2012, p.416-417) until 2005, when the Japanese government made the requirements for obtaining entertainer visas stricter in response to the United States’ Trafficking in Person Report 2004, which placed Japan on the Watch List for its lack of a comprehensive law against trafficking (Department of State, United States of America 2004, p. 96). Thai women, who have usually entered Japan with tourist visas and worked illegally in sex trade venues, appear the highest in number of rescued human trafficking victims during the period between the early 1990s and early 2000s (Saito 2006, p.69; 2009, p.115) and the second highest of overstayers in 1995, following Koreans (Nagayama 2000, p.238; also see Aoyama 2007, p.15). Ito (1992) notes that Filipino and Thai account for 90% of reported illegal workers in Japan in 1987, and of those workers, women accounted for the majority (p.295). A change
occurred in the following year when there was a significant increase in Korean illegal workers, who came to account for 20% of the total (p.295-296).

Both streams above recognize the vulnerability of the women who enter into the sexual service industry in Japan, highlighting the fact that their movements are highly regulated by multiple external forces constituted by the transnational network of brokers, Japanese legal structures and historically perpetuated gender, sex, class and colonial structures. Together they control, restrict and condition women’s transnational movements. However, the two streams have contrasting views of the agency and experience of women who engage in the sexual service industry in Japan. Generally, studies of human trafficking are based on case studies collected by non-government organizations, including testimonies of individual women who sought shelters and organizations’ assistance upon exiting the trafficking system (Dinan 2002, Inaba and Saito 2005, Muto 2006, Otsu 2007, Yokoyama 2010),9 and as a result, have tended to see those women as “victims” of forced sexual labour or “sex slaves.” They highlight the involvement of brokers in the sending countries in facilitating women’s travel, brokers in the receiving country (Japan) in making arrangements with sex trade business

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9 In and around Yokohama, there are human rights organizations, including HELP Asian Women Shelter (est. 1986) located in Tokyo, Kanagawa Women’s Space “Mizura” (est. 1990) in Yokohama, and The House of Women Saaalaa (est. 1992) in Yokohama, and Kalakasaan (est. 2002) in Kawasaki (neighbour city of Yokohama). They have worked for trafficked women who required supports in exiting the trafficking system since long before the Japanese government implemented measures to prevent human trafficking in response to the US Trafficking in Person Report 2004. Testimonies of trafficked victims, individual cases and non-government organizations’ activities have been published in the following: Kanagawa Women’s Space “Mizura” (2002), Shoji (2005), HELP Asian Women Shelter (2006), Ochiai (2010), and varies issues of magazine Women’s Asia 21.
establishments, the coercive and deceptive nature of such travel and work arrangements, “fictive” debts ranging from three to five million yen in total (approx. $30,000-50,000) imposed on the women by the brokers of both countries and managers (e.g. mama) of business establishments in Japan, the risks of being infected with HIV/AIDS and other health-related risks, forced labour, and the strict control and management by business managers, which in most extreme cases have ended up in murder incidents where trafficked women killed their mamas in order to escape from the harsh conditions of their work. (Muto 2004, Otsu 2004a, Saito 2006).


Brokers in the receiving country are often transnational migrants themselves. Nagayama (2000) reports, based on mid-1990s statistics, that the “number of Thai brokers in Japan is higher than that of Japanese, 1874 (38.8 per cent of the total) compared to Japanese, 1179 (24.4 per cent of the total)” (p.238). Based on interviews with (former) undocumented migrant Thai workers in Japan, Chunjitkaruna (2000) also reports that brokers can be Thai, Chinese, and Japanese as well as people with other nationalities (p.263).

A number of murder incidents, which caught mass media and public attention in the early 1990s, revealed extreme cases of harsh conditions under which trafficked women worked. They include the Shimodate incident (Ibaraki Prefecture, 1991), the Shinkoiwa incident (Tokyo, 1992), the Shigehara incident (Chiba Prefecture, 1992), the Kuwana incident (Mie Prefecture, 1994), and the Ichikawa incident (Chiba Prefecture, 1994), named after the cities in which they occurred. The first three incidents involved murders of mamas, whose national or regional backgrounds varied from Thai to Singaporean and Taiwanese, committed by trafficked Thai women, who were forced into bonded labor. The Kuwana Incident involved a murder by a Thai woman of her male customer, who sexually assaulted, threatened and confined her. The Ichikawa incident involved a murder of a Thai woman by another Thai woman, who had been a victim of violence, rape and confinement (see Saito 2006, p.68).
higher sources of income. The role of brokers is often suggested as a mediator between employers and migrant workers and their primary “service” is to “find jobs” for undocumented migrant workers (Nagayama 2000, p.238). Feminist anthropologists and sociologists, who participated in hostess work themselves (Watanabe 1997, 1998, 2000, Chung 2004, Parreñas 2011) and/or conducted interviews with sex workers currently working in Japan or who have returned to their homeland without seeking protection by anti-trafficking organizations or shelters (Aoyama 2007), recognize that women were in the most part informed of the sexual nature of the work in which they would engage in Japan, prior to migration, and in many cases they were not forced to participate in the sexual service industry. Watanabe (1998), who interviewed Thai sex workers working in Yokohama, reports that they are indeed “subject to disease, injury, mistreatment, indignity, physical and psychological abuse, and coercion” (p.122-123), but at the same time they tend to “find more favorable class conditions in Japan even through they have to endure the undocumented, thus often exploitative, circumstances” (p.122).12 Cases of death, violence, forced sex, drug addiction and alcoholism, and mental illness are also reported in a study of Filipina entertainers in Japan conducted by Rosario P. Ballescas (1992, p.89-101), but she also suggests that women still find the work offered by the sexual service industry in Japan attractive due to the high income they can attain. While brokers can be an immediate threat to migrant workers, in Parreñas’s (2011) view, migrant women are vulnerable not necessarily because of the involvement of the broker

12 In fact, Watanabe (1998) suggests that not all migrant hostesses are forced to have sex with their customers. One of her informants said that she would pursue money by having sex with customers she liked, but her employer never forced sex with them (p.211).
or criminal organizations per se,\textsuperscript{13} but rather due to larger extra-criminal structures that
create their reliance on the brokers or criminal organizations in the first place and
diminish their autonomy to legally travel to and work in the sexual service industry in
Japan.

Many sociological studies of transnational migration recognize the historical and
ongoing structures that create the flow of migration of women into the sex trade in Japan.
Postwar transnational migration to Japan is said to be uniquely characterized by being
predominantly participated in by women in the 1970s, followed by masculinization of
migration in the late 1980s, which makes it atypical a case in comparison to examples of
North America and Europe where incoming migrants were predominantly male and
“feminization of migration” happened much later, in the 1990s (Ito 1992, p.297).

However, Mike Douglas (2000) notes that the predominance of women in transnational
migration to Japan simply reiterates the old tendency from around the turn of 20\textsuperscript{th} century
for transnational migrants from Japan to be predominantly women, who travelled to

\textsuperscript{13} While yakuza are often blamed for sexual trafficking (e.g. Shared Hope International 2007, Jones 2011),
Parreñas (2011) notes that they are not the threatening figures for Filipina hostesses working in Tokyo,
customers and potential sexual partners are (p.3). To my knowledge, in the case of Koganecho, yakuza
were not directly involved in the trafficking of women but policed and profited from them by collecting
“street fees” and sometimes “protected” them from unruly customers or police raids. During my
fieldwork I did not hear stories of yakuza being immediate threats to migrant sex workers who worked in
Koganecho. Carolyn S. Stevens (1997) in her study of underclass manual labourers in Kotobukicho, a
marginalized district in the inner city of Yokohama not too far from Koganecho, reports another case
where the local yakuza members do not necessarily act in “ruthless” or “violent” ways in relation to the
labourers (p.30). She writes that “around Kotobuki, it was believed that if you stayed out of the yakuza’s
way, they would generally leave you alone,” although there is also “animosity at times between labourers
and yakuza” (ibid.). I got a similar impression about the relationship between the sex workers (and
mamas) and the yakuza in Koganecho. I heard a story of a yakuza being an intimidating figure for
customers and visitors, who would potentially disturb the operation of the chon-no-ma by harassing sex
workers or photographing or videorecording the district, which could result in the circulation of the
images to the wider public. On some occasions, people whom I met in Koganecho warned me not to take
photographs in yakuza territories, as there was the possibility that they would charge me for
photographing their properties.
Southeast Asia, East Asia and even North America to work in Japanese-run brothels as sex workers (also see Fujieda 2001, p40-41; for studies of Japanese sex workers abroad see Ichioka 1977, Shimizu and Hirakawa 1998, Oharazeki 2008, Warren 2008, Mihalopoulos 2011, Takemoto 2015). Thus, Douglas (2000) sees that the contemporary migration of women from other parts of Asia to Japan as not an isolated phenomenon but one with deep roots in the long history of the international trade in women in Japan, which has always been shaped by gendered “class stratification to provide poor women for the pleasure of middle and upper-class men” (p.111). As Fujieda (2001) notes, the sex trade in Japan is “far from being gender neutral” and it “largely presumes heterosexual men are the consumers, and women are the providers of various types of sexual services” (p.22).

Historically existing structures of transnational migration into the sex industries is not only gendered but also inflected with an ongoing (neo)colonialism. Arrival of transnational migrant women in Japan since the 1970s can be situated within a wider context of globalization that is increasingly characterized by “millions of women from poor countries,” who migrate to “rich ones, where they serve as nannies, maids, and sometimes sex workers” (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2013, p.2; also see Cheng 1996, Tyner 1996, Parrenas 2001, Asato 2009, Tsujimoto 2014, Yoshimizu 2014). Just as in North America and Europe, contemporary migration to Japan is characterized by the earlier colonial structure that enabled former empires to extract natural resources and agricultural products from their colonies (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003) argue that what is extracted from poor countries today, in addition to agricultural and industrial labor, is labor for what is considered “women’s work” in
rich countries (p.4). In fact, as Anthony King (1989, 1990) and Ackbar Abbas (1997) suggest, between an old imperialism and today’s globalism does not exist a clear and clean break, and instead, they are much more connected than how the two eras are often imagined. In Japan, a set of (neo)colonial precedents has created the foundation for migration of women to sex trade businesses starting in the late 1970s. They include: the deployment of “imperial Japanese comfort women” during the period of Japan’s colonial invasion of East and Southeast Asian countries; the expansion of the multi-ethnic and transnational trafficking network that enabled the trade of Korean women to Japan and China under Japanese colonial rule; and the development of sex tourism in the 1970s that facilitated Japanese men’s travels to Asian countries outside of Japan to purchase sex with much lower fees under the neo-colonial economic structure within Asia (Ito 1992, Douglas 2000, Chung 2004, 2012). Not only have these structures offered the material infrastructure for Japanese men to access women from less privileged countries, but they have also built and perpetuated popular images of Asian women as providers of sex, love and “comfort” (Fujieda 2001, p.40-44; Lopez 2012, Yoshimizu 2014).

14 King discusses this by examining how what is recognized as globalism today, which manifests in the international flow of capital, people, commodities and culture, was already experienced in colonial cities during the colonial era and suggests that the old imperialism and colonialism was only one earlier phase of globalization (1989, p.7; 1990, p.7). Similarly, in his study of urban culture of Hong Kong, Abbas (1997) suggests that the end of British rule in Hong Kong did not mean “the end of capitalism (of which imperialism was one manifestation)” but it meant “merely that capitalism has entered a new phase” (p.2), also suggesting the structural continuity of the colonial and postcolonial eras.
Legally, migrant sex workers in Japan have been vulnerable to the Migration Control and Refugee Recognition Law, the Anti-Prostitution Act and the Law to Control Business Affecting Public Morals. In many cases, transnational migrant women, who entered Japan with entertainer visas, tourist visas or study visas and worked in the sexual service industry, have ended up overstaying in Japan, which have made them categorically undocumented under the Migration Control and Refugee Recognition Law and at risk of deportation. In case they engage in “baishun” [prostitution], which is officially prohibited under the Anti-Prostitution Act, they are made illegal in a double sense. They are also vulnerable to the Law to Control Business Affecting Public Morals, which regulates entertainment venues, including a range of water trade businesses. While in actuality sex work and other entertainment services have long been tolerated in certain venues, their status as foreign nationals makes them particularly vulnerable to crackdowns.

15 The Japanese government amended the Migration Control and Refugee Recognition Law and the Law to Control Business Affecting Public Morals in accordance with the new measure against trafficking, which developed under the Action Plan to Cope With Trafficking in Persons in the end of 2004, proposed in response to the US Trafficking in Person Report 2004. This resulted in more frequent police raids and monitoring of foreign nationals involved in the sexual service industry (Aoyama 2014, p.287). Problems with this move have been pointed out in some studies of human trafficking and studies of transnational migration, but their critiques stem from different views of the needs of migrant women. Some argue that the current policy emphasizes the need for crackdowns on criminal organizations, such as brokers and travel agents that have facilitated the trafficking of women, and stricter border controls rather than protection of victims (Saito 2006, Ono 2010; also see Yokoyama 2010 for details of the government measure). Parreñas (2011) is equally critical of the current anti-trafficking measures taken by the Japanese government but she is more concerned with the increased immigration controls and reduced accessibility to entertainer visas for migrant women, which diminish their opportunities to migrate. She also raises the concern that the current “protectionist laws” in Japan, while protecting women from criminal organizations, fail to protect them from the discourse of “immorality of close sexual interactions with customers, in other words, hostess work” (p.32). Similarly, Watanabe (1998) argues that the “best way to ‘protect’ [migrants’] lives from exploitation and abuse would be support the descrriminalization of sex work and legitimize the migration for such employment” (p.123).
Feminist sociologists and anthropologists, who conducted ethnographic research in Thai (Watanabe 2000), Filipina (Parreñas 2011), and Korean (Chung 2004) hostess clubs in urban areas of Japan by participating as paid or non-paid hostesses recognize the vulnerability of migrant women working in hostess clubs in Japan due to their legal and socio-economic status in Japan and their racial and cultural backgrounds, aspects that were not explored in the study of the Japanese hostess club by Allison (1994) reviewed above. While sex may usually not be expected in Japanese hostess clubs, it might seem more accessible with migrant women due to the persistent colonial assumption that they are available commodities, the relatively lower costs of their services compared to services offered at Japanese hostess clubs, and women’s own aspirations to find their marriage partners among their customers in order to obtain citizenship and immigration status in Japan (Ballescas 1992, Parreñas 2011). Often what migrant women are concerned about the most is not their involvement in the sexual service industry but their immigration status, language barriers and racism in Japan (Chung 2004, 2012, Parreñas 2011). Thus, studies in this stream are critical of the anti-trafficking discourse that views migrant sex workers as in need of “rescue” from the sexual service industry, as it assumes that migrant women want to quit sex work and does not help the women who wish for safer and fair working conditions to continue working in the industry (Watanabe 1998, p.123, Parreñas 2011, p.56, Aoyama 2014, p.281; also see Agustin 2007 for her critique of the “rescue industry”). Aoyama (2007), who studied experiences of Thai sex workers, and Parreñas (2011), who studied those of Filipina hostesses, look at both larger historical and structural conditions that limit migrant women’s work opportunities and women’s individual agency. They argue for the grey zone between the “forced”
prostitution and the “voluntary” participation in the sex trade and discuss the complex processes in which women become sex workers out of the necessity and/or aspirations as they “cope” with their realities (Kojima 2011, p.157). Parreñas (2011) develops a notion of “indentured mobility” to speak about the experiences of women who seek economic opportunities outside their countries while facing the “severe structural constraints” (p.5) outlined above.

While there is a rich tradition of studies of migrant women engaging in the sexual service industry in Japan, what has not been adequately discussed in the body of literature above and with which my dissertation is primarily concerned is the question of what

16 Comparing different cases reported in literature and based on my own research in Yokohama, hearing stories of Thai women working in Koganecho from their family members, chatting and interacting with Thai women and hearing their complaints about their work, “Japanese men” and their living conditions, my position is that no single explanation can be imposed on the experience of any transnational woman working in the sexual service industry in Japan. Some participants in my research told me that most of the trafficked Thai “girls” were informed of the nature of the work they would engage in Japan from their family members or friends who had already been working in the sexual service industry in Japan (Mama, Diner [pseudonym], personal communication, 27 February 2012; Numata [pseudonym], former Thai grocer in Wakabacho, personal communication, 9 March 2012). Many were willing to do sex work because they had already been in the sex industry in Thailand and/or had a strong motivation to attain a higher income. Takizawa (pseudonym), the owner of Thai restaurant Khai (pseudonym), told me that one of the Thai “girls” he knows did not recall her hometown because she was trafficked multiple times since their childhood and kept being “resold” and “moved around” in Thailand (personal communication, 16 March 2012). Some participants in my research also said that there were also cases of deception and forced labour involved (Numata, personal communication, 9 March 2012). I heard stories of misery, regret, excitement and successes and cannot reduce them to one single narrative. I follow Aoyama (2007) and Parreñas’ (2011) positions above that they are structurally severely conditioned by exploitative working conditions but are also agents who seek economic opportunities to support themselves and their families, coping with their realities and navigating their lives among options available to them. The experience of doing sex work and the degree to which the women were informed or deceived, forced or free to participate voluntarily, exploited or empowered, confined or mobile (physically, economically, socially) can vary from woman to woman, depending on her relationship to each customer and to her mama, depending on the working environment of each business establishment and depending on the situation. Women’s own interpretations of their conditions can also change depending on whom they talk to, for what and under what circumstances they speak of their experiences. In sum, lives are complicated for the migrant women who engage in the sexual service industry in Japan and their experiences cannot be neatly classified into and explained with any available categories or binaries. While the question of how much agency migrant sex workers had in the processes of migration is not central to my dissertation, I attempt to show the complexities of migrant sex workers’ experiences working in Yokohama, particularly in Part II.
happens, at cultural and everyday interactional levels, when and after sex workers or sex work are *displaced*. What happens to the site of sex work after sex workers are displaced? How is the effect of displacement interpreted, lived or felt by people who come to occupy or inhabit the space? How are local residents implicated in the displacement of migrant sex workers? How are displaced lives remembered or forgotten at material, discursive and embodied levels? What happens to the migrant women who stayed in the city? What happens when sex work becomes more and more difficult to carry out due to the increase of regulation and monitoring by authorities? What happens to women who start to engage in other types of work? How does their vulnerability change or not change? How does the arrival or addition of a younger generation, often migrant women’s children, affect the dynamics of their work and life?

**After Displacement**

*Forgetting*

External structural forces facilitate movement both *to* and *from* places. The landscape of Koganecho has historically been shaped as much by displacement of women through crackdowns and raids as the arrival of migrant women, and I argue that those are two sides of the same coin of the structural processes that marginalize transnational migrant women in Japan. While the 2005 police raid of Koganecho might seem a trivial incident in the history of Yokohama that affected a small community of people, most of whom did not even ever settle in the place for the long term, the political and ethical implications of the incident are much larger. The displacement of migrant bodies from Koganecho and how this incident is remembered today reveals the city’s historically
exclusionary politics based on nationality, race, class and gender, and enabled the industrial development of the city and Japan at large thus far. I also believe that serious inquiry into how we engage with such a neglected past opens up a space to consider how we might engage with other unresolved moments of colonial violence in the city. Those moments include but are not limited to the massacre of Korean and other residents who were mistaken as Korean (e.g. Chinese and Okinawan) in the aftermath of 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake (Soda 1998, Huang 2010, p.26, Ye 2010, p.35) and the abandonment of mix-raced babies born during the Allied Occupation as a result of interracial encounters between Japanese women and non-Japanese, primarily American, men (Yamazaki 1996).

The displacement of women from Koganecho in 2005 happened in conjunction with the preparation for the 2009 Expo and the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Port of Yokohama, and probably, the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) convention that took place in Yokohama the following year. The year 2005 also marked a moment when Japan made the requirements for obtaining entertainer’s visas stricter in response to the United States’ Trafficking in Person Report 2004 that placed Japan in the Watch List for its lack of a comprehensive law against trafficking (Department of State, United States of America 2004, p. 96). Obviously, the displacement of women was carried out not to end the exploitative labour conditions of sex workers or improve their living conditions, but to smooth out Japan’s and the city’s diplomatic relations with external powers and expand their economic opportunities. The sex workers were now perceived as having been a “social problem” that turned Koganecho into a “broken community” (Suzuki 2008). Their presence was a shameful moment in Yokohama’s
history and cannot be exposed to the external communities, and thus, needs to be forgotten.

After the 2005 raid happened in Koganecho, no single undocumented migrant sex worker remained in the district and some old Japanese and Korean Japanese mamas, who did stay in the district, no longer attempted to continue their chon-no-ma businesses. Koganecho became a ghost town, and very quickly it also became a vacant site for a potential redevelopment and new initiatives. The municipal government saw the district as an experimental site for its “creative city” project and imagined Koganecho to become a city of art. Under the auspices of the City of Yokohama’s Urban Development Bureau and Culture and Tourism Bureau, the publicly-funded non-profit art organization Koganecho Area Management Centre started renting out emptied chon-no-ma units and converting them into art studios. In addition, the city also transformed part of the space under the railway overpass between Hinodecho Station and Koganecho Station and has repurposed the site into an additional art event space. A new police kiosk was installed at the bottom of the Sueyoshi Bridge on the Ooka River and regularized patrols continue to ensure that “baishun” will not return to the district. On the surface, therefore, the

17 Crime reports filed by Kanagawa Prefectural Police suggest that the raid in Koganecho, formally called Bai Bai Sakusen [Operation Bai Bai], lasted for two years between January 5, 2005 and December 31, 2006. The reports show that no arrest was made on the first day of the Operation as, according to some of my research participants, sex workers and mamas were informed of it and vacated their chon-no-ma to avoid arrests before it started. Over the course of the Operation, 49 arrests were made under the Migration Control and Refugee Recognition Law, the Anti-Prostitution Act and/or the Law to Control Business Affecting Public Morals. Among all cases documented in the crime reports I obtained (Kanagawa Ken Keisatsu, January 13, 2005- December 31, 2006), foreign women and men (17 Chinese, 10 Koreans, 8 Thai, 4 Filipino, and 1 Bangladeshi), mostly aged between 25-35, were always arrested under the Migration Control and Refugee Recognition Law for not carrying (proper) passports and/or overstaying in Japan and not on the basis of their involvement in chon-no-ma businesses; one Japanese person was arrested under the same law for arranging a job for a foreign woman who entered Japan illegally. Nine arrests were made under the Anti-Prostitution Act and/or the Law to Control Business Affecting Public Morals for promoting prostitution, offering space for prostitution, or running sexual businesses without a permit.
landscape of Koganecho has completely transformed. The clear glass windows of converted chon-no-ma units and newly installed art spaces makes the district literally transparent, as the interiors are completely visible to the outside and the uncertainty around the activities inside are removed. Water is now contained at first glance.

Lives Go On

*Water spills out.* However, not all chon-no-ma units actually came to be managed by the city and the Koganecho Area Management Centre. A small number of local, primarily Japanese residents found a small block of former chon-no-ma units, which is informally called Koganecho Riverside, as a place to start their independent community businesses. When I was conducting my fieldwork there were seven businesses that independently operated as bars that serve coffee, tea, and/or alcohol with light snacks, including Cups for Few mentioned in the opening of the Introduction. Most of the business owners or *masters* were local residents, who were familiar with the district’s past but did not necessarily agree with the city’s effort to erase the traces of Koganecho’s old culture that lasted since the end of WWII. While most of those business owners and their customers did not necessarily have personal relationships to the transnational migrant sex workers, they inherited the spirit of independent water-trade businesses from the old chon-no-ma community by making a modest living from selling drinks and food and serving them with intimate conversation over tiny counters. To be sure, in the authorities’ eyes, those businesses should not be anything to be concerned about as they did not offer a space for or promote “baishun” (though in the beginning they were heavily monitored by the police to ensure no “immoral” activities were happening there). Instead, as I discuss and show in Chapter Four and Five, the culture of water trade survived here
in much subtler ways—in the way that masters and customers negotiate and develop intimate relationships, and in the way that people socialize, sexually and otherwise, through day-to-day interactions in those chon-no-ma spaces.

At the same time, the Riverside community significantly altered the water trade culture of Koganecho as well. While the old chon-no-ma district was characterized by the transnational movement of sex workers and a heavy flow of customers, who were themselves not always local but came from all over the country, the Riverside today is inhabited primarily by local business owners, who rely more heavily on the patronage of a relatively stable and small groups of customers. In this community I felt a strong localism held among the people who ran or frequented those businesses. Part of it included their nostalgic attachment to memories of the district from the time before the 2005 raid. This attachment was sometimes expressed as a form of resistance against the authorities’ effort to erase traces of Koganecho’s past and even as an ethical gesture to acknowledge the presence of migrant sex workers in the neighbourhood in the past. However, other times it was expressed to implicitly legitimize their own presence in the neighbourhood in that they were better successors of the chon-no-ma units than those who supported the art project, because they had a better understanding of the old chon-no-ma culture.

*Water diverges.* The 2005 raid also resulted in the dispersion of migrant sex workers from Koganecho. Most Thai women, for example, left Yokohama and found new workplaces in the Japanese countryside and elsewhere, including Australia and the UK, or returned to Thailand. However, some stayed in Yokohama, and in fact, stayed
very close in the neighbourhood of Koganecho. Immediately after the raid they found alternative jobs in hostess clubs and restaurants or continued their sex work on the streets just across the river, particularly around Wakabacho and Fukutomicho. However, as police regulation of transnational migrants became stricter and a nighttime economy became less vibrant due to the general recession of the Japanese economy, it became extremely difficult for them to live off the profits of street sex work. The number of hostess clubs also decreased and many women started or found jobs in new massage businesses. Today, Thai water trade businesses exist in the forms of restaurants, hostess clubs, karaoke bars, and massage parlors, and just like Riverside businesses in Koganecho their economy relies on patronage, including that of Thai migrants themselves.

Changes occurred in the Thai community itself over the last decade: the community has been reduced in size; most of the original members now have legal status in Japan through marriage with Japanese citizens; less women were making a living from sex work; businesses had to adapt to the regulation of the nighttime economy that is becoming stricter in recent years\(^\text{18}\); and the community was demographically

\(^{18}\) Water trade businesses are subject to the Law to Control Business Affecting Public Morals, informally called *fueiho* in Japanese, which broadly regulates entertainment businesses, including cabarets, eating and drinking venues, dance clubs, businesses that offer sexual services and gambling venues. Fueiho was amended with strengthened penalty measures imposed on the business owners in late 2005, the same year in which the Ministry of Justice strengthened the requirement for obtaining entertainer visas. While I was conducting fieldwork in Yokohama, I heard from local residents that the regulation of water trade businesses was becoming stricter and the law was more severely applied in certain areas of Yokohama, including Koganecho and other low-income districts that have been home of businesses owned by transnational migrants. Shin-san, son of the mama who ran a Thai hostess club in Fukutomicho, noted that those clubs, which used to be open until 4 or 5 AM six or seven years ago, could no longer operate after 1:30 AM without getting a formal permit to operate after midnight (personal communication, 11 December, 2012). The Thai restaurant/karaoke bar Maenam (pseudonym) in Wakabacho received a warning to make her venue soundproof she wanted to continue to operate throughout night.
transforming due to the addition of younger generations. Regardless of all those changes, however, this community continues to be a transnational, migratory space connected to their homelands and other nodes of migrants’ movements across national borders. Being among Thai migrants across the river I also sensed strongly that nothing really had changed in their lives after the raid. There were still many Thai women, like Shin-san’s mother, who continued to live from water trade where the heterosexual server-client relation was still very much in place. In those venues, Thai women continued to serve Japanese customers food, alcohol, dancing, karaoke, chatting, touching, and in some cases, dating and makura eigyo [pillow sales]. Unlike the independent Riverside businesses in Koganecho, therefore, work in which Thai women engage today include varied levels of sexual services. They survived the raid, but so did their muddy work.

Emplaced and Entangled

This dissertation is primarily based on the nine months of ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Yokohama in two separate phases: from the beginning of January 2012 to the end of April 2012; and from the beginning of November 2012 to the end of March 2013. Based on my fieldwork in Yokohama, this dissertation responds to the question, what happens after displacement? in two ways. Organized into two parts, it first aims to critique the processes through which displaced lives get further erased or displaced from memoryscapes of the city at both material and discursive levels (Part I). My discussion here is based on my critical reflexive analysis of the built environment, official historical discourse materialized in museum exhibitions and municipal policies, and grassroots cultural production happening locally in the forms of photography, film and film festivals. After analyzing the dominant memoryscapes of Yokohama, in Part II I return to
my engagements with people in two distinct but historically connected communities that emerged or survived at the site of displacement in the aftermath beyond the intention and calculation of the authorities. Without necessarily dismissing my analysis in Part I, here I want to highlight the processes where I, a researcher with particular agendas, interests, institutional affiliations and a set of intellectual frameworks, was “confronted” by people in the field (Fabian 2001, p.25), and had my research rejected or questioned in unexpected ways. Those moments of confrontation from my fieldwork experience were significant as they forced me to be reflexive and turned my gaze from memories and experiences of others in the field to my own memories and experiences as a site of critical scrutiny and ethnographic practice (Pink 2015, p.13). Against the background I present in Part I, Part II does not necessarily offer a straightforward counter-scape to the dominant memoriescapes. Instead, it connects my questions back to the world “in the open,” the “continual coming-into-being” of the place of my research (Ingold 2008, p.1797), of which I was a part. What I wish to achieve in Part II is to highlight the complexity of the lives of people that gives rise to new ideas, thinking, understanding and imagination through everyday encounters and interactions that cannot be presumed or neatly contained by pre-existing theories and philosophical ideas (Biehl 2013, p.594). Here, I attempt to share an embodied sense of what happens after displacement at the level of everyday interaction, one that is different from what I present in Part I, which I tentatively call an alternative memoriescape of the city.

The two parts of my dissertation offer very different responses to the question of what happens after displacement, which reflect my interdisciplinary approach informed by two distinctive traditions: cultural studies, which is concerned with the question of
power at play in the processes of meaning-making; and ethnography, which is interested in the knowledge that emerges in the intersubjective engagement with Others in the field (Biehl 2013). While important differences exist between those two parts in terms of methodological approaches, the nature of the research material, and in other ways, as I discuss below, there is an underlying epistemological premise that runs throughout my dissertation that the knowledge I present here, just like any other knowledge, is “mediated by [my] experience” (Fabian 2001, p.12). It emerged through my “body as a site of knowing,” as Sarah Pink (2015) puts it, as I engaged with the social, sensory, imaginary and material place of my research in Yokohama. When I say this, I do not simply mean that the body is a “source of experience and activity that would be rationalised and/or controlled by the mind, but itself as a source of knowledge and subsequently of agency” (p.26). In this sense, I call what I share in this dissertation “embodied” knowledge.

My research methodology has largely been informed by the field of sensory ethnography (related terms include “sensuous scholarship” [Stoller 1997] and “anthropology of the senses” [Herzfeld 2001]), and a contemporary resurgence of interests in the issues of the “bodies” and the “senses” in the discipline of anthropology that has been increasingly theorized and practiced since the 1990s (Classen 1993; Seremetakis 1994, Stoller 1997; Herzfeld 2001; Howes 2003; Pink 2009, 2015). While this field itself is diverse in its theories and practices, this scholarship is consistently characterized by its critique of the western privileging of the mind over the body, objective data collected from vision-based observation over embodied knowledge gained through multisensory experiences, and the text over other forms of communication
Some ethnographers in this field take a structuralist approach and are more concerned with how sensory perceptions are culturally coded and given symbolic meanings according to the social relations of the given society (studying senses as objects of investigation; see Classen 1993 and Howes 2003), while others are informed by a phenomenological approach, reject a view of the body merely as a reflection of social structure, and often pay attention to their own embodied experiences and sensory perceptions as part of their epistemological and methodological practices (Csordas 1990, 1991).

This new tradition in anthropology did not emerge from a void. As early as the 1930s French anthropologist Marcel Mauss’s (1973; originally published in French in 1935) emphasized the importance of examining “techniques of the body,” or different ways in which bodies are trained in a cultural—as well as biological and physiological—apparatus. In the 1960s, Claude Levi-Strauss “extended the model of structural linguistics to the study of the sensory codes of myths” (Howes 2003, p.xx; also see Geertz’s [1967] discussion of Levi-Strauss’s “science of the concrete” under section II). In the same period British anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) contended that the perception of dirt was not biologically determined but culturally defined and imposed by society to maintain order. A significant theoretical shift in anthropology took place, especially in the 1980s, from “structure” toward “practice” (“praxis,” action,” “interaction,” “activity,” “experience,” “performance”) and focuses on the “doer of all that doing” (“agent,” “actor,” “person,” “self,” “individual,” “subject”) (Ortner 1984, 144). Namely, Michael Jackson (1983) developed a phenomenological anthropology that departed from Douglas’s semiotic/symbolic approach to bodily praxis that viewed the body merely as a reflection of social structure, and instead brought human experience as a central problem to his analysis. Instead of analyzing how ideas and the mind determine bodily practice, he focused on people’s bodily actions as what actively shaped images in the mind (p.336). Drawing on both Merleau-Ponty’s notion of “lived body” and Bourdieu’s “habitus,” Jackson coined the term “body-mind-habitus” to examine the relationship between the body and the mind that is shaped in a cultural milieu.

Two Canadian scholars Constance Classen (1993) and David Howes (2003, 2005), who have been working together as part of the Concordia Sensorial Research Team (CONSERT), criticize the Western prioritization of the mind over the body and call attention to the body as an important site of ethnographic exploration in order to get a better understanding of the epistemological differences between cultures. Both Classen and Howes draw on Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong as some of the few social scientists “who have explored the relationship between the sensory order of a culture and its social and cognitive order” (Classen 1993, 5), and explore how different cultures “make sense” of the world and maintain social relations (e.g. gender, class, race) through their sensory orders (for example, Classen [1993] points out that foreigners and women have historically been “coded” as “stinky” in the West [p.92]). They examine different ethnographic materials and analyze cultural meanings, codes and rules of sense modalities of various cultures. Herzfeld (2001) calls their approach “symbolic” as they are in line with symbolic anthropology from the 1960s that views cultures as “systems of classification” (Ortner 1984, 135).

In my dissertation I follow Pink’s (2015) approach to “sensory ethnography” and think of it as a matter of epistemology. Rather than thinking of sensory ethnography as a particular “method for data collection” (p.5) or a type of ethnographic inquiry that focuses on bodies and senses as the “object of ethnographic study” (p.13), I practice it as a reflexive and experiential process where I am “open to multiple ways of knowing to the exploration of and reflection on new routes to knowledge” (p.5). Throughout, I present my analyses with a critical, reflexive, and multisensory approach whereby I ground my analysis in my experience of being implicated in the production of the dominant

\(^2\) Anthropologists in the United States including Taussig (1993), Seremetakis (1994), and Stoller (1997) contributed to the development of sensory ethnography with a radically different approach than their Canadian counterparts (see the previous footnote). Instead of studying the social structure reproduced through the sensory order, they are interested in the colonial and global processes that are realized in or resisted through sensuous experiences and practices of memory and imagination (“mimesis,” or the the imaginative and sensuous practices of copying and imitating the other, for Taussig [p.xiii]; sensory experience evoked by material culture for Seremetakis; embodied and collective memory practice for Stoller). Theoretically and methodologically they are in a closer alliance with phenomenology and postmodernism/poststructuralism than Classen and Howes and they inherit postmodern anthropologists’ emphasis on “evocative” approaches in ethnographic representations (Herzfeld 2001). Taussig (1993) and Seremetakis (1994), in particular, are strongly influenced by Walter Benjamin’s critical historiography and both employ Benjaminian methodology of montage in their stylized textual forms. What distinguishes their approach from Classen and Howes’ is also that while studying others’ sensory experience, the anthropologists informed by phenomenology also pay attention to their own bodies. The phrase “dusting off” used by Seremetakis (1994) and Stoller (1997) expresses the goal of such work: to awaken “our bodies” to so to be aware of the hidden or repressed pasts. British anthropologists such as Tim Ingold (2011a, 2011b) and Sarah Pink (2015) critique Howes’ approach for “reduc[ing] the body to a locus of objectified and enumerable senses whose one and only role is to carry the semantic load projected onto them by a collective, supersensory subject—namely society—and whose balance or ratio may be calculated according to the load borne by each” (Ingold cited in Pink 2015, p.9). Instead, Ingold takes a phenomenological approach and sees human perception as a starting point of cultural analysis. Pink (2010) recognizes that Ingold’s work marks a significant moment in the sensory turn in anthropology, which takes the field beyond the “anthropology of the senses” (studies of the senses) promoted by Howes and his collaborators to “sensory anthropology” (studies through senses) (see Pink 2010 and Ingold 2011a).
memoryscapes where migrant sex workers are made absent (I would know in an embodied way that I am “implicated” in this when, for example, a sense of nostalgia is realized in my body—nostalgia becomes embodied—as I identify with and participate in the production of the narrative of the dominant memoryscapes; see Chapter Three), and becoming entangled with the strands of lives that inhabit the communities I encountered at the site of displacement (I would know in an embodied way that that I am “entangled” with others when, for example, I am performing locally expected roles and involved in emotionally charged social relations with others in the field; see Part II).

I draw on Tim Ingold’s (2008) notion of a “zone of entanglement” (p.1807) and Pink’s (2008, 2009, 2015) elaboration on his concept to speak about the relationship between my body and the place of my research. Building on the phenomenological tradition, Ingold (2008) contends that the environment in which we live is not a fixed container that is “furnished with already-existing things” (p.1797), but it is instead an open “zone of entanglement” (p.1807) where the organism comes together as “bundles of interwoven lines of growth and movement, together constituting a meshwork in fluid space” (p.1796). Pink (2015) argues that Ingold’s concept allows us to speak of the complex, processual relation between the local and the global where a place “occurs” locally through everyday interactions, as pathways of organisms come together and are entangled with each other, while also acknowledging that such movements are facilitated and regulated by external global forces and relations of power (p.37). Furthermore, Pink (2008) suggests, thinking of a place in this way invites ethnographers to be reflexive of not only how we are situated as embodied beings but also how we are “emplaced” in the place of research (p.179). When I speak of my emplaced body, I do not assume I am an
independent, separate and autonomous subject “bombarded by sensation-inducing sensory stimuli from the external environment” (Ingold 2011a, p.314) or a body under control who acts on the surface of the furnished world (Ingold 2008, p.1799) but see myself as part of those “strands” that are entangled with each other to constitute the “continual coming-into-being” of place (p.1797). In other words, I have been part of the transformative processes of making of the places of my research.

Following this I see my body as a site of knowing, as a concrete, perceptive, and experiential location that was “unbounded and connected” to the larger entanglement I engaged in the field and allowed me to know it, in an embodied, even if partially and incomplete, way (Kulick 1995, p.17). At the same time, my body was also a social and political place where I found myself entangled with broader gender, sexual, class and colonial relations of power that shape the entanglement. Bearing particular gender, sexual, class and colonial positionalities, my body enabled or disabled particular movements, acts, imaginations, and perceptions over the course of my research. This dissertation is written as an outcome of a process of “reflection” (Csordas cited in Pink 2015, p.26) and “objectification” (Fabian 2001, p.26, 2012, p.448) of my sensory, material and social experience of being part of the entanglement. Through this process I reconstructed my emplaced “experience” into a meaningful material for intellectual discussion and critique. Here, especially through my use of an autoethnographic voice, I consciously and critically account for my experience as the fundamental condition for the production of knowledge.
In Part I, my primary objective is to critically examine the dominant memoryscapes of Yokohama to contextualize the process through which memories of migrant sex workers have been erased in the city. In Chapter One I define and theoretically elaborate on the notion of memoryscape by drawing on studies of cultural memory (Kuhn 1995, Bal, Crewe and Spitzer 1999, Radstone 2000, Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, Kuhn and McAllister 2006, Radstone and Hodgkin 2006, McAllister 2010), postcolonial studies of Asian cities (Abbas 1997, Yoneyama 1999, Goh 2005, Kusno 2010), and phenomenological studies of landscape and sensory ethnography of place (Feld and Basso 1996, Stewart 1996a, Riano-Alcala 2006, Irving 2007, Pink 2008, 2009, 2015, Ingold 2012). Through this I develop a critical and reflexive methodology that allows me to read the power-relations that give shape to the dominant memories and to work with my own memory and experience to recognize my own complicity in the production of the memoryscapes.

I organized chapters in a way that is informed by the socio-spatial geography of Yokohama. Chapter Two focuses on the official urban redevelopment discourse of Yokohama that is materialized in the waterfront districts of Minato Mirai 21, a modern commercial district, and Kannai, Yokohama’s historic government district. By critically examining the built environment such as expo pavilions and their afterlives, shopping malls, heritage buildings and monuments, museum narratives and urban redevelopment policies that consistently feature Yokohama’s port-opening era in the second half of the 19th century, I argue that the official history actively constructs Yokohama as a distinctively westernized (or Americanized), modern and progressive city. More specifically, the official history marks the arrival of the Black Ship led by United States
Commodore Matthew Perry in Kurihama, Yokosuka, in the south of Yokohama, which resulted in the end of the Edo government’s sakoku [seclusion] policy and began the reluctant opening of Japan’s port to western powers, the origin of Japan’s modern industrialization. While featuring the moment of first contact with the western powers and defining the city’s identity in a celebratory manner, the official history represses the reality of Yokohama of always being shaped by the Japanese central government’s imperialism, colonization of other countries and regions in Asia, intranational and transnational migration, and women’s sexual labour that was mobilized by the government’s diplomatic measures.

In Chapter Three, I make a spatial move to the district behind the waterfront. This district, the other side of the official face of Yokohama, is informally called Kangai, which is often described as Yokohama’s shitamachi (literally, “downtown”), a place of small family businesses where a “traditionally [Yokohama] ethos” can be felt (Kondo 1990, p.57). This is also an area enclosed by the two former canals, the Ooka River and the Nakamura River, which used to be bisected by number of waterways cutting across the area, and along which a number of water trade businesses developed. In this chapter I examine a socio-cultural space of memory that emerged in Yokohama in the early 2000s by analyzing a popular narrative that started to materialize through grassroots local cultural productions such as photographs, films, a theatre performance, and film festivals. These productions are centred around the life of Yokohama Mary, who was a street sex worker serving American officers stationed in Yokohama in the context of the post-WWII Allied Occupation of Japan and who continued to live on the street as an old woman. The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the presence of the other space of
memory in Yokohama that has been much more attentive to the city’s less celebrated past, i.e. post-WWII Allied Occupation, an antiquated postwar streetscape, and marginalized subjects in the city, including sex workers, yakuza and the poor. At the same time, I also suggest that this space of memory is built on the narrative of Japan’s self victimization and still largely blind to the present postcolonial reality of the city, namely, more recent experiences of Japan’s postcolonial other, the transnational migrants from economically unprivileged countries, who engage in the water trade in Japan.

Chapter Four specifically focuses on the local politics of memory in Koganecho, one of the most marginalized districts located at the fringe of Kangai along the Ooka River. The purpose of this chapter is to examine both official and popular discourses of this particular district, focusing on how the memoryscape of Koganecho has been constructed through government policies, the production of cultural materials, the physical transformation of the built environment and more ephemeral spatial practices such as walking tours. In this chapter I analyze the official discourse that has been transforming the material and imaginative landscape of Koganecho since 2005 by looking at the built environment, art festivals and events that have been planned, organized and installed via the Koganecho Area Management Centre, the City of Yokohama’s arm’s length non-profit art organization. I argue that since 2005, Koganecho has been a “battlefield of memory,” or an “arena of both remembering and forgetting” (Kapralski 2001, p.37; also see Yoneyama 1999, p.34) where conflicts occur over “who or what is entitled to speak for that past in the present” (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, p.1) so that different individuals and organizational bodies can symbolically, politically and economically mark their presence in the neighbourhood. How to remember the past is
key in these politics, as memories of the place—whether memories of Koganecho in the old days as a “good” place or a “bad” place—serve as a resource for justifying the presence of those who occupy the place in the present.

After critiquing the production of the dominant memoryscapes of Yokohama in Part I, I present an alternative memoryscape of the city based on my ethnographic engagement with the local water trade communities, which I participated primarily as a regular customer during my fieldwork. Significant to this shift is the fact that the knowledge I present in Part II is fundamentally intersubjective in nature. In the first part, I chose to analyze the cultural text, whether it is the built environment, films, photography or events, following the tradition of cultural studies. While my analysis and interpretation is mediated by my experience of actually being there and interacting with local people, the fact remains that those texts, the primary objects of my analysis, did not talk back or “confront” me, in Fabian’s (2001, p.25) term, at least in the same way that people did. However, the alternative memoryscape I present in Part II is fundamentally shaped by my engagement with people I encountered in the field, who, in different ways, resisted me and my research interests “in the form of incomprehension, denial, rejection, or…simply Otherness” (ibid.; also see Simpson 2007, Tuck and Yang 2014a, 2014b). In this sense, Part II not only responds to the question of what happens after displacement in its unique way but also fundamentally disrupts the institutional expectations for research, the theoretical and methodological formulation of my memory project and my assumptions about what constitutes ethical research. I felt that this actually constitutes a significant part of my research finding and I decided to leave the tension caused by the gap and the difference that exist between the two parts (in terms of my theoretical and
methodological approach to interpretation, analysis, presentation and representation of knowledge), instead of forcing them to narrate a consistent and seamless story. For example, in Part II I raise the question of what my research meant to people who inhabited, occupied or survived in the sites of displacement. In fact, one of the most significant ways in which people confronted me and my research was by refusing to become speaking subjects in my dissertation and to let me give them voice (see Chapter Five). This refusal resulted in my decision to speak in an *intersubjectively-shaped*, autoethnographic voice from my own memory and experience of being in the field.

Chapter Five, an introductory chapter for Part II, is entirely devoted to a reflexive, methodological discussion where I explain in detail how my ethnographic inquiry into memories of displaced migrant sex workers developed or transformed as I negotiated my presence, relations and roles among lives in the water trade communities in Yokohama. Here I focus on discussing what my fieldwork in Koganecho entailed, how my methodology shifted in an “improvisational” manner (Castañeda 2006, Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, Ingold and Hallam 2007, Culhane 2011) over the course of fieldwork as I became entangled with the local relations and the political and ethical implications of my research. The chapter is organized around five reflexive moments in which I was faced with my (changing) relationship to the local entanglements. I explain how my engagement with people in the field called for modifications and shifts in my research approach and how I negotiated those calls in improvisational manners by adopting locally expected roles (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007; also see Castañeda 2006, Ingold and Hallam 2007). At the end of this chapter, I also include a short discussion on the *ghostscape*,
which I started to sense on and across the Ooka River as I became more informed and affected by the stories of the lives that inhabited in Kogenecho before the 2005 raid.

Following this, in Chapter Six and Seven I theatrically enact everyday moments in which I found myself being entangled with lives in the water trade communities of the Kogenecho Riverside and Thai migrants. I textually reconstruct myself as a caricatural “character” (McAllister 2010, p.47), who set herself to unearth memories of migrant sex workers who were displaced in the 2005 raid, but who, together with her research, is constantly made strange, objectified, confused and lost in the “open-ended, even mysterious, social processes and uncertainties” (Biehl 2013, p.590) of the ethnographic world. Those chapters also aim to evoke a ghostscape of the displaced lives and make visible the effects of the “abusive systems of power” that continue to perpetuate the displacement of marginalized bodies and memories (Gordon 2008, p.xvi).

I would note that those chapters, a textual performance of my experience in the field, are not an assemblage of “pure data” or a “mere description” of my experience. While I do not treat this particular form of writing as something sacred or more privileged than a more conventional analysis of ethnographic materials, I also follow Fabian (1990) and make it clear that they are not “just preparatory to [the]…analysis and interpretation” that follows (p.xiv). To me, textual performance is as theoretical and analytical a practice as other forms of academic writing that give an interpretation and meaning to experience (p.xv). Those two chapters are an outcome of a careful and intentional process of objectification, reflection, abstraction and classification of my ethnographic experience and research materials. Analysis and interpretation of the
presentation of the ethnographic event do not follow from, but are already integral to, my performance.

In my conclusion, entitled “An Opening,” I reiterate key points of my dissertation and return to the field once again to suggest other-scapes, different possibilities of imagining the site of displacement, which emerged during my fieldwork but I was not able to fully elaborate on in this dissertation. I do this to reflexively disclose the selective nature of my analysis and writing and point to possible directions for future research.

Maps of the city included in my dissertation visualize the space of research in their given section. I drew the original map (included in the beginning of the introduction) by tracing a map of Yokohama generated by Google Maps and then adding former waterways by referring to the map “Eight Vanished Rivers,” available at the official website of the Yokohama Archives of History (Source: http://www.kaikou.city.yokohama.jp/journal/095/02.html). All other maps included in the rest of dissertation are enlarged versions this map, sometimes modified with visual effects. I produced and edited all photographic images used in this dissertation.
Chapter One: Reading, Sensing and Making Yokohama’s Memoryscapes

Yokohama is a city of memory. When I returned to Yokohama to launch my fieldwork in January 2012 the first thing I noticed upon my arrival in the JR Sakuragicho Station (formerly Yokohama Station) was a series of photographs installed in the stairwell that chronologically displayed the transformation of one of the very first train stations in Japan, from the late 19th century to the present. At the concourse level I found two maps side by side, a current map of the area and an old map that showed the same area from 1878, the year when the original Yokohama Station opened. Outside, on the water side of the station, there are Minato Mirai 21 and Kannai further east, filled with a number of museums, heritage buildings, monuments and plaques that showcase the city’s history to visitors. Throughout the duration of my fieldwork in 2012 and 2013, I noticed many events taking place that were organized around the city’s past, including photo and film festivals that featured or included exhibitions or screenings of images of Yokohama from the past. At the central branch of Yurido Bookstore in Isezakicho on the hill side of the JR Kannai Station, which originally opened in 1894, I found an entire section devoted to the local history represented in black and white images of the city from the Showa period (1926-1989). Old photographs could also be easily spotted on commercial buildings in the city that showed images of their locations from earlier days. In addition to the visual presence of Yokohama’s past, I was also immersed in local oldies songs,
including Mina Aoe’s “Isezakicho Blues” (1968) and songs by the postwar local band The Golden Cups from the late 1960s. A number of historical walking tours were happening in the city both in commercial and community-oriented forms.

Part I aims to critique the processes through which the lives of transnational migrant sex workers, who were displaced or forced to disperse from Koganecho’s chon-no-ma district in 2005, get further erased or are made absent in the dominant (official, commercialized, popular or more accepted) “memorystapes” of the city at both material and discursive levels. In this short chapter I explain how my methodology allows me to critically engage with the “memorystapes” of Yokohama, while being attentive to marginalized memories and reflexive of my own complicity in the making of such memorystapes. The notion of “memorystape” that I have been developing through this project is built on a range of fields of scholarship: studies of cultural memory, postcolonial scholarship, phenomenological studies of landscape and sensory ethnography of place. Below, I will first review selected studies of cultural memory (Kuhn 1995, Bal, Crewe and Spitzer 1999, Radstone 2000, Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, Kuhn and McAllister 2006, Radstone and Hodgkin 2006, McAllister 2010) and briefly outline how they have studied “memory” as a critical site of investigation. I will then discuss how postcolonial scholarship informs my methodology. Finally, I discuss the role of imagination and sensory perception in developing a critical, sensory and reflexive methodology for engaging with a memorystape (Feld and Basso 1996, Stewart 1996, Riano-Alcala 2006, Pink 2008, 2009, 2015, Ingold 2012).
I would like to note that my review of those diverse fields of scholarship is by no means comprehensive and limited to the extent that allows my conceptualization of “memoryscape” as it is applied in the rest of my dissertation.

**Politics of Memory**

Studies of cultural memory emerged as a critical response to positivist historians’ project to “recover” the past in an “objective” manner and produce knowledge of what really happened (McAllister 2010, p.6-8; also see Hodgkin and Radstone 2003). Informed by a postmodern epistemology, critical scholars of cultural memory offer a powerful critique of History, the master narrative of the past, by politicizing discourses of the past and destabilizing its claim to universal knowledge. For example, Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (2003), editors of the volume *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, contend that the “past is constituted in narrative, always representation, always construction” (p.2), and because it is not something naturally given it can be contested. What is at stake in studies of memory is not the realist question of what actually happened but a political question of “who or what is entitled to speak for [the] past” (ibid.) and shape the way we remember it.

It reasonably follows that studies of cultural memory are also critical of the naïve and romanticizing treatment of memory as something “innocent” or “authentic,” an investigation of which would rescue diverse experiences from a totalizing discourse of the past produced by historians, the state and capitalism (e.g. Nora 1989, Benjamin 1999,
Boyer 1994). To make this point in their other co-edited volume *Memory Cultures* (2006), Radstone and Hodgkin argue that both history and memory are “regimes” in a sense that both are produced, represented, mediated and made available for interpretation within or through “systems of knowledge and power” (p.11; also see Radstone 2000, Said 2000). Following the tradition of cultural studies that view culture as a site for the struggle over meaning (Barker 2012, p.55), a “memoryscape” can be understood as a “battlefield of memory” where a conflict over what to remember and forget takes place between different groups, who “compete for the fullest possible representation of their [experiences and] identities” (Kapralski 2001, p.37). As a site of contestation, a memoryscape “continues to be unsettling” (Fujitani et al. 2001, p.2); while it makes particular memories visible, it always makes others less visible or invisible.

Thus, memory is social and collective, as well as individual. A shared memory of the past gives a group a sense of membership, but memories that are not consistent with dominant memories can be marginalized. There are different forms of power structures that shape or influence who speaks for the past and how. To critical historian Pierre Nora (1989), author of “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” it would be the modern nation-state and historians as authorized agents of history that claim the true

22 For example, in his canonical piece “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” Pierre Nora (1989) creates a dichotomy between authoritative and totalizing discourses of the past, which he calls “history”, and plural, specific and spontaneous “memory” (p.8-9). Nora cautions the increasing presence of “sites of memory,” sites where history is produced and presented for the public, that have emerged in western nations. Those states “deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally” (p.12) due to the historical break caused by the processes of modernization. In contrast to history, Nora treats “memory” as innocent and authentic, something that exists outside of artificially produced “history”.

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knowledge of the past and present it to the public in materialized forms such as museums, archives, monuments, and programmed rituals such as anniversaries and national calendars (p.12). It is those state apparatuses and institutional discourses that establish legitimized *les lieux de memoire*, or “sites of memory,” and discipline where, when, how and what members of society remember.

However, as Andrea Huyssen (2003), Alison Landsberg (2004) and Amy Holdsworth (2011) would argue, in today’s media saturated and market-driven consumer society, it is mass-marketed commodity culture, industries and media that are increasingly manufacturing memories and shaping the ways we remember the past. Huyssen (2003) claims that today we are witness to the “hypertrophy of memory” (p.3), not of history, in the increasingly globalized urban space of western society where “mass-marketed memories” are turning the city into a spectacle of memory, an image for consumption. Here, monuments, architecture and sculpture are not simply officially legitimized sites of memory, in Nora’s sense, but also objects for tourist consumption. In this logic, *profitable* representations of the past dominate the process of “musealization” of the city (Huyssen 2003). Landsberg (2004) develops the notion of “prosthetic memory” by examining commodified, mass-mediated memories that increasingly shape the subjectivities of advanced capitalist society. In her unique way she rejects the assumption that memory is “authentic” or “natural,” and instead argues that the consumption of images of the past in which the viewer did not live can actually “organize and energize the bodies and subjectivities that take on them” (p.26). She argues that technologies of memory, such as cinema, have a capacity to have audience *live*
mediated pasts in a personal and deeply felt manner and pass on memories to future
generations that are potentially outside of the particular racial, ethnic or national group to
which the experience belongs (p. 34; also see Holdworth 2011, Arnold-de Simine
2013). 23

Power structures—state, capitalist, industrial, and colonial—strongly determine
who speaks for the past, and what and how to remember it. Crucial to a critical analysis
of memoryscapes, therefore, is an active inquiry into what appears as present or absent in
the memoryscape and exploration of the forces at play in the production of such
presences/absences (McAllister 2011, p.427). In the meantime, scholars like Annette
Kuhn (1994) and Kirsten McAllister (2010) (also see their co-edited volume Locating
Memory, 2006) have advocated the position that marginalized memories of individuals,
families, and communities are meaningful resources for questioning how the past is
remembered, unearthing forgotten pasts and presenting new ways of remembering. This
can be done through what Kuhn calls “memory work” (1994, 2000, 2007), which can
take a range of forms and practices, including organized community acts, critical artistic
practices, and everyday individual practices. Defined by Kuhn (2000) in the following
way, memory work can also be a critical research methodology:

23 For further discussion on mediated memories, see Amy Holdsworth’s (2011) study of the role of
television in the constitution of contemporary memory cultures. She argues that technological changes,
such as digitalisation, DVDs, and online archives, are causing nostalgia for the television past and
production of the television memory (p.5). She calls for medium specific studies of memory in order to
understand the current memory boom. For another example, Arnold-de Simine (2013) studies the
museum as a medium of memory through which the visitor comes to share a memory they did not
actually live.
[Memory work is] an active practice of remembering which takes an inquiring attitude towards the past and the activity of its (re)construction through memory. Memory work undercuts assumptions about the transparency or the authenticity of what is remembered, taking it not as ‘truth’ but as evidence of a particular sort: material for interpretation, to be interrogated, mined, for its meanings and its possibilities. Memory work is a conscious and purposeful staging of memory.

(p.186)

Memory work can involve inscribing marginalized memories in the memoryscape to bring them into view and recognition (Robertson and Culhane 2005, Hirsch and Spitzer 2006, McAllister 2006, 2010, 2011, Riano-Alcala 2006, Walsh 2006, Aoki 2011). At the same time, Kuhn and McAllister take a feminist approach by starting their analyses with their own personal memories to reveal or point to larger structural processes; Kuhn (1994) works with the traumatic memories of her own family, or “family secrets,” to reveal their connections to the public and social issues of postwar England; McAllister (2011) brings to view an effect of colonialism by searching her own memory and “imagin[ing] [her]self in the…layered memoryscape” of the province in which she grew up, realizing “with terror” that she “cannot recall any Indigenous children” as part of the postcolonial memoryscape of British Columbia, Canada (p.427; also see McAllister 2010, p.166-167). Not only does their memory work take their personal memories seriously in illuminating wider social issues, they also suggest a critical reflexive practice whereby the researcher, or the subject of memory work, makes visible her participation in the production of the memory she critiques. For example,
McAllister (2010), in her study of a memorial of the internment of Japanese Canadians during WWII, explicitly positions herself in her writing to “disclose” the process and constitution of her memory work (p.47).

Postcolonial Forgetting

Just like many other cities, Yokohama has always been shaped by the combination of state, capitalist, and industrial structures, which are uniquely mediated by Japan’s (neo)colonial relations with other Asian countries and with the west, especially the United States since the end of WWII. My analysis is particularly concerned with ongoing (neo)colonial structures in shaping dominant memoryscapes. At the same time, in critiquing memories of Yokohama, I also do my reflexive memory work by searching my own memories of the city where colonial bodies of migrants are absent and making visible my participation in the production of the memoryscapes I analyze and write about. Here I position myself as a Japanese citizen, a “member of the colonizer nation state” in which the “decolonization” process is incomplete (Hanasaki 2000, p.78), and expose my own privilege, mobility and limitations in accessing and critiquing memories of the city. Below, I discuss how postcolonial scholarship contributes to my methodology of analyzing Yokohama’s urban memoryscapes.

Postcolonial scholarship has long been addressing the issue of memory in its own way. With its primary concern with forgetting, or the “mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath” (Gandhi 1998, p.4), postcolonial studies make visible forgotten aspects of colonialism that continue to shape and haunt the present reality by linking the present
to the past and identifying ongoing effects of colonialism in our time. This scholarship is valuable to my study, firstly because it reminds us of unresolved memories of past colonial violence that have been forced or encouraged to fade into oblivion in the dominant memoryscape, and secondly because it also reminds us of the often neglected fact that global capitalist forces that manufacture particular memories over others in our “postcolonial” capitalist society are still structured by old colonial relations. Postcolonial studies of Asian cities (Abbas 1997, Yoneyama 1999, Leung 2008, Kusno 2010, Goh 2005, 2014) have also been influential in my conceptualization of urban memoryscapes for their emphasis on studying cities in their unique local historical contexts, instead of simply applying a western model that assumes a homogenous process of urbanization that originates in Europe and North America and “belatedly” affects other parts of the world (Bishop et al. 2003, p.2; also see Goh 2005, Introduction, Bharne 2013, Perera and Tang 2013). Bishop et al. (2003) consider global urbanism and postcolonialism as “concomitant phenomena” that require simultaneous attention (p.5), and argue that a mere application of western theories to postcolonial cities would be insufficient in grasping the urbanization and modernization in those cities that are characterized by diverse manifestations of colonial and postcolonial rules.

24 In my dissertation, I apply the term “postcolonial amnesia” that is used in postcolonial literature, rather than “forgetting” or “displacement of memory,” to specifically highlight the instances in which dominant society forgets or neglects the continuity of colonialism and colonial-relations that still exist in our time. This can be applied to the case of Yokohama where there is historically a pattern of marginalizing memories of violence and exploitation exercised on the central government’s (neo)colonial others, including the Okinawan, the Ainu people, the Chinese, the Korean and, more recently, migrants from developing countries with which Japan has neocolonial economic relations (Stevens 1997, Oishi and Takekawa 1998, Takahashi 1998, Ventura 2007, Yamamoto 2008; see Chapter One).
Japan occupies its own unique position within the postcolonial landscape. As pointed out by Asian postcolonial scholars such as Sang-jung Kang (1996), Tetsuya Motohashi (2005) and Kuan-Hsing Chen (2011), it has a “double status” of being simultaneously a colonizer in Asia before the end of WWII and a “colonized” by the United States after the war (Chen 2011, p.30), which happened most explicitly through the Allied Occupation of the country immediately following Japan’s surrender (1945-1952). I am careful about speaking of Japan’s “double-status” and treat it critically, because the latter status is often used to repress the former and effectively enables postcolonial amnesia. That is, the discursive construction of a clear historical “break,” which supposedly existed at the moment when Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers, became subject to the Allied Occupation, and was “demilitarized” by external force under the Anpo Joyaku (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan), has encouraged the nation to prioritize its own mourning of loss, while obscuring Japan’s own imperialism and colonialism as if they have already been done and dealt with (Hanasaki 2000, p.71-72). In fact, Japanese imperialism continued in Asia.

25 While postwar Japan-US relations facilitated Japan’s economic growth and its economic imperialism in Asia and other parts of the world, it also expresses American imperialism and its domination over Japan. The Allied occupation of Japan at the end of WWII was led by the United States and it was, in practice, almost exclusively authorized and carried out by the American military (Ara 2005, p.25). The American occupation of Japan did not simply take the form of a temporary occupation of the land and a military invasion, but also the imposition of a new constitution, political system, capitalist structure, and social relations (Dower 1975) by the United States. As Shunya Yoshimi and David Buist (2003) point out, while “American domination was not entirely one-way…throughout the occupation, Japan was in no position to determine its own future without negotiating with an overwhelmingly powerful ‘other’” (p.436, 435). They write that “this was true of all the spheres of life, from economics and politics to culture and lifestyle” (p.435). It is not my primary concern to make a case for Japan’s “colonized” status, and in fact I rather critique the narrative of Japan’s self-victimization because it obscures its status as a colonizer. However, I still think it is important to recognize the history of the American occupation of Japan, as memories of this experience have powerfully shaped the dominant memoryscape of Yokohama today. I will analyze those memories in detail in Chapter Three.
in a new form after WWII, as the country was enabled to pursue economic progress and industrialization under the U.S.-led Cold War structure and the *Anpo Joyaku*, which ensures Japanese national security through protection by the United States. Japan’s neo-colonial relations with other nations have partly been articulated in the form of transnational migration of women from impoverished regions and countries to Japan, as I discussed in the Introduction.

Kohei Hanasaki (2000) argues that Japan’s decolonization has thus been reduced to “demilitarization,” and is therefore, incomplete (p.72). What needs to happen includes actively bringing to our sight the “colonized people who were once subjects of the Japanese Empire” and any injustice done to them (ibid), which should involve a sincere and comprehensive form of public recognition of and apologies for the sexual crimes committed by the Japanese military on so-called “comfort women.” While Japan just commemorated the seventieth anniversary of *sengo* [postwar] in August 2015, we have to ask “to whom the historical periodization [of prewar and postwar] exists…whether it

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26 The Japanese government’s treatment of the Japanese military “comfort women” issue entered a new phase on December 28th of 2015 when an agreement was made between the governments of Japan, led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and Korea, by President Park Geun-hye, to settle the issue “finally and irreversibly” with one billion in Japanese yen (approximately 8 million US dollars) support funds paid by the Japanese government to the surviving women. However, this agreement has been criticized by survivors and Korean researchers as it denies the Japanese government’s legal responsibility for the crime and does not recognize the funds as a form of reparation (see a statement made by Founding Committee of the Research Network of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery on its website and as translated to Japanese and posted on the website of the Asia-Japan Women’s Resource Center [Nihongun “Ianfu” 2015]; see also Song [2015, December 30] and Gale [2016, January 3]). The agreement does not acknowledge the voices of surviving women themselves by excluding them from the process of making the agreement and, furthermore, precluding them from raising their voices in the future by presenting the agreement as “final and irreversible.” A parallel debate can be found in the Canadian case of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s “apology” to Indigenous residential-school survivors made on June 11, 2008, which was characterized by its exclusion of the leaders of the survivors in the process of developing the apology and its lack of recognition of the residential school system as a crime committed by the government (see Gray [2008, June 12] and Krebs [2008, July 18]).
does for the Japanese nation or Asia at large” (Motohashi 2005, p.190). For whom was the war over in August 1945?

Urban memoryscapes, studied with a postcolonial sensibility, can thus be seen as forgetful. In *Hiroshima Traces*, Lisa Yoneyama (1999) studies different forms of memory—ranging from the monumentalization of war ruins, constructions of memorials, and large-scale urban development projects to storytelling and walking tours—to critically examine the postwar memoryscape of Hiroshima. In carefully analyzing the selective remembrance of Hiroshima’s victimhood in WWII driven by the municipal government and the tourist industry, Yoneyama identifies “persistent, albeit forgotten, elements” that haunt the city’s memoryscape, that is, the absences of memories of the Japanese Empire, of Japan’s relationship to its former colonies and of the nation’s multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural constituencies (p.3-4). She argues that Hiroshima’s dominant memoryscape embodies a process of “amnes(t)ic remembering whereby the past is tamed through the reinscription of [particular] memories” (p.32) over others. Yoneyama’s critical work, by actively linking the past and the present, deconstructs the myth of a historical “break” and allows us to see the continuity of Japanese colonial forces that shape the urban landscape of Japan today.

**Performance of Memory**

The Yokohama memoryscapes that I analyze in Part I are primarily constituted by the physical built environment and representations of the city’s past in museums, photography, cinema, literature and walking tours. I use a common methodological
approach taken in cultural studies of cities that examine the urban cultural landscape as a “palimpsest”—a multi-layered field of inscriptions made up of both architectural and infrastructural forms and representations of the city in different forms of media and practices (Harvey 1990, Boyer 1994, Huyssen 2003, Crinson and Tyrer 2005, Goh 2005, Kusno 2010). By critically reading the urban palimpsest, those studies examine what memories are (made) visible or invisible in and of the city through these layers of inscription. This activity, I believe, effectively complicates our understandings of the city, and moves away from the dominant forces that regulate and manage our experience of it by imposing particular ways of seeing. In addition, studies of East and Southeast Asian cities in postcolonial contexts (Abbas 1997, Yoneyama 1999, Bishop et al. 2003, Goh 2005, Clarke 2007, Leung 2008, Kusno 2010) have been attentive to the particular ways in which affective experiences of the city have been part and parcel of making the texture of an urban palimpsest. For example, the urban landscapes of formerly colonized cities are shaped by persistent colonial legacies, trauma of past violence, anxieties over new regimes, desires and hopes for a city’s new roles, different forms of local resistance, as well as nationalist ideologies and economic ambitions that mediate the general forces of economic globalization and modernization.

These studies, as in other studies I reviewed in the sections above, also reject a view of memory as static data that can be retrospectively retrieved in an unchanged form and instead highlight the ongoing and open nature of the production of urban memories and the important place that memory has in actively shaping the city in the present and future (Kuhn 2010, p.298-299). Bal (1999) argues, “cultural memorization [is] an
activity occurring in the present, in which the past is continuously modified and redescribed even as it continues to shape the future” (p.vii; also see McAllister 2010, p.6). Here, memory is not viewed as a “bearer” of past events but “something that you actually perform, even if, in many instances, such acts are not consciously and willfully contrived” (Bal ibid., italics in the original). Again, the question of identity is constantly examined across a range of studies of cultural memory. Active performance of memory—revisiting the past, making different interpretations of it, finding its continuity with the present or questioning it, and enacting or staging different versions of the past—is simultaneously an act of reconstructing identities in the present and imagining what we will become in the future (Kuhn 2000, 2010). Thus, memory is performative.

For example, Ackbar Abbas (1997) studies new cultural forms that emerged in Hong Kong at around the time of the 1997 “handover” of the city to China. Here, he sees Hong Kong cinema, architecture, and writing produced in this period as a “culture of disappearance,” a complex kind of “rebus that projects [the] city’s fear and desire” that come with historical change (p.1). However, his discussion of the “culture of disappearance” is less about the disappearance of culture per se than an explosive production of new forms of culture, and the invention of a new Hong Kong identity, which takes place in the “process of negotiating the mutations and permutations of colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism” (p.11). According to Abbas, the memory culture that has been witnessed in Hong Kong lately—such as photographic exhibitions about old Hong Kong, an archive of old Hong Kong films, preservation of cultural and urban forms (p.65)—develops “technologies of disappearance,” or techniques that
allow the city to deal with the felt danger, which involves “replacement and substitution” of what is actually there with representations of disappearance (p.8).

Whereas what appears in urban cultural forms is treated as products of a culture of disappearance in Abbas’s study, Abidin Kusno (2010), in his book The Appearances of Memory, suggests a different way of viewing the architecture and urban infrastructure of Indonesian cities by looking at them as performative and transformative sites of memory. According to Kusno, the “visual environment” of the postcolonial city is not always an ideological and distorted representation of the time passed or a finished expression of fear and desire from the time of construction, but it can also be a stage for unintended or unconscious performances of memory in the present. On the one hand, like Abbas, Kusno also sees the urban form as a way to “articulate a general anxiety over the sense of change in everyday life” (p.3). He suggests that “buildings serve as a reminder of the practices of the past” by showing how the city has managed anxieties over the course of history (ibid.). However, the same buildings also serve as “the starting point for both the performance of unfinished fantasies and the desire to overcome troubling memories and remake oneself within, as well as beyond, one’s particular time and place” (ibid). While studies of commemoration and collective memories have generally tended to focus on architectural spaces and objects that are intentionally built for the purpose of regulating public memories (e.g. monuments), Kusno’s study also includes examination of architectural objects that were not built for a commemorative purpose (such as a shopping mall), or for suppressing particular memories, but which are equally significant in registering and setting the stage for the performance of memory (p.104).
dynamic, performative site of memory the urban visual environment “provide[s] materials to imagine anew the space of our present” (p.14) beyond representation.

Attention to the affective textures of the urban palimpsest and the productive and performative aspects of memoryscapes has also been significant to this dissertation. As I show in Part I, Yokohama’s multilayered memoryscapes carry a strong sense of nostalgia toward particular moments in Yokohama’s past in response to the fear of decline in the economic and cultural significance of the city. Nostalgia, according to Susan Stewart (1993), is:

…a sadness without an object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience. Rather, it remains behind and before that experience. Nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack. Hostile to history and its invisible origins, and yet longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality. (p.23)

In cultural forms ranging from expo pavilions, museum exhibits (Chapter Two) to locally produced documentary photographs and films (Chapter Three), Yokohama intentionally celebrates and unintentionally reiterates moments of the encounter with the military power of the United States—such as Commodore Matthew Perry’s arrival in
Yokosuka in 1854, which marked the end of Edo government’s seclusion policy and “opening of the port” of Yokohama and Japan, and General Douglas MacArthur’s arrival in Yokohama in 1945, which marked the beginning of the postwar Allied Occupation of Japan. As material traces of those moments are becoming more difficult to find in the rapidly changing landscape of the city, the memoryscapes that represent those times are infused with a strong sense of nostalgia. To be sure, production of those memoryscapes are not just a reactionary and “retrospective” response to lost times but are quite future-oriented or “prospective” as well (Boym 2001, p.xvi). In the case of Yokohama, memories of the past have offered a site to negotiate the fear of change and reinvent its identity anew. The municipal government has actively appropriated memory to revitalize the local economy and the tourist industry (see Chapter Two) and a small group of local cultural producers revisited the city’s marginalized memories to explore an alternative sense of belonging and build a (new) community (see Chapter Three). I would further question what and whose reality is displaced in the production of nostalgic memoryscapes. This effect is particularly heightened in Koganecho where the production of a new artscape, driven by a nostalgia for the “safe” and “secure” neighbourhood from the time before the arrival of “foreigners,” quite directly replaces a transnational migrant community with another community (Chapter Four). The displacement of colonial subjects and postcolonial migrants happen in subtler ways too, where dominant, nostalgic memoryscapes construct Japan as the victim of colonial violence (Hanasaki 2000, p.72) and diminishes our ability to imagine other postcolonial realities in which Japan is an Empire (Chapter Two and Three).
**Imagining and Sensing Memoryscapes**

As I discussed above in regards to memory work, my work has involved reflexive sensory ethnography (Pink 2015). I am keenly aware and openly disclose that my critique of Yokohama’s memoryscape is informed by my concrete, embodied experiences of having being emplaced in the city. Here, I am entangled with a social network of Yokohama in particular ways, as I engage with the city as a middle-class tourist, consumer, cosmopolitan student, a Japanese citizen and a member of the colonizer nation. As such, my dissertation is a product and process of memory work—it describes, de-contains and also inscribes myself in Yokohama’s memoryscapes as a politically, economically, socially and culturally situated remembering subject. In addition, I am simultaneously an emplaced body; I “cannot escape from place, since it is simultaneously the context [I] inhabit and [my] site of investigation; it is what [I am] seeking to understand and it is where [my] sensory experiences are produced, defined and acted on” (Pink 2015, p.34).

In conceptualizing a sensory and reflexive notion of memoryscapes, I draw on phenomenological approaches to studying landscape and sensory ethnographic studies of place (Feld and Basso 1996, Stewart 1996a, 1996b, Riano-Alcala 2006, Irving 2007, Pink 2008, 2009, 2015, Ingold 2012). Phenomenological understanding of place begins with the premise that bodily perception and embodied experience of sensing a place is fundamental to an understanding of place. Edward Casey (1996), in the introductory chapter for the edited volume *Senses of Place* (eds. by Feld and Basso), writes, “there is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is
to be in a position to perceive it” (p.18). Instead of viewing the perceiving body as an autonomous entity that exists separately from the place that is being perceived, Casey argues that the perception of place is both constituted by and constitutive of the place perceived. Perception is constituted, not only because the embodied experience of perception occurs in the physical sensory field in which the body is emplaced, but also because the place exists as an intersection of “cultural and social structures that sediment themselves into the deepest level of perception” (p.18-19). Perception of place is, therefore, a cultural and social practice instead of merely natural or biological. Perception is also constitutive, Casey (1996) argues, because our immersion in place also shapes the place being perceived (p.18-19). In Steve Feld’s words, “as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place” (cited in Casey 1996, p.19). Keith Basso (1996) also argues that the “experience of sensing of places…is …both roundly reciprocal and incorrigibly dynamic” (p.55). He says, “as places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed,” and additionally, “the movements of this process…cannot be known in advance” (p.55).

Tim Ingold (2012) adds another layer to the discussion of the perception of place, or the “landscape” (he does not draw a clear conceptual line between place and the landscape and rather critiques such a boundary), by highlighting the significance of the act of imagination in shaping the landscapes of our perception (p.3). He does this by critiquing James Gibson’s formulation of the perception of the world, which excludes and separates the imagination from the “real world” by treating it as a
retrospective…interpretation of landscapes already perceived” (ibid.). Ingold instead writes, “to imagine…is not so much to conjure up images of a reality ‘out there’, whether virtual or actual, true or false, as to participate from within, through perception and action, in the very becoming of things” (p.3). Thus, “imagined landscape…is a landscape not of being but of becoming” (p.10). This resonates with how scholars of cultural studies of the city have emphasized the significance of studying imaginations and fictional representations of the city to understanding our urban experience. “Imaginary” cultural meanings are not not-real but have “profound material consequences,” Ben Highmore (2005, p.5) argues, because they constitute the material out of which we experience and act on the city (also see Donald 1997, p.181-185).

By extension, I see memoryscapes as a cultural “landscape,” in Ingold’s use of the term, of both sensory perception and imagination that involves selective processes of remembering and forgetting of particular pasts. While it is often the case that an imagining of a place happens elsewhere without the physical presence of the body in place, it is important that the imagination is still an embodied practice and can only take place through an “existential involvement in the sensible world” (Ingold 2012, p.3). Also, as in the case of Koganecho that I discuss in Chapter Four, I extend an idea suggested in Highmore’s quote above and argue that an imagination of a place’s past, even if the act of imagination and/or the representation of such an imagination physically happens outside of the place, does feed into the way in which the place is acted on and reshaped at a material level in the present and for the future.
In some cases, however, a particular perception and imagination of the place’s past can only take place by physically being there. Pilar Riano-Alcalá (2006) argues that some “memories are bound to place, dwelling in natural and urban landscapes, in chronological and local site referents and in sensorial and biographical environments” (p.65). A memoryscape of place, therefore, sometimes arises in immediate moments when the place is “sensed” while being there, walking the streets, and encountering “mnemonic landmarks.” To Kathleen Stewart (1996a, 1996b), a memoryscape is an assemblage of felt “impacts” and “effects” of the past where sensory perception is essential to an imagination of the landscape (see 1996a, p.90). Here, a memoryscape is not a perfectly reconstructed picture of the past that can be evaluated at an objective distance, but an “intensely tactile” image, an affective scene, that is “as ephemeral as the ghostly traces of forgotten things” (p.4). In giving an account of memories of place, Stewart’s writing does not explain the landscape but performatively “evokes” the “sense of place” that emerges in an “endless process of remembering, retelling, and imagining things” (1996b, p.140).

In some sections of Chapter Two and Three, I use an autoethnographic voice and actively foreground my memory of the city from my childhood and from much more recent past, i.e. my fieldwork in 2012 and 2013, in-between my analysis of the built environment, urban policies, photographs, films and film festivals. By adding a layer of my own memory of the city, which is both personal and social, familiar and strange, nostalgic and potentially subversive, I wish to evoke a sense of the effects of the displacement of migrant bodies that are felt in the everyday experience of the city. At

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the same time, I also construct my memory and experience of being part of the process of producing the nostalgic and forgetful memoryscapes and submit them as a critical site of discussion and critique.
Chapter Two: Building History on A Vacant Land

Port 1989/1859: Gulliver on A Vacant Land

Tracing back my memories of Yokohama, I arrive at my first visit to Minato Mirai 21, the moment when I encountered a giant Gulliver. My mother took my brother and I to the Yokohama Exotic Showcase ’89 (YES’89), a futuristic exposition, which took place in Yokohama’s waterfront, reclaimed land looking out to the Pacific. I was eight and my brother four. I cannot remember the month or even the season exactly, but perhaps it was a weekday during the summer school break. My father was absent most likely for his work and our trip to Yokohama must have been a special treat that my mother figured out to entertain us. Our visit to Yokohama left me with a strong impression of the event because of one single structure. This was among many other pavilions and exhibits that were supposedly built in a vast area of the waterfront, but I have no memory of them. What I only remember is a giant Gulliver from Jonathan Swift’s well-known novel lying flat on his stomach with his head slightly elevated, a
view from the ground outside the pavilion, looking up with fascination at a western giant with blue eyes, shining under the sun.

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I want to start my discussion with an image of Yokohama as a “vacant” land. Multiple times in its modern history Yokohama was constructed as “vacant,” a “void” (Doron 2008, p.205) or a “non-place” (Bhabha 1994, p.352) —with no particularly significant history, life or story to remember and continue living with. According to the official history, in the beginning, Yokohama was only a small fishing village with just about a hundred households. In the eyes of the Edo government, the newly opened Port of Yokohama had nothing—it was an empty and convenient “vacant” space to be developed and experimented on with a different set of regulations, policies, commercial activities and modern, western infrastructures. This image of Yokohama punctuates the city’s official historical narrative. In 1945 after the Great Air Raid by the United States, the city was burned to the ground. General Douglas MacArthur, the head of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, landed on Yokohama’s “vacant” land to create a new, postwar Japan. Yokohama’s postwar hybrid urban culture flourished due to contact with American culture, which was introduced through the U.S. military base. Then in the late 1980s Yokohama’s waterfront was bulldozed for the post-industrial redevelopment of the city. In this process the municipal government replaced the wasteful “dead zone” of the old port with a “future city” where the past again became irrelevant and invisible. Finally, although much marginalized in the official history of Yokohama, a series of police raids in 2005 displaced migrant sex workers from Koganecho, and the neighbourhood again
became a “vacant” site to be exploited and redeveloped by the authorities with their creative city project.

I argue that the image of the “vacant” land, which repeatedly appears and marks a clear break in the historical narrative of the city’s urban development, is a political construction that has strategically been made possible by the authority-driven urban redevelopment of Yokohama. This chapter examines a memrouscape of Yokohama’s waterfront area, Minato Mirai 21 (MM21) and Kannai, the official face of the city, by focusing on their built environment and urban redevelopment policies localized in the area, and offers a critique of the official historical narrative. I attempt to show what is perceived as “postindustrial” Yokohama, a city haunted by ongoing colonial structures shaped both by American and Japanese imperialisms and forgotten memories of migrant labourers, men and women, who contributed to the urban development of the city. I do so by deconstructing the officially presented memrouscape of the city through my memory work, which I discussed as a critical, reflexive and sensory engagement with memory in Chapter One. I include fragments of my personal memory of the city and experience of being in the city as an emplaced ethnographer to evoke a “sense of place” (Feld and Basso 1996) that disrupts the dominant memrouscape, makes visible the forced absence of marginalized memories, and point to my own complicity in the production of the dominant memrouscape. In contrast to the image of Yokohama as a “vacant” land, I want to suggest a more ambivalent image of the city as a haunted land in which the “past is never over and done with” and continues to haunt the future (Crinson and Tyrer 2005, p.66).
Examining the dominant memoryscapes through a critical lens is particularly significant in the local cultural context of “postindustrial” Yokohama where local memories have been gaining currency, exploited and appropriated for top-down urban redevelopment. The “musealization” of the entire city, which is reported in studies of other postindustrial cities of Western and Asian countries (Nora 1989, Huyssen 2003, Crinson 2005, Goh 2005), is happening in Yokohama in its own way. The waterfront area is occupied with a number of museums, monuments, and black-and-white and sepia photographic images of the past displayed at public venues, commercial buildings and photo festivals that take place regularly in the waterfront. Against this background, in my analysis of the historic district of Kannai, I focus on museums, historic buildings and monuments, and argue that they are not pure “bearers” of the past but a manifestation of the performance of memory in the present where a particular set of memories are selectively remembered and projected while others are excluded or marginalized. Before this, however, I first look at MM21, “future city” of Yokohama, where I focus on modern architecture that were not built for a commemorative purpose but are still significant in activating a memory of the city beyond the city’s and developer’s original intention and desires (Kusno 2010, p.104). Throughout the chapter I will read in Yokohama’s urban palimpsest the multiplicities of time that constitute the memoryscape of the city, and show how a new part of the city can be seen as old and historical, and an old part of the city can be seen as new and refashioned.27

27 Postcolonial scholars have shown that an urban space in a postcolonial context is complex, as it is not merely a collection of isolated spaces, each of which embodies a discrete time period of the past, but is simultaneously new and old, embodying the present, the past and the future all at once. For example, in his study of the urban transition of postcolonial Macau, David Clarke (2007) points out that the
Between March 25 and October 1, 1989, the city of Yokohama held the Yokohama Exotic Showcase ’89 (YES’89) to commemorate the Yokohama city government’s 100th anniversary and the 130th anniversary of the opening of the Port of Yokohama, which opened in 1859. It was part of the exposition boom experienced by a number of municipalities throughout Japan, and in fact, 11 more expositions took place elsewhere in the same year. Those expositions were manifestations of the Japanese “bubble” economy and its industrial achievements, just like the theme park boom that was happening at around the same time throughout Japan (Nakajima 2011, p.52), although the “bubble” would burst in the early 1990s and many theme parks closed down in the subsequent years of economic recession. Ironically, those booms unexpectedly became the last cry of Japan’s postwar economic “miracle.”

Unlike world fairs that represent different countries, Yokohama’s YES’89 was sponsored predominantly by Japanese private companies, including powerful former-zaibatsu conglomerates such as the Mitsubishi Group, the Sumitomo Group, and the preservation of pre-existing vernacular structures, particularly ones with European associations, and the creation of the “old city” in fact produce “new” Macau in a sense that the space has “already been largely refashioned” (p.402). He notes, the “many images of peeling walls and shabby decay…can easily serve an apolitical nostalgia, offering a modern day variant on the picturesque mode” (p.403). While this may meet the expectations of the tourist gaze it “fails to critically address the actual changes currently occurring in the city” (ibid.). By the same token, even the “new” parts of Macau are haunted by the old and the ongoing colonial structure as they are built after “models from elsewhere,” in this case, Las Vegas; thus, “newness or contemporaneousness does not mean a pure autonomy” (p.399). Likewise, Yoshihisa Amae (2011), in his study of Japanese colonial heritage in postcolonial Taiwan, suggests that the recent urban development in Taiwan involves revisiting Japanese colonial heritage and appropriating it by “deforming” and “transforming” them instead of “restoring” or “preserving” them (p.19). However, this is not happening simply in pursuit of economic goals and for the creation of new tourist sites, but in the context of the democratization of Taiwan in the 1990s and, in an attempt to re-appropriate the past for the creation of new, the creation of a multicultural and hybrid Taiwan by strategically diverging from the Chinese Nationalist’s regime that destroyed Japanese structures following the end of WWII.
Mitsui Group; energy companies such as the Nippon Oil Corporation, Tokyo Gas Co, and Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO); electronic conglomerates such as Toshiba, Matsushita, Fujitsu, and Hitachi; media and communication companies such as NEC Corporation and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT); and department stores such as Yokohama Sogo and Yokohama Takashimaya. All of those large corporations and conglomerates supported Japan’s growing economy and consumer society in the postwar era. With respect to zaibatsu conglomerates, they were in fact a key driving force of the economy in the prewar era, under the rule of Imperial Japan (Hanasaki 2000, p.77). An exception to the dominant domestic private companies that sponsored the expo was the International Pavilion in which displays represented Yokohama’s sister/friendship cities abroad, including San Diego, USA; Lyon, France; Bombay, India; Manila, Philippines; Vancouver, Canada; Seoul, Korea; and a group of the Southeast Asian countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand (Bessonette 1989; Kanagawa Shinbun 2010, p.106)—a reminder that Yokohama was indeed an international city economically connected to the world outside.

The theme of the exposition was “children and the cosmos.” While part of the aim of the event was to commemorate Yokohama’s 130 years of history since the opening of its port, the exhibitions had a strong emphasis on imagining the “future” through the development of science and technologies, which supposedly enable us humans to discover and explore a new “space” outside of the present reality. The space-station-shaped pavilion sponsored by Mitsubishi Group, which partly owned the waterfront area and previously used it as a dockyard during Yokohama’s industrializing era, produced 3D images entitled IMAGINATION and offered visitors the virtual experience of moving
through a “‘space tunnel’ with lights and mirrors simulating the feeling of being in space,” which was intended to represent a “passageway into the mysterious future” (Bessonette 1989). An over 100-metre-high Ferris wheel constructed by Senyo Kogyo Co., the tallest in the world until 1992 and in Japan until 1997, with a giant digital clock at the centre of the wheel manufactured by Citizen Holdings Co., was called Cosmo Clock 21, and would count time into the hopeful future.

But in fact the hopeful future was not a promised one. Yokohama’s YES’89 was rather a defensive strategy intended by the city to mark the beginning of new Yokohama when its port had lost its economic significance due to the relocation of private companies’ headquarters from Yokohama to Tokyo due to the postwar American occupation and the explosive growth of Tokyo that followed (Nicchukan sangoku kyodo rekishi hensan iinkai 2011, p.49). This led to Yokohama’s transition into a “bedtown” for people who had residences there merely for rest in the evening and who commuted to Tokyo for the productive and consumptive activities of work and shopping (Edington 1991, p.67). In addition, there was a rise of East Asia’s newly industrializing economies (NIES) and a rapid development of port cities in the Asia-Pacific Rim, which diminished the significance of Yokohama as an economically vibrant international port city. The postindustrial shift of Japan’s economic base toward “knowledge” and “information” intensive activities added another incentive to renew Yokohama’s infrastructure. Here, YES’89 “provided the catalyst for the initial clearing of land and provision of infrastructure” (Edington 1991, p.74) on the newly reclaimed land of Minato Mirai 21 (MM21; “future of the port in the 21st century”), and aimed to redevelop the formerly industrial port area. Yokohama’s redevelopment project involved the removal of
dockyards and railway yards from the waterfront that extended from Kannai, the old city of Yokohama, and Yokohama Station, the new commercial district; the extension of filled land toward the water; and building new infrastructure for a new city with a population of 190,000 workers and 10,000 residents (Kishida and Utsuki 2009, p.24). As reported in The Japan Economic Journal on August 2, 1986, MM21 was “sure to bring Yokohama its most profound changes since the first foreign settlement was established there in the 1860s,” causing a radical break in Yokohama’s postwar history. YES’89, then, was symbolically a gateway to the new Yokohama.

In my fading memory

**giant Gulliver invites me to MM21**

**and to the Pacific**

Reflecting back on YES’89 through my experience of visiting the exposition, however, the only figure that lingers in my memory among high-tech, futuristic exhibitions is the giant Gulliver. He was so huge that I was immediately overwhelmed by his hand, the entrance to the pavilion—but up above his face is blurred in my memory. Looking at a website (www.yokohaku.com) created by Yokohaku Dosokai (Yokohama Exposition Reunion Committee), I learned that the Gulliver’s height was 53 metres, his palm was 9.7 square metres, and his foot was 8.5 metres, twice as large as the famous Buddha statue of the Todaiji temple in Nara. On the website, the description of the Mitsui Group and Toshiba-sponsored Gulliver Pavilion says, “In front of the pavilion, we become tiny residents of Lillipat, who welcomed Gulliver to their country.”
Gulliver’s visit to Yokohama was not merely a whimsical attraction constructed for the exposition. In Swift’s internationally-known novel, Gulliver does visit Japan, the only real country that appears in *Gulliver’s Travels*, and there is a locally accepted inference that the port of Xamoschi, Japan on which Gulliver landed was actually Kannonsaki of the Miura Peninsula, located immediately to the south of Yokohama (“Gulliver Landed in Kannonsaki” 2011). To Irish writer Swift in the early 18th century, Japan might have looked no less exotic than other fictive countries that he constructed for his novel: Lilliput, the country of tiny people; Brobdingnag, the country of giants; the flying island of Laputa; Glubbdubdrib, the island of sorcerers and magicians; and the country of the deformed creatures called Houyhnhnms. Compared to other sections of the book, however, Gulliver’s visit to Japan has received “little attention” from postcolonial critics, as Robert Markley (2004) observes, because his “adventures do not fit the pattern of European encounters with ‘barbaric’ peoples (the Irish, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders)” (p.457). Rather, the story conveys Japan’s “fundamental challenges to the rhetoric of European imperialism: it was a ‘heathen’ empire that, after the civil wars of the sixteenth century, had rejected Christianity, cut off almost all contact with Europeans, and yet continued to prosper” (p.461).28 When Gulliver’s Travel was published, Japan had a very restrictive foreign relations policy called *sakoku* (“chained country”) under which almost no foreign countries could enter Japan. Sakoku policy lasted until 1853

28 Markley (2014) sees that this is consistent with anti-Eurocentric perception of the early modern history developed by a number of historians who have demonstrated that “Europe enjoyed no clear advantages over China or Japan and, in fact, likely lagged behind the Asian empires” in areas of “standards of living for the peasant as well as upper classes; technologies of communication; transportation; agriculture, shipping, and manufacturing; disaster relief; health care; food distribution; literacy; worker productivity; and often military power” (p.460).
when the Black Ships of Commodore Matthew Perry from the United States arrived in Japan and forcefully opened Japanese ports for western trade under the Japan-US Treaty of Peace and Amity of 1854 (the Convention of Kanagawa). Thus, Gulliver lying on Yokohama’s waterfront at YES ’89 would have signified cultural difference and the encounter between the West and the East, without necessarily calling attention to Japan’s subordinate political and military position in the postwar context in relation to the west, particularly the United States. Gulliver activates a collective memory of the arrival of the west in Japan in the 19th century with Yokohama as their gateway, and reaffirms Yokohama’s identity via its relationship with the west.

Gulliver, a fantastical and tamed version of Commodore Perry, is one manifestation of Yokohama’s performance of memory. As I continue to elaborate in the following sections, Yokohama’s performance of memory relates its past to its present and future, and constructs, maintains and reproduces its identity in the face of changes. The “past” to which Yokohama strategically returns is the discursively constructed image of the Black Ships, which signifies the arrival of the west, the opening of the port, and subsequent urbanization that happened in the little fishing village of Yokohama. While the westerners were unwelcomed and feared by the Edo government, nationalist groups, and the local Japanese residents of the time (see McVeigh 2004, p.42; Takano 2010), today the image of the Black Ships proudly appears in museums and on tourist items in souvenir shops. The image defines the city as the most important gateway for Japan’s modernization and the importation of western science, technologies and urban infrastructure, and as a site for cosmopolitan cultural exchanges. This image also marks the “beginning” of the official history of Yokohama. Yokohama’s identity, in this
construction, is impossible without calling on the west’s presence and influences. In fact, part of YES’89 was the Port Opening Memorial Village in which Yokohama’s old city was reconstructed and visitors virtually experienced the city from the Meiji era (1968-1912) when western architecture and urban infrastructure, such as gas lights, iron bridges and water fountains, were first introduced (Yokohaku Dosokai 2001-2012).

Gulliver smiles. Instead of being portrayed as an external threat to the nation, he appears as a friend and a guest, who lies on the ground in a relaxed posture. Yokohama remembers the opening of the port as a hopeful beginning of its “self-imposed westernization” (Bharne 2013, p.4), which shaped Yokohama’s modern landscape and eventually led to the Japanese economic and industrial prosperity showcased at YES’89. Gulliver was there to ensure and demonstrate that the city continues to have economic and cultural currency in Japan and the world. But there is more going on here. While Yokohama’s distant past, i.e. the opening of the port, is actively remembered in the idealized memoryscape projected at YES’89, the subsequent development of MM21 contain traces of Yokohama’s other pasts that only become visible through critical memory work. Those traces constitute Japan’s subordinate relationship to the United States since the end of WWII and, even less visible at first glance, Japan’s imperial past.

**Port 1993/1945: An Imperial Land Mark in A Future City**

Within a year of my visit to YES’89, my family moved to Moscow for my father’s work and lived there for three years. During this period, I was witness to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 but at around the same time Japan was also experiencing a break in its economic history— the Japanese “bubble economy” burst and the country entered a period of recession. A few months after my family returned to Japan, we
visited MM21 again, this time with my father, when the Land Mark Tower, then the tallest building in Japan and the centerpiece for Yokohama’s MM21 waterfront redevelopment project, opened in July 1993. My parents did not let us go up to the lookout from the 69th floor, because the entrance fees were too expensive, but instead, they took us to the Land Mark Plaza, a shopping complex attached to the tower’s lower levels, and bought my brother and I gelatos to soothe our disappointment. I remember that the Plaza was strangely empty and quiet for its opening period and felt quite eerie. A void extended throughout the mall and an array of stores on the walls were exposed to us from the top floor to the bottom, like strata.

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The land formerly used as an industrial port was bulldozed and cleared to prepare for YES’89 and for the subsequent redevelopment project MM21. The image of the flat, vacant land brings back to my mind monochromic images of a burnt-out Yokohama after the 1945 Great Air Raid by the United States, images I saw multiple times during my fieldwork in museums, the public archive, and locally available photographic books. Less visible pasts that persistently linger in the city, even in the newly developed land of MM21, are the postwar American occupation of Japan and prewar Japanese imperialism and colonialism in Asia. In addition to being the site where Commodore Perry met the Edo government upon his landing in Japan in 1854, Yokohama’s waterfront was also the site where the GHQ (General Headquarters), or the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, headed by American General Douglas MacArthur, was initially set up after Yokohama’s urban area was burned-down in 1945. Yokohama’s waterfront and downtown area were extensively occupied by the Allied Forces and most of the buildings (offices, theatres, department stores, government buildings, schools and parks) that
survived the air raid were turned into military facilities with new English names (Policy Bureau, City of Yokohama 2008, October). In present Fukutomicho and surrounding neighbourhoods in Kangai (see Chapter Three for the description of the area) military barracks and airfields were built. However, the memory of the American occupation of Yokohama has been less actively projected in official history than that of the arrival of the Black Ships.

But what is even further repressed is Yokohama’s prewar memory of Japanese imperialism. Further back in history, while it is not explicitly stated in the official narrative of the Port of Yokohama’s history, Yokohama was a key site for military transport and industry. This is particularly true after the Manchurian Incident of 1931, the beginning of the invasion and occupation of Manchuria by the Imperial Japanese Army when the Japanese government decided to start investing in the militaristic industrialization of the nation (Kagawa 2011, p.297; also see Kato cited in Stevens 1997, p.42). This drove the nation into the Sino-Japanese War, and eventually, Japan’s war against the United States in WWII. During WWII, the Port of Yokohama was occupied by the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy for its facilities and however repressed this past it continues to constitute the foundation for the built environment of MM21.

The year 1993 marked the opening of the Land Mark Tower, the first major project that was part of the city of Yokohama’s MM21 plan. The tower houses a shopping mall, offices, an international hotel, and the Sky Garden lookout on the 69th floor. It was built at the end of an automatic 230-metre-long flat-escalator extending from the JR Sakuragicho Station (Kuwabara 1989), which was previously the main gate for
YES’89. The Land Mark Tower was designed by American architect Hugh Stubbins, “one of the stars of nineteen-fifties American Modernism” (de Rudder 2007, p.12), and was his last work before he died (Goldin 2006). It is a 296 metres-high, 70-story building, and was the tallest building in Japan for two decades until the 300-metre Abeno Harukas in Osaka was completed in 2014. Described as “modern engineering in a flexible skeleton” to absorb earthquake shocks (Goldin 2006), it is perfectly suited as a landmark in Yokohama’s new futuristic city.

Ghostly traces remain even in the newly built high-rise; “although the ‘new’ [Yokohama] is structured in visible contrast to the old one, it needs models from elsewhere to follow” (Clarke 2007, p.398-399). Its “template” first comes from Manhattan, the global city with numerous landmarks, and the place where Stubbins built Citicorp Center, a 914-foot tower, the third tallest building in New York at the time. Stubbins’ work in Japan outcompeted the 243-metre-high Tokyo New Metropolitan Government Office Building, built just a few years earlier and designed by internationally renowned Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. Tange also designed the Yokohama Museum of Art, which opened in MM21 at the time of the expo as the second largest art museum in Japan, but it is now hidden behind Stubbins’ high-rise. It was a strategic choice by the City of Yokohama to involve an American architect. As Coaldrake (1996) puts it, it was “like the preference of younger Japanese for clothes with foreign ‘designer labels’…In fashion terms, Stubbins’ Land Mark Tower promotes the image of Yokohama as somewhere trendy and a little exotic, even foreign” (p.254-255). In pursuit of reestablishing Yokohama’s status as a cosmopolitan city, the City of Yokohama makes
historical reference to Imperial America, which returns to Yokohama decades after the postwar occupation of Japan to symbolically occupy Yokohama’s new urban landscape.

But the Land Mark Tower’s template is twofold. Greg Goldin (2006), who wrote an obituary of Stubbins, describes the tower as having “temple-like corners” mixed with American modernism. In the meantime, a resident of Yokohama whom I met during my research conveyed a locally shared speculation that the tower was designed in the image of torii, the gate of a Shinto shrine, but in this instance outlining all four walls of the tower. While it is not clear which architectural tradition Stubbins had in mind in conceptualizing his project, the torii hypothesis is more telling than Goldin’s observation for situating the symbolic meaning of the design within Yokohama’s historical discourse. The Land Mark Tower is not only a new landmark of Yokohama, but it is symbolically also a new torii gate installed at the entrance of the MM21 on the reclaimed land. It is a gate facing the interior Japan, inviting local visitors and consumers to Yokohama’s modern (read, Americanized) city. It is also an exotic and sacred gate facing outward to the Pacific, welcoming international visitors.

The tower’s link to Shintoism, Japan’s state religion before WWII, is a trace of Japanese imperialism, which is now coupled with American imperialism. In Hiroshima Traces, Lisa Yoneyama (1999) compares two of Tange’s architectural designs, his plan for a grandiose Shintoist memorial zone proposed in 1942 as the Commemorative Building Project for the Construction of Greater East Asia, part of Japan’s imperial vision, and his postwar design for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. While the former was never realized, Yoneyama points out, its concept “appears to have been revived” in
his Hiroshima project (p.2) as a “persistent, albeit forgotten, element” of the Japanese Empire (p.3). Almost forty years after Tange’s project was realized in 1954, a Shintoist symbol appears again in the tower designed by an American architect. The symbol is further modified to suit a modernist, progressive project, and rises as a masculine, phallic figure as the city’s and nation’s landmark.

Stubbins’ attention to a traditional Japanese architecture might reflect his Orientalist fascination with Japanese traditional culture. However, having a Shintoist icon is not completely out of context or unfounded in the history of Yokohama’s waterfront, whether the architect was conscious of it or not. In fact, the tower’s design accidentally reveals Yokohama’s invisible connection to Imperial Japan. The site of the Land Mark Tower was previously used by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries for its dockyard, which has been partially preserved as a historic site and is currently used as an open event space attached to the Land Mark Plaza and a shopping complex extending from the lower level of the tower. The tower still belongs to the Mitsubishi Estate, a company that, together with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, constitutes the Mitsubishi Group. As one of the big four former-zaibatsu companies [great family enterprises], Mitsubishi, with its extensive financial power in the form of commercial bank credit, played a significant role in the politics, economy and “nationalized” industrial development of the Japanese Empire from the Meiji period until the end of WWII, working in a strong association with the imperial military and the Emperor (Bisson 1945, p.355, 1954; Yamamura 1964, p.539-540). While zaibatsu were dissolved by the GHQ during the American occupation era to break down the concentration of economic power and move toward a more competitive, laissez-faire liberal (and US friendly) economy (Bisson 1945, p.3), the Mitsubishi Group
reformed in the 1960s and played a leading role in the nation’s postwar economic growth, a “miracle” that most Japanese retrospectively celebrate today without nurturing an ethical engagement with other Asian countries with which Japan maintains neo-colonial relationships (Hashimoto 2005, p.215).

With a critical eye I see the Land Mark Tower and find the ghost of the Japanese Empire wearing a U.S.-designed Oriental mask. It embodies Japan’s lasting postwar relationship with Imperial America, which conceals the nation’s prewar history of the Japanese Empire. Despite Yokohama’s attempt to create a future city, therefore, the “newness or contemporaneousness” of the landscape of MM21 “does not mean a pure autonomy” (Clarke 2007, p.399), but instead the “infectious residue of [Yokohama’s] unconsidered and unresolved past” appears as a ghostly trace from a crack in the “postcolonial dream of discontinuity” (Gandhi 1998, p.7). What this trace reveals is the actual historical continuity of the two imperial powers.

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In the decade that followed 1993, through to my undergraduate years, I frequently returned to MM21 with my friends to spend time together while shopping, watching movies, drinking over live music, counting down to the New Year in front of the Cosmo Clock, and watching fireworks. To me in my adolescence, MM21 was another “place to be”—it was much more spacious than the congested shopping venues in Tokyo, and quite importantly, it was an entrance to the vast Pacific Ocean. Strolling from the JR Sakuragicho Station through the postmodern structures of the Land Mark Plaza, the Queen’s Square shopping and business complex, Pacifico Yokohama, and finally to the Rinko [harbour-side] Park, was a passage to the Pacific. MM21 was my imaginary gateway to the world outside Japan.
The decade during which I spent my leisure time in MM21 was also the time I spent studying in Keio High School and University, whose campuses were scattered across Tokyo and Kanagawa Prefecture in which Yokohama is located. One-third of my high school’s population were “returnee students,” who had returned from abroad, almost exclusively from English-speaking countries, immediately preceding their entrance to the school. Combined with an intensive English education, the acceptance of students who were already equipped with fluent English was my school’s strategy to bring cosmopolitan culture into the school and produce an internationally competitive group of graduates. I was one of those “returnee students,” who, just like others labeled as such, had lived abroad with my family because my father was on his three-year term working at his employer’s international branch office; but I was also an atypical case, because my family returned from Moscow of the communist Soviet Union. I had zero competence in English, making me just the same as “regular” Japanese students. Immediately after being admitted to the school I was not able to come to terms with the supremacy of the English language that dominated the campus and felt that my familiarity with non-Japanese, non-American, non-English and non-capitalist culture was unreasonably undervalued or not even recognized. Over time, however, the presence of English-speaking classmates converted and motivated me to pursue graduate studies in North America.

The history of Keio parallels the history of Japanese modernization. Keio University was originally founded by Yukichi Fukuzawa in 1858, a year before the Edo government opened Yokohama’s port, as an “institution of Western learning unlike any other in Japan in its time” (Keio University, n.d.). Fukuzawa, who has been featured on the 10,000 yen note, the highest banknote issued in Japan since 1984, had a strong belief in “datsu-a nyu-ou,” or “leave Asia, enter Europe,” advocating that the only possible way for Japan to survive the political and economic pressure from the west was to develop and modernize like the west. His stance on westernization, of course, came hand in hand with a colonialist view of Asia. He had his own version of the Orientalist worldview, which was an imitation of 19th century western Orientalism, saw other
Asian countries such as China and Korea as backward and barbaric, and expressed his desire to establish Japan as the centre of civilization in Asia (Kang 1996, p.95). Today, Keio is known as one of the prestigious universities in Japan, producing elite salarymen and women working for big corporations, including former-zaibatsu conglomerates.

When I graduated from Keio University, I did not join Japan’s work force but moved to Canada in 2004 and started to develop my academic career in the west, studying critical theories and postcolonial literature. As a westernized cosmopolitan subject, whom Fukuzawa would have favoured, I still feel at home back in MM21 however disturbing this is to me, at the same time. When I see the nighttime skyline of MM21 from across the water on the Yokohama Bay Bridge, coming from the Tokyo Narita Airport, it grabs my heart and evokes a homecoming sentiment. What catches my eyes first is, of course, the Land Mark Tower, sticking out in the landscape of the waterfront with the upper four corners lighted up by white vertical lines. To the right, the Queen’s Square draws a wave of lights that delineate their multilevelled rooftops, and then there is the Intercontinental Hotel in a crescent-moon shape quietly standing at the edge of the waterfront. To the front, the Cosmoclock Ferris Wheel presents a colourful spectacle of lights, and the Red Brick Warehouse shopping and event complex modestly show its brick walls with orange dim lights, creating a warm and nostalgic tone in the view. Every time I return to Japan this view convinces me that I am back home.

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The City of Yokohama’s redevelopment project MM21 was directed by the Yokohama Minato Mirai 21 Corp., which was established in 1984. MM21 Corp. took the form of a “third sector” organization, which received half of its capital from the public sector and another half from private companies, totaling 2 trillion yen in investment. After the opening of the Land Mark Tower in 1993, the project continued until 2008
when its master plan of 1981 was fully realized. The project took place over almost a quarter century and involved the leadership of four mayors, Asukata, Saigo, Takahide and Nakada. MM21 occupies 180 hectares of reclaimed land and is filled with office buildings, hotels, a convention center, a hospital, an amusement park, museums, and shopping facilities (Kishida and Utsuki 2009, p.144). It is also equipped with earthquake tolerant high-tech infrastructure; a full range of water and gas pipes, power cables, waste routes, and a heating and cooling system; a teleport service with a network of communication satellites and optical fibres; and new roads, a bridge, and rail links, connecting MM21 to downtown Tokyo, the Shin Yokohama Station of the Tokaido Shinkansen or “bullet train,” Tokyo International Airport (Haneda Airport), Tokyo New International Airport (Narita Airport) and the Tomei (Tokyo-Nagoya) Highway, giving access from the rest of Japan and to outside Japan (Edington 1991, p.75).

What made this project “exceptional” in Japan is the fact that many architects were involved in the planning, which had not been the case in the country where “road specialists,” or a handful of mega construction companies, usually dominate urban development (Frankel 1986). Those specialists had been protected by the postwar, new “sakoku” economic policy of Japan that facilitated the growth of domestic industries. What is more, MM21 involved participation of American architects Hugh Stubbins, who designed the Land Mark Tower, and Michael Graves, who designed high-rise condominiums (Kuwabara 1988). After May 1988 when Japan and the United States agreed on the opening of Japan’s construction market to foreign companies, again, under

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29 Kunosuke Kuwabara (1988) reports in the *Japan Economic Journal* on May 28, 1988 that the participation of foreign architects and tie-ups between Japanese and foreign contractors were becoming more visible in other cities of Japan at around this time.
U.S.-led globalization, Schal Associates Inc. based in Chicago became the first American contractor to participate in a major project in Japan (“U.S. firm is included in Yokohama contract” 1988). Schal was a member of the nine-company consortium, which won a contract worth 17,950 million yen from the City of Yokohama, and participated in the construction of the Pacific Convention Plaza Yokohama (Normile 1989), part of today’s convention complex PACIFICO Yokohama. Again, Yokohama became an experimental site for Tokyo’s new “opening” policies.

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I returned to Yokohama’s waterfront, my imaginary hometown, the place I missed the most from across the Pacific in Vancouver, to conduct my fieldwork. To my surprise MM21 seemed like a ruined city. During weekdays, shopping malls were quiet and with the extensive voids designed into the buildings, the buildings looked too spacious. On this particular day in December 2012 the Land Mark Tower was hosting an event that celebrated the sale of a greatest hits album by Yuming, a female Japanese singer, composer, lyricist and pianist, who became a commercial success during the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. In the Plaza Yuming’s songs were playing, which I was familiar with because my mother used to listen to them when I was little. Absence of other visitors and the oldie echoing in the building made me extremely sentimental and sad. The newness of the building that fascinated me over ten years ago was gone. Today, the future city is nostalgic—it invites consumers of an older generation, who yearn for the golden age of the “economic miracle,” of neo-imperial Japan. What would happen when the tallest building in Japan loses its inhabitants? I wondered. Some of the Parisian arcades from the 19th century were incorporated into new urban structures during the Second French Empire, becoming like antique, hidden streets in-between buildings. But nothing would be able to absorb a high-rise like this. (5 December 2012, Minato Mirai 21)
On the 2008-2009 annual broadcast of *Yuku-toshi Kuru-toshi [The Old Year Out, the New Year In]*, NHK’s (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) cross-country temple-and-shrine-tour-show, the first site that was visited was the Redbrick Warehouse and Cosmo Clock Ferris Wheel in Yokohama’s MM21 (Utsuki 2009, p.17). The program is designed for Japanese families who spend the end of the year at home while listening to the mass-mediated tolling temple bells at midnight on New Year’s Eve. It was new for the program to feature a view of modern and western urban structures, as it almost always presents traditional Buddhist and Shintoist landscapes from different parts of Japan. Morio Utsuki (2009), an architect, urban designer and professor of urban design at Waseda University, positively evaluates it as evidence that MM21’s spectacle is as beautiful as traditional Japanese religious sites by Japan’s national public broadcasting. It might have also meant that the future city MM21 is now legitimized as a traditional landscape of Yokohama, and Japan.

While originally constructed as a progressive “future city” by modern engineering, the landscape of MM21 is today much more ambivalent. Hideo Mori, a local photographer, published a photograph book in 2011 entitled *Scenery of Yokohama*. A photographer who used to capture the transformation of the streetscape in inner-city Yokohama, scenes of postwar Yokohama “disappearing” due to new development in the Yokohama Station and MM21 (see Chapter Three), today documents the urban landscape of MM21, a future city, in a somewhat nostalgic manner. The cover page captures the waterfront—the Land Mark Tower, the Queen’s Square high-rises, the Cosmo Clock
Ferris wheel, piers and Yamashita Park—from the water. The landscape is entirely illuminated in orange by the setting sun and gently appeals to the viewer’s emotions by evoking a sense of sadness and pain. In the book Mori (2011) writes, “Yokohama is a mixture of the old and the new, a city that is ever evolving” (n.p.). Here, what he means by the “new” part of Yokohama is clearly the district of MM21. But his photographic collection as a whole cherishes Yokohama’s waterfront. He captures both the “new” and “old” parts of Yokohama protectively and nostalgically with warmth created by the colors of the sun, evening lights, and the fog. Yokohama’s future city is aging in his viewfinder, still forgetful of its imperial and colonial pasts.

**Kannai 2012: Western Heroes in New Old City**

On January 20, 2012, I was inside the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History. It was the second museum in Kannai I visited on that day, after the Museum of Yokohama Urban History. Official history of modern Yokohama repeated itself in Kannai. It was like museums are echoing each other and together forming a voice of institutional history. I could almost recite this historical narrative, which was
constituted by roughly three breaks or key turning points that facilitated the city’s urban development: the arrival of Black Ships in the mid 19th century, which marked the beginning of Yokohama’s modernization, westernization and urbanization; the Great Kanto earthquake in 1923 (magnitude of 7.9), which destroyed most of the urban structures of Kannai and interior areas that required an intensive restoration; and the Great Air Raid of 1945, which again destroyed the commercial and residential areas of central Yokohama, and led to the subsequent occupation of the city by the Allied Forces and Americanization of the city. Then there was the long lasting period of the present, the “postwar” era, which was most clearly presented in the section “We kept running after the wealth” at the very end of the exhibit on modern history in the prefectural museum. The display shows Yokohama and Japan’s efforts to build the nation from ground zero and “catch up with America” in economic and industrial spheres.

In the large, authoritative stone building of the museum, I felt protected from the snow that lasted since the morning. I was already quite familiar with the same official narrative of Yokohama, and nothing in the museum exhibits felt striking or new. I wanted to stay in the building just to avoid the snow but it did not seem like it would stop anytime soon. “The amount of cesium is increasing due to snow. You better stay inside today,” I was warned in a text message from a friend of mine, who was cautious about the aftereffects of the Fukushima nuclear accident, and that discouraged me to go outside even more. The discourse of the history of Yokohama that permeated the museum building was indifferent to the “postindustrial” disaster the nation was facing today. This is ironic, because nuclear technologies are something the Japanese government imported from the United States soon after the end of WWII, and importation of western modern technologies is what Yokohama’s official history is mostly about. Coming back to the museum lobby, I was asked by a staff member to provide my feedback on the exhibit. They were struggling to attract visitors. Kannai was never busy during the period of my research. Particularly on weekdays the city toned down even more, making me anxious as if I could disappear in the street without being witnessed. I was one of very few visitors on that day and there was no reason for them
to miss an opportunity. The museum was empty and the voice of the staff echoed in the hall. (20 January 2012, Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History)

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Kannai is currently Yokohama’s government district located immediately to the south of MM21. The area is surrounded by the Yokohama Bay, the Ooka River, the Nakamura River, the underground Shuto Highway or the former Haooka River before it was filled for development in the 1960s. When the Edo government opened the Port of Yokohama in 1959 it expanded the former Yokohama Village into present Kannai and designed it as a commercial site for western trade. The government strategically isolated the area by water and divided it into carefully designated districts of *gaikokujin kyōryūchi*, a foreign settlement, *nihonjinmachi*, Japan town, with a Chinatown in-between those two districts, reflecting and promoting Chinese people’s role as go-betweens for westerners and the Japanese.  

The last area that made up Kannai was a red light district called Miyozaki Yukaku [*yukaku* is literally a “pleasure quarter”] for foreign elite visitors. The foreign settlement was located in the east side of the waterfront and the development of Miyozaki Yukaku was carefully planned and realized to restrict the movement of foreign visitors and control the risk of potential conflict between the

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30 When Yokohama’s port was opened in 1859, Chinese migrants came to Yokohama as compradors, skilled workers and domestic workers hired by western merchants, mediating and assisting their business relationships with the Japanese (Shu 1995, p.402).

31 Regarding the last point, Masaaki Hiraoka (2007), a local cultural critic based in Yokohama, points out that the Edo government strategically located a red light district at the centre of the city to avoid Yokohama becoming a typical colonial city with a church that might have been built by westerners there otherwise (p.260). The presence of the red light district between the foreign settlement on the waterfront and interior also helped the government deflect the foreigner’s invasion and control the border as I discuss at the end of this chapter.
visitors and the Japanese. Soon western architecture (stone and brick buildings, railway station, iron bridge, roof tiles, bricks etc.), infrastructure (roads, drainage, manholes, water works, gas works, park, etc.), communication systems and technologies (newspaper, telegram, mail, photography, etc.) were introduced and started to form the modern urban development of Yokohama.

Today, the city is filled with plaques, monuments and museums, commemorating Commodore Perry and oyatoi gaikokujin, or hired foreigners, who introduced modern western technologies to Japan as advisors of the Edo and Meiji governments. In the official history of Yokohama, western men such as Richard Brunton (UK), who built the first lighthouse and designed the original Yokohama Park, drainage, and roads in Kannai; Alfred Gerard (France), who introduced French roof piles and bricks; Henry Palmer (UK), who built the first water works and Yokohama’s new harbour; and Henri Pelegrin (France), who built the first gas works, are remembered not as external threats or objects of abjection but as respected fathers of the modern city of Yokohama (Hori 2006). The

However, Eric C. Han (2013) suggests that the “Japanese and foreign communities were not sequestered in separate spheres, as has commonly been presumed” (p.249). On the contrary, a full range of contact between Japanese and foreigners took place in the mixed lower-class communities.

When Japan opened the country to the western nations, the Japanese (Edo and Meiji) government hired foreign experts, who worked for the government, private trade companies and schools, and assisted in westernization and modernization of Japan (Muramatsu 1995). Those “hired foreigners” came from a range of western countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands. In addition to introducing western technologies those “hired foreigners” also helped the government with designing modern legal, political, military and economic systems for the new Meiji Japan. Examples include G.F. Verbeck (Netherland), who introduced military recruitment and education systems; G.E. Boissonade (France), who designed the basic structure of Japanese civil law and criminal law; H. Roesler (Germany), who drafted the Meiji Constitution; A.C. DuBousquet (France), who contributed to the establishment of the Japanese army; A.L. Douglas (UK), who built the basic structure of the Japanese navy; H.W. Denison (USA), who educated members of the Japanese government on international diplomacy; T.W. Kinder (UK), who helped create a modern monetary system; and A.A. Shand (UK), who took a leading role in establishing the Japanese banking system and its management method (Muramatsu 1995, p.25).
history of the introduction of western technologies and architecture in the Port Opening era has been spatialized and mapped out across Naka Ward, and Kannai in particular, on the tourist monument map published by the ward government (Naka Ward 2014).

When I walk the streets of Kannai I am overwhelmed by the sheer number of museums housed in western-style heritage buildings. Between Bashamichi [Carriage Street] and Hakubutsukan Dori [Museum Street] stands the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History. It is architecturally grand, stone-made and western, originally built in 1904 for Yokohama Specie Bank’s central branch and is currently designated as a heritage building by the national government. Bashamichi Street itself is like an open-air museum with monuments that commemorate the introduction of photography, ice cream, and gas lamps. In fact, the gas lamps, which were first introduced in 1872, were restored in the 1980s by the Bashamichi Arcade Association to reproduce a touch of Yokohama’s the early modern period (Rokukawa 2006, p.97).

Bashamichi Station of the Minatomirai Line, which opened in 2004, was designed to be a “meeting point for the past and the future” (Yokohama Minatomirai Railway Company 2012). It is constructed with red brick for finishing the walls and displays parts of remains from old modern buildings that used to stand on the ground above, such as iron gates, bars, and office shelves. On Nihon Odori [Japan Avenue] is the Museum of Yokohama Urban History, which is housed in western architecture with tiled walls. The building was originally built in 1929 for the Yokohama Telephone Central Exchange Station and is currently designated as a heritage building by the City of Yokohama. In addition to those, there are also the Yokohama Archives of History, the Silk Museum, the NYK (Nippon Yusen Kaisha) Maritime Museum, the NYK Hikawamaru ship museum on
the water, Yokohama Customs Archives, the Port Opening Memorial Hall, the Japan
Newspaper Museum, the Yokohama Museum of EurAsian Cultures, and Hara Model
Railway Museum located in the historic Yokohama Mitsui Building. Many of those
buildings are designated as heritage buildings by the national or municipal government.

In Natsuko Akagawa’s (2015) study of practices of heritage conservation in
Japan, she suggests that the state used “heritage for nation building in the quest for
defining a national character and culture, to show national distinctiveness and to establish
‘national identity’ in the context of an increasingly globalised world” (p.13). She suggests
that in the period of rapid economic development and urbanization after WWII, the
Japanese government began to utilize traditional vernacular culture to project the “desired
image of Japanese identity” (p.43). In Yokohama, however, it seems that the opposite
trend applies where the municipal government puts effort into showing its distinctiveness
and reinforce its identity through conservation of western architecture. City officials
currently define Yokohama’s identity in terms of the presence of western architecture in
the city. For example, former mayor Hiroshi Nakata (2008) distinguishes Yokohama
from other cities in Japan by its urban landscape originating from the Port Opening era.
As a concrete strategy to maintain the city’s identity, he specifically emphasizes the
importance of the preservation of historic buildings through his creative city project. In a
government issued booklet titled Toshi no kioku [Urban Memory], a catalogue of
Yokohama’s heritage buildings, current mayor Fumiko Hayashi (2011) also proposes the
preservation and repurpose of historic buildings as part of the city’s four-year plan for
Yokohama’s new urban development. Many of those heritage buildings in Kannai have
been repurposed into museums, archives, prefectural and city government buildings and private company offices.

In 2004, the Culture and Tourism Bureau of the City of Yokohama put together the Proposal for Creative City Yokohama under Nakata’s mayoralty. Importing the concept of “creative city” (Landry 2000, Florida 2002) adopted by European cities for branding urban redevelopment projects, Yokohama aimed to economically revitalize the Kannai area. Kannai had lost its commercial power to attract tourists due to the development of MM21 that was now blocking the flow of visitors from Tokyo in the North (Mori, City of Yokohama, personal communication, 28 February 2013). At around this time, the cityscape of Kannai was transforming due to the development of high-rise condominiums (Oishi et al. 2008, p.10). The creative city project was simultaneously a strategy to save unoccupied old private buildings from being demolished by private urban developers by utilizing them as art venues and to maintain Yokohama’s distinct identity as a western-influenced exotic city. A keystone in this project was the BankART1929 project launched in 2003, which initially used two historic buildings that were built in 1929 for the Yokohama branch of the former Daiichi Bank and the Yokohama branch of the former Fuji Bank. The project turned them into art venues for short-term art projects (Oishi et al. 2008, p.13). The two preserved bank buildings, one characterized by the Tuscan columns and the other by a design resembling Italian Renaissance palazzo architecture (Noda 2008, p.90), are symbolic traces of Yokohama’s economic centrality in the prewar era. Later the Fuji Bank building was taken over by the Graduate School of

34 Both buildings are designated by the City of Yokohama as heritage buildings.
Film and New Media at Tokyo University of the Arts, and the Daiichi Bank building was used as Yokohama Creative City Center, home of the Arts Commission Yokohama, a funding body for artists based in Yokohama or visiting as artists-in-residence. Currently, the BankART project is located in what was previously used as storage for one of the largest Japanese shipping companies, Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha (NYK).

Kannai is, using Pierre Nora’s (1989) term, lieux de memoire, a site of memory where historic sites are deliberately established by institutions as “exterior scaffolding and outward signs” (p.13) to preserve historical traces of the city from the prewar period against the felt disappearance of the “real environment of memory” (p.7). Those historic buildings no longer serve their original functions but “they are now…first and foremost structures to be looked at” by tourists (Clarke 2007, p.396). In addition to the buildings themselves, it is quite common to see monochrome or sepia-coloured photographs of the buildings from their early years. Those photographs are sometimes displayed at the entrance of the building, in bookstores, any other commercial establishments, museum websites, and of course, museum exhibits, together projecting Kannai as ‘old’ Yokohama. Being juxtaposed with MM21, which is identified by the municipal government as a future city where “memories and the past are irrelevant,” Kannai has been restructured and politically reinvented to be a site for remembering (Edensor 2005, p.833). Kannai, ‘old’ Yokohama, is not actually old or unchanged but “has already been largely refashioned” according to immediate political and economic needs (Clarke 2007, p.402).
Musealization of cities, including the establishment of museums and the creation of new historical walks and new maps, has been discussed by many scholars of cultural memory (Boym 1994, Huyssen 2003, Nora 1989). In those discussions, the process of musealization is understood to be happening as a nostalgic reaction against forgetting caused by “time-space compression” (Harvey 1990) or the “cultural logic of late capitalism” (Jameson 1991). As Huyssen (2003) puts it, it is an “attempt...to secure some continuity within time, to provide some extension of lived space within which we can breathe and move” (p.24). In Yokohama, however, it seems to me that the musealization of the Kannai district is not occurring as a reaction against capitalist, creative-destructive transformation of the city, which is exemplified by the redevelopment of MM21, a consumer-oriented futuristic city. Rather, those two urban restructuring processes are driven politically with the municipal government’s same imperative to revitalize Yokohama’s economy through commercialism and tourism. At a cultural level, both the MM21 project and musealization of the Kannai district are the government’s strategies to reestablish the city’s identity as a traditionally cosmopolitan, i.e. westernized, city, more so than Edo-Tokyo, to which Yokohama has always had a been subordinate.

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On January 25, 2012, I was standing at the ground level of the Hotel New Grand, Yokohama’s European-style, historic hotel that opened in 1927 right by the water.35 The purpose of my visit was to see a photo exhibit, which took place in conjunction with Photo Yokohama 2012 that took place across the waterfront area and other parts of the

35 The building was designated as a heritage building by the City of Yokohama in 1992, and as a heritage of industrial modernization by Ministry of Economy and Trade and Industry in 2007.
city between January to March. This particular exhibit commemorated the 85th anniversary of the opening of the hotel, featuring its history in photographs from the past. The displays were set up under the stairs leading up to the lobby area. The exhibit was much smaller in scale than what I had expected and there were not many viewers around. Looking around the displays, what struck me were the photographs of the hotel taken during the American occupation era. I looked at a monochrome photograph of General Douglas MacArthur, the head of GHQ, coming down the steps of the hotel entrance, protected by guards standing in front of the hotel. The display indicated that MacArthur was staying in room 315 of the hotel on the first three days after his arrival in Japan. The reason why the Allied Forces selected Yokohama as the site for their first station was because of the Hotel New Grand, which survived the air raid and was most appropriate as accommodation for the chief commander. The captions perplexed me, because it phrased the occupation of Yokohama and the hotel by U.S. military in a celebratory tone, as if it was an honourable event and MacArthur was the most “welcomed” guest in the 85-year history of the hotel. The photograph of MacArthur itself, however, was rather depressing. Guards stand still, straightening up their bodies and looking up to the sky, and MacArthur looks straight toward the ground, ground zero where almost nothing other than the hotel building remained due to the Great Raid of May 29, 1945.

How did MacArthur come to be remembered as a hero in Yokohama’s history? I had already speculated on this question a number of times but could not help asking myself again. I had the same question a few days earlier in the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History’s section for the modern history of Yokohama, when I was standing in front of a series of four enlarged images taken from wood print portraits of Commodore Perry, who won the port treaty with the Edo government and aggressively opened the Japanese port in 1859. Images of Perry dominated the entire space—there were no other faces of officials from the Edo government or any other western countries. Why is only Perry remembered? Is this an effect of postwar Japan-U.S. relations? One of the portraits clearly represented him like a tengu, a legendary demon
with a red face and a long nose, one of the well-known representations of western men from a time when Japanese people first encountered the west, but the museum’s general narrative presented him as the founder of modern Yokohama. Local struggles against the western Other during the Port Opening era and the Allied Forces in the post-WWII period were cleanly wiped away in the official narrative. Yokohama happily becomes a land of Americans in the postwar construction of Yokohama’s modern history.

It did not take too long for me to go through the photo exhibit but I was hungry having walked all over the city all day. I decided to stop by a café in the hotel with windows giving a view of Yamashita Park and the water. When a waiter came to my table, I ordered a piece of strawberry shortcake and asked him whether the exterior of the building had ever been renovated. “No,” he answered me with a smile. “It stays the same since the opening in 1927. It survived the war, and you know what, MacArthur stayed at our hotel!” (25 January 2012, Hotel New Grand)

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The repetitive historical narrative reproduced in Kannai controls and manages the way Yokohama’s past is remembered. Preserved heritage buildings, newly built monuments and plaques also clearly identify the sites where remembering should take place. The newly-fashioned-old-city of Kannai is shaped by a carefully selected set of memories and memory sites. At the same time, as Tyrer and Crinson (2005) argue, it is important to pay attention to the process of forgetting that occurs simultaneously when memory is used as a rejuvenating strategy for a city. Postindustrial redevelopment is enabled, they argue, by the practice of forgetting and suppression of particular pasts. In their analysis of Trafford Park, a site of memory for the history of industrial Manchester, for example, Tyrer and Crinson suggest that the “lived experiences of working-class
labour that made industrial societies possible are notably absent. [The strategic production of the old Village] suppress[es] that experience, turning formerly working-class space into places where the middle classes are always at home” (p.130).

Tyrer and Crinson’s argument is applicable to the case of Yokohama. Adding a postcolonial lens to my reading of Kannai’s official discourse, I argue that it excludes memories of (post)colonial migrants from the memoryscape of the city (Yoneyama 1999). While official historical discourse only highlights the contributions of western male oyatoi gaikokujin, or hired foreigners, in the modern development of the city, in reality, working-class migrants, including Chinese, Korean, Okinawan, Ainu, people of Buraku and Tohoku (North-Eastern) Region, also played significant roles in the urban industrial development and international trade taking place in Yokohama (Takahashi 1998, p.68). While their contributions are not recognized in official history, local community activists and researchers have documented their contributions. For example, Yokohama kakyō no kioku [Memories of the Chinese Community in Yokohama], collected by the Yokohama Chinese History Research Association, documents oral histories of people of Chinese descent, and includes a story of Seiki Suzuki (2010), a second-generation Chinese Japanese resident in Yokohama’s Chinatown. In his story, Suzuki notes that there were many Chinese carpenters and painters in Kannai during the Meiji and Taisho eras (1868-1912; 1912-1926), and that his father was involved in painting the exterior of the Hotel New Grand (p.121). Migrants also played a leading role in urban development as construction workers. According to Fumio Oishi and Mariko Takekawa, contributors for Kanagawa no naka no Chosen [Korea in Kanagawa], a collection of local histories of Korean migrants in Kanagawa Prefecture, Korean migrants were
involved in the development Nakamuracho, a district in the inner city of Yokohama where Korean and Okinawan communities grew (Oishi and Takekawa 1998, p.204). Furthermore, when the city was destroyed due to the Great Kanto Earthquake, Korean labourers engaged in the reconstruction and expansion of the city’s industrial port (Nicchukan sangoku kyodo rekishi hensan iinkai 2012, p.38). Just before WWII, during the period of the Japanese Imperial rule, Korean and Chinese people were brought from their homelands to Yokohama and were forced to work at construction sites and military factories (p.39).

Domestic and transnational migrants continued to contribute to the manual labour force in Yokohama after WWII in different ways. The presence of the U.S. military bases during the occupation of Japan and the Korean War produced a demand for labourers, particularly longshore workers, and attracted a number of migrants particularly from the impoverished northern regions of Japan, such as Tohoku and Hokkaido (Nakata 1983). Local activist Shiro Nakata (1983) in his book Hadaka no derashine [Naked Drifters] reports that Korean people in Yokohama offered those migrant labourers cheap accommodations, such as “water hotels,” boarding houses built on disabled boats that would float on the Ooka River in the late 40s through 50s. From the late 50s, they also operated unofficial social housing in Kotobukicho. In the 1980s, as Japanese labourers started to age, the manual labour market began to require new transnational migrant labourers to sustain the Japanese “bubble economy” (Takahashi 1998, p.72). Filipino journalist Rey Ventura (2007), who was himself a day labourer in Kotobukicho once, writes that labourers from the Philippines and Korea became visible in Yokohama from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s until the bubble economy burst (also see Yamamoto
2008, p.32). In fact, according to Carolyn Stevens’s (1997) ethnographic study of Kotobukicho, the labourers in the district were even more diverse as there were also Thai, Malaysian, Pakistani and Iranian men, aged between 18 and 60 (p.26). Yokohama was built, to a significant degree, by migrants from Japan’s (neo)colonies. The present-day Kannai, however, completely lacks any visible traces of the lives and experiences of those *hiyato ri dosha*, or day labourers. Kannai’s memoryscape is shaped by a double process of remembering of the *oyatoi* and forgetting of the *hiyatoi*.

Another set of experiences that is made invisible in the memoryscape projected in Kannai, which the rest of this dissertation is primarily concerned with, is those of women, particularly those in the water trade, who contributed to the modernization and urbanization of Yokohama through their physical, economic, political, socially reproductive, cultural and emotional work. While in Yokohama many women were directly mobilized by the Japanese government to prepare for the opening of the port and the American occupation, their experiences are rarely represented, having been buried in the shadow of the memories of western heroes. Those women include: women recruited by the Edo government from impoverished farming families of the Kanto Region, who worked at Miyozaki Yukaku, the government-run pleasure quarter designated for foreign elite men, during the Port Opening era (Kawamoto 1997, p.219); and women recruited by the postwar government, who worked at government-run brothels run by the Recreation and Amusement Association for Allied G.I.s. Furthermore, a group of unauthorized sex workers who worked privately in Yokohama and contributed to the production of an interracial and hybrid culture in the city through day-to-day encounters and interactions with their male customers, are made completely invisible in the official history of
Yokohama. Among them are Japanese street sex workers working all over the city during the occupation, as well as transnational migrant sex workers who started to arrive in the late 1970s in Yokohama. This included those who worked in Koganecho, an unofficial brothel district in the inner-city, in the shadow of the postindustrial development of the city.

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On January 10, 2012, I was on my way to the Naka Ward Office located in Kannai in search of statistical data on the population of non-Japanese residents in the city. Getting off at the Kannai Station for the first time during my fieldwork research, I immediately thought of having a look at the stone lantern of Gankiro that should have been displayed somewhere in Yokohama Park. The park is located between the station and the ward office, and it seemed a perfect plan. Gankiro was one of the most popular establishments in Miyozaki Yukaku, a licensed red-light district designated specifically for foreign diplomats, sailors, and merchants by the Edo government in the very initial stage of the development of the waterfront. The inclusion of the yukaku was an essential part of the urbanization plan for the government, who thought that international and intercultural relations could successfully be facilitated through a promotion of sexual relations (Kawamoto 1997, p.87-88). It was also a strategic measure against the invasion of westerners into Edo; the government hoped that women would serve as the floodwall against western male desires and ambitions so that foreigners would stay in the foreign settlement and their political, economic, social, cultural and sexual influences on the nation could be minimized (Kawamoto 1997).

Indeed, whereas licensed red-light districts were normally located at the fringes of the Edo urban society (Jinnai 1995, p.88), Miyozaki Yukaku was intentionally built right at the centre of the newly developing port area (Yamada 2006, p.82). The district apparently became extremely vibrant, as portrayed in many Yokohama Ukiyoe [woodblock prints], housing approximately 500 women recruited from impoverished
farming families in Kanto Region and operating almost at the same scale as Yoshiwara Yukaku in Edo and Shimabara Yukaku in Kyoto (ibid.). The district had a rather tragic end, however. In November 1866 the great fire, Keio no Taika, burned down two thirds of the Kannai area, including the yukaku, resulting in the death of a number of women working in the district. The site was later redeveloped and became the very first western-style park (1876) introduced to Japan.

Based on some local literature (Yamada 2006, Danbara 2009) I was informed of the presence of the Gankiro lantern, the only physical trace of the Miyozaki Yukaku remaining to date. Passing the Yokohama BayStars baseball stadium under renovation, the key facility of the park today, I finally found a small area that was designed as a Japanese style garden. Contrary to my assumption that the lantern would be visibly displayed as a historical monument, its presence was rather modest, surrounded by bushes that went up to half the height of the lantern itself. I would not have noticed the lantern, if I had not been informed, and could have simply passed it. There was no trace of the stone surface having been carefully taken care of and the overall tone of the stone evoked a sense of misery and abandonment. Furthermore, the lantern was overshadowed by a large plaque, placed in front of the lantern, that explains the historical context of the birth of Yokohama Park. Strangely, the description did not include the word “yukaku,” not to mention any name of individual women working there, and did not make it explicit that the site was originally a red-light district or that Gankiro, to which the lantern used to belong, was a brothel. Instead it briefly stated that Miyozakicho “flourished as an international socialization site.” Disappointed, I took some photographs of the site and started walking to exit the park from the main entrance. What caught my eyes were four tall walls of plaque, proudly greeting the visitors, which explained the historical development of Yokohama Park after the great fire with a note, of course, that the park was originally designed by British engineer, Richard Brunton. (10 January 2012, Yokohama Park)
Chapter Three: Re-membering *Shitamachi* Water Trade

**A Memoryscape Where Ghosts Lodge**

Despite the fact that I was quite familiar with Yokohama’s waterfront, both Minato Mirai 21 and Kannai, throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, it was only the summer of 2005 that I visited “Kangai,” the other side of Yokohama (what some people might call, the “real” Yokohama), for the first time. Kannai refers to “inside the kanmon,” a gate set up by the Edo government to segregate samurai and foreign visitors to prevent contact and conflicts between them, whereas Kangai is a name that has commonly been used by locals to refer to the area outside the foreign settlement.\(^3\)

During my fieldwork, I started to learn one of the popularly accepted histories of Kangai.

\(^3\) Unlike Kannai, Kangai is not an officially designated district. As such, a geographical definition of the area is difficult to be made. Usually, it includes the area of Yoshida Shinden surrounded by rivers, which itself covers a number of small, officially designated towns [or *cho*, a subdivision of a ward or *ku*], but often Kangai also includes towns beyond the rivers, such as Noge, Hinodecho and Koganecho.
as I visited museums in Kannai, read locally available literature, walked streets and heard stories from local residents. According to this history, before the port opened, this bell-shaped area enclosed by the Ooka River, the Nakamura River, and the Hakooka River was called Yoshida Shinden [Yoshida’s new fields]. It was rice fields developed on reclaimed land in the mid 17th century, and in the Meiji period when the small Yokohama Village expanded into a cosmopolitan modern city, the former rice fields further developed into the centre of commercial and cultural activities for Japanese residents. Kangai, and particularly the commercial street of Isezakicho, was most vibrant, like its Ginza counterpart in Tokyo, until WWII when the area was burned down and the American occupation of the area forced key local businesses to move to Tokyo during the post-war restoration period. Ironically, however, the postwar occupation facilitated a reconfiguration of the Kangai area into a vibrant and culturally hybrid space, as American popular culture was introduced through the American military base and nighttime businesses targeted at G.I.s emerged. The area continued to be Yokohama’s primary cultural scene throughout the postwar era. In fact, Kangai had already developed as a gate to western popular culture at the beginning of the 20th century. For example, the Odeon Theatre at the intersection of Isezakicho and Chojamachi always released imported films earlier than any other theatres in the country (Museum of Yokohama Urban History 2003, p.88). Yokohama’s postwar cinema culture was in its prime once again in the 1950s. In 1958, there were 30 movie theatres in the neighbourhood of Isezakicho. The centrality of Isezakicho as Yokohama’s entertainment and commercial district lasted until a new development started around Yokohama Station in the 1970s and the waterfront “future city” project of MM21 was launched in the late 1980s. As the economic and cultural centre was relocated, Kangai began to strengthen its identity as Yokohama’s less modernized shitamachi [literally, downtown], a place of small family businesses where the traditional culture of Yokohama can be felt. Here one finds one of the first western-style confectionary stores in Japan, Hamajiman, not to mention the oldest branch of Fujiya, which has today
grown into a nationwide chain. There are postwar retro-style coffee shops like Coffee Matsumoto and Takeya, which are now often introduced in popular media as non-touristy character businesses that one must visit (Kikuno 2011; Yoshizawa 2014). More recently, Kangai, and particularly its nightlife districts including Fukutomicho and Wakabacho, has been discovered by tourist media as a mysterious and exotic ethnic town with restaurants, pubs and grocery stores owned by Koreans, Taiwanese, Filipinos, and Thai (Kagawa 2011).

But when I went to Kangai in 2005, I did not have such historical knowledge of the place. I was walking with my friend, who wanted to take me to an old western restaurant out of tourist-curiosity. This restaurant had been operating since 1938 in Noge, currently known more as a pub district for salarymen and women. We were supposed to celebrate the end of my one-year marathon to prepare for the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), the results of which were to be sent to American graduate studies programs along with my applications. We also wanted to spend additional time together before I returned to Vancouver for a new academic year. But after taking the exam I was notified that the results did not meet the minimum requirement for the programs I was applying for. I was terribly disappointed and my confidence was completely smashed. By that time, I had already started my postsecondary studies in Canada and my wish to stay in North America had grown greater than ever. Getting another study permit was one of the limited options that would allow me to at least extend my status there. On this particular day, my future seemed uncertain and dark, and I did not have any appetite for the best omuraisu [omelette rice, a western-Japanese fusion dish] in Yokohama.

We must have cut across the Kangai area from Isezakicho across the Ooka River to Noge. But strangely, I have no visual memory of this movement. What I only remember is the darkness of the place, which is odd because, at least in my understanding of the place today, the area is usually bright even during the night,
illuminated with neon, store lights and street lights. I cannot even describe the nature of this darkness. In my memory the place exists more like a void or black hole, which retains no trace of my experience of being there. Perhaps I was too preoccupied with the result of the exam. But is that really it? I vaguely remember that I was confused and felt lost. It was certainly not the Yokohama that I knew and I had no ability to navigate myself in the area. I don’t even have a sense of time we took traveling from Isezakicho to Noge. I remember that at one moment we were standing in front of the Yurindo bookstore on the Isezakicho street and the next moment we were inside this old-fashioned, Showa-style restaurant in Noge.37 I simply followed my friend, who seemed to know the direction to the restaurant. Kangai was outside my map and it did not register in my body then, not even a fragment of its streetscape.

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The first image included in Hideo Mori’s (2006) photographic documentary Pass: Hama no Meri-san [Yokohama Mary] (the second edition) is a monochrome portrait of Mary from the chest up, an unofficial legendary figure in Yokohama, who used to be a street sex worker for American military officials and continued to live on the street as an old woman. She eventually became part of Yokohama’s streetscape until she “suddenly disappeared” in 1995. In the photograph, Mary is neither smiling nor frowning, instead she just peacefully looks at me, the viewer. It is difficult to see if her eyes and mouth are open or closed. Her eyes are covered by her thick, black eyeshadow, and together with her lipstick, they immediately draw my attention because of their clear contrast with her face, as it is covered in kabuki-like white makeup. Her appearance is indeed eccentric. In

37 Showa is a period in Japanese imperial calendar, which corresponds to the reign of the Showa Emperor, Hirohito, from December 25, 1926 through January 7, 1989. I briefly discuss the connotation of this period in this chapter below.
the photographic images of her that I had previously encountered, she always wore a completely outmoded white western dress, often with decorative lace work. She looks like a theatrical figure, except that instead of standing on a stage, she was standing on the street.

Mori’s portrait of Mary is ghostly. The image lacks a sense of sharpness and concreteness that otherwise would suggest the referent of a living body. The lighting at the bottom left of the image, as well as the blurry border between her body and the background, works as a visual effect that creates the illusion that part of her body is disappearing into complete whiteness (the other world?); and her expression is peaceful, making the photographic space transcendental and spiritual. In a formal funeral procedure in Japan, the dead body is usually covered by a white *kimono*, which is traditionally believed to purify the spirit of the dead. Ghosts that appear in Japanese folklore usually wear the same white *kimono*. As ghosts, they are devoid of flesh and they appear blurry in the air, which is not so different from how Mary appears in Mori’s portrait photograph. Mori’s photographs of Mary are also closely linked to death because Mary is old and her aged body suggests her death in the near future. Mori himself alludes to this when he comments on the portrait in the documentary film *Yokohama Mary* (Nakamura et al. 2006), and says it is suitable for Mary’s funeral picture to be displayed on her altar.

At the same time, Mori’s photographs do not cause any fear or creepy sensations in my body. There is also little sense of violence in his documentation or exposure of Mary’s body to the viewer. This might have to do with the photographer’s approach to
photography. “Unlike other photographers, who are eager to take photographs by way of appropriation,” says Sachi Takasugi, a Buddhist ink wash painter, “Mori-san receives, gently and quietly, what is there in front of him,” and in fact, “he rather offers [to the landscape] with his camera” (Mori 2006, n.p., my emphasis). Mori gives Mary, the ghost, a social life by offering the viewer an image of Mary to remember her by after her death or disappearance. In fact, he might have known that Mary might be gone soon when he was photographing her: “Every time I photograph things and places that draw my attention, they are gone the next year, and I was worried that it might happen to Mary-san too,” he comments in Yokohama Mary.

What Mori offers the viewer might be the sensory medium through which things that are no longer with us in the material world reappear. His photographs are less about documenting and preserving past scenes than creating spaces for the ghost to return. Speaking about Mori’s photographs, writer Hiroyuki Itsuki describes the photograph as yorishiro, material objects or places where Japanese people traditionally believed the kami [diety] lodge and settle (Mori 2006).38 Expanding on the notion of yorishiro, Itsuki explains that photographs are neither representations nor indexes of the reality (not even its traces or extensions), but places where the ghost of the referent lodges. Just as the kami come down to earth along a pathway to yorishiro, Itsuki says, the ghost of Mary

38 According to Nam-lin Hur (2009), the “most archaic forms of yorishiro were rocks, trees, plants, or other natural objects, which were usually cordoned off from their surroundings” (57), but they can also be found among human-made objects in the home, such as kadomatsu, a bamboo-made new year decoration at the gate and omigawara, roof-tiles with the design of a devil (Nakamaki 1983, p.65). In fact, Hirochika Nakamaki says, “If we….step into the [traditional] house, it is difficult to find places that do not have a kami” (p.66), and suggests an overwhelming presence of different forms of yorishiro in everyday life of the Japanese.
returns to our world through Mori’s photographs. They serve as a spiritual medium through which the viewer encounters Mary the ghost.

The rest of this chapter critically examines a memoryscape where the time of postwar American occupation is remembered in Yokohama today by analyzing grassroots cultural productions that serve as yorishiro, spiritual and sensory media, through which the viewer encounters the ghost of postwar Yokohama. This memoryscape is centred around the legend of Yokohama Mary, whose story has been developed into a number of local cultural productions since the mid-1990s and has increasingly been accepted in a celebratory manner from the 2000s onward. This include Hideo Mori’s photography books *Mori no kansoku 3: PASS Hama no Meri-san* (1995) and its new edition *PASS #2* (2006), Takahiro Nakamura’s documentary film *Yokohama Mary* (2006), theatre artist Michiko Godai’s one-person play *Yokohama Rosa* (written by Giho Sugiyama) (1996-Present), Yoko Yamazaki’s non-fiction book *Tenshi wa burusu wo utau [Angels Sing the Blues]* (1999), and Kaizo Hayashi’s film trilogy *Shiritsu Tantei [Private Detective] Hama Maiku* (1993-1996). These cultural productions do not simply circulate in a broader market but they have also been exhibited, screened and played in local theatres and cultural spaces, making Yokohama’s space of memory in these representations both imaginary and locally-grounded. The first Yokohama Minato Film Festival took place in

39 While this is out of scope of this chapter, cultural productions around Yokohama-based pop and rock band Golden Cups, which was active in the 1960s and introduced American popular music to Japanese audiences, are also part of the memory boom currently happening in Yokohama. Those productions include Yoko Yamazaki’s non-fiction book *Tenshi wa burusu wo utau [Angels sing the blues]*, the documentary film *The Golden Cups: One More Time* and ancillary events that took place between 2003 and 2005 with the release of the film, and the gallery exhibit *Yokohama Graffiti: The Time of the Golden Cups*, which took place in August 2014.
2012 and was produced by Nakamura. The Festival included a screening of *Yokohama Mary* and a panel discussion by Nakamura and Mori. The 2013 festival exclusively featured both the film and television spinoff series of *Shiritsu Tantei Hama Maiku*. These events offered locals a social space to be connected with each other through a particular set of memories of postwar Yokohama, its streetscape and lived experiences, that shed light on stories of sex workers, who are now romanticized and imagined almost as the symbolic “mother” of Yokohama’s postwar generations. Importantly, people who participate in this space of memory are not necessarily those who have direct experiences of life in the occupation era. What those cultural productions have been producing is what Alison Landsberg (2004) calls “prosthetic memories,” or constructed and mediated memories that were not actually lived by the producer nor many of the viewers but, as I discuss below, still have a capacity to deeply affect and gather bodies, and potentially encourage building a new community and producing a new identity.

At first, I thought that images and stories of Mary like Mori’s photographic project could potentially be understood as constituting a memoryscape that is radically alternative to one shaped by the official history of the city that is projected in the waterfront (see Chapter Two). However, as I discuss below, I later realized that the legend of Mary is a story of victimization, of the Japanese as a “colonized” subject. As a result, this memoryscape is still very much a nationalist one and excludes and potentially silences memories of Japan’s colonial others. By re-appropriating a less celebrated memory of the occupation, local cultural producers and audience re-imagine the city as uniquely and more directly influenced by American culture than any other major
city in Japan. Through this performance of memory those cultural productions reinvent the identity of Kangai, Yokohama, enabling a particular group of local audiences to feel a sense of belonging to place through their immersion in the memoryscape. In this process, however, it obscures the realities of Japan’s colonial others, including migrant sex workers, who are at risk of material and discursive displacement and erasure.

My analysis is firstly based on a close reading of the above cultural productions, which pays attention not only to the photographic or cinematic object but also to their effects on the viewer, or the viewer’s experience of viewing (Sobchack cited in Baron 2014, p.8-9). To discuss the latter I draw on my own experience of viewing images of Mary and Kangai’s streetscapes from the past, being emplaced in the socio-cultural and sensory space where images of Mary were produced and circulated, are projected, cited and talked about. I insert my autoethnographic voice between my analysis of the cultural text to disclose the process through which I became complicit with the production of a memoryscape. My body was increasingly affected by the stories and images of Mary to
the extent that I “felt” the constructed past and a strong sense of nostalgia through cinematic engagement with “archival” images (Baron 2014, p.128).  

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When I first saw Mori’s photographs they made me curious about Mary’s life, not simply because of her theatrical and almost eccentric appearance, but because she was the single most remembered figure in postwar Yokohama by locals. This is despite the fact that she was a street sex worker without privileged status and she embodied a rather dark and less celebrated memory of the American occupation of the city and, more broadly, domination over Japan. Non-fiction writer Terukazu Danbara’s (2009) suggests that “Mary” was originally a general term that was used in postwar Yokohama to refer to any Japanese woman who was familiar with western culture and language (i.e. English) (p.196-197). Extending this view, it could be said that the legend of Yokohama Mary is not simply a story of a specific individual sex worker, but rather it embodies a memory of

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40 When I use term “archival” photographs, I do not necessarily mean that those photographs belong to institutional archives authorized by the state or powerful corporate organizations. The cultural productions I analyze in this chapter do not necessarily identify the “storage locations” from which those photographs were retrieved and many photographs used in, for example, the film *Yokohama Mary* may in fact come from private individuals or independent documentary photographers. Here I follow Jaimie Baron’s (2014) redefinition of the “archive” in contemporary contexts that include “documents that are housed outside of official archives” (p.7). She “reposition[s]…the archival from the authority of place to the authority of experience” and argues that “archival documents exist as ‘archival’ only insofar as the viewer of a given film perceives certain documents within that film as coming from another, previous—and primary—context of use or intended use” (ibid.). Baron suggests that one of the ways in which images are “read as ‘archival’ is…the effect within a given film generated by the juxtaposition of shots perceived as produced at different moments in time” (p.17). As I discuss below, *Yokohama Mary* also uses a series of juxtapositions of monochrome or sepia images of the city produced in the past and cinematic shots of the city produced at the present time (combinations of images from “then” and “now”), which creates “temporal disparity” (p.18) and effectively confers on the former the role of “archival” photographs.
the city during the postwar occupation era, and the postwar Showa era more broadly. She signifies a time when a number of Japanese women earned a living and supported their families in the sex trade by taking Allied G.I.s and officers as their customers, who were stationed in Japan.\(^{41}\) Initially, there were women who were mobilized from across the country by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and worked under the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) in a government-funded and regulated facility (Yoshimi 1979, p.114) to serve as a “sexual floodwall” to protect “Japanese women” from a sexual invasion by foreign men (except, of course, for “shofu” [prostitutes]) (Kato 2009, p.24, Kawamoto 1997, p.20; also see Molasky 1999). In addition, just as the Edo government implemented Miyozaki Yukaku in the development of Kannai in the Port Opening era, the RAA was also the Japanese government’s strategic measure to facilitate external relations with the United States. The RAA itself was abolished within a year upon request by the GHQ led by general Douglas MacArthur out of concern about the rise of the STDs among G.I.s. However, sexual services targeted at Allied G.I.s continued to survive in the form of street sex work—the context in which Yokohama Mary started to stand on the street of Kangai. With her disappearance in 1995, she became an urban legend that symbolizes the city’s experience of American occupation.

\(^{41}\) Similarly, Alan Tansman (1996) studies the myth of Misora Hibari, Yokohama-born female singer and cultural icon, nationally known and celebrated as an “embodiment of post-war Showa” (p.106). He argues, “Hibari’s death…has become a handy cultural marker, a symbol of the end of an age. Yet her death, which seemed to symbolize the passing of an old-fashioned temperament, paradoxically ensured the survival of that temperament by transforming it into myth” (p.106-7). I see Yokohama Mary as an embodiment of the era of American occupation and a symbol of a more suppressed aspect of Japan’s postwar history. If Misora Hibari’s enka songs evoke traditional Japanese culture, Yokohama Mary evokes the city’s culture hybridized by American popular culture, with Japanized versions of the blues, such as Mina Aoe’s “Isezakicho Brusu” (see footnote 43).
While Mori’s photographs only made me interested in the postwar history of Yokohama at first, today they also make me deeply emotional and nostalgic for the antiquated streetscape captured in the background. In Mori’s monochrome photographs Mary crosses a narrow alley-like Kangai street in which signs of pubs, a mah-jong parlor, and a sushi bar stick out, and an untidy web of electronic wires spread between the buildings. She walks with her back bent forward, looking straight ahead of her. In Isezakicho, she dines at her regular spot in a Morinaga Love fast food restaurant and strolls inside the Matsuzakaya Department Store. The camera follows her from behind. She pushes her bag roller with her right hand and carries several paper bags with the other hand, walking between showcases of pastries and sweets. In another shot, she stands in front of the GM Building in Wakabacho with her fist on her waist, looking out to the street, right and then left, as if she is waiting for someone. In the film Yokohama Mary (Nakamura et al. 2006), Mori says, “At the moment when Mary-san left Yokohama, the city started to change, too,” and in fact, most businesses that appear in his photographs—Ato Hoshoku, the Morinaga Love restaurant, Matsuzakaya Department Store—no longer exist.

Mori’s photographs capture the remnants of Showa streetscapes in shitamachi, old downtown, of Yokohama that are completely antiquated but in fact convincingly picturesque.\textsuperscript{42} Showa is the period from 1926 to 1989 in the Japanese imperial calendar,
which experienced radical changes and shifts spanning pre- and post-war eras and was hardly stable or homogenous. However, the term Showa is often cited in popular media in a highly selected manner to specifically speak of the period from the 1950s up to the Tokyo Olympics in 1960, and to remember particular socio-economic reality, cultural taste, worldview and value (Wood and Abe 2011, Merklejn 2013). Today in Japan where the population is rapidly aging and the economy is marked by instability, idealized representations of Showa period are increasingly gaining popularity. Those representations (films set in the Showa era, TV documentaries that feature key corporate figures who emerged during that time, Showa style pastiches adopted in the interior designs of noodle houses, etc.) are propelling the wave of “Showa nostalgia,” a myth of an “idyllic” or “simpler” time when Japanese people were still poor but experiencing rapid economic growth (Wood and Abe 2011, p.3249; Merklejn 2013). In the photographic space of PASS the viewer meets not only the ghost of Mary but also that of Kangai’s Showa streetscape, of which Mary herself is a part.

It felt like the depth of my nostalgic response to Mori’s photographs has increasingly been intensified over the course of my research as I became familiar with the

\[42\] The term Shitamachi [downtown] is usually used in contrast to Yamanote [hillside] to refer to the geo-socioeconomic division that can be found in Tokyo. In the original context of Tokyo, Yamanote symbolizes large firms, white-collar work, mainstream, modern ideals while Shitamachi symbolizes small merchant or artisanal businesses, blue-collar work, and a “traditional Japanese” ethos (Kondo 1990, p.57). Kondo (1990) details how locals differentiate those two areas of Tokyo (p.57-75). The term shitamachi (with a small letter “s”) originating in the specific geographical area of Tokyo can also be used more generally to refer to other areas of Japanese cities that share similar characteristics with Shitamachi of Tokyo. Local people in Yokohama sometimes explained to me that Kangai is “like Tokyo’s Shitamachi,” although it lacks traits of the Edo culture (or at least traits that are recognized as such), which has been the basis of Shitamachi in Tokyo. Instead, as I discuss below, Yokohama’s shitamachi culture is more associated with the American culture imported during the American occupation.
local cultural productions on Mary and the Kangai streetscape and as I immersed myself in local cultural scenes. During my fieldwork, I watched *Yokohama Mary* several times, virtually meeting local people who recount stories of Mary in the film; read Godai’s accounts of her encounter with Mary; had a brief conversation with Mori and Nakamura at local film festivals; talked to people who were involved in the festivals; identified some spots where Mary used to spend her time on my regular walks in the city; and lived in the Kangai area for some time during the research. Yokohama’s local cultural productions and events helped me acquire a bodily capacity and sensibility that enabled me to identify and be affected by yorishiro in the streetscape of Yokohama. Ultimately, Yokohama’s memoryscape “nostalized” my body (Niemeyer 2014, p.10) to the extent that I started to carry my affective sensibility outside photographic, cinematic or theatrical spaces and to be emotionally affected when I walked around in the city.

The popularity of the legend of Yokohama Mary suggests the lasting effect of American occupation of Yokohama in defining its distinctive identity and culture, which in fact resonates well with, rather than being alternative to, the way in which the official history of Yokohama celebrates the arrival of the Black Ships and the opening of the port. It is important, however, as I discuss in the last part of this chapter, that while this space of memory evokes the experience of the city being “colonized” by the United States, as a shofu [prostitute] serving the American Empire throughout its postwar period, it simultaneously forgets the other part of the city’s experience of being shaped by Japan’s colonization of its former.neo colonies. Thus, this memoryscape is still a site of exclusion—it only allows certain bodies, bodies that are capable of being
nostalized about a particular past in a particular way, to participate in its production and consumption.

**Isezakicho: Remembering the “Time of Mary,” Re-Membering Nostalgic Bodies**

Getting off a train at the JR Kannai Station, I hurried on my way to the Yokohama Nyu Teatoru [New Theatre], one of the venues for the Yokohama Minato Film Festival 2012. The theatre is located on the Isezakicho street, and I knew my way exactly, as I had visited its box office previously to purchase a presold ticket for the screening of *Yokohama Mary*. On this particularly day, March 18, 2012, I was heading for the show, but I had to rush as I arrived at the Kannai Station only 10 minutes before the screening time at 11 AM. It was my first time walking to Isezakicho on a weekend, since I had promised my husband that I would only conduct my research on weekdays so that I could fully engage in childcare on weekends. Today was an exception. The street was filled with an array of racks of shoes, clothes, used books, new CDs and other products sold by local businesses, expanding their storefronts outside their buildings and I had to walk amongst loud touts from both sides of the street. I got excited about the weekend vibrancy of the street but did not have time to enjoy the festive atmosphere. Getting to the theatre, I saw Tani-san, an organizing member of the film festival, standing in front of the entrance stairs greeting visitors. I got to know him at Kikiya, a bar in Koganecho where I was conducting my research, as he was one of the frequent customers of the bar. He was also an active member in local cultural events and worked very closely with local artists, journalists and filmmakers aside from his full time job. When I greeted him, he smiled excitedly and said, “There are lots of people inside already.” As this was the first film festival he organized with Takahiro Nakamura, producer of the festival and director of the film *Yokohama Mary*, the positive turnout of the screening was probably a great relief for him. “All right, I have to make sure that I have a seat for myself!” I went downstairs, showed my ticket and entered the screening
The room was roughly 70% full and I got a seat in the fourth or fifth row from the back. Before long the screening started. (18 March 2012, Yokohama Nyu Teatoru)

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Nakamura’s documentary Yokohama Mary begins with Mori’s photographs of Mary projected on a screen one by one in a dark room. In voice-over local pedestrians speak what they know about Mary-san, one of the most legendary and mysterious figures of Yokohama, set against street noise. “She carries all her property with her,” “She’s white,” “Never heard about her,” “She is white and wears high heels,” “She got institutionalized in Ibaraki,” “She went home to Hiroshima,” “She is still working as a shofu [prostitute],” “She has a poet lover,” “She was on the cover of Life [magazine].” “She died long ago. Two or three years ago. No longer alive.” With this last comment, the screen cuts to a harbour looking out at the Yokohama Bay Bridge. A caption says, “No body knows the truth about her life. In 1995, she suddenly disappeared.” This introduction is followed by the credits sequence with shots of Isezakicho street. During this opening “Isezakicho Brusu [Blues],” a song of “women of night” in port city Yokohama from 1968 by female enka singer Mina Aoe, sets the nostalgic and sentimental tone of the film.43

43 Enka is a popular Japanese ballad genre that originated in the early twentieth century. According to Christine R. Yano, who studied emotional aspects of the genre, enka are conventionally “melodramatic songs of love, loss, and yearning” (2002, p.3) where listeners collectively and emotionally engage in a community of the broken hearts and tears for Japan’s “imagined” past. The 1960s saw a series of “blues” hits where enka singers produced songs of the “failed romance” while featuring “Western instruments such as the saxophone and steel guitar” (p.41). Shaped by the nostalgic tradition of enka while having some “western” blues feel, Mina Aoe’s “Isezakicho Brusu (Blues)” can be considered one such example.
The documentary opens up as what Nakamura calls a “film with an absent subject,” as the very subject, Mary, had already disappeared from Yokohama when the documentary was conceived. In the film the viewer never see a moving image of Mary living in Yokohama. Instead, she appears in Mori’s monochrome photographs, which are cited frequently throughout the documentary. To fill the gap in knowledge about her life, the camera captures the streets of Kangai (Isezakicho, Fukutomicho, Wakabacho) where Mary used to live and work, and interviews with key individuals who supported Mary when she was living on the street. While the film seems driven by a desire to solve the mystery of who she was and what happened to her (recovering the past), it eventually becomes a story of those who were left behind after her disappearance and their collective work of memory that produced a character of Mary in that process.

Consequently, and very similarly to the “culture of disappearance” of Hong Kong that Abbas (1997) studies (see Chapter One), the film constitutes a production of Yokohama’s new culture that emerged in response to a felt and imagined disappearance of a time past.

Many of those individuals who testify their memories of Mary are local business owners, who share their stories of how they got to know Mary and what they know about

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44 The film that was supposed to be a film with an “absent subject” actually ends with a sequence of Mary currently living in a nursing home in her hometown in Okayama Prefecture. In the panel discussion that followed the screening of the documentary during the Yokohama Minato Film Festival in 2012, Nakamura spoke about his dilemma, which he faced when he discovered that Mary was alive in her hometown, as to whether he should carry through with his initial concept by not visiting Mary or include his encounter with Mary in the film. He decided to visit Mary, and when he saw her face without a makeup, he was convinced he should “return to this moment” at the end of his film and conclude it as a story of an ordinary “grandma,” who lived through the Showa era.

45 In her analysis of the Finnish documentary film Kaksi enoa/Two Uncles, which centres around a photograph of the filmmaker’s uncle who went missing in World War II, Ilona Hongisto (2013) also suggests that the film becomes not just about uncovering what actually happened to her uncle based on testimonials and interviews as historical evidence, but an imagination of the uncle through its memory work.
her. For example, Katsuhito Rokukawa, the president of Ato Hoshoku jewelery store, testifies that his store received seasonal gifts from Mary regularly in appreciation of letting her sleep in the building in which the store was located. He also says that the gifts were kept untouched for a long time, because some workers did not appreciate her visits and felt “disgusted.” Tatsu Yuta, the owner of Runa Hair Salon, speaks about Mary’s visits to her salon as a regular customer. In an apologetic tone, she confesses that she had to tell Mary not to return to the salon after other customers started to refuse to share the space with her from fear of HIV/AIDS. Emiko Fukunaga, female owner of YanaGiya cosmetic store, proudly tells that it was she who recommended Mary the face powder brand that she used for the rest of her life in Yokohama, because it was economical and did not contain oil, making it easy for her to wash away at any public washroom without soap. Kimiko and Masanao Yamazaki, owners of Hakushinsha cleaning store, used to let Mary use the store’s changing room. Toward the end of the film, Kimiko tells the viewer the “truth” about Mary’s disappearance by recounting her memory of helping Mary return to her hometown in Okayama Prefecture after she fell on the street and was brought into a hospital. Throughout the film, their stories testify that Mary was a strong and proud woman, who only received money in exchange for her work, and never accepted “pity” money, and whose life on the street was full of dignity.

Local artists and writers, who know Mary, were inspired by her and/or have produced work around her life, also speak of their own interpretations of Mary’s character and life. Writer Dan Oniroku recounts his “spooky” encounter with Mary in the pub area of Fukutomicho where he realized that she was quietly following him
without a word, just like a “shadow of the death” or “water.” “She is a ghost,” he says.

Butoh dancer Yoshito Ono recollects his first encounter with Mary at his wife’s drugstore where he was helping, when he was struggling with his life as a young artist. He calls her “kinkira-san [twinkle]” and tells how Mary inspired him to perform Ophelia in Hamlet when he saw Mary looking at a perfume bottle on display in a cherishing manner. As a butoh dancer he also gives his own interpretation of Mary’s white makeup and says, “When people ask us why we put white makeup on, we say, ‘We do not put it on, but we erase [with it].’” Novelist and non-fiction writer Yoko Yamazaki suggests that as Mary got older her makeup became like a mask with which she performs a different persona, a person called “Mary,” implying that Mary had become a theatrical character in her later life. Film producer Kikuo Fukuju tells with confidence that Mary was acting as a “self” and her performance was “beautiful…It was beautiful because it struck people’s hearts.”

Thus, while some testimonies suggest that she was generally not warmly accepted by the locals back then, the film reinterprets her life and represents it in rather a positive light and further elevates her as a source of artistic, philosophical and spiritual inspirations. As it becomes clear as the film progresses, however, Yokohama Mary is not simply a documentary of an individual woman who lived through her life at the margins of the city. Mori defines the disappearance of Mary from Yokohama as a sign of the death of the postwar streetscape of Kangai by saying, “At the moment when Mary-san left [Yokohama], the city started to change, too.” In fact, the film simultaneously presents memories of Mary and the “time of Mary,” the postwar occupation period when a number of Japanese women made a living by sex work and took G.I. clients. In the
film, Koichi Matsuba, former cabaret owner from Maganecho, Yokohama’s former licensed brothel district, nostalgically and even lovingly recollects this period. He speaks of the time as he introduced a book published out of his oral history *Yokohama Monogatari [Yokohama Story 1945-1965]* (2003; ed. by Toyoji Oda). Standing in front of a stack of his books piled up in a corner of Yurindo Bookstore in Isezakicho, Matsuba speaks of the city’s “good old days” to the young film crew: “Our time was full of romance, if I think about it now…” Archival photographs show images of the burnt-out ruins and an array of military barracks built on the bulldozed land of Kangai. While those bleak images only evoke bitterness and hardly signify “good old days” in themselves, they are peacefully integrated in Matsuba’s and other individuals’ romanticized recollections of the time. The archival photographs from the time of occupation are used less as objective evidence of a past event than as something that “offer us an experience of pastness” in a deeply nostalgic manner (Baron 2014, p.1).

In the film, the “time of Mary” is also told through people’s recollections of pub Negishiya located in Wakabacho right behind Isezakicho street. A “symbol of the night in Yokohama,” the pub embodied the hybrid and vibrant cultural scene of Occupied Yokohama, which faded with the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 and ended in 1980 when the pub was burned down in a fire of an unknown cause. It was open twenty-four hours and attracted all sorts of people, including American G.I.s, foreign sailors, Japanese sex workers, police officers, yakuza and gangsters – everyone but “normal” people. “That place was taken up by half officers and half yakuza. It was like a film set,” says Kyoko Itsukida, female owner of the pub. The place was actually used as a film set in
Akira Kurosawa’s *Tengoku to Jigoku [High and Low]* (1963). The footage from the film gives us a sense of how the space was charged with extreme vibrancy and excitement, with juke box music, a dense dancing crowd of young men and women of different races, menu items written in Japanese, English and Korean. Keichi Hirooka, sex journalist, explains that a range of sex workers used to solicit clients in Negishiya, “There were women who were called *oshipan* [mute prostitutes]. We are not supposed to use this term today, but it referred to the women who had a speech disability and lived on prostitution. There were three kinds of women there: *oshipan*, white-only and black-only.” Itsukida recounts her memory of Mary, who was never inside the pub but stood right in front of the pub, “People called her Her Majesty, a ghost, and what have you. She was very proud of herself and when she saw Negishiya ladies she never greeted them with a smile... I actually had a fight with her once.”

The film attempts to reconstruct an image of Negishiya through archival photographs, stories and a memory map. Former gangsters Masao Takamizawa and Koichi Matsuba walk Isezakicho street and guide the camera to the former site of Negishiya, which is now a parking lot. Walking around in the area the two men map out the interior of the pub relying on their memories, identifying the location of the entrance, describing the table and counter arrangements, and pointing at the stage where there would be live music performance. In the meantime, a series of monochrome photographs are inserted in the sequence, showing exterior and interior images of the pub. The two men nostalgically speak of the “good old days” of Yokohama when they hung out in Negishiya. Takamizawa says, “That place was really vibrant. It was a place where
you would always find somebody you know. There was a time like that.” Matsuba adds to this and says, “You find your friends, and of course, drink the first glass, then the second, and go on until the morning.” “It was an exciting place,” both nod in agreement. This sequence is concluded with a drawing of the floor plan of Negishiya superimposed on a cut of the parking lot shot from above.

More implicitly, there are a number of tropes that evoke a sense of “disappearance,” connoting the lost “time of Mary.” One example is the shots of the Ooka River that are inserted several times throughout the film in-between main sequences. The water, reflecting the present world on the surface, slowly flows into the unknown future. Above the river, Keikyu trains on the overpass, carrying lives in them, rapidly pass the screen and again evoke a passage of time. The sense of disappearance is more explicitly expressed in a series of juxtapositions of photographic images produced in the “old days” and cinematic shots taken in the present. As the camera visits local business owners to hear stories of Mary the screen shows archival photographs of their businesses. Those old images then turn to the film shots taken in the present from exactly the same spots. Most of those businesses have already closed down or moved elsewhere, leaving the spaces replaced with or repurposed into new businesses. A combination of those tropes powerfully evoke a nostalgic feeling.

While featuring stories of Mary and a postwar history of Yokohama, the film also follows a life of Ganjiro Nagato, a gay chanson singer, who developed a friendship with
Mary toward the end of her life in Yokohama. Now dying from cancer, Ganjiro is featured as a key figure, in fact even more central than Mary herself, whose body itself embodies the disappearance (or death) of the “time of Mary” and its ethos. Having been raised by a single mother, who was “doing the water trade,” and having worked as a street sex worker himself, Ganjiro explains that he approached Mary not out of mere curiosity but because his own life was “linked to Mary-san.” His lasting sense of guilt about condemning his mother for selling water and calling her *pan pan* (a derogatory term for “prostitute” that was used in the postwar era) in his adolescence also propelled him to identify Mary almost as his own mother and support her as a redemptive act. Not only did he see Mary frequently at the Morinaga Love restaurant in Isezakicho to be in her company, he also repeatedly visited City Hall to negotiate with city officials so that Mary could receive welfare and rent an apartment. His attempt ended up in failure, as Ganjiro explains over his image strolling Isezakicho street, because Mary did not have *juminhyo*, registration of her residential status in the city. Despite his failure, his care for Mary-san suggests old human relations where neighbours offer help and even make active interventions in others’ lives out of care, a *shitamachi* ethos that is implied to be disappearing together with the old streetscape of Yokohama.

Toward the end of the film Ganjiro starts to appear not merely as a friend of Mary but as a haunted body, or *yorishiro* along which Mary returns. In one sequence, Mori takes photographs of Ganjiro and the resulting images strongly evoke ghostliness just like

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46 An earlier version of *Yokohama Mary* featured Ganjiro even more so than the final version (Tani, personal communication, 18 March 2012). The earlier version was screened in 2003 at Akarenga Soko [Red Brick Warehouse].
his photographs of Mary. In the same sequence, Mori comments, “Mary-san and Ganjiro-san overlap in my mind. I feel that some of Ganjiro-san’s songs are about Mary-san, too. Maybe that’s why I cannot resist the two images coming together,” suggesting that the resemblance of the two images is Mori’s projection of his own imagination of the two figures. The film narrative further affirms the association between the two lives based on the fact that they both lived with the stigma of being involved in the water trade and of being homeless or gay, thereby representing lives at the margin of postwar Yokohama.

The sense of disappearance is painfully intensified through the implied death of Ganjiro. Although he does not die in the film, his cancer progresses to the point where he is hospitalized like a “bird deprived of wings,” as he describes himself. In the closing sequence when Ganjiro is finally reunited with Mary at a nursing home in her hometown, he sings Frank Sinatra’s *My Way* (1969), a song for those whose “end is near,” for Mary and other senior residents. This marks the emotional height in the film. When the film finally ends, the viewer realizes that Yokohama has lost Mary-san, her time, and now Ganjiro.

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The screening was followed by a panel discussion by the filmmaker and Hideo Mori, a photographer whose work is cited throughout in the film. The discussion was facilitated by Tani-san. In my last conversation with Tani-san, he promised to introduce me to the filmmaker and the photographer after the screening, and my heart was beating throughout the panel discussion. When the discussion was finally over, I walked toward Tani-san, who was standing in front of the exit to the screening room.
Outside, I saw people lining up in front of the ticket counter to purchase Mori-san’s new photographic book *Scenery of Yokohama*. One of the visitors was talking to Tani-san, telling him that she had just moved to Yokohama and appreciated the film very much as she was able to learn local history. She also positively commented on Tani-san’s writing, which was included in the festival program, and asked him for his autograph. “This is my first time writing an autograph,” he blushed. Spotting me in the crowd, Tani-san encouraged me to buy a copy of *Scenery of Yokohama*. I was concerned about my budget but I followed his advice, got my copy and waited in a line to get Mori-san’s autograph. Nakamura-san was standing right beside Mori-san and my eyes met with his. As it was a screening of his film, it felt awkward not to ask for his autograph while doing it for Mori-san. “I didn’t bring my DVD copy of *Yokohama Mary* today but could you perhaps give me your autograph on the program?” I asked. “She is conducting research in Koganecho,” Tani-san immediately introduced me to Nakamura-san. “What? Koganecho? You mean, the underpass? Good for you!” “She’s got a *refined* sensibility at a young age,” Tani-san half-jokingly commented. “You know what, Nakamura-san is knowledgeable about that area,” he told me. Writing his autograph on my copy of *Scenery of Yokohama*, Mori-san also said, “I also took quite a few photographs there.” Right. I remembered being struck by two photographs of Koganecho streets included in *PASS #2* (2006), the only images that do not contain Mary in them. Koganecho is not even a place that is remembered today as part of Mary’s life world, so his choice made me wonder about his intentions. Nakamura-san also includes shots of Koganecho in *Yokohama Mary* between sequences, capturing the Ooka River and passing trains on the Keikyu overpass from above across the river. In both cases, images of Koganecho do not have an explicit link to Mary except for the fact that Koganecho was a brothel district. Those images have more of a metaphorical effect, hinting at the passage of time and the disappearance of the old streetscape of Kangai.

*under the passing train*
It was drizzling outside the theatre. Leaving Isezakicho behind, Tani-san guided me to the “oldest” coffee shop in Fukutomicho. Once behind Isezakicho street, the traffic decreased and the weekend festivity was gone. The coffee shop was indeed old. The menu items posted on the wall seemed unchanged for ages and the papers had been yellowed. Antique lamps hanging from the ceiling emitted warm dim light around them and made me feel at home. Tani-san ordered hot chocolate and pancakes and I ordered coffee and butter toast, basic items for Showa style coffee shops. As I requested, Tani-san brought a few photo albums to show me from his personal collection of documentary photographs that he had produced in the past decade in Kangai. He is an amateur photographer and takes photographs of urban neighbourhoods in decay as one of his hobbies. I was initially interested in his photographs as historical records of Koganecho’s landscape before or at around the time of the crackdown in 2005, but having just seen Yokohama Mary once again and hearing the discussion with Mori-san and Nakamura-san, I was interested more in the local practice of documenting the changing streetscapes. My question was no longer what is captured in the photographs but what people actually do, as a photographic “performance” (Bal 1999, p.vii), with their cameras. The setting—the old coffee shop and the underdeveloped city of Fukutomicho—seemed a perfect place to talk over such a topic. Sitting on a low sofa at a low table, an old standard for furniture before Japanese average heights increased due to the spread of western diets, I almost had the illusion that I was time traveling. Right next to the cashier was a crib for the owners’ granddaughter. She was enjoying drawing at a table. The boundaries between private and public spaces are almost non-existent—just like family run businesses I see in old Japanese movies set in Showa shitamachi, like Kurumaya dango store in Yoji Yamada’s

“Mori-san and I share the same motive in photography,” Tani-san told me, “We photograph landscapes that are disappearing. He encourages everyone (lay photographers) to do the same. Every time we see each other we always update each other, like so-and-so’s building is gone, so-and-so has changed,” he laughs. He pointed at a building across the street and said, “You see the sign Silk Hat? It was a casino. There used to even be a TV commercial for the business on TVK (Television Kanagawa) but the owner was arrested because his business was illegal, and it’s gone.” Yokohama’s shitamachi streetscape continues to change just like in Yokohama Mary. Or, I was no longer sure, it might be the other way; the “cinema itself” is “leak[ing] out, continuously, all over the city” (Clarke 1997, p.3) and turning Yokohama into a city of “disappearance.” At least Yokohama Mary made my body more sensitive to what local people would see as Showa elements of Yokohama, which are becoming more and more difficult to find today. “Nakamura-san was filming at the right moment. If he had missed that time, he would never have had an opportunity to produce Yokohama Mary…The city was dying, Ganjiro-san was dying and others in the film too.” Tani-san’s photographs were taken within the last decade but the recorded landscapes looked much older, because they were mostly monochrome images and things that appear in his photographs were selectively obsolete.

“Was Mary-san actually accepted by local people like it appears in the film?” I asked. “I think it was rather the opposite…There are many people who criticize Nakamura-san’s film for excessively glorifying Mary-san. ‘She is just a shofu [prostitute]. Why would you treat her as someone special?’ some people say. The same is true for Mori-san’s photographs, Godai-san’s performance, and Yamazaki-san’s book. They are also criticized for the same reason.” So what do their performances of memory do? “Glorifying” did not seem to accurately capture their practices. The memoryscape they draw are not necessarily “rosy” although they are emotionally
mobilizing, because of the human-relations and affective sociality that are enmeshed in those landscapes. What they do might be to capture deaths at the margin of the city and put makeup on the deceased quietly and tenderly. (18 March 2012, Yokohama Nyu Teatoru)

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Speaking about the American documentary film The Cove (2009, dir. Louie Psihoyos) after it was screened at Yokohama Nyu Teatoru in Isezakicho in July 2010, Nakamura (Kimura 2010) distinguished between two types of documentary. The first is a documentary as a form of argument, like The Cove, he says. In this case filmmakers have their conclusions in advance and images are collected to support their arguments and lead to preplanned conclusions. On the contrary, he explains, the other type of documentary, of which his Yokohama Mary is an example, does not set a conclusion in advance. Stories are constructed only through the filmmaker’s dialogue with the cinematic subject and the decision as to what to include in or exclude from the story is made in the negotiation between the two parties. What the latter type of documentary reveals in the end are the very processes of building a community through an exploration of a particular topic.

In fact, in addition to expressing local memories of Mary and postwar Yokohama in a nostalgic manner, Yokohama Mary also presents and interweaves a web of human relations in its cinematic text. In the beginning of the film, the viewer sees local individuals, who testify to their particular knowledge of Mary. But toward the end of the film, we also start to see some of them visit and/or cite each other and recount their memories together. For example, after speaking of her failed attempt to produce
a film on Mary in the past, singer and sex counselor Setsuko Shimizu meets Ganjiro at a foot massage parlor and they together speak about how much the city has changed since Mary left Yokohama. Ganjiro also visits the owner of Runa Hair Salon, Tatsu Yuta. Although he finds out that the business has already been closed, he also learns that Yuta now runs a pub in Kangai as a mama. Ganjiro visits Yuta where she regretfully recollects why she had to refuse Mary’s visit to her hair salon. Ganjiro also meets Kimiko Yamazaki, former female owner of Hakushinsha cleaning store, and together they visit the former site of the store, which is now repurposed as a Chinese restaurant. The two recount their memories of Mary over dinner. Photographer Hideo Mori organizes a charity event with a shamisen performance by Kyoko Itsukida, former owner of pub Negishiya, to preserve Yokohama’s last geisha practice. Thus, as we watch the documentary we start to realize that we are witness to the presence and emergence of a local community. This community was initially based on Mori and Ganjiro’s networks but is further strengthened through the production of the film. To some extent, the film created a community to remember Mary and her time.

Furthermore, as I became familiar with other cultural productions around Mary, it became clear to me that Yokohama Mary was situated in a larger community of local artists, writers, and cultural producers, who collectively and collaboratively produce a memoriescape of the time of Mary. The most obvious example would be Hideo Mori’s first edition of the photographic documentary PASS, which inspired Nakamura to produce

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47 Beside Nakamura’s film, some literature documents the presence of such a community. See for example, Yamazaki (1999), Hiraoka (2007) and Godai (2010).
his film. In fact, the production of the film also allowed Mori’s work to be exposed to a wider audience. In addition to being cited in Nakamura’s cinematic text, Mori and his photographs traveled together with the film for its screening tour across the country.

Another project that actively participates in the production of this memoryscape would be the one-person play *Yokohama Rosa* written by Giho Sugiyama and performed by Michiko Godai. Godai’s (2010) monograph *Shiroi kao no densetsu wo motomete [Searching A Legend of a White Face]* offers her account of meeting Ganjiro, Mori, and other individuals who also appear in *Yokohama Mary* and of gathering stories about Mary from them. Those stories later became the basis of Sugiyama’s *Yokohama Rosa*, a fictional performance based on the local memories of Mary. Godai’s monograph and Nakamura’s film echo each other in multiple aspects. Not only does she too use Mori’s photographs of Mary in her monograph, much of the stories of Mary published in the book overlap with what is told in *Yokohama Mary*. In fact, the production of *Yokohama Mary* and Godai’s monograph happened at around the same time, and the two projects cite each other explicitly. In the film, Nakamura includes shots of an interview with Godai, her performance of *Rosa* on stage and shots of Godai’s enactment of Mary on the street. In the middle of the film, Godai, in her white dress and makeup, the costume for *Yokohama Rosa*, walks the streets of Bashamichi and Isezakicho with her back bent, receiving curious looks from pedestrians. In the meantime, in her book Godai writes about Nakamura’s request to perform Roza on the street for the film and to turn the city into a theatre to perform a memory of Mary. *Yokohama Mary* also includes an interview with author Yoko Yamazaki, who cites her own non-fiction book *Tenshi wa brusu wo*
utau [Angels Sing the Blues] (1999) where she documents her exploration of Yokohama’s postwar history, including stories of Mary and what she calls “Mary-san’s children,” mixed race children of American G.I.s and Japanese sex workers. While initiated by different individuals, those projects now intertextualize each other and together produce the memoryscape of the time of Mary.

Remembering Mary, I argue, is simultaneously about re-membering, a process of renegotiating Yokohama’s shitamachi identity in a collective manner when those who actually lived the time of Mary are aging and the familiar streetscape is felt to be rapidly “disappearing.” This process of re-membering has happened through the participation of local residents, artists, and writers in the production of the film and the collaboration between local artists, writers, and cultural producers, who together produce representations of the time of Mary by drawing on and intertextualizing each other’s work. In addition, those cultural productions also re-member their audience through the viewing experience. Yokohama’s culture of yorishiro gathers bodies, nostalgizes them through photographic, cinematic and theatrical media and events by offering a positive and sentimental reinterpretation of the life of Mary through the voices of key local figures, and highlighting the humane shitamachi relationships among Mary, Ganjiro and others. Membership to the new community is not determined by whether one actually lived the “time of Mary” but by one’s capacity to be nostalgically affected by what Alison Landsberg (2004) calls “prosthetic memories,” memories of past events that are constructed and mediated by cultural texts, and in this case, the memory of postwar, Occupied Yokohama.
Just as Ackbar Abbas (1997) describes cultural forms that emerged in Hong Kong at around the time of the 1997 “handover” of the city to China (see Chapter One), I argue that the emerging nostalgic representations of Yokohama Mary not only narrate the “disappearance” of Mary’s body from the city and present the streetscape of Kangai, but also produce and reinvent a new identity of the city. Pam Cook (2005) argues, “[r]ather than being seen as a reactionary, regressive condition imbued with sentimentality, [nostalgia] can be perceived as a way of coming to terms with the past, as enabling it to be exorcised in order that society, and individuals, can move on. In other words, while not necessarily progressive in itself, nostalgia can form part of a transition to progress and modernity” (p.4). The nostalgic memoryscape that has been actively produced through those yorishiro, I argue, is not simply a “reactionary” or “regressive” landscape, but an active site in which remembering and re-membering simultaneously occur in an attempt to reaffirm and/or create anew a sense of belonging. I would also argue that while this process of re-membering is open to younger generations who did not live in the time of Mary, it can also be very exclusive. Those who do not agree with this particular narrative of postwar Yokohama or are not emotionally or spiritually affected by it in the same way (e.g. Japan’s colonial other, such as zainichi Korean residents who have different memories of the time), may not feel part of the community.

“Koganecho”: Remembering The Postwar, Forgetting The Postcolonial

On March 18, 2012, after the screening of Yokohama Mary for the first Yokohama Minato Film Festival, Tani-san shared with me the organizer’s ambition to continue and grow so that the festival is not limited to local film fans but attracts
people from Tokyo, while maintaining priority for films that were produced in Yokohama or by directors who have strong connections to the city. "Next year, director Kaizo Hayashi has promised us, we will have his *Hama Maiku* series at the festival. We will bring Masatoshi Nagase as a guest. Don’t tell anybody yet." *Shiritsu Tantei [Private Detective] Hama Maiku*, is a detective trilogy released between 1993 and 1996 directed by Kaizo Hayashi and starring Masayoshi Nagase. The first film in the series marked a record for highest volume of visitors for the year among independent theatres. The nation-wide popularity of the film series led to a *Hama Maiku* television series in 2002. Like *Yokohama Mary*, the trilogy was entirely filmed in Yokohama, and particularly, in Kangai along the Ooka River, centred around a movie theatre called the Nichigeki located in Wakabachō. In the story, Nichigeki’s projector room is used as Hama Maiku’s detective office. The fact that the series was produced locally and had a nation-wide reception made it a perfect candidate to be showcased in the Yokohama Minato Film Festival. In fact, Hayashi was involved in the first film festival as an advisor and a guest panelist for its opening event, and it seemed a natural sequence that his films were invited for the second year. The organizer’s plan was realized in March 2013 when the festival exclusively featured both film and television series of *Hama Maiku*.

On March 17, 2013, I was standing in front of Cinema Jack and Betty, a movie theatre in Wakabacho, which is one of the main venues of the Yokohama Minato Film Festival and right in front of the former site of the Nichigeki. Today, in the place of the Nichigeki theatre is an apartment building. A year ago, Tani-san showed me his photographs of the ruins of the theatre taken at the time it was demolished. “I actually kept a tile from the Nichigeki’s exterior wall. When I was photographing the building being demolished, I asked a wrecker if I could take it, and here it is” he said. He is a collector of yorishiro of the city. How many more images and objects does he keep in his personal archive? Tani-san remembers Kangai from the 1990s as a “city of cinema” with a number of independent theatres where he enjoyed hopping from one theatre to
another to watch films. Today, however, the Jack and Betty is one of only a few remaining independent theatres in Kangai along with the Yokohama Nyu Teatoru [New Theatre] and the Yokohama Shinemarin [Cine-Marine]. A great part of the change that is happening in the Kangai streetscape, therefore, includes the decrease in independent movie theatres, which Tani-san, local cultural producers, and independent theatre owners resist by organizing local film festivals and bringing visitors to those venues. To have visitors enjoy the spectacles of both “films and Kangai’s streetscape” has been the concept of the festival since its inception in 2012.

On this particular day, I visited the Jack and Betty, not for a screening of one of the Hama Maiku films, but for a walking tour organized by the film festival and run by two local women: current manager of Pub Sachiko, which is used as one of the locations in the film, and Lily-san, a local and amateur walking tour guide, who is also a big fan of Hama Maiku series and got her nickname after the protagonist’s stripper mother. They were leading a Hama Maiku Location Tour for festival visitors so that they could trace some of the key sites that appear in the film and virtually experience the city in which Hama Maiku and other characters live. As the visitors gathered around, Tani-san gave a brief introduction to the tour, explaining that it was Hayashi’s approach to do all the filming locally (within the distance travelable by cart with all the equipment on it), and that most of the key locations can be covered in the tour. Many of the local businesses that appear in the film use the same names as those of the actual stores, pubs and restaurants. The two women guided a young group of ten or so into the neighbourhood, starting from Kamikaze Asian Grocery Store located right next to the theatre, which in the film was owned by a young couple, Maiku’s old friends. The grocery store in reality is now replaced with an art space run by two local artists, who

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48 Yamagishi (2012) notes that there were 30 independent theatres in Kannai and Kangai combined in 1958. With the introduction of television, this was reduced to 24 in 1968, and to almost a half in the 1990s. The arrival of multiplexes in Minato Mirai 21 further led the closure of independent theatres. Currently there are only three theatres remaining in the same area, including the Yokohama Nyu Teatoru, the Yokohama Shinemarin and the Cinema Jack and Betty (p.8-9).
closely work with the Jack and Betty and local businesses in Wakabacho. The group then moved to a parking lot, former site of Janso, a mah-jong parlor where Maiku gets his pinky cut off in his confrontation with yakuza in the first episode of the film series. Lily-san showed us a still image of the scene where Maiku’s friends frenetically and comically run after a dog with Maiku’s finger in its mouth. “This dog was actually owned by Kitamura Seinikuten [meat store],” Lily-san explained. The tour participants knew that Kitamura Seinikuten was another “real” store, which was also used as a location in the film with the same name. Iwasaki Saketen, a pub and liquor store, was another local business used in the film but the tour guide pointed toward a vacant space and explained that it was now turned into a parking lot. (17 March 2013, Yokohama Minato Film Festival, “Private detective Hama Maiku” Location Tour 2013)

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The more familiar I became with Yokohama’s locally produced media, the clearer it became that the practice of documenting “disappearing” streetscapes in cinema had a longer tradition in Kangai. Yoichi Maeda, a filmmaker known for his comedies, was based in Yokohama and produced two films in Kangai on working class communities, 

*Niji wo watatte [Crossing The Rainbow] (1972) and Kigeki Kazoku Domei [Comedy: Family Alliance] (1983). Both films feature the Nakamura River as a key element of Kangai working class lives. In *Niji wo watatte*, day labourers, the main characters of the story, live literally on the water in a shack built on a disabled boat. The floating shack was not a fictional creation, as those boats or what are called “water hotels” were in fact part of the postwar landscape of the Ooka River and the Nakamura River, the two rivers that run along the fringes of Kangai area. While in *Kigeki Kazoku Domei* the river was
not directly integrated in the story to the same extent as with his earlier work, Maeda consciously included the view of the Nakamura River on screen, being aware that the landscape would be lost due to the upcoming construction of the highway overpass right above the river.  

Kaizo Hayashi’s film trilogy *Shiritsu Tantei Hama Maiku* was also motivated by a similar desire to make the disappearing streetscape visible on the cinematic screen. In fact, while Maeda and Nakamura shared an impulse to capture the streetscape before it was lost forever, Hayashi, probably because he came from outside the city and discovered Kangai landscape for the first time, was intrigued by how *unchanged* the streetscape of the area was compared to other parts of the city. His fascination with the Kangai landscape resulted in the production of the *Hama Maiku* trilogy. “The entire city was like an open set,” he writes for the DVD brochure of the first episode (For Life Music Entertainment 2002). In a TV program broadcast by Television Kanagawa (TVK) on March 1, 1995 (For Life Music Entertainment & TVK 2002), Hayashi explains that part of what motivated him to pursue this series was his encounter with the Nichigeki theatre and its neighbourhood. “Time stays put in this neighbourhood. The city outside keeps transforming, but here the speed of change is very slow, or gentle. The place resists change, because people persistently hold on to the positions they have continued to occupy.” In a sense, his films document a Showa streetscape that is lost elsewhere but

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49 Director of *Yokohama Mary* Takahiro Nakamura was involved in Maeda’s film production earlier in his career. This might have influenced his later engagement with local working-class history and streetscape of Yokohama in his first feature-length documentary.
could still be found on the margins of Yokohama. He calls this area “Koganecho,”
probably because he initially arrived at the neighbourhood via its closest train station
called Koganecho and the name has a special appeal due to the ironic gap between what it
signifies (“gold town”) and the actual socio-economic reality of the neighbourhood.
Strictly speaking, however, the Nichigeki and the key local businesses that appear in the
film are located in Wakabacho and Sueyoshicho, towns across the Ooka River from
Koganecho. In fact, when the Hama Maiku series was in production in the 1990s, the
actual Koganecho was still an active brothel district and strictly protected and policed by
yakuza, who did not allow filming or photographing of the area, and it would have been
challenging, if not impossible, for Hayashi to include it in his films. In Hayashi’s trilogy,
Koganecho only shows its surface in the scenes shot from across the river or from the
same side of the river, but only briefly. His films, however, invent “Koganecho” anew
with its fictional dramas, characters and different landscapes.

The Hama Maiku series produces a nostalgic effect on the viewer in a number of
ways. For one thing, like Yokohama Mary, it is almost entirely shot in Kangai, and by
presenting the old shitamachi streetscape of Yokohama the film makes the present viewer
feel nostalgic for the disappearing, or already lost, landscape of the city. The first episode
was also produced with old CinemaScope technology and uses monochrome images,
which further strengthens the antiquated feel of the film. As I discuss below, this

50 In the early stage of his career, Hayashi preferred to produce monochrome films. In addition to the first
episode of the Hama Maiku trilogy, his first film Yume miruyoni nemuritai [Sleeping like dreaming], a
detective story set in the 1950s, was monochrome and also silent. The first colour film he produced was

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cinematic space is dramatized and emotionalized through the traditional narrative, character setting, and tropes often used in Japanese theatre, cinema, and songs, which again powerfully evoke a nostalgic response in the viewers, who are familiar with Japanese popular culture from Showa or earlier eras.

Although the series progresses toward a nationalist narrative as I discuss below, it should be noted that the first episode of *Hama Maiku* is distinct from Nakamura’s documentary *Yokohama Mary* or Maeda’s comedies in its explicit engagement with Japan’s colonial Other in the postcolonial reality of the present-day Kangai. In addition to representing Yokohama as a city that has been directly influenced by American occupation in the postwar era, the film reveals Japan’s neocolonial relations to former colonies (Geller 2008). The first episode *Waga jinsei saiaku no toki [The Most Terrible Time in My Life]* was co-produced with a Taiwanese production team. In the episode, “Koganecho,” the neighbourhood in which Maiku’s community is located, is constructed as a “multinational town” in which people from China, Taiwan and the Philippines, who still have ongoing emotional attachments to their home countries, develop new relationships and strive to survive in the margin of Japanese society. Some of the key characters are members of the Taiwanese mafia, who came to Japan through the underground, transnational network of crime organizations. By representing the nation’s others, postcolonial migrants, their hardships, and the marginalized status they occupy in Japanese society, the film makes visible cultural difference and the non-harmonious relation between Japan and its colonial subjects (Geller 2008, p.174). Thus, the Kangai constructed in *Waga jinsei* differs from that of Nakamura’s *Yokohama Mary*. In
Yokohama Mary urban culture was hybridized due to the introduction of American popular culture through the American military base and the presence of a multiracial community of G.I.s in the postwar era but is presently much more homogeneously Japanese, being almost exclusively represented by local Japanese residents. In fact, the production of *Waga jinsei* was part of the general trend in Japanese cinema in the 1990s where “foreigners” were increasingly represented (Ko 2010) and Japanese film companies were increasingly working on co-productions across Asia (Phillips and Stringer 2007, p.10). Kaizo Hayashi himself is second generation Korean Japanese who recently wrote a TV drama called *Osaka Love & Soul* (2010), a story of a Korean Japanese family living in Osaka. He was indeed in a good position to write the postcoloniality of Yokohama in his most successful film series. Earlier, preceding the production of the *Hama Maiku* trilogy, he was also involved in the multinational production of the series *Ajian Bito [Asian Beat]* in the early 1990s, which involved collaboration between young film directors from six Asian countries and regions (Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong).

Despite Hayashi’s engagement with Yokohama’s postcoloniality in the first episode, however, his series moves in a much more nationalist direction in the second episode *Harukanaru jidai no kaidan wo* [*The Stairways for A Distant Past*]. Instead of directly engaging with the present postcolonial reality of the local community, the story nostalgically gazes back to the postwar occupation era, a period in Yokohama’s past that is less celebrated but simultaneously increasingly cherished today. In fact, from the very first episode, the series adheres to a particular representation of the Showa
period, which idealizes the 1950s and 60s, when Japanese people were still poor but had strong communal and mutual support systems in place. More specifically, the past constructed in the *Hama Maiku* series is tied to Kangai, Yokohama’s shitamachi that supposedly continues to preserve old “idyllic” landscapes, lifestyles, human relations and ethos, the time and space left behind in the hyperacceleration of the “bubble” economy and the urban development happening outside the neighbourhood. The representation of Showa is constructed most powerfully in the second episode but consistent to a significant extent throughout the series. Even in the first episode where the city appears as multicultural and diasporic, the way in which the cinematic narrative is constructed is largely traditionally Japanese and Showa-like.

Stories unfold in an imaginary town called “Koganecho,” a “nostalgic multinational town that remains an in-between modern city,” as described in the DVD brochure (For Life Music Entertainment 2002). The opening shot for all of the three episodes includes a rusty gate standing right next to the former Meigaza theatre, today’s Cinema Jack and Betty, and across from the Nichigeki theatre. With an outmoded font, the neon sign at the top of the gate says, “Nichigeki for western cinema, Meigaza for Japanese cinema.” Behind, a Keikyu train in rustic design with a dull red colour passes on the overpass. The camera approaches the Nichigeki theatre right across the street in which Maiku’s office is located. A bell rings to announce the starting of a film screening and visitors rush into the theatre. In the first two episodes, a foreign visitor comes into the theater in this opening sequence, is mistaken as a visitor for the show at the ticketing counter and clarifies that he or she is actually visiting Maiku upstairs. The
camera then shows the English sign of the detective office hung in the window of the projector room, “MAIKU HAMA DETECTIVE OFFICE: If you have some trouble call me…soon! 045-251-1815.” Rhythmical jazz music, the signature opening tune, starts and against this background of sound Maiku drives around the neighbourhood in his cherished Nash Metropolitan. Maiku Hama is a parodic, Yokohama version of Mickey Spillane’s Mike Hammer (Maiku’s last name Hama, which means “beach” in Japanese, was most likely taken from Yoko-hama) and perhaps detective characters that appear in American film noir of the 1940s in general (Geller 2008, p.172). The ill-matched images of the Nash Metropolitan driving in the old shitamachi streetscape and the character of Maiku himself with his westernized name and traditional shitamachi temperament, embody the identity of Kangai as a whole: shaped by western influences, particularly from the occupation period, but simultaneously preserving Japanese shitamachi ethe and human-relations, resisting the recent redevelopment happening elsewhere in Yokohama.

Local viewers would know that the American elements that manifest on the screen are just superficial masks. Hayashi comments in the TVK program broadcast on March 1, 1995 that “Maiku wants to be Philip Marlowe” (For Life Music Entertainment & TVK 2002). Maybe he is already like Philip Marlowe, who is known in Japan (but maybe less elsewhere) specifically for his statement, “If I wasn’t hard, I wouldn’t be alive. If I couldn’t ever be gentle, I wouldn’t deserve to be alive.” Being “gentle” makes both Philip Marlowe and Maiku Hama heroes in Japan. In fact, Maiku might be too gentle, affectionate and emotional to be a hardboiled detective. “One of the difference between Maiku and a typical hardboiled detective is his age,” Hayashi also notes,
“Maiku is younger and incomplete as a detective. He looks like a young gangster but is very traditional inside and values giri-ninjo [traditional Japanese sense of duty and human sentimentality]. He makes mistakes, acts before thinking.” With a closer look, Maiku appears less a Japanese version of the American hardboiled detective but more like a young, Yokohama version of Tora-san, a fictional character acted by Kiyoshi Atsumi in Yoji Yamada’s most popular film series consisting of 48 episodes (1969-1995). Tora-san is a pure-hearted, affectionate and comical character, who lives as an itinerant peddler and whose hometown is located in Shibamata, part of Tokyo’s Shitamachi area. As Ian Buruma (1984) puts it, Tora-san is “firmly working-class. With his golden heart, his quick temper, his easy sentimentality, his zest for life, his slyness, his failures and his fast verbal humour, he is the mythical Everyman of urban Japan” (p.210). He is a “Shitamachi archetype” (Kondo 1990, p.67), an embodiment of the shitamachi emotionality and sentimentality, which Japanese audiences across the nation nostalgically yearn for today.

Like other Japanese heroes and heroines, Tora-san and Maiku have tragic upbringings. Tora-san and his younger sister are children of Okiku, a geisha, who ran away when they were small. Likewise, Maiku has a younger sister Akane and their mother, a stripper called Lily, suddenly disappeared when they were still little. Both Tora-san and Maiku have limited relationships with their fathers, because, in the case of Tora-san, he left his father’s home at the age of 16 after a big fight, and in case of Maiku, he was never introduced to his father but believed that he was dead. Instead, both characters have a strong bond with their younger sisters, whom they were
supposed to look after, but in reality they worry about and look after their brothers. Both Tora-san and Maiku are rooted in their own shitamachi communities—everyone in town knows him—and they are quick to get involved in the lives of others out of compassion. Both series sympathetically represent the worlds of people living in the margins of society: working-class labourers, yakuza, and women in the water trade, typical heroes and heroines in Japanese popular culture whether in kabuki, woodprints, novels, films (Buruma 1984), enka or Japanese blues (Yano 2002, p.15). What characterize those worlds is shitamachi ninjo, humane and compassionate emotionality and sentimentality shared in less economically privileged communities where lives are carried out based on reciprocal human relations. In large cities, this is experienced as disappearing with rapid urban development and the constant circulation of people.

In the first episode, Maiku develops a strong sympathy toward his Taiwanese client Yang Kim. Yang visits Maiku’s office because “the police are cold to foreigners” and not helpful in searching for his older brother De Jian. After this initial meeting, Maiku accidentally encounters Yang at a mah-jong parlor where Yang works as a waiter. Hearing a yakuza customer using a slur for Yang, saying “Come to Japan after studying Japanese,” and flashing a knife in his hand, Maiku confronts the customer to defend Yang. This results in having his pinky cut off with the knife (this sequence develops into a comical drama and eventually he gets his pinky back in place with a medical procedure). The friendship between Maiku and Yang later grows out of their commonality of both being orphans and delinquents in their youth. As the story progresses, Maiku learns that Yang and his brother were both members of the
Taiwanese mafia but his brother recently betrayed his group by switching to a
Yokohama-based emerging yakuza group led by Kanno. Yang wants to convince his
brother to return, because otherwise it is his duty to kill his brother for his betrayal.
Yang’s mind is split between giri and ninjo (an obligation to his mafia group and a desire
to save brother’s life). Knowing that Yang’s confrontation with Kanno will put his life at
risk, Maiku tries to convince Yang to give up on his search for his brother and return to
Taiwan. “If you kill your brother, you will also be killed [by Kanno]. The death of two
Taiwanese only benefits Japanese evil,” Maiku insists. Despite Maiku’s desperate effort,
Yang breaks into Kanno’s base. In the end, both Yang and his brother are killed by
Kanno’s henchmen. In the letter Yang left for Maiku, he writes, “You were like my true
brother. Thank you. Thank you.” Maiku’s friendship with his Taiwanese “brother” does
not end with Yang’s death. He visits Yang’s intended fiancé, who seems to be working as
a hostess in Kangai and was never informed of Yang’s intention to propose to her while
he was still alive. Maiku delivers the engagement ring, which Yang once showed Maiku
when they were drinking overnight at Yang’s small apartment, a key moment in their
developing friendship.

On the one hand, the first episode of the Hama Maiku trilogy alludes to the
postcoloniality of Yokohama by including transnational migrants as key characters and
revealing Japan’s uneasy and unresolved relations to its colonial other. On the other hand,
however, the story eventually resolves such uneasy relations through a sentimental
narrative with the traditional ninja drama. In fact, Maiku’s transnational and traditional
ninja drama in the first episode further retreats into a much more nationalist
narrative in the second episode, which is centred around the theme of the “family.” While the first episode represents a form of transnational brotherhood or pseudo-family through the friendship between Maiku and Yang, the second episode focuses on biological “blood relations.” Additionally, the story features the time of the American occupation through the memories of Maiku’s parents’ generation, offering an interpretation of the time with a sentimental narrative that victimizes the Japanese nation.

The story starts when Maiku’s mother Lily returns to “Koganecho” after a long absence and starts performing at a local strip theatre Kogane Gekijo just as she used to when Maiku was still little and Akane was an infant. Maiku hears a rumor that his mother is back in Gekijo and visits her in a rage. “Why did you return?” he says furiously. He recalls the last time when he saw his mother, when she told him that they would go visit a zoo tomorrow. “Tomorrow” never came, because she suddenly disappeared from the city. “Akane thinks that you are long dead. How can I tell her that his good middle-aged mother is living on naked dance?” “You told her I am dead? That’s terrible,” Lily is disappointed. “You dumped us,” Maiku cannot forgive her.

In the meantime, Yokohama’s underground world is split between Kanno, who leads local yakuza but is hesitant to touch the “river” because it has always been ruled by the White Man, the most powerful man since the “time of the black market” during the occupation period, and a group of Kanno’s henchmen, who want to challenge and take power from the White Man. Maiku’s life also comes to intersect with that of the White Man when Maiku was forced by an infamous officer from the Kanagawa Prefectural
Police into a search for evidence of the criminal activity of Sachiko, mother of Akane’s best friend who runs a little pub along the river and is involved in the White Man’s business. Later, Sachiko ends up being killed by the White Man, leaving her two daughters behind, which propels Maiku in his pursuit of the White Man in revenge for her bereaved daughters. As the story progresses, Maiku learns the tragic truth that the White Man is Maiku and Akane’s biological father. Maiku recollects his childhood memory of a young White Man who visited Lily at the strip theatre, where Maiku waited for his mother to get off work, while carrying Akane on his back. The White Man left him an envelope with a stack of 10,000 yen bills for Lily and a small box of cake for Maiku. Today, over two decades later, Maiku confronts his own father for the first and last time. While Maiku himself did not trigger the death of the White Man, Kanno’s henchman runs into him and stabs him to death in front of Maiku. In the final sequence, Lily visits Maiku’s office to see Akane. “Brother, this is Lily-san,” Akane introduces her to Maiku, not knowing that they already know each other and that Lily is her own mother. Lily asks whether Maiku wants to join them for a trip to a zoo. Maiku’s feeling toward Lily is still mixed and he declines the invitation, but Lily’s promise to “go to a zoo” is finally realized with Akane. As the day comes to an end, Lily leaves town by the Keikyu train and Akane sees her off on the platform, waving and running after the departing train.

In both the first and the second episodes, the structure of the characters’ internal conflicts—between giri and ninjo, between organizational responsibility and the love for family—which can consistently be found in traditional Japanese popular dramas
(Yano 2002, p.15) offers the viewer an experience of pastness. The combination of the traditional narrative and the characters of the film (yakuza, the poor, women in the water trade, etc.) that are typical to Japanese drama evoke a sense of nostalgia. Furthermore, the views of Kangai featured in the series establish more concrete objects of nostalgic yearning: the disappearing streetscape.

Here, again, the Ooka River works as a trope of time being preserved, returning, or passing. Once being the border of Kangai’s off-limits zone for the Japanese when Kangai was occupied by American military shacks and airfields, the Ooka River simultaneously evokes a memory of the American occupation and embodies passing time. When Lily first appears in the episode, she is carried by a boat on the Ooka River under cherry trees in full bloom that embellish both sides of the river. Her return signifies a return of time passed, as Lily appears as the only one in the film who has not changed. “This neighbourhood has changed so much that you may not recognize it,” the boatman says to her. Lily does not respond to him and seems even uninterested in the man’s comment. Instead, she tells him to stop the boat. Stepping out on a mooring, Lily cheerfully says, “Come visit the theatre” and gives him a kiss on his cheek. “She hasn’t changed at all,” he says in amazement. As the story develops, it becomes clear that Lily has previously lived in Yokohama during the “time of the black market,” which overlaps with the “time of Mary” constructed in Yokohama Mary, when the city was occupied by the American military, the inner city was lawless and the informal economy prevailed, and many women made a living in the sex and water trade. In the middle of the story, Lily meets the White Man for the first time in a long while on the hill looking out to
the Yokohama Harbour. The White Man says to Lily, “Hama [a shorted name for Yokohama] has changed, hasn’t it?” “You are right. But I like today’s Yokohama too,” she responds. “I don’t like it…Everything has changed. Soon, my position will be gone, too.” The White Man then recollects the time of the “black market.” “Back then, everyone was living in darkness. I am the only one who is still living there.” Sure enough, the White Man’s time comes to an end when he is stabbed to death and his right-hand henchman sets out on a boat that carries his body on the Ooka River. The boat flows on the same river that Lily traveled when she returned to “Koganecho,” but this time the boat moves in the opposite direction toward the harbour, or the future city of Minato Mirai 21 on which Land Mark Tower stands. With the image of the Ooka River the film produces and reinvents the “disappearance” of a time, the time when Japan was victimized, and turns it into an object of nostalgic yearning.

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The tour then took us to the Kogane Gekijo, a strip theatre where Maiku’s mother works in the second episode. In reality the business went bust in 2012 and the building was unused at the time of the tour. Some of the tour participants took photographs of themselves standing in front of the theatre. The theatre is visibly worn down with its rusty neon boards and dusty green shades. External stairs and a window are covered with an obsolete plastic awning in tri-colour like the Italian flag. When I looked up, the neon boards said “Kogane Gekijo” on one side and “Nudo [nude] Kogane” on the other. A remnant of Showa-style popular sex culture—just perfect for a film set. From the strip theatre, we walked to the riverside, a central site in the second episode. In the film, the river carries Maiku’s mother Lily by boat in the cherry blossom season,
who returns to the neighbourhood after a long absence. Although the view from the water is far from a high-end spectacle like that of the Seine, a shot of the low-rise old buildings along the river and cherry trees in full bloom present an almost a dream-like shitamachi spectacle. The Ooka River is also where Maiku’s motorboat gateway action scene unfolds in the same episode. Later in the film, Maiku also meets Yokohama Mary, acted by Sumiko Sakamoto, in a mysterious night shot illuminated in blue lights on the riverside, to get information about the “White Man,” an invisible and powerful don who governs river politics. After his death, the Ooka River carries the White Man’s body, slowly into the ocean. I looked down on the river, but the view was rather mundane and looked much less dramatic than how it appeared in the film. Actually, it looked like it was not flowing at all but the water was staying put like a swamp, waiting for time to be accumulated in layers.

The tour guides continued to point out the changes that have happened in the streetscape since the time when the film was shot. The Sueyoshi Bridge on which a number of conversations take place in the film has been renovated, which resulted in a different “feel” to the landscape, one of the guides said. An old-fashioned tobacco kiosk that always appears at the corner of the screen in those shots is gone. The steps on the riverbank that Lily uses when she gets off from the boat still remain, but now with a sign “No Mooring.” Large and aged cherry trees have been replaced with young ones. The cherry blossom spectacle would be no longer possible to shoot with such little trees. Pink lanterns were already set up along both sides of the river and I realized that the annual Ooka River Cherry Blossom Festival was approaching. The time of Lily was coming. (17 March 2013, Yokohama Minato Film Festival, “Private detective Hama Maiku” Location Tour 2013)

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The context in which the *Hama Maiku* trilogy was produced, screened and re-screened, is important to discuss in highlighting its strong localism and its power to affect, mobilize and re-member bodies for the creation of a new community of Kangai. Just like Nakamura’s *Yokohama Mary*, *Hama Maiku* is a low-budget film produced out of the filmmaker’s close engagement and collaboration with the local community.

Throughout the duration of the shoot, Hayashi comments in the TVK program (For Life Music Entertainment & TVK 2002), the film crew were staying in a local weekly hotel and they ate at local diners and restaurants just around the corner of the Nichigeki. Initially wary local people started to welcome the crew and support the production. For instance, the Pekin Gyoza restaurant located right across from the Nichigeki prepared special “shooting bento [lunch boxes]” for the crew. Hayashi also comments that he never had a hard time finding extras in the neighbourhood. The scene in pub Iwasaki Sakaten, for example, was taken during its regular operating hours and people who appear on screen are all real customers of the store, except for a few characters in the film. “We don’t need to create drama, because drama is out there [in the city],” Hayashi says. In the same program, Kikuo Fukuju, a film producer and the owner of the Nichigeki, characterizes *Hama Maiku* as a film of “fact and fiction being intermingled,” because “what the viewer sees on the screen [in the background] is reality while the story is a fiction.” In fact, the second episode was shot when the first episode was on screen in the Nichigeki. The viewer sees the first episode being screened in the theatre (or hear the opening song leaking from the screening room) while Maiku meets his new client in his office, which is the theatre’s projection room. Outside, the title of the first episode is
posted on the “now-screening” board. As Fukuju puts it, “As you watch the film you start to be unsure of what is truth and what is not.” Structurally, therefore, the \textit{Hama Maiku} series compels the viewer to believe that the characters, their lives, community, and drama might actually be found somewhere in the city.

To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the \textit{Hama Maiku} series, the second Yokohama Minato Film Festival 2013 entitled \textit{Shiritsu Tantei Hama Maiku Grand Retrospective} featured both its film trilogy and television series using three independent movie theatres in Kangai: the Yokohama Shinemarin, the Yokohama Nyu Teatoru, and the Cinema Jack and Betty. Kaizo Hayashi (director) and Masatoshi Nagase (actor) were invited to multiple speaking events that took place throughout the festival (March 16\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th}). Concurrent to the film screenings and the speaking events, there were a photographic exhibit of still images, the exhibit of Nash Metropolitan, and multiple iterations of \textit{Hama Maiku} location tours all happening in the Kangai neighbourhood. The significance of the event was not only to offer a space for visitors to nostalgically enjoy the return of the series back to the city, but also to simulate the world of Hama Maiku so that visitors can virtually experience the city in which Maiku and other characters live. The presence of actor Masato Nagase in the city during the festival might have given visitors a sense that Maiku, the character, was really back in town. Location tours also allowed visitors to get out of the theatres and walk around the city to see actual places where Maiku’s drama unfolds. During the location tour in which I participated, the tour guides showed us around key locations that frequently appear in the trilogy, including the former site of the Nichigeki, the local businesses owned by Maiku’s local
friends, the Kogane Gekijo where Maiku’s mother performs as a stripper, the Ooka River, and Pub Sachiko owned by Akane’s best friend’s mother. What is more, festival staff drove a Nash Metropolitan around the neighbourhood so that participants could see, in front of their eyes, the car passing two-storied Miyakobashi Shotengai [Arcade] along the Ooka River, the typical driving scene that appears in the trilogy. Through those series of events, the entire city, imaginary and actual, turned to a memoryscape to remember the time of Hama Maiku, a remnant of occupied Yokohama.

To be sure, both Yokohama Mary and the Hama Maiku trilogy are progressive in their community-oriented production processes, commitments to local distribution at independent theatres and commitments to the repressed or neglected memories of postwar Yokohama. However, I argue that the nostalgic memoryscape that those films and their spinoff events create is nationalistic and exclusive, addressed primarily to those who have cultural references to Showa popular culture, are capable of being nostalgized toward the idealized time of the city and identifying with the victimization of the Japanese nation. To put it differently, Yokohama’s nostalgic memoryscape produces a collective identity of Japan as the “colonized,” a “shofu” serving the American Empire throughout its postwar period, which is delinked from and makes less visible other part of Japan’s position as the colonizer.

In fact, although initiated by grass-roots or community-oriented initiatives, the socio-cultural space created by the above cultural productions has increasingly been a privileged site of remembering and re-membering. For example, the final episode of the
*Hama Maiku* trilogy involves participation of local officials and media as extras, including the then Mayor Hidenobu Takahide and journalists who actually worked for the Kanagawa Shinbun newspaper and Television Kanagawa (TVK). Initially nameless in the first two episodes, detective Maiku is “certified by the City of Yokohama” at the beginning of the third episode and even becomes “certified by the Kanagawa Prefectural Police” by the end of that same episode. This symbolically demonstrates the trilogy’s development from a small-scale, community-oriented film to an officially recognized popular film. In addition, the Yokohama Minato Festival more recently developed a tendency to repetitively feature films produced by a particular group of local filmmakers, making it a more privileged and exclusive site of participation. The third festival, in the fall of 2013, featured *Miroku* directed by Kaizo Hayashi and acted by Masahiro Nagase, the same team that produced the *Hama Maiku* trilogy, and the forth festival in 2014 featured a short film series *Life Works* co-produced by Tsuyoshi Rijyu and Takahiro Nakamura, the director of *Yokohama Mary*. More recently, Nakamura’s *Yokohama Mary* was screened again together with his latest short-animation film *Henri no akai kutsu* [*Henry’s Red Shoes*] at the Yokohama Nyu Teatoru in December 2014. The Yokohama Minato Festival has been promoted by the Yokohama Convention and Visitors Bureau and Yokohama Triennale, which both have strong and direct connections to the municipal government and are the major facilitators of Yokohama’s tourism industry today.

While those local cultural productions in Yokohama shed light on marginalized subjects, questions remain: Who remembers—as opposed to who is
remembered—and why? What bodies are re-membered through the collective practice of remembering? To what extent does this memoryscape open up to a more recent experience of transnational migrant sex workers or their present realities that also constitute the city’s postwar experience? Or does it preclude such possibility?

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On November 28, 2012, finding extra time before my interview appointment for that day, I saw one of my high school friends with whom I used to hang out in Yokohama’s waterfront. This time, however, I asked her to come meet me in Kangai. As soon as we met at the JR Kannai Station, I took her to the old coffee shop Azuma located underneath the Yokohama Shinemarin theatre. Tani-san mentioned this coffee shop before and I was always curious about the place. I realized that even for my private meetings I started to choose old Showa-style coffee shops, restaurants and pubs in Kangai instead of modern hip cafés and bars in Minato Mirai 21. “Hey, I’ve never come to this area,” my friend said to me as she walked the Isezakicho street. I was not surprised because I had almost never come to this area before I started my research a year ago, either. Strangely, the place where I felt alienated and out of place whenever I walked with locals felt much more familiar when I was guiding someone completely new to the city. As we walked, I gave my friend a little tour, explaining a history of Kangai and information about different stores on the street. The street of Isezakicho was still empty, as it was still 10 in the morning when many stores were closed and streetlights were turned off. Kangai was a nightlife district after all.

Azuma coffee shop was located just next to the entrance of the Yokohama Shinemarin. The three-story building is modest, only occupying a small corner of the block. I was delighted to see such a small movie theatre still surviving in Yokohama. Posters of now-screening and upcoming films were proudly presented at the
front, using every single available space on the wall. Azuma was sandwiched between those posters. Two large windows with brown frames already gave a Showa feel to the interior, lit up in yellowish ramps hanging from the ceiling. Inside, low, brown couch seats and low, small wooden tables were neatly organized. Of course, they served as a typical Showa coffee shop menu, “moningu” [morning] combo, which included toast, a boiled egg and coffee. On the wall shelf I found *fukusuke*, a traditional doll sitting in *seiza* [proper sitting] and bowing at the customer. Together with a *manekineko* cat doll, *fukusuke* is associated with business luck. We were the youngest customers in the coffee shop. In fact, there were not many customers then, only a few, senior regulars having morning coffee while reading papers or magazines. I looked at the female owner chatting with a friend in the corner of the floor. The scene was far from vibrant but extremely peaceful. As the owner ages, so does the business, and so does the city. The atmosphere of the space almost convinced me that Kangai was an aged body and I was just witness to its end. (28 November 2012, Azuma Coffee)
Chapter Four: Politics of Memory in Koganecho

Silent City

In her bleak novel *Gold Rush*, Korean Japanese author Miri Yu (1998) narrates a fictional story of a fourteen-year-old boy from an affluent family living in a wealthy district of Yokohama on the hill, which was earned from his father’s *pachinko* business in Koganecho. Despite such wealth, his family is broken—his parents are separated, his mother has abandoned her children, his disabled brother is locked up in the house, his sister is involved in the sex trade, and his father neglects all those family issues and is concerned only with power and profit. The boy has dropped out from his formal schooling and instead immerses himself in the world of drugs and violence, and eventually murders his own father. In the novel, Koganecho, Yu’s actual hometown where her father worked in a pachinko parlor, is described as a city of darkness, being even “avoided by the sunlight” (p.6). The Ooka River that runs along Koganecho does not flow like regular rivers, but the water is stagnant and stays put, and looks like overused *tempura* oil. The boy spots a white thing on the water and soon realizes that it is a dead cat, but shows no sign of shock. Lives do not have value in Koganecho and nobody seems to question that fact. Instead, silence pervades the town. Yu writes, “Residents in Koganecho—the old, *shofu*, drug dealers—all keep their memories in a safe as if the past is their only valuable, and they never tell anyone the location of their key”
(p.28). Being deprived of almost everything (being poor and uneducated, having no “normal” family relationships or social status, and being marginalized and stigmatized within larger society), keeping memories from others and protecting their lives from external judgment and interpretation might be the only possible option that allows them to sustain their dignity.

Yu’s representation of Koganecho is noteworthy for three reasons. First, it is one of few full-length representations of the district produced before the 2005 police raid; second, it is the only full-length representation of the district by an ethnically non-Japanese author among everything I found during my research; and last, and most important, its representation of Koganecho is very distinctive in its refusal to offer a straightforward interpretation of the lives of those who inhabit the district. With respect to the last point, I argue that in her novel the lives and realities in Koganecho seem complicated, though perhaps too bleak and depressing, and beyond full comprehension of those outside the community. In the present context where Koganecho’s past has increasingly been reinterpreted through rather simplistic narratives, which I discuss in the rest of this chapter, Yu’s work offers an alternative memoryscape of Koganecho as a city that was extremely marginalized by mainstream society but managed to protect the dignity of its inhabitants with a respectful form of silence.

Indeed, Koganecho has hardly been talked about in any explicit way in local cultural productions that are widely known today. When Hideo Mori was working on his photographic project of Yokohama Mary and Takayuki Nakamura on his documentary
film about her disappearance (See Chapter Three), Koganecho was still active as a brothel district. Curiously, images of Koganecho do appear in both of their works despite the fact that Koganecho is never cited as part of Mary’s actual lifeworld in their works or elsewhere. In both projects the images of Koganecho were never explicitly introduced or talked about. In Mori’s (2006) Pass #2, two photographs taken during the day of streets of Koganecho, the only images in his collection that do not contain the figure of Mary in them, show the district with almost nobody on the street. In one of the images, a number of tiny pubs are crammed under the train overpass and the same number of pubs line up in parallel right across from a narrow street. Business signs stick out from the chon-no-ma, and many of those pub names are taken from Japanese women’s names: Kikue, Aya, Midori… It is very likely that their mamas also go by their pub names and never publicly use their real names. The other image shows a little gate to the pub district called Hinodecho Inshokuten-gai [Restaurant Avenue]. The gate advertises pubs on the block, and again include women’s names (Chitose, Katsumi and Kikumi) and others, such as Donzoko [the Lower Depth], Hatoba [Pier] and Koto [Ancient Capital]. What is captured in both of the images is a landscape constituted by Showa-style, low-end pubs that powerfully evoke a nostalgic sentiment. The images imply the lives of women of the water trade, who probably live from day to day by selling “water”—alcohol, entertainment, intimate conversations, experiences and relations. However, in Mori’s photographs their lives are sealed off behind closed doors, and the images remain silent in regards to their stories and their pasts. The photographs do not even hint at the concrete bodies of women. In fact, without anybody in the images (one of the images
captures a man in the far distance but he is not recognizable) the places look deserted and ruined. It seems to me that those photographs are included as a remnant of the postwar streetscape that is disappearing from Yokohama today, documentation of which was one of Mori’s intentions for the book (see Chapter Three). In Nakamura’s documentary, the images of Koganecho are included in shots of the Ooka River, but just like in Mori’s photo-documentary they remain abstract and rather poetically inserted as a trope of “disappearance” and “passage of time” in-between the main narrative sequence (see Chapter Three).

Thus, while both projects actively document Yokohama’s postwar history of sex work, explicit reference to Koganecho, then an active brothel district, is almost avoided. Koganecho becomes an evocative image that symbolizes a time past. While it is possible to interpret Mori and Nakamura’s decisions simply as stylistic ones, just to furnish their projects with an additional, picturesque Showa landscape, I also speculate that their options were limited. Recording the lives of sex workers in Koganecho would actually have been extremely challenging, especially when one did not have a close relationship with the women there, as the district was strictly regulated by yakuza, who were protective of their territory and did not welcome documentation of women who were
vulnerable to the law. Koganecho might have been a place of silent memories as it is represented in Yu’s novel—residents were indeed externally silenced through stigmatization and marginalization, but because of the stigmatization keeping silent was also a means of resistance against external judgment and interpretation. In Amy Shuman’s (2006) words, this might have been a way for the inhabitants to demonstrate their “entitlement” and ownership of their own experiences while they were deprived of almost everything else; silence might have allowed them to “redraw the boundaries around what can and cannot be told” (p.151).

However, ever since chon-no-ma brothel businesses were displaced in the police raid in 2005, it seems that Koganecho’s silence has been broken by those who vocally evaluate and make judgment of its past in pursuit of particular political, economic, social and/or cultural interests. The rest of the chapter first discusses popular representations of Koganecho constructed before 2005, which had been shaped primarily by two polarized narratives. The two narratives together serve to condition how Koganecho’s past (before the 2005 raid) is remembered today by those who occupy the site of displacement, which actively contributes to the ongoing “becoming” of the landscape after displacement. I will then outline how the dominant memoryscape of Koganecho has currently been produced

51 Takaaki Yagisawa’s photo documentary Koganecho Maria (2006) and Shofutachi kara mita nihon [Japan looked through the eye of prostitutes] (2014) are exceptions to this. The books document lives of migrant women living on prostitution in Koganecho before chon-no-ma businesses were uprooted in the district in 2005. Masashi Yamamoto’s film Junk Food is another example that includes a short film shot in Koganecho during the night, most likely with a hidden camera. However, accessing Koganecho would have been more challenging for women who cannot pass as customers. Many female residents told me that women were not welcomed in the district. Watanabe (1997) notes that she did not conduct her research there because she was warned that speaking to women in Koganecho might result in harassment or violent reactions by yakuza. Instead, she worked at a Thai hostess club in Fukutomicho and recruited her interview informants there, including a few women, who were working in Koganecho and able to speak about their experiences of working in chon-no-ma.
by critically examining the government-funded art project managed by non-profit organization Koganecho Area Management Centre that has been rapidly transforming the material and imaginative landscape of Koganecho since 2008. I argue that this project shapes a memорyscape of Koganecho through active forgetting and discursive displacement of migrant sex workers who used to inhabit the neighbourhood. I also introduce some alternative practices that emerged in Koganecho after 2005 that were more active in remembering the past presence of migrant sex workers. I argue that even in those alternative practices migrant sex workers’ voices are absent. All together this chapter directly serves as a background against which I present my own engagement with memories of lives in Koganecho before 2005 and lives after displacement in Part II.

Unlike the two chapters that preceded this, this chapter does not include sections of my autoethnographic voice as an “emplaced” ethnographer, someone who is implicated in and entangled with the becoming of the place of research (see Introduction). I reserve this for Part II where I present an alternative memoriescape of sites of displacement—Koganecho and a Thai community across the river—almost entirely from my experience of being emplaced and entangled with lives there.

**Postwar Imagined Landscape of Koganecho**

Koganecho, *gold town*, is a narrow district extending less than 400 metres along the Ooka River, which flows into the Port of Yokohama at the bottom of the Land Mark Tower only 1.5 km away. There is a Keikyu Railway station called Koganecho that opened originally in 1930 as the last stop of the former Shonan Dentetsu railway. A plan
to extend the railway to Yokohama Station was also determined in 1930, so a railway overpass connecting Koganecho Station to Yokohama Station was already under construction when the station opened (Yoshikawa and Sato 2001, p.177). Many people were killed under the overpass during a WWII air raid, which left scars from the bombings on the supporting pillars that were removed only recently when the overpass was finally renovated (ibid). Many people in Koganecho tried to protect themselves under the overpass and others jumped into the Ooka River to avoid the heat, but eventually they all lost their lives. There is a rumor, which has apparently spread among railway employees at Koganecho Station, that the station is haunted by the ghosts of WWII victims.

Koganecho has been the most marginalized place in Yokohama particularly after the end of WWII. Koganecho was a sort of “dead zone,” an avoided space, a space of indeterminacy, or urban void, in the eyes of the government officials, due to the proximity to the river (Doron 2008). Of course, as Rob Shields (1991) suggests, marginality of a place does not simply come from its “out-of-the-way geographic locations” such as being adjacent to the river. Rather a place becomes “marginal” for being a “site of illicit or disdained social activity” and “placed on the periphery of cultural systems” (p.3). Throughout its postwar history, Koganecho was marginalized for being a site of “baishun” [prostitution], drug and violence. It always accepted “deviants” and outlaws, who were excluded from mainstream society, such as the poor, shofu, drug addicts, yakuza, migrants from other parts of Japan, non-Japanese residents and
foreigners, who contributed to the development of underground and local economies (Nakata 1983).

Koganecho’s brothel barracks, or chon-no-ma (literally, a little space or a short period of time), which used to fill the spaces underneath the overpass of Keikyu Railway between Hinoecho Station and Koganecho Station, originally developed during the postwar period when the city centre was occupied by Allied Forces and the black market flourished at the margins. Migrant men primarily from the northern region of the country were arriving in Yokohama, looking for day labour, finding their temporary homes in “water hotels,” boarding houses built on disabled boats floating on the Ooka River, and later settling in social housings run by Korean migrants in Kotobukicho. While commercialized sex became criminalized under the Anti-Prostitution Act in 1956, Koganecho survived long after 1956 as an unlicensed but tolerated brothel district. Indeed, as Japan’s economy grew, it started to absorb transnational migrant women, many of whom were trafficked from developing countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia, South America and the former Soviet Republics. The district expanded along the Keikyu underpass as more chon-no-ma were built up until a few years before the final raid of 2005.

Popular narratives about Koganecho have fed into people’s “imaginative geography,” to use Edward Said’s term (1978, 2000). Said (2000) defines the term as the

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52 Kotobukicho, a marginalized and stigmatized day labour town located near the Nakamura River, is another place that is socially and culturally marginalized in and around Kangai. Carolyn S. Stevens’s (1997) ethnographic study reports that Kotobukicho is perceived as “foreign” and abject to other Japanese (p.36) due the presence of underclass men with diverse ethnic backgrounds (p.24), including zainichi Koreans, yakuza (p.30), illegal “foreigners” (p.144), and “gay prostitutes” on the street (p.158).
colonialist “invention and construction of a geographical space… with scant attention paid to the actuality of the geography and its inhabitants” (p.181). This process often involves the stigmatization of place and its inhabitants through stereotyping and such an imaginative quality of the district becomes “indistinguishable from any basic empirical identity [it] might once have had” (Shields 1991, p.3). Said (1989) argues that historically, “philosophical and imaginative processes” have always been “at work in the production as well as the acquisition, subordination, and settlement of [colonial] space” by empires (p.218). In Koganecho, too, it is imagination that has ultimately made it possible for the authorities to control and regulate the place, and more recently, instrumentalize it as an experimental laboratory for the local government’s new cultural policy. In addition to an overly sensationalized image of Koganecho as a place for exotic sexual encounters constructed by sex journalists, male bloggers and 2-chan [online billboard] users (e.g. Koganecho no tenshi 2008, Ah, Yokohama Koganecho 2010-2012), I can identify two primary ways, both extremely clichéd, that Koganecho could have been imagined. Unlike Yu’s description of Koganecho, those narratives break the silence, making the place legible and comprehensible to the audience. I found a few instances in which those narratives became available to the public in some of the stories published in news media.

One view of Koganecho—and this is more dominant than the other— can be found in news reports that portrayed the district as a place of drugs, “baishun” and violence that needs to be beautified by rigorous police crackdowns and regulations. For example, on June 20, 1962, Yomiuri Shinbun, the largest newspaper in Japan,
reported the first public investigation of Koganecho, “a city of drugs,” by the Kanagawa Prefectural Police, and the arrests of three women, who were involved in the drug-trade (Fujimori and Otaruyama 1962). In the article Koganecho is represented as a mecca for drug-trade, where half of the 535 drug criminal cases are caught annually by the prefectural police, which itself accounts for one quarter of the cases caught in a given year nation-wide. Koganecho was also picked up in a little section of Asahi Shinbun, another major newspaper in Japan, on January 31, 1969, as an area that used to be dominated by drugs and “baishun” but is “being reborn” thanks to rigorous police surveillance and patrols (“Umarekawaru” 1969).

Around this time, in addition to the news coverage, Koganecho was also reconstructed artificially as a film set in Akira Kurosawa’s internationally known film Tengoku to Jigoku [High and Low] (1963), whose story was almost entirely set in Yokohama. In the film Koganecho is presented as the lowest rung of society and as a “dupe street,” and is one of few visual images that would portray Koganecho during this time. Here the streets of Koganecho are packed with heavily drug-addicted and zombie-like young men and women, who gather around visitors asking for more drugs or otherwise squat on the ground with blank expressions. The sequence develops into a crime scene in which one of the addicted women is murdered by the movie’s villain, having being experimented on with heroin to assess its lethalness. This portrayal is, of

53 Exceptions include Yasuhiro Okumura and Denkichi Higashino’s (1981) photo documentary Haisen no aika [Elegy of defeat] and Yasuhiro Okumura and Toyoko Tokiwa’s (1996) photo documentary Sengo goju-nen Yokohama saigen [50 years since war: Yokohama reappears], which include some photographs of Koganecho Station and the Keikyu Train overpass from postwar Yokohama.
course, an extremely dramatized and exaggerated one but is recognized today as a powerful visual memory of the district.\textsuperscript{54}

In the 1990s, crackdowns on “baishun” in Koganecho drew public attention once again. By this time, Koganecho’s chon-no-ma units were mostly populated by transnational migrant sex workers. This time Koganecho was portrayed also as home of undocumented foreign women, particularly from Thailand, and a hotbed of HIV/AIDS. What was highlighted in the news coverage of those crackdowns was not simply the fact that “baishun” as a criminal activity had been taking place in Koganecho but also the fact that “baishun” was carried out by “foreign” women, who were without proper status or who had obtained status through sham marriages, and were often carriers of HIV/AIDS (see “Koganecho gado-shita” 1990; “Eizu hokinsha” 1990). All of those media representations, therefore, discursively pathologized and immoralized the landscape of Koganecho. But while earlier representations from the 1960s marginalized the district based more on “illicit or disdained social activit[ies]” (Shields 1991, p.3), more recent representations from the 1990s did so by associating the place with a particular population that occupied the place, namely, foreign women, who carried no status but disease.

Another view of Koganecho, which is more sympathetic than the other toward inhabitants involved in the sex trade, can be identified as sentimental journalistic and

\textsuperscript{54} For example, see article “Yokohama seen in songs, films and dramas” (2011, p.10) and Yamagishi (2011, p.36), which are both included in Yokohama, a periodical edited by the City of Yokohama and Kanagawa Shinbun, published by Kanagawa Shinbun.
fictional narratives. Those representations of sex workers resonate with typical *ninjo* stories from conventional Japanese dramas that narrate the lives of people at the margins of society (see Chapter Two). In Kengo Matsumoto’s novel *Koganecho Kurasshu* [Koganecho Clash] (2003), for example, Koganecho appears as a place where a blunt but warm-hearted obstetrician runs his modest clinic to serve the needs of the poor, sex workers, and gangsters, and ill-fated old Japanese mamas manage their brothels and offer jobs to young and poor women so that they are able to support their families. Those narratives are particularly sympathetic to aged mamas, usually sex workers themselves in the past, who grew up in the postwar period in extreme poverty without a proper family, have endured hardships and stigma, and later managed to become proud of their professions and their lives (e.g. “Neon no kierutoki” 1996, Matsumoto 2003, Yamazaki 2006). While the first set of media reports of Koganecho circulates fear of the district, the sympathetic stories tame such fears by winning audience’s sympathy with neatly formatted and familiar narratives.

Another example can be found in a featured story published in a 1996 local edition of *Mainich Shinbun*, a nation-wide newspaper (“Neon no kierutoki”). The story follows Tomie Aizawa (pseudonym), an old Japanese woman, who has witnessed the transition of Koganecho throughout its postwar history. Born poor and having lost her mother at the age of eight, young Tomie grew her strong-minded character and would be called by her nickname, “*kamisori* [razor].” Her first husband was killed in the war and her second marriage failed due to the husband’s infidelity. The third husband disappeared, leaving Tomie, her aunt, uncle and her three small children with his
gambling debts. Finding no other option to support her family, she decided to work as a sex worker in the water trade of Koganecho. Her competitors were initially hostile toward her but she worked diligently and finished repaying the debt in a little over one year. By the 1980s she was managing her own brothel with a few girls from other parts of Asia, such as the Philippines and Taiwan. She ended up being caught by police in a crackdown in 1990, which made her decide to close down her business. She removed herself from her family registry to formally cut off her relationships to her children so that they did not have to suffer from having a mother with a stigmatized past. “She did not wish to start her water trade business. That was the only choice she had to feed her family. She worked as hard as possible, and she is proud of it,” the article summarizes her life toward the end of the story. A victim of her own fate but a strong woman—a typical idealization of a heroine that can be seen in conventional _ninjo_ dramas.

Except for those limited occasions when Koganecho received public attention from journalistic reports, the neighbourhood remained silent about the lives of its inhabitants. However, times have shifted. Nearing the final raid of chon-no-ma businesses in 2005 and onwards, Koganecho was evaluated and judged both within and outside the district to an extent that it never reached before. _Was Koganecho a good place or a bad place? Were “foreign shofu” immoral people or victims of sexual and economic exploitation? Has Koganecho become a better place or not?_ Koganecho has been the single most contested site in Yokohama for the negotiation of memories, where the municipal government, news media, a non-profit organization, local residents, independent business owners, visitors, writers, journalists, cultural producers,
artists and students, actively write histories of the neighbourhood and invent new identities of the place (e.g. “Saigono itto kierumade” 2005, Yagisawa 2006, 2014; Suzuki 2010; Kogane-X 2009-2015; Agawa 2014). What is neglected in this battle are questions, for whom is Koganecho a good place or a bad place? Whose memories are at stake? Most importantly, who speaks for Koganecho’s past? In the current battle over memories of Koganecho the voices of sex workers are absent. In what follows, instead of speaking for transnational sex workers, who lived, were displaced from and whose bodies are absent today in Koganecho, I present my analysis of the processes through which their absences and silences have been produced in the local battle over memories that has been ongoing since 2005 (Kikuchi 2010, p.76).

Battlefield of Memory: Politics of Remembering and Forgetting in Koganecho

In January 2005, a large-scale raid organized by the Kanagawa Prefectural Police, the municipal government of Yokohama and a local resident group called Hatsuko Hinodecho Kankyo Joka Suishin Kyogikai [Hatsunecho-Koganecho and Hinodecho Environment Cleanup Initiative Committee; hereafter, “Cleanup Committee”] uprooted chon-no-ma businesses in Koganecho. The raid is formally called Bai Bai Sakusen [Operation Bai Bai], which stands for “bye to baibaishun [selling and buying sex].” While there are different explanations for why the chon-no-ma in Koganecho had to be uprooted, the official justification offered by the Prefectural Police and the City of Yokohama led by its young and energetic then-mayor, Hiroshi Nakata, was that the demise of the chon-no-ma and ridding of the ‘unfavourable’ would improve the image of
the city and was necessary to prepare for the 2009 Expo and the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Port of Yokohama (see, for example, “Yokohama kaiko 150” 2005, Hatsuko-Hinodecho 2007, Kurihara 2015). At the press conference that took place on December 1, 2004 for the announcement of Operation Bai Bai, Prefectural Chief of Police Ito stated that the presence of those “special eating and drinking venues,” i.e. chon-no-ma, was “embarrassing” to the world outside and not suitable for Yokohama as an “international city” (“Saigono itto kierumade” 2005). Local residents like members of the Cleanup Committee expressed that the eradication of “baishun” was long due, particularly after the presence of “foreign” women became dominant and the neighbourhood felt less “safe” to be in especially for (Japanese) women and children. They remember that many people left their community and the community was “breaking down” (Suzuki 2008, p.114). Language barriers and cultural differences also fed

Aside from the official justifications, there are a number of local and muted explanations for why chon-no-ma businesses were no longer tolerated. Some speculate that Koganecho had become too popular and publically-known through the Internet, and as a consequence, the police could no longer unofficially tolerate illegal businesses. Another story is that a wild seal referred to as Tama-chan appeared in the Ooka River in September 2002 and attracted families with small children from outside Koganecho, consequently exposing the neighbourhood to the public, and leading the government to shut it down (Tamura, personal communication, 31 January, 2012). In fact, there is official evidence that the increasing explosion of chon-no-ma to the public required stricter regulation of the area. In the hanzai jiken shoribo [crime report] entitled “‘Koganecho gado-shita’ chiku ni okeru baishun jihan” [Prostitution case in the district of ‘Koganecho underpass’], created by Kanagawa Ken Keisatsu [the Kanagawa Prefectural Police] and submitted to the Yokohama District Public Prosecutors Office on January 23, 2005, which reports the arrest of a suspect for providing a room for commercial sex, indicates that this area had been experiencing the “degradation of public morals to the extent that it was broadcasted on TV as a brothel district.” This suggests that the publicization of Koganecho as a brothel district to the wider public was part of the reason for the final raid in 2005. Less politicized views include the belief that district-based prostitution is old-fashioned and obsolete due to the rise of new communication technologies that allow consumers to have sex workers come to them anywhere in the city with phone call or text message, that men could no longer afford sexual services due to the economic recession, and that Koganecho had in fact become less vibrant than it was before the 2000s. According to these views, in other words, chon-no-ma were in decline within the underground economy of Yokohama, and the police did not see as much incentive as they might have in the old days to tolerate such businesses.
frustration among some locals. There was, for example, a “problem” raised by local residents that “foreign” women did not follow local rules and expectations for the disposal of waste (Kageyama 2010, p.57). I would add that there were yet other factors that facilitated the city’s decision to demolish the district, including the increased awareness and fear of AIDS that emerged among locals in Koganecho during the 1990s,\textsuperscript{56} U.S.-led international pressure on the Japanese government to prevent human trafficking, which increased in the 2000s,\textsuperscript{57} and newly implemented security measures that, beginning in 2003, aimed to remove undocumented migrant sex workers from major cities of Japan.\textsuperscript{58}

Whatever the cause of the eviction of chon-no-ma businesses, the Operation, which lasted several months and was followed up by patrols and the establishment of a new police kiosk was successful on the surface. Koganecho would become a site of struggle over who belongs to the neighbourhood today through an evaluation of the past. One the one hand, the members of the Cleanup Committee, who were involved in the police raid of 2005, claimed that they wanted to make their neighbourhood “safe” and

\textsuperscript{56} In 1994, Yokohama was the first city in Asia to to host the International AIDS Conference.

\textsuperscript{57} The Second World Congresses on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) took place in Yokohama in December 2001 and Japan signed the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in December 2002 (ILO 2005, p. 50). In 2004, Japan was categorized as a destination country for trafficked persons by the USA’s State Department.

\textsuperscript{58} In October 2003, the Ministry of Justice issued a joint statement with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Metropolitan Police Department to declare that the Ministry would reduce the number of undocumented foreign residents in Tokyo by fifty percent in five years to combat crime and strengthen national security. While the measures for stricter immigration control and crackdowns were first implemented in Tokyo, they were extended to other cities of Japan in the following months (see news articles “Fuhoshuro gaikokujin” 2003, “Fufotaizai” 2003, “Hanzaisoshiki” 2004).
“secure” and ensure that no “illegal” businesses could ever return there in the future. The city saw the district as an experimental site for its creative city project and imagined Koganecho as an art town. On the other hand, a small group of young individuals based in Yokohama saw potential for the vacant chon-no-ma space to instigate a new cultural movement by using the “lingering scent” of the former brothel district. Others found vacant units as potential sites for their independent community businesses.

As different agendas, interests, motives and desires started to dwell in the same territory, the landscape of Koganecho became a “battlefield of memory,” or an “arena of both remembering and forgetting” (Kapralski 2001, p.37). While some wanted to completely erase the stigmatized past from Koganecho’s history, others regretted that the old culture and community was gone and consciously attempted to preserve old elements of the district. As many scholars of memory studies argue, memory is political; both remembering and forgetting are political acts (Bal 1999, Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, Radstone and Hodgkin 2006). As those scholars would argue, the conflicting desires for the neighbourhood is not about establishing more truthful accounts of what actually happened in the past. The conflict is about “who or what is entitled to speak for that past in the present” (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, p.1) so that they can symbolically, politically and economically mark their presence in the neighbourhood today. In this way, the past is appropriated “for goals in the present” (Bal 1999, p.xvi). As I outline below, local practices of remembering and forgetting have been expressed and materialized in a range of forms, involving both a more permanent transformation and production of built environment and more ephemeral “spatial practices” (de Certeau 1984). They
include organized walks, map-making activities and production of the imaginaries of the neighbourhood that collaborate, compete or negotiate with each other in producing new memoryscapes of Koganecho at both physical and imaginative levels.

*Forgetful Art*

The most visible and dominant transformation of Koganecho has been happening under Yokohama’s creative city project. Since 2004, as the City of Yokohama began to imagine itself as a city of art, inspired by Charles Landry (2000) and Richard Florida’s (2002) concepts of creative city and creative economy, both Kannai and MM21 districts have been key sites for Yokohama’s art and entertainment scenes. The entire waterfront area has been the main setting for the Yokohama Triennale, an international exhibition of contemporary art, which has been held once every three years since 2001. The waterfront has also been the site for the “six base areas” of the National Art Park Plan, an initiative to revitalize Yokohama’s economy by developing new entertainment and tourist industries and bringing in entertainment-related companies and artists from outside the city. Yokohama’s creative city project is also an attempt to re-establish Yokohama as a

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59 The city of Yokohama has published books to actively publicize the city’s aggressive and innovative strategy to transform the city through art and creativity. *Creative city Yokohama koremade to korekara* [Creative city Yokohama from the past into the future] (2008) edited by the Yokohama Creative City Promotion Council, with an Introduction by former mayor Hiroshi Nakata, reports how Yokohama’s creative city project has evolved through discussions that took place among city employees, academics and artists. *Sozotsushiki Yokohama no senryaku* [Strategies of creative city Yokohama] (2008) was authored by Kunihiro Noda, a city employee who worked with former mayor Nakata in creating Yokohama’s creative city policies in 2003 and played a leading role in planning the Yokohama Triennale in 2004. The book outlines a history of the municipal government of Yokohama, discussing how Yokohama’s creative city policies came to fruition. *Sozosei ga toshi wo kaeru* [Creativity changes cities] (2010), edited by the City of Yokohama and Nobuharu Suzuki, a professor at Yokohama City University, has one chapter authored by current mayor Fumiko Hayashi, outlining how the idea of creative city has been applied to Yokohama.
cosmopolitan and internationally competitive city. In fact, in earlier years since its inception, the project developed in conjunction with preparations for two international events held in the waterfront: A Grand Exposition for Yokohama’s 150th Year (Y150) in 2009 and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Japan in 2010 (Y. Mori, City of Yokohama, personal communication, February 28, 2013). In addition, one of the objectives of the creative city project proposed by the Yokohama Creative City Promotion Council was to make the city into an Asian hub of art by attracting artists from Asia and around the world. Given the wave of economic growth happening in Japan’s neighbouring countries in Asia, Yokohama is presented with the diplomatic option of “returning to Asia,” an apparent reversal of the Meiji era pan-Asianist slogan “leave Asia, enter Europe,” which advocated for Japan’s modernization following the model of the west. Koichi Iwabuchi (2002) suggests that the recent strategy of “return to Asia” results from the country’s imperative to re-encounter “Asia” in a context where other Asian nations are highly modernized, which requires Japan to reposition itself among its neighbouring countries (p.546-547). At the same time, this strategy is also return to the old Orientalist narrative that “assign[s] [Japan] the (imperialist) mission of leading the ‘backward’ Asian nations” (p.547), consistent with the earlier slogan from the Meiji era. The narrative of return appropriated by the City of Yokohama discovers Yokohama’s Asia-ness by reconfiguring the city as an art centre in Asia with an imperialist mindset,

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60 Yokohama Creative City Promotion Council, which is currently part of the Culture and Tourism Bureau of the municipal government, was part of Y150 and Creative City Headquarters between 2006 and 2009 and Creative City APEC and Creative City Headquarters in 2010.
Isolated from the main site of Yokohama’s creative city project on the waterfront, Koganecho has also been rebranded since 2008 as a “creative delta,” a designated site of art spaces for young artists. This was a solution devised by the city in order to “regenerate” the neighbourhood that had been a ghost town for the past few years since the eviction of chon-no-ma businesses. This regeneration involved “improving” the image of the district by installing art spaces and making the place accessible to tourists and visitors from outside the neighbourhood. The major project that the city launched in Koganecho is an “experimental art event” called Koganecho Bazaar. The first Bazaar took place during the period of the Yokohama Triennale 2008 and it has since become an annual event. The Bazaar has been run by The Koganecho Area Management Center, a government-funded, non-profit organization (Suzuki 2009, p.62), which has worked closely with the Cleanup Committee and the Kanagawa Prefectural Police that continue to regulate the district through frequent patrol and surveillance. It also works with Yokohama City University, particularly with one of its faculty, Nobuharu Suzuki—a board member of the Center—and his undergraduate students, who study Koganecho as a model case of community regeneration. The district, which had long been regarded as a “dead zone” or a marginal, extraterritorial space where the law was suspended and criminalized activities were tolerated, suddenly became the most regulated and disciplined part of the city, an experimental site for institutions’ latest cultural and urban design policies. The Center’s artist-in-residence programs bring artists from all
over Japan and overseas, particularly Asian countries, including China, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Singapore.

One of the most visible outcomes the art project is the new built environment that is replacing parts of the physical landscape of Koganecho. After the raid of 2005 the city rented out chon-no-ma properties and turned them into artist studios (As of February 2013, 67 chon-no-ma units were rented out by the city and had been used as art and office spaces). In addition, a space that belongs to Keikyu Corporation under the railway overpass between Hinodecho Station and Koganecho Station has been repurposed as additional art space and is managed by the city. Kogane Studio under the railway is one example of art spaces that constitute Koganecho’s new landscape. The studio is sandwiched between a wall with shiny aluminum finishing and large windows on the one side and a glass wall on the other, giving a clean, futuristic and inorganic view. The studio’s large windows make the interior visible from the outside. It is currently occupied by a group of artists, who run it as a coffee shop, music house, and community library. The architecture directly reflects the Center’s Community Development Pact of 2009, which states that one of the Center’s goals is to create a “bright, transparent, safe and peaceful landscape in the neighbourhood” (Koganecho Area Management Center 2011, p.90). This is architecturally consistent with Hinode Studio, another space installed beneath the railway, which is fully surrounded by glass windows. Between those two studios are four art spaces (for exhibits, workshops, and events), each designed by a different architect. They are called Site A to D and also have modern elements of concrete walls and large windows. Together they extend about 100 metres along the
Ooka River, between the Kogane Bridge and the Sueyoshi Bridge. Beside those newly installed large art spaces underneath the railway, Koganecho Area Management Center also has small art studios converted from chon-no-ma units, which stand along the overpass. Chon-no-ma units, which used to have frosted glass entrances and awnings with bar names, now have clear and full glass entrances, which make the activities inside completely visible to passersby. Those studios showcase artists’ projects or artists themselves working on their projects, making them observable from the outside.

Displacement of the traces of the past landscape also happens through Koganecho Area Management Center’s residency programs. The Center either invites or calls for artists from a range of fields annually, selects those who “understand the goal of [the] organization,” including the “cleanup” of the district, and allows them to work in Koganecho for up to one year (Koganecho Area Management Center 2014, 2016). An artist is able to apply for an extension upon review but their residency is subject to termination if their activities or art projects are considered undesirable to the Center. The high turnover of artists would make it extremely challenging, if not impossible, to engage with local history and incorporate it into an artwork in the first place. At least up until I completed my fieldwork in April 2013, art projects in Koganecho were subject to strict censorship; a project should not evoke memories of “baishun,” by explicitly or implicitly representing sexual matters, evoking past scenes of chon-no-ma (e.g. by using pink
lights) or by publicly engaging in activities that can be interpreted as transgressive, “delinquent” or “disturbing” to neighbours.61

Forgetting the past happens in much more subtle ways when the landscape of Koganecho is presented and represented anew in regularized walking tours organized by the Center and in media projects that are officially invited to the neighbourhood. The Center’s walking tour, which I participated in March 2012, guides visitors from one studio to another, introducing current artists in residence and facilitating interactions between artists and visitors (see Chapter Six). The tour is solely focused on presenting a new Koganecho *artscape* to visitors represented in a map of the studios and experienced by window-shopping selected studios. This artscape replaces an old imagination of the place with a new one.

Similarly, history is made absent in images of Koganecho in media projects like 5 *Windows* directed by Natsuki Seta, which was initiated as part of Cinema de Nomad, an experimental art project in Koganecho that took place in conjunction with the 2011 Yokohama Triennale. 5 *Windows* is a 40-minute-long film consisting of five parts. It was entirely shot in Koganecho and the first screening took place in the neighbourhood in October. The first four parts were screened outdoor and the last one in Cinema Jack and Betty, an independent theatre located just across the Ooka River. According to the

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61 In the past, some projects were terminated or denied an extension because they did not fit the “goal of the organization.” They include Nekokikaku [cat project], a project that involved offering traditional Thai massage services, a DJ project by Kamome Sound System, a street culture store and gallery GOODDAYS. The termination of those projects were not officially announced by the Center and I heard about their closures through rumours circulating among regular customers of independent local businesses on the Koganecho Riverside.
accompanying brochure, the project’s concept is for the audience to “float” with the film in Koganecho by moving from one screening to another in an exploration of “relationships between film, city, space and body” (Higuchi 2012, n.p.). In an interview entitled “For the [cinematic] experience of an unknown time and place” with film critic Hidetake Yuki (n.d.), filmmaker Seta says that Koganecho was selected as a site for film production not because of its particular history or identity but because she was interested in the idea of making the project site-specific: to produce and screen the film at the same location and cause an effect on the viewer so the assumed boundary between fact and fiction is questioned. The film itself captures a day in Koganecho experienced by four individuals with different relationships to the place, who do not have previous relations to each other but happen to pass by each other on one of the bridges over the Ooka River at exactly the same moment. The film juxtaposes the individuals’ personal memories, imaginations and their physical presence in place, which all come to intersect at the end of the film. However, by focusing on personal memories and imaginations of those characters that are completely irrelevant to the neighbourhood’s socio-economic realities in the past and present, the film effectively neutralizes the place as a blank film set and renders Koganecho as an ahistorical and apolitical laboratory for an art experiment.62

In fact, new local initiatives centred in the Koganecho Area Management Center do not completely disengage from local history. There are some projects that are

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62 See Aoki and Yoshimizu [forthcoming] for their discussion on the “Logbook Yokohama” workshop organized by the Yokohama Triennale, another art project that took place in Koganecho in 2013-2014, which is similarly indifferent to the neighbourhood’s history and turns the place into an artistic laboratory.
specifically concerned with writing a new history of Koganecho based on particular memories of the district. For example, Nobuharu Suzuki, an Associate Professor at Yokohama City University and a board member of the Center, conducted historical research in Koganecho with a research team made up of his students. The outcome of the research was published as *Koganecho Textbook 2010*. The book archives the history of Koganecho by following the similar narrative produced by public museums in Kannai (see Chapter Two), outlining the infrastructural development of water transportation systems on the Ooka River since the opening of the port; destruction of the town due to the Great Kanto earthquake in 1923; and the tragedy of WWII and the Great Air Raid of 1945. The book does cover a post-war, Koganecho-specific history, including the construction of air fields just across the river; emergence of a black market in neighbouring town Noge; development of inns and brothels in Koganecho targeted at male labourers migrating to Yokohama to look for work; Koganecho’s “dark” history of “suffering” from continued brothel development and the emergence of the drug trade during a time of economic growth between the late 1950s and 1970s; and the increase of foreign sex workers in Koganecho from the 1970s onwards. Koganecho’s history ends when local residents worked closely with the prefectural police and the city to eradicate illegal chon-no-ma businesses and launch the Koganecho Bazaar in 2008 to turn the district into a town of art with a bright future. The book project, however, is complicit in the city and Koganecho Area Management Center’s project to normalize the district, and
its narrative that sets Koganecho’s post-WWII history merely as the grounds for recent attempts to change the district’s landscape.\textsuperscript{63}

Since the final raid of 2005, the neighbourhood’s new history has also been “invented” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) by the Koganecho Area Management Center, Cleanup Committee, Kanagawa Prefectural Police and artists in residence. The Cleanup Committee presents its own history of creating a “safe” and “secure” neighbourhood (through rigorous surveillance and security measures) in a timeline with text and photographs that mark significant events since its inception in 2003. When I first visited Koganecho in January 2012, the timeline of the Committee’s activities was posted on the railings along the Ooka River near the new police kiosk at the end of the Sueyoshi Bridge, clearly presented to pedestrians (this timeline is also available at the Committee’s official website [see Kogane-X 2009-2015]). The committee’s history is now ritualized in a formal ceremony too. In January 2015, the Cleanup Committee celebrated the 10\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Operation Bai Bai, which involved an opening ceremony at Azuma Elementary School, a group patrol, which started at the school and ended at the Koganecho Police Kiosk, and a formal acknowledgement of the generation of police officers who worked toward the eradication of “baishun” in the neighbourhood. At around the same time the Center hosted a series of photo exhibits called \textit{Passages of}

\textsuperscript{63} In addition to the fact that the project was headed by Suzuki, who is a board member of Koganecho Area Management Center, the project also involved interviews with five other Center board members (including the chair, and two vice-chairs) and a few city employees, who are involved in urban development and the creative city project in Yokohama.
Koganecho to commemorate six years of history of artist-in-residence programs and reflect on the role of Koganecho in the Japanese artworld.

Invention of a new history has been taking place in fictional forms as well. Taiju Agawa, a long-term artist-in-residence who has been based in Koganecho since 2009, published Yokohama Koganecho Puffy Street in 2014, which is one of the few projects produced by the Center that directly addresses local history. Set in Koganecho, the story narrates the processes through which a stigmatized neighbourhood was transformed into a town of art. The story is told from the perspective of fictional character Shiori, a female high school student, who discovers Koganecho when she was photographing the neighbourhood and learns its shadow history as she develops relationships with local residents and artists. The story narrates the story of what is called Fuzoku Kakudai Boshi Kyogikai [the Sex Industry Expansion Prevention Committee], including its origin, collaboration with local police and success in eradicating “baishun” from the district; simultaneously, it tells of the artists who arrived in Koganecho after the raid and began to make it their own by transforming the neighbourhood along the Ooka River into a space for art spectacles (Shiori calls this project “Venicization of Koganecho”). Agawa’s novel was adapted as a play in October 2015 and was presented with a walking tour guided by the author, which showcased some of the key spots that appear in the novel (Butaiban Koganecho Pafi-dori 2015).

In Agawa’s fictional but authorized history of Koganecho, the presence and lives of migrant sex workers are made invisible through multiple erasures. In his story, migrant
women do not appear as subjects who speak of Koganecho’s past (first erasure). Their lives in the district are not even recollected by the novel’s characters, because they arrived after the displacement or they never developed personal relationships to the migrants before the displacement. The story rather highlights and celebrates residents’ acts of erasing past traces (second erasure). Furthermore, this very act of forgetting is now turned into the very thing that should be remembered and passed on (third erasure). This process of multi-layered erasure occurs in Agawa’s writing most conspicuously in the section where he describes the 2010 ceremonial removal of brothel awnings, a remnant of the past that was identified as a “symbol” of Koganecho’s dark history by the Cleanup Committee. Agawa writes, “[Even after the removal] the trace of the awning was still visible. The trace would recall the past. But, at the same time, it also memorializes the act of removal itself” (p.251). In Agawa’s story the act of erasure and forgetting becomes a new history, overwriting the memories of the lives of migrant sex workers.

The official historical narrative that is accepted in Koganecho today recognizes the district’s past only to justify the removal of migrant sex workers and the present art project. The practices of memory that have been dominant in Koganecho are also linked to postcolonial amnesia in Yokohama at large. In 2014, Koganecho Bazaar was entitled “Fictive Communities Asia” and aimed “to situate Yokohama as an important cultural hub in Asia, and provide a new think-tank network and platform among Asian art communities” (Koganecho Bazaar 2014). This was situated in the context of Yokohama Triennale 2014’s general theme, “ART Fahrenheit 451: Sailing into the sea of
oblivion,” which focused on artists and artistic expressions that responded to things that were left behind and failed to be recorded (Morimura 2014). Yokohama’s creative city project and Koganecho Bazaar finally discover “Asia” in the “sea of oblivion” for the first time for their construction of a new Yokohama. However, there is almost no acknowledgement that the city and its culture have always been shaped by migrants from Asia and other parts of the world. In this way, the memories of young migrant sex workers (“criminal” foreigners) are replaced with a spectacle of young international artists (“guest” foreigners) to transform the landscape of the district. Yokohama’s creative city project attempts to invent Yokohama’s cosmopolitan history while at the same eliminate traces of the transnational communities, which had been making the margin of the city diverse, multicultural and international in Yokohama for two decades.64

64 Koganecho’s art projects, coupled with the “cleanup” movement of the district, are not without critics. Objections to erasing memories of the district’s past were, in fact, raised internally in a symposium organized by the Center itself. It was held in Kogane Studio on January 26, 2009, immediately after the first Koganecho Bazaar in 2008, to reflect on the first art festival. The panel consisted of art documentarian Shigeo Anzai, artist Tadashi Kawamata, and art journalist Makoto Murata, and was facilitated by the director of the Center Shingo Yamano. In the symposium, Murata pointed out that Koganecho Bazaar facilitated gentrification of the neighbourhood, and eliminating “crime” simultaneously involved ruining local creative potential (he referenced a case of New York and how graffiti art disappeared in the process of gentrification). While expressing his understanding of the Center’s policy to exclude any art project that can evoke a link to the district’s past, Murata cautiously pointed out that there are risks in “wallpapering flowers to cover up a dirty place” (Koganecho Bazaar Office 2009, p.114). Anzai followed him by saying that artists need to engage with the “shadowy” part of the district and incorporate it into their artwork, instead of “blindfolding [the artists] or covering up” such pasts (p.115). Terukazu Danbara (2014), a non-fiction writer based in Yokohama, also sees the Center’s activities as a form of gentrification of the neighbourhood and criticizes the mechanisms of repression and censorship at work behind the “safe” and “secure” artscape presented to the outsider. In his book Koganecho Chronicle (2014), Danbara reveals the extreme police regulations deployed after the completion of Operation Bai Bai on individuals who, independently from Koganecho Area Management Center, started businesses and sub-cultural activities by converting chon-no-ma units (see below); the Center’s strict censorship of art projects so that they do not evoke past memories; and the concealment and silencing of a sexual assault that happened in one of the art spaces during Koganecho Bazaar in 2010. He argues that the Center’s art projects are used as an apparatus
As of today, the municipal government and its arm’s-length Koganecho Area Management Centre continues to dominate the battlefield of memory of Koganecho (Chapter Four). However, an attempt to suppress memories sometimes ends up evoking them as a result of the forced disappearance of what used to occupy the space. As Abidin Kusno (2010) points out, some buildings, although they were not built for a commemorative purpose but rather for forgetting the past, have the effect of “registering, as well as forgetting, memories of past events” (p.104). In the case of Koganecho, the refashioned built environment of Koganecho is like a “palimpsest” (Harvey 1990; Huyssen 2003; Crinson and Tyrer 2005; Goh 2005) that makes the multiplicity of time in the city visible, “enact[ing] the dynamics of memory and forgetting” (Kusno 2010, p.104). The futuristic and contemporary designs of the studio structures under the railway are an out-of-place imposed newness among the surrounding old-fashioned inner-city buildings. Furthermore, because renovated chon-no-ma units preserve their exterior structures from an earlier time, the Center’s curatorial attempts to avoid evoking a sense of the district’s past is constantly undermined by chon-no-ma buildings that were originally designed and built solely for quick sexual intercourse. Chon-no-ma units— with their two-metre-wide entrances and narrow stairs that are connected to a few tiny rooms upstairs, which were only large enough to accommodate two adults lying down—are, indeed, awkwardly small.

not to eliminate violence and oppression but rather to exercise violence and mask the actual oppression that exists today in the district. There are also more casual, critical evaluations communicated online on personal blogs and by Twitter, that the Center’s art projects have been failing to keep their promise to attract visitors from outside, as the streets of Koganecho still remain empty even during the festival period (see for example posts made by a locally known blogger Kappuku-no-yoi-kare [2012, 2013]).
**Some Rememberings**

Completely apart from the city’s initiative to utilize vacant (or emptied) chon-no-ma units for its creative city project, some young individuals in their twenties and thirties based in Yokohama found different possibilities in the spaces left behind and envisioned different futures for the neighbourhood. The city and Koganecho Area Management Center exercise strategies to “produce, tabulate, and impose…spaces” (de Certeau 1984, p.30) in Koganecho through the “panoptic practice” (p.36) of physically transforming the landscape and installing permanent structures in it; whereas most other initiatives resonate with what de Certeau calls “tactics,” as they have been more ephemeral or never involved production of permanent or stable markers in the district, and instead only used spaces that are available to them temporarily in order to achieve their immediate and sometimes whimsical goals (p.xix). Eventually, these initiatives did not grow into a concrete and large-scale project to the same extent as Koganecho Bazaar, partly due to regulatory pressures imposed by the authorities. They also remained “isolated actions” and did not leave many visible traces, except for a few publications (p.37). The memoryscapes of Koganecho they attempted to draw, therefore, was never complete and remained fragmented.

Alternative initiatives emerged and were centralized in one particular unit of a chon-no-ma block located along the Ooka River between the Ota Bridge and the Sueyoshi Bridge. This block, which is sometimes called Koganecho Riverside by those who frequent the place, has been occupied by modest independent businesses (see Chapter Five and Six). As of January 2015, all units have been converted into bars
and are supported by local customers. There is still working-class culture remaining in
some of these bars but there are also groups of freelance writers, media workers,
independent business owners, care workers, sex workers, unemployed individuals that
make the community distinct from mainstream Japanese society where salarymen and
women, or corporate employees, with stable positions still have privileged status. They
shared somewhat antagonistic sentiments toward the Koganecho Area Management
Centre and the local police, having been under the authorities’ suspicious gaze for awhile
after they opened their businesses. Umino-san, one of the masters [male owners] in
Riverside commented, “During the first month after I opened the coffee bar, police
sometimes came to investigate us. One time they ran into the unit without saying a word
and rushed upstairs to check if anything was going on. There were other occasions when
they came into the unit without advance notice. They also patrolled around the block
regularly. It is illegal for them to enter a private business without getting the owner’s
permission, but these things still happened here” (personal communication, 8 March,
2012). I heard similar stories from other masters as well. Their bars developed into spaces
where customers were able to openly share their interpretations of the neighbourhood
from the old days. Customers could express positive feelings of the past or their
frustration toward current police regulation of the district, the city’s spending on
“disengaged” and “irrelevant” art projects, and the Center’s censorship of sexual matters.

Although most of these masters and their customers do not explicitly advocate for
remembering Koganecho’s past in any public way, one of those units was home to
multiple and loosely connected projects that intentionally engaged with the history of
sex work in the neighbourhood. The first project in this particular chon-no-ma unit was the Koganecho Project, organized by a group of three young men, Toshiyui Kajiwara, Rio Asai, Yoshio Kobayashi, all in their twenties (Ishii 2007, May 19). Kajiwara is the current manager of independent theatre the Cinema Jack and Betty in Wakabacho, one of the key figures in the Yokohama Minato Film Festival discussed in Chapter Three, but at the time when they first arrived in Koganecho, it seems, they did not necessarily claim themselves as cultural producers or artists.

It is difficult to describe the content of the Koganecho Project in detail, as the project was short-lived and its members did not leave many records of their activities. Whenever I asked those who witnessed to the Project about it, they would just say, “Well…nothing really happened,” without elaboration. My attempts to interview Kajiwara failed as I never received a response from him to my inquiries, and descriptions of the project published in online news or magazine articles available do not elaborate on the actual content of the project (e.g. Ninomiya n.d.; Ishii 2007, May 20; Tachibana 2013). During my fieldwork I also felt that in some cases, those who were involved in the Project were hesitant to recount their experiences as it had a bitter end—they were forced to dissolve by the dominant actors of the neighbourhood (local police, neighbourhood associations, the Koganecho Area Management Center and related groups).

Fragments of stories and information gathered from my conversations with locals who frequent the Koganecho Riverside and the available publications above suggest that in essence, the Project was about making use of the remnants of chon-no-ma, or what
they called the “lingering scent” of the place. They also attempted to build a new community based on the network of the old community that existed before the 2005 raid and was almost broken down due to the displacement of chon-no-ma businesses. Organizers facilitated local events and publicized the neighbourhood through different types of media. Their activities were materialized in at least three forms. First, they rented one of the chon-no-ma units on the Riverside block and used it as an open community space. The space was once used to exhibit materials that were left behind in the chon-no-ma, such as sex workers’ costumes and pink lights, and to evoke scenes from the brothel district. It also offered a space to build a new community for those who were interested in the history of the neighbourhood. Second and third, they built an online site called *Koganecho Project* and published two issues of a free magazine called *Koganecho Rush* in April and October 2007 to raise awareness of local history, old community businesses, and events (Ishii 2007, May 24; Tachibana 2013). It is worth mentioning that the second issue of *Koganecho Rush* included a group interview with three old mamas, who had been running their pubs in Koganecho for decades. The interview reveals a different view of Koganecho than the negative one reproduced in official discourse. For example, one mama says that Koganecho was a place of ninjo, compassion, where the poor were welcome to visit their pubs and have drinks, even if they did not have enough cash to pay for them. All mamas agree that Koganecho always accepted outsiders, who migrated from elsewhere and found a place for survival there. The interview suggests that such character is still present in some pockets of the neighbourhood like those three mamas’ pubs, and promotes their businesses by offering a coupon to encourage people to
visit the neighbourhood again. Soon, however, the Koganecho Project was forced to come to an end by the Kanagawa Prefectural Police and the neighbourhood associations after being perceived as a “supporter of baishun” (Danbara 2014, n.p.). Copies of Koganecho Rush were not fully distributed and the online site was taken down due to the silent censorship that was never explicitly expressed but nevertheless powerfully felt in the district.

Thus, despite the fact that these initiatives did not develop into a large-scale form of resistance against the removal and forgetting of chon-no-ma businesses, they sought to engage with Koganecho’s past in a way that was not in sync with the official treatment of it. Their interpretation of the neighbourhood might resonate with the sympathetic view of Koganecho found in some ninjo dramas (discussed above) that tell of the lives of women who survived through postwar Yokohama. During my fieldwork I felt that this sentiment was much more widely shared and supported by locals than it initially seemed, although it does not usually get expressed publicly. “Even members of the Cleanup Committee sometimes admit that Koganecho was better in the past. That’s what they really think but they just don’t say it publicly,” said one participant in my research (20 February 2012). “The silent majority feel that the place was better before,” another told me (n.d.).

After the publication of the second issue of Koganecho Rush, the project members retreated from the politics of Koganecho and started to focus on their new business, Cinema Jack and Betty. They held the Koganecho Film Festival at their theatre for two consecutive years in 2008 and 2009, which became the predecessor to the Yokohama
Minato Film Festival launched in 2012 (see Chapter Three). Takahiro Nakamura and Hideo Mori, the key figures in the Yokohama Minato Film Festival, were interviewed by the members of the Koganecho Project for the second issue of *Koganecho Rush*. In a sense, former members of the Koganecho Project found a place in Yokohama’s socio-cultural space of memory, which I discussed in Chapter Three, where the “lingering scent” of the city is much more accepted and appreciated. At the same time, this move was also the end of the Koganecho Project, as an initiative to revisit and support Koganecho’s small pubs run by old mamas. Instead of resisting the official forces, it seems that the project members started to develop diplomatic relationships with the city and the Koganecho Area Management Centre in order to survive the economic difficulty experienced by many independent theatres in the city. For example, Cinema Jack and Betty collaborated on the *5 Windows* film project discussed above and work with the City of Yokohama to carry out and advertise the Yokohama Minato Film Festivals.

When the members of the Koganecho Project moved to Wakabacho to start their theatre, the chon-no-ma unit used for the project was then passed down to Tadafumi Tamura, who was involved in the activities of the Koganecho Project before it was dissolved. Committed to bringing to light the repressed memories of the neighbourhood, Tamura independently organized a walking tour to raise awareness of the postwar history of sex work in Koganecho and other parts of Yokohama’s inner-city, of the forced removal of migrant sex workers in 2005, and of the destruction of the old community in the district. He ran his tour between 2008 and 2013 on demand and always in small groups. It received sporadic media attention (e.g. “Koganecho purojekuto” 2007,
Nakazawa *et al.* 2007, Osawa 2011), but was never advertised widely and remained almost unnoticed except by local police officers, who occasionally harassed him by questioning what his “true” intentions were, that is, whether he was attempting to agitate for the return of “baishun.” At night he ran a bar called Kikiya and attracted customers who sympathized with his belief that the history of Koganecho should be openly talked about as a public matter, rather than suppressed.

One of Kikiya’s customers was Takaaki Yagisawa, a photo journalist, who published two non-fiction books (2006, 2014), and a newer edition of the first book (2015), on the lives of migrant sex workers in Koganecho. Yagisawa’s two book projects are the product of over ten years of fieldwork in Koganecho, other brothel districts of Japan and overseas, including the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Chile. Compared to other ephemeral, short-lived projects that emerged locally in Koganecho, his books are much more clearly materialized forms of memory that document lives in Koganecho in both text and photographic images. Yagisawa’s portrayal of Koganecho also differs from the one presented by the members of the Koganecho Project. Having actually engaged with some of the migrant sex workers in Koganecho, who still had strong transnational connections to their homeland, Yagisawa represents Koganecho as a strange and foreign place populated by women with diverse nationalities and transnational networks. This is distinct from the Koganecho Project’s emphasis on a small community sustained by mamas, who initially arrived in Koganecho from elsewhere but had settled and ran their businesses there for a number of years.
In his book, Yagisawa recalls that the streets of Koganecho were always covered by “something like a fog” (2014, p.16). He writes, “The fog might have been just an illusion. But I believed that it surged up from the emotions of women who sold their bodies there and the bodily fluids of men who devoured those bodies.” He continues, “The storefronts of chon-no-ma lit up the street in thick colours of red and pink…A distinctive smell filled the narrow street. It was the mixture of the scents of women’s perfumes and the male customers’ cigarette smoke. The women showcased themselves in front of their chon-no-ma with thick layers of makeup on. Some women were in high school uniforms, some in short pants with t-shirts, and others in dresses” (p.16-17). When women were uprooted, Yagisawa comments, the fog also disappeared from Koganecho (p.74).

Based on interviews with sex workers, Yagisawa’s books (2006, 2014) attempt to offer an alternative view of “shofu”—not criminals or sources of vice but victims of national politics, wars, modern industrial development and neo-colonial exploitation. He also presents a view of transnational migrant sex workers as mothers, daughters and sisters, who work abroad to support their families back home even if that involves a risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS. It is important, however, that after sympathetically describing the challenging realities in which the sex workers from economically disadvantaged countries live by including their testimonies, Yagisawa’s narrative makes a slippery shift. At the end he writes, “It is regrettable that longlasting brothel districts, which are full of sentiment, are rapidly disappearing from Japan” (p.311). He goes on, “It is likely that Japanese society will lose colour from its streetscape and be left a
dry and tasteless place. But the presence of shofu, in whatever forms future baishun may take, will surely add colour to the grey city. I see a little hope in the existence of shofu” (p.312). After the final raid of 2005, he stands on the Kogane Bridge and looks at the empty chon-no-ma brothels and the cherry trees lining the Ooka River. Over the cherry trees he finds the Land Mark Tower, which he metaphorically describes as a “grave stone” (2006, p.183) that embodies the death of Koganecho as “a place of sex workers” (2014, p.73). In his eyes, the high-rise is a symbol of a break in Yokohama’s history, where the completion of the MM21 postindustrial redevelopment project marks the end of postwar chon-no-ma businesses that supported the industrial development of Yokohama in the time of the Japanese “bubble economy.”

While those alternative initiatives and projects have created a space to remember the lives of transnational migrant sex workers in spite of authorities’ efforts to erase memories of their past presence, the constructed counter narrative has not always been a progressive one that envisions a more ethical relationship with transnational migrants. Nostalgic yearning for Koganecho’s old community relations and “tasteful” and “colourful” streetscape, mirrors the function of the Yokohama Mary narrative for imagining Kangai’s shitamachi relations and picturesque streetscape (see Chapter Two). In Koganecho, I also met locals, usually male, who regularly visited the neighbourhood and other former brothel districts in Japan out of their nostalgic pursuit of Showa-style landscapes, atmosphere and sentiments. They would take strolls and document former brothel buildings in photographs, following the emerging craze of “city walking” in general and “walking in the former brothel districts” in particular that have

As a number of postcolonial scholars (Hall 1990, Chakrabarty 1992, Oka 2000, Yang 2008, Kikuchi 2010) have argued, the questions of positionality—from what position one speaks and write—is important especially when dealing with external representations of experiences on behalf of marginalized people and places. Incredibly, in the narrative constructed by Japanese men, who stroll in search for the “disappearing” streetscape of brothel districts, voices of sex workers are absent in concluding that those districts had a richer culture and thus were better before. When Koganecho’s past is positively evaluated by those who were not the object of displacement, or indeed, whose access to and mobility in the neighbourhood today is enabled by that very displacement, without acknowledgment of such, it often takes a form of what Renato Rosaldo (1989) calls “imperialist nostalgia,” which happens when “people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed” (p.108). He writes, “Imperialist nostalgia…revolves around a paradox: a person kills somebody and then mourns his or her victim. In more attenuated form, someone deliberately alters a form of life and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to his or her intervention” (ibid.).

What would be an ethical way for those who inhabit the site of displacement today, such as myself, to remember the lives of displaced migrant sex workers? How can I start imagining a more ethical relation to displaced lives when I was and am complicit with their material and discursive displacement, especially after acquiring a “refined
sensibility,” as Tani-san, one of my participants, remarked on my capacity to be nostalgically affected by the old streetscape of Yokohama and the nationalist narratives of postwar Yokohama (Chapter Three)? What would this ethical relation look like when I am unlikely to become an object of displacement, criminalization and marginalization in Japan to the same degree? What are the political implications of remembering? How is it possible to make meaningful connections between past violence and present reality? How do we (I) speak about the displacement in the past while also acknowledging the presence of transnational migrant women who still engage in the water trade in the city and Japan at large? How do we (I) go from remembering the past to engaging with the present and imagining the future? While I do not have final answers to any of these questions, the second part of this dissertation presents one exploration of the questions above from my emplaced and entangled fieldwork experience.
Chapter Five: Following the Ghost, Entangled with Lives: Fieldwork in the Water Trade

“Don’t worry even if nothing happens there,” said Dara Culhane, an experienced ethnographer and one of my dissertation committee members, as she hugged me at the end of the day on which I had my research proposal defence. It was December 14th of 2011, nine days before I left Vancouver for my fieldwork trip to Yokohama. What advice could have been more encouraging and terrifying at the same time to a novice ethnographer, who was about to embark on her research in a neighbourhood she had almost no previous contact with? I still recall vividly the mixed feeling of anxiety, fear, and a bit of excitement that I had expressed to the committee. In fact, during my fieldwork in Yokohama, there were actually times when I was frustrated, disappointed and anxious because nothing seemed to be happening. Days went by without any
quantifiable progress (no additional contacts, interview appointments, sources, etc.), there were relapses (last-minute cancellations of appointments, contacts not showing up to meetings), and a lack of immediately meaningful findings to include in my journal (“Today’s only gain was two beer coupons I got for my next visit [to a Thai karaoke bar],” one entry says). So much of what I was writing in my journal was made up of everyday interactions, conversations and gossip that took place in the venues I was visiting along the Koganecho Riverside and in the Thai migrant community and it often looked completely unrelated to the memory project I proposed to the committee before I left Vancouver (then titled “Following the Ghost: Excavating Memories of Migrant Sex Workers and Reconstructing Memoryscapes of Yokohama”). Later those interactions and conversations became important material for my dissertation but I did not necessarily feel assured while I was there.

On another level, I think that Dara’s words rhetorically pointed to one of the fundamental characteristics of ethnographic fieldwork: that it offers a researcher contact to “open-ended, even mysterious, social processes and uncertainties” (Biehl 2013, p.590) of the “unfinished world” (Stewart cited in Culhane 2011, p.260) outside of the classroom, where nothing happens in ways that the researcher anticipates in the planning stage of the project. “One of the greatest promises of ethnography,” she writes, “is its capacity to surprise” (Culhane 2011, p.265). As I learned in her graduate course on ethnography in the spring of 2008, fieldwork is improvisational and processual (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007; also see Castañeda 2006, Ingold and Hallam 2007, Culhane 2011). Malkki (2007) argues, an ethnographer “cannot be assured of her
competence to carry out good field research simply through mastery of a known set of methods,” but there is “an open, flexible, highly context-dependent, and time-sensitive repertory of possibilities” that emerges during fieldwork that the ethnographer must creatively use and remake (p.180, emphasis in the original). Ethnographic fieldwork is “also a matter of living. [It] is a way of being in the world” and this involves giving oneself over to quotidian routines, social obligations, sensory and emotional experiences of the mundane “messiness” of life (p.178).

In that sense, so much was happening over the course of my fieldwork. Once I was in the space, I found myself caught in the life force entanglements of water trade communities in Yokohama. Most of my “creative” efforts were consumed by my attempts to simply orient myself there so that I could somehow get by. Things did not work out as planned, ideas were dismissed, misinterpreted or refused by people whom I met, and my work started to seem irrelevant to their lives and meaningless to carry out. Johannes Fabian (1990) suggests that the ethnographer’s role is not “that of a questioner” but “a provider of occasions [of performance], a catalyst in the weakest sense, and a producer…in the strongest” (p.7). My role was at the weaker end and soon I found myself being an engaged member and entangled part of the “continual coming-into-being” of the places of the present water trade (Ingold 2008, p.1797). Thus, my fieldwork was not a process of collecting research data that exists “out there” in a static form (“informative ethnography,” in Fabian’s [1990] term) through prescribed data-collection methods. It was rather a “performative” one (Fabian 1990); it was a “generative” and “relational” process (Ingold and Hallam 2007) in which I performed both as an
observer and as an actor in the field while I constantly negotiated new and unexpected situations that emerged from intersubjective interactions with others (Castañeda 2006). This process is unfinished even after I “finished” my fieldwork—I am still entangled with the social relations and they are not concluded and containable—leaving me with the impossibility of “bring[ing] this unfinishedness into [my] storytelling” unresolved (Biehl 2013p.574).

While the first part of this dissertation consisted of my critique of the dominant and popular memoriescapes of Yokohama, where memories and voices of migrant sex workers are (made) absent, the second part presents a different memoriescape of the city. This is based on my own emplaced engagement with memories of displaced lives and with lives that inhabit the site of displacement in the aftermath, which happened during the nine-months of fieldwork I conducted in Koganecho and a Thai migrant community across the river. In the rest of this chapter I discuss this improvisational and performative nature of fieldwork, which extended over two periods from the beginning of January 2012 to the end of April 2012 and from the beginning of November 2012 to the end of March 2013, and unfolded in two distinct communities that are both differently connected to the old chon-no-ma community of Koganecho: the community of Koganecho Riverside, a small block of chon-no-ma units that have been converted into bars that are independently run by local individuals; and a community of Thai migrants that is dispersed across Kangai but particularly centred in so-called Little Bangkok of Wakabacho, a neighbourhood located just across the Ooka River. Speaking from concrete situations that emerged as I participated in the everyday goings on of water trade
communities in Yokohama, I discuss what my fieldwork in Koganecho entailed, what my plans were, how they were challenged, how my methodology shifted over the course of the fieldwork as I became entangled with local relations, and the political and ethical implications of my research. The chapter is organized around five performative moments of what Castañeda calls the “very actualization, conduct, realization, and corporeal doing of the activities and practices that comprise and constitute ethnographic fieldwork” (Castañeda 2006, p.76). I selected those moments for their capacity to have made me reflexive of my research practices. In those moments the role I wanted to perform initially was not recognized or refused by others and instead I was faced with my othered self, as a “girl,” a hyper sexualized body or a “customer,” the roles and identities I did not necessarily choose to perform but were rather imposed on me or emerged through my negotiation with others. In Dorinne K. Kondo’s (1986) terms, the process of negotiation with people I encountered during my fieldwork, who were “actors” and “agents” in determining the kind of role I was able to occupy in the field, propelled my “collapse of identity” (p.75). I reluctantly or unconsciously accepted those roles as I became entangled with their lives and, whether I liked it or not, enacted the patriarchal and (neo)colonial structures that constituted the water trade communities I encountered in Yokohama. By returning to those moments, I explain how my approach to fieldwork constantly called for modifications and shifts and how I negotiated those calls in an improvisational, or perhaps ad-hoc, manner. In the end of this chapter, I also include a short discussion on the ghostscape, which I started to imagine and sense on and across the Ooka River. I will conclude the chapter by explaining how I present my ethnographic
knowledge in the two chapters that follow.

Most names of individuals and business establishments that appear in the following chapters are pseudonyms. I use the real names for those who spoke to me in their professional or public capacities and chose to have their names appear in my publications, including organizational representatives, writers, and community advocates.

**Being Othered, Becoming Entangled: Performing Intimate Relations**

**Moment 1**

It was the second time when Tani-san, one of my male participants, guided me through Yokohama’s Kangai area. When we first met he showed me around Koganecho, places where Thai women used to solicit clients and hang out after their work hours. “You see that apartment across the bridge? Earlier the site was half a parking lot, half a love hotel. Thai women used to solicit men around there.” He recalled the bad smell of watermelon rinds that Thai “girls” had left on the street and said that he could still vividly remember it. Crossing the bridge, walking the streets of Wakabacho, he pointed to a dance club where Thai women used to socialize. He also identified the former site of a Thai restaurant that was informally called the “embassy” among Thai migrants. All those places were no longer there. Many Thai businesses have closed down after the Thai community was diminished by the 2005 raid in Koganecho. His tour was informative and gave me some sense of what the neighbourhood looked and felt like in the old days. I was meeting him again, as he had promised to bring me some photographs of Koganecho and its neighbourhood from the time before the raid. We met at a coffee shop in Fukutomicho, looked through his photo album, and now he was generously guiding me through Fukutomicho, Isezakicho, and further toward the Nakamura River, an excursion outside of Koganecho. “How do you think others see us?”
Tani-san suddenly turned to me. "What do you mean?" I was perplexed. "They might think of you as at work," he laughed. His comment did not make sense at all for a moment. What work? I looked up, then around, and found a male solicitor in a shiny suit standing in front of one of the “fashion health” [massage parlor] buildings. A girl in a costume came out from the building and had a short chat with him. Quickly I realized that we were walking in Akebonocho, informally called oyafuko-dori [unfilial street], a sex trade street. My body was suddenly bound to his, glued with uneasy steps. (18 March 2012, Akebonocho)

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Initially, not knowing how to start my “fieldwork,” I followed my proposal and instigated my research by inviting local people to do some memory work activities: photo-taking, map-making, storytelling, and guided walking. While fieldwork is unscriptable, Malkki (2007) notes that just like in jazz, ethnographic improvisation requires “countless hours [of] practice and preparation of various kinds” (p.182). In my case this included “imitating” and “quoting” (p.183) past practices of other researchers, who embraced subjective, embodied, sensory, affective and emotional knowledge and valued creative, reflexive and collaborative research practices. In their projects research participants are invited to generate ethnographic knowledge through a range of activities, such as storytelling, mapping, image-making, photo-taking, guided or shared walking, eating and drinking (Bendiner-Viani 2005, Richardson 2005, Riano-Alcala 2006, Irving 2007, 2010, Moretti 2008, O’Neill and Hubbard 2010, Pink 2008, Radley et al. 2010). Building on those past practices, I designed the above four activities so that I could invite people in the local community, some possibly migrant (former) sex workers,
into my research. These activities were to help me learn about the lifeworlds of migrant
sex workers in Koganecho from the time before they were displaced, in a multisensory
and locally grounded manner (see Appendices for the “protocols” for those activities).
They were supposed to enable me to imagine different possibilities of what the
displacement meant and “reconstruct” a memoryscape of Koganecho that would
challenge the dominant memoryscapes of Yokohama. However, while those participant-
centred collaborative activities might have been carried out successfully in other research
contexts, most of my planned activities did not work out as I had hoped.

“Storytelling” was for me a way to invite people “not simply as sources of data”
but as my “intellectual partners” (Bauman and Briggs 1990, p.61; also see Cruikshank
1990, Robertson and Culhane 2005, p.14), who could make substantial contributions to
generating an understanding of place based on their own unique and embodied
knowledge of everyday life in Koganecho before the police raid of 2005. Throughout the
two phases of fieldwork, but much more intensively in the first, I tried to generate stories
of Koganecho in the “old days” by asking local individuals to share their knowledge of
the neighbourhood, who had relationships to varying degrees with migrant sex workers
and Koganecho’s chon-no-ma quarter. My “intellectual partners” ranged from former
clients, marriage partners and ex-partners of migrant sex workers to (former) owners of
Thai restaurants and grocery stores that are/were catered to sex workers and their clients.
Not only did they remember everyday scenes of the chon-no-ma quarter vividly, many of
them had close relationships with individual migrant sex workers and were also familiar
with their everyday lives. To supplement this, I interviewed members of local non-
profit-organizations that worked closely with transnational migrants, writers, artists and activists, and who are knowledgeable in socio-economic and legal conditions of migrants’ lives in Yokohama. I ended up generating stories with twenty-one individuals. I also did other activities such as guided walking and map-making with a few people who had shared stories with me.

In the first phase of my fieldwork, in my attempts to recruit participants for my memory work activities, I frequented Koganecho Riverside, a small block of former chon-no-ma units converted into new independent businesses. I spent the majority of time with people who were part of this block, instead of those in the other part of Koganecho managed by the Koganecho Area Management Center and local resident groups, despite the fact that they are central to the officially recognized and dominant Koganecho scene today. I made this decision for an obvious reason. People on the Riverside were independent from the official mandate that underlies the operation of the Center, part of which involved the repression of the neighbourhood’s past. They were rather open about speaking about the past, and in fact, there was a tendency among them to rather cherish the old culture of the neighbourhood. This made me inclined to develop close relationships with people on the Riverside. In the second phase of fieldwork, I frequented family businesses owned and run by Thai migrants such as restaurants, karaoke bars, pubs, massage parlors, and grocery stores. Identifying the structure and network of the Thai community was not as straightforward as on the Riverside, as Thai businesses were geographically dispersed across Kangai, although they were mostly concentrated in Wakabacho, the area informally called Little Bangkok. I was introduced to those
businesses by referral from Riverside masters and others, who had already been participating in my research, which allowed me to see the presence of the small-scale but dense network of Yokohama’s Thai community. Both communities are made up of modest independent and family-owned businesses and heavily rely on patronage. While they are not represented by any officially recognized bodies, I often found those restaurants, pubs, bars and massage parlors to serve as community centres where people socialize, organize celebratory events, and seek consultation from one another on a range of matters.

Two months into the first phase of fieldwork, I realized that my pre-planned memory work activities were not working out effectively or in the way I expected. As in other cases where ethnographers’ gender and sexuality affect their fieldwork experience (Whitehead and Conaway 1986, Bell et al. 1993, Markowitz and Ashkenazi 1999, Buarque de Almeida 2003, DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, Ch6), mine also strongly shaped the ways people interacted with me and influenced how I conformed to local expectations of gender roles. As a woman, it was a challenge to be taken seriously as a professional researcher by my male participants. One participant dismissively commented that my memory work activities were like “high school assignments.” I also realized that my research activities could well be interpreted differently by people in the local communities. As Tani-san’s comment during my enactment of a fieldwork moment (“Moment 1”) indicates, in certain areas of Kangai women only become visible as sex workers. By walking with a man my body is easily read as “at work” by other passersby. Furthermore, in some cases the co-walking activity could also give a false
impression to my male participants. This was more likely to happen in the Thai restaurant that I frequented in Wakabacho where a young Thai server and Japanese master often jokingly offered me an escort to the hotel where I was staying. The same master started to ask me on dates each time our “storytelling” activity was over. All those situations were insightful and suggestive of how gender and sexual roles and relations operate in the local context but I could not also ignore the risk of carrying out those activities with my male participants. As I discuss later in this chapter, the feasibility of doing those activities with Thai migrant women was even less for different reasons.

I decided not to pursue memory work activities persistently and shifted my focus to doing what seemed most appropriate for those venues: to return as a regular customer and simply hang out there. To be sure, I never completely dismissed the stories I generated through those activities and I do draw on them in presenting my ethnographic knowledge in the next two chapters. As I discuss at the end of this chapter, they fed into my imagination of the place from the time before displacement in a meaningful way and gave me a more nuanced understanding of the life and work in chon-no-ma. However, faced with day-to-day interactions that unfolded there, my pre-planned activities and research questions started to seem irrelevant and trivial, and instead I found myself constantly having to negotiate local relations of the present communities. I started to spend a significant amount of time there, moving from one bar or restaurant to another every day, chatting with masters, mamas and their customers, prioritizing “participation” over “data-collection” activities. The shift I made was not just a technical matter of research method but also a matter of epistemology: from seeking an
understanding of the place through textual and *transcribe-able* knowledge about Koganecho’s past to embodied knowledge (Csordas 1990, Geurts 2003, Pink 2015) of the place by immediately being in the water trade communities of the present. This meant that I was an “emplaced,” perceiving subject that actively participates in making and making-sense of the ethnographic place (Pink 2008; also see Amit 2000). My ethnographic “field” was not simply an objectively and instrumentally defined site from which research data could be retrieved, but a transformative “zone of entanglement” (Ingold 2008; see Introduction) in which I found myself to be part of the process of its making through everyday interaction with others and performance of local roles.

As I continued to frequent Riverside and Thai businesses and to be part of their everyday scenes, my research participants became peer customers, workers or owners of my hangout places. In some cases, as my relationships developed to become intimate, I became a friend of some and a girlfriend of one whom I met in my research (see below). Gradually, I adopted social and cultural roles that were conventionally assumed in each of those places where, in most cases, heterosexual gender-relations were still very explicitly in place. Castañeda (2006) argues, “fieldworkers do not in any simple sense impose themselves and their projects on people; rather, members of the subject community exercise their agency and control over the extent to which they engage the fieldworker…These subjects have agendas, interests, and motives that bring them into definitive relationships with the fieldworker” (p.84). In my case, I had to perform my role as a “girl,” a young mother, a potential sex partner or sex worker, and/or a customer, in order to exist as a locally recognizable body and participate in the social interactions
that constituted places. Usually there was a delay in realizing the role I happened to occupy in each situation and moments of realization occurred not through my active contemplation, but rather passively in imposed reflexive moments in fieldwork, when people objectified me in unexpected ways and I encountered those objectified selves (Taussig 1993, p.236).

As I mentioned above, the researcher-informant roles I assumed for myself and the people I met in Riverside and Thai communities were also constantly contested by men when they dismissed my presentation of self as a researcher and instead recognized me as a heterosexual body, and tried to advance a sexually intimate relationship or otherwise objectified me by making sexual remarks. In many cases, I gave up on performing a researcher’s role and, instead, started to take on another that was locally appropriate in each situation. While I never participated in the water trade communities as a “server” in Riverside or Thai businesses, I often performed my double role as “customer” and “girl.” At Pub Mary, a Thai hostess club, intoxicated male customers interacted with me in a way similar to how they would with the servers at the pub. Riverside bars, although they do not include sexual services as part of their “menu,” were sites of flirtation and I, just like many other female customers there, often ended up enacting the role of “girl” to entertain male customers by attending to their stories, making compliments, accepting their sexual remarks with a smile and accepting different forms of bodily contact.

Visiting and walking in Koganecho and its neighbourhood became part of my
routine. I repeatedly walked between Hinodecho Station and Koganecho Station along 
the Keikyu Train overpass. Sometimes I walked along the Ooka River from the 
waterfront to Koganecho. Other times, I walked from other parts of the city and entered 
Koganecho by crossing one of the bridges on the Ooka River. I also walked between the 
stores, restaurants, bars and pubs, my hangout places, on both sides of the Ooka River. 
Those repeated walks wove these venues together (de Certeau 1984, p.97), gave shape to 
the network of social relations and spatialized them in my imagination of the water trade 
communities at the margin of Yokohama. As it turned out, my “field” was made up of 
these hangout places where I unconsciously and consciously came to perform local roles 
and actively participate in the making of place. In a sense, my “field” was a constellation 
of multiple and distinctive theatrical stages for social and cultural performance that 
together loosely form part of the water trade culture of Yokohama (Freeman 2001, 
Moretti 2008).

**Moment 2**

I was walking along the Ooka River to Koganecho. I was at Khai Restaurant 
having dinner with Mia, but Tamura-san interrupted our meal with a phone-call, telling 
me that Kawakami-san, one of his customers, wanted to see Mia and asked us to come 
to Kikiya. Streetlights illuminated the water and I could see pink petals fall out from the 
cherry trees, floating like one big carpet. Mia had grown too big to nicely fit in the 
carrier. I supported her neck with my arm hoping that she wouldn’t wake up and start 
making noise. Every time I walked with her late at night, taking her to a nighttime 
venue, I felt like I was being a bad mother. As I approached Riverside I looked down on 
the street, strode up and went straight to Kikiya so that Mia and I weren’t witnessed by 
people in other bars, with which I had already been familiar. I can be gossiped
about. “Here you come,” says Tamura-san. “Hey, washboard!” Kawakami-san teased me about my chest with his bad joke. Is he sexualizing me or desexualizing me? Either way I didn’t mind anymore. Kikiya always turned me into a young, naive girl and I was already used to performing that role. I gave him a big laugh and squeezed myself to pass behind Kawakami-san’s huge body to reach the end of the counter. Mia woke up. “All right, Mia. Let’s have a walk with your ‘daddy.’ You remember me right?” Kawakami-san grabbed Mia with his big arms and took her outside. I was worried that she might catch people’s attention but was also relieved because my shoulders were light now. I could drink, talk and behave like a normal woman at a bar. I ordered shochu on the rocks. I thought about my next phase of fieldwork. “Next time, our family will take care of Mia if it is needed,” Kohei-san, Tamura-san’s close friend and Kikiya’s regular customer, had said to me once. I knew that it was not a serious proposal but I was also convinced that this was not completely an unrealistic situation to happen in Koganecho. “We were planning a BBQ party before you leave,” Tamura-san said. Two weeks are remaining before I leave Japan. I looked at a horserace calendar on the wall. I recalled my first visit to Kikiya when I told Tamura-san and Kawakami-san my birthday. Like other birthdays mine was marked on the calendar now. (17 April 2012, Bar Kikiya)

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Not surprisingly, as I actively participated in the everyday life of the water trade communities of Koganecho Riverside and Thai migrants, I started to be intimately involved in the lives in those communities. Developing intimate research relations had both strengths and limitations, both enabled and disabled particular acts in the field, opened up new possibilities and closed off others, and raised a particular set of ethical dilemmas. As already discussed in the “intimate ethnographic tradition” (Rabinow 1977, Cesara 1982, Whitehead and Conaway 1986, Bell et al. 1993, Wade 1993,
Kulick and Willson 1995), these relationships, sexual and gendered, are important to
reflect on rather than keep in silence, because they uniquely affected not only my
methodological decisions (whom I interviewed, where and with whom I hung out, the
amount of time I spent in different places), but also my other field relations (how others
perceived and engaged with me, what roles I played), my ethnographic understanding of
my fieldsites (how I understood Koganecho’s past, how I sensed the place, how I
understood the current water trade culture in Yokohama), and fundamentally, my way of
being there. In this section, I turn to my intimate interactions with three individuals,
Tamura-san, Meaw-san and Shin-san, and discuss how those relations shaped my
research practices and methodological decisions. My intention is not to treat those
intimate relations as an essential category, as the most noteworthy field relations to
examine. On the contrary, I also recognize that the distant research relations I ended up
having with some people I met in the field are equally important to examine. Those
relations also raised exactly the same questions above and affected my research
methodology in significant ways. I discuss this in the second part of this chapter.

The first intimate relationship developed with Tamura-san, who was the owner of
Bar Kikiya in Koganecho and the historical walking tour guide of the inner-city of
Yokohama, which he independently produced and operated. While I was conducting
fieldwork, he was a leading figure in the Riverside community. He was also politically
vocal about the injustice of the sudden removal of the old community that existed in
Koganecho, and was the only new business owner in Riverside, who sought to develop
relationships with people from the old communities. The old communities
include both members of official neighbourhood associations [chonaikai], which currently work closely with the municipal government and police, and those who were directly involved in old chon-no-ma businesses in the capacity of mama. He was never accepted by the former, being labeled as a “supporter of baishun” for actively calling for an open discussion of the neighbourhood’s past through his walking tour (see Chapter Four). However, he managed to create his place in Koganecho through his relationship with a few mamas, who taught him how to do business decently and in a traditional way in Koganecho. Initially, I approached Tamura-san by identifying him as one of my research participants, but gradually he became my gatekeeper to both the present and the old communities of Koganecho. Furthermore, at the end of the first phase of my fieldwork we both started to commit ourselves to a long-term romantic relationship, and after my fieldwork was over Tamura-san closed down his business in Koganecho and moved to Vancouver to join me.

In the first phase of fieldwork I developed a sense of loyalty to the Riverside community and a sense of guilt about spending time in events organized by the Koganecho Area Management Center. A significant number of Riverside people were wary of the Center’s mandate and critical of the relevance of the “art” to Koganecho, which had been implanted from above under the municipal government’s cultural policy. Often, this distrust of the Center’s art projects was imbued with anger, disappointment, a sense of embarrassment and cynicism. Maintaining “neutrality” and “balance” started to indicate a lack of commitment to the people I was hanging out with in Riverside. While this might have limited the possibility of understanding the current politics of
Koganecho from a range of perspectives, my personal commitment to Tamura-san and other people in Riverside offered me a deep understanding of one particular perspective of local politics, which would not have been available to someone without that same level of personal and intimate commitment.

Throughout my fieldwork he remained my mentor and was the most seriously concerned with my research. He was simultaneously supportive and critical of my project from the beginning. It happened that he quit his university undergraduate program from my alma mater in his early twenties. He was not able to reconcile the gap between what he expected from the academy and the reality that universities in Japan manufacture salarymen and women, and he was bitter about Japanese university education in general. He was also keenly aware of the potential violence of research conducted in a top-down manner, which in a local context had promoted urban redevelopment in Yokohama and the erasure of memories of Koganecho. Not only did he help me enter the Riverside community of Koganecho as a “gatekeeper,” he also challenged me by posing questions that were both intellectually demanding and emotionally charged. Why did you decide to study Koganecho? What and whom are you doing this research for? To what extent is this your personal quest? Who will benefit from your research? Can you enter others’ lives, asking questions and using their time, under the name of research? If you want to learn something from others, can’t you do it just through everyday human-to-human interactions? Later he told me that those were the same questions posed to him by someone who had a close relationship with old chon-no-ma mamas, in the time when he was starting his business in Koganecho. His questions were sometimes also warnings.
To him I appeared too ignorant, naive and unskilled to navigate among the lives in the water trade. Do you really know what it means to get involved in Koganecho? In nighttime businesses in this town? Do you know where you are leading yourself? While I always sought and relied on other channels to gain access to Koganecho, its memories, and local perspectives of place, his presence and thoughts remained influential in my research.

Apart from gaining an understanding of place directly from Tamura-san’s knowledge of the neighbourhood, I learned something significant about the present community of Koganecho Riverside by having my family relationships affected by my encounter with Tamura-san; that is, it was difficult, if not impossible, to attain and sustain a family proper, a nuclear family legitimized by the state, there. While people who frequent Riverside today are predominantly Japanese residents, who are socio-economically much more privileged than the undocumented migrants who used to inhabit Koganecho, many of those people were attracted to the district because they did not fit in mainstream society, dominated by middle-class socio-economic norms. For example, the Riverside community is quite diverse in terms of sexuality and age. Many regulars are also engaged in low status labour, such as construction and demolition work, care work and sex work; some are unemployed or work sporadically without a secure and stable position. A surprising number of those customers, both men and women, whom I met in Riverside were single, divorced, or engaged in a relationship outside of their marriage. While they did not have a normative nuclear family they had quite tight relationships with each other within the Riverside community. They met each other in
Riverside every day, knew each other very intimately, brought food to share, would sometimes end up sexually involved, and so on. Tamura-san described the community of Koganecho as a large pseudo-family. At the same time, however, what constitutes this pseudo-family is the very fact that it is not a “proper” family legitimized by the modern nation-state.

I learned the nature of Koganecho as home for an almost-but-not-quite-family in a rather hard way through my firsthand experience. When I first visited Koganecho, I was married and had a one-year-old daughter with my then husband. A happily married young girl visiting from Canada—this was probably how I was perceived in the community of Riverside at first. In reality, however, I was experiencing difficulty coping with my marriage and my family was almost broken due to my failed relationship with my husband. As I kept visiting Koganecho, often leaving my daughter under my husband’s care, I started to develop an uneasy, imagined affinity with male customers who frequent their favorite pubs and bars. While I was in Koganecho I was momentarily able to free myself from other spheres of my life. People started to notice that I was becoming more and more present in Koganecho and gossip that my husband would divorce me, because I was not fulfilling my role as stay-at-home-mom. While this was not the actual reason why our marriage was not functioning, the fact that the possibility of divorce did exist changed people’s perception of me. I was becoming more like one of them. My relationship with my husband came to an end toward the end of the first phase of my fieldwork. My relationship with Tamura-san developed almost simultaneously, and I started to feel more strongly that I was becoming a part of the Riverside
community. People accepted me as his girlfriend and I was spending more time in his bar with his regulars. At the very end of the first phase, I stayed in a weekly hotel in Yokohama with my daughter and brought her to Koganecho every day. Some of Tamura-san’s male customers often played with my daughter, jokingly referring to themselves as her “daddies.” I was becoming part of Koganecho’s large pseudo-family and my longing for Koganecho was even more intensified.

However, as this new relationship became a permanent one the situation changed and I faced an ethical dilemma that emerged as a result of this relationship. When I was back in Vancouver for six months until I was to return to Yokohama for the second phase of my fieldwork, Tamura-san told me over Skype, “You cannot come back to Riverside as people started to see our relationship as becoming real. A real family cannot exist in Koganecho, because it would destroy the existing pseudo-family. If you stay, they will try to destroy our relationship to protect themselves.” Tamura-san was also aware of the difficulty of continuing the patronage-based, nighttime business while developing a “real” relationship with me. He often spoke of how his body was consumed by his customers, who came to his bar, ready to communicate to him in close proximity; the respectful social and emotional distance that would normally exist between individuals outside of the private space was extremely diminished. While earning an income from his customers, he also spent it with them, often in other bars in Riverside, outside of his business hours to maintain and develop his customer/business relations. “No matter how much you earn, it won’t stay with you. In the water trade, money flows out and so does happiness,” he said. Knowing that this was a great loss to people in Riverside and
sensing their disappointment and anger, Koganecho to me became a site invested with a strong sense of shame, anger and guilt where a nostalgic return became impossible when I started the second phase of fieldwork.

My shifted position in Koganecho made conducting my research in Riverside awkward. My presence was no longer as welcomed, because I was a reminder of the closure of Tamura-san’s business. I still hung out in his bar outside of its business hours or other times when my presence was appropriate, but I did not return there to conduct my research or recruit additional participants by relying on Tamura-san’s community network. At the same time, I also started to feel strongly compelled to spend more time on the other side of the Ooka River, in a Thai community where I met former sex workers, their Japanese partners, and their children.

**Moment 3**

“Are you leaving already? I’ll miss you,” said someone. I was deeply drunk and did not recognize who was trying to grab my arm. In fact, I was not sure if anybody was actually touching my body. The skin, the physical boundary that divided our bodies in the space, had no sense. Bodies were mingling and merging into one, inseparable from one another. I decided that the words came from Shin-san, mama’s son and an assistant in her business, who was sitting beside me. “You are busy with other customers anyway. Why would you miss me?” I said. “You never know,” he replied. A typical conversation between a male client and a hostess at a pub, except that the gender was opposite in this case. Would he really miss me? As usual, Shin-san came down with me to the front entrance of the building to see me off. I gave him a hug and started walking. “Happy New Year!” “Call me any time,” Shin-san waved at me. What am I doing? Things that used to make sense did not make sense anymore. My sense was falling apart. I
pushed my wasted body, vaguely thinking about whether there are such things as real boundaries between performing roles and authentic selves, following scripts or speaking from one’s heart, lies and truth, fantasy and reality, research and “real” life... Inside me something was breaking down, melting into the sea of the indistinguishable. (28 December 2012, Pub Mary)

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As it turned out, I spent a significant amount of time during the second phase of my fieldwork with the children of Thai migrant women. Those children were either born in Thailand, joining their mothers in Japan after she obtained permanent resident status, or were born in Japan between a Thai mother and a Japanese father. In fact, the Thai community was facing a gradual generational renewal when I was conducting research. Thai restaurants, karaoke bars, pubs and massage places were still managed by migrant women, who arrived in Yokohama when Koganecho was active as a chon-no-ma quarter in the 1990s, but also many young Thai men and women, mostly children of the first generation migrants who were either born in Japan or joined their mothers in Japan before adolescence. I became particularly close to Meaw-san and Shin-san in this phase of research.

Meaw-san is the daughter of a migrant woman from Thailand, who runs the restaurant Khai with her Japanese husband Takizawa-san, Meaw-san’s stepfather. Meaw-san’s mother, the restaurant’s mama, used to work at a Thai pub in Fukutomicho as a hostess and is part of the larger Thai community in Yokohama. I initially approached Takizawa-san, knowing that he was a frequent client of Koganecho chon-no-
ma and knowledgeable about the present and past Thai migrant community. I saw Meaw-san while I was hearing stories from Takizawa-san at Khai between its business hours. Meaw-san happened to be only one year younger than myself and we started to have longer conversations at each of my visits at the restaurant. From our series of conversations, I learned that she was born in Thailand but migrated to Japan with her brother when she was an early teen to join her mother, who obtained permanent resident status through her marriage with Takizawa-san. Meaw-san now also has permanent resident status. She went through formal schooling in Japan and, while she did not go to university immediately after she graduated from her high school, she happened to be enrolled in a distance education program, again, at my alma mater. Knowing that I was a graduate student, Meaw-san and her mother started to call me sensei or teacher. I asked Meaw-san to call me by my first name, and she later started to call me Ayako-san, slightly misrecognizing my actual name, but I did not correct her and accepted it as my nickname there (mama continued calling me teacher). Meaw-san and I came to a deal that I would perform the role of tutor and editor of her papers, which she had to write to complete her course requirements, while she shared her knowledge of the local Thai community in Yokohama. She also devised many of the Thai pseudonyms for this dissertation. Toward the end of my fieldwork, however, we also started to share more of our personal matters, particularly around family and relationship issues, over lunch outside Khai. Our lunch meetings became mini-getaways for Meaw-san, who had been helping her parents’ restaurant for a number of years without having much social time outside of her family obligations.
Shin-san is the son of Pub Mary’s mama, and I met him when I visited the pub with the hopes of hearing stories of Koganecho from the mama, who had been living in Yokohama for almost twenty years and was knowledgeable of the local Thai water trade community. When I first visited the pub in the first phase of fieldwork, Shin-san was studying in Seattle. When I was back in Yokohama for the second phase, Shin-san was also back in Japan and helping mama run her pub. He was in his early twenties, ten years younger than myself, but we were immediately connected by our mutual experience of living in Seattle for a short period of time and spending our childhoods outside of Japan. Shin-san did part of his schooling in an international school in Bangkok; I did in a Japanese school in Moscow. Shin-san is bilingual in Thai and Japanese and we had no difficulty communicating in Japanese. After being informed of my research interests, he was eager to share with me his story of being “hafu,” a mixed-race child, in Japan and being raised by his mother, who was engaged in the water trade. While he was born in Japan, he still did not have Japanese citizenship, because his biological father, who is a Japanese citizen, did not officially recognize Shin-san as his son before he separated from Mama. Mama started her relationship with her current husband when Shin-san was little but they were living separately for some time, and Shin-san said that he was raised by a “single mother.” He told me that his story was only one of many stories of hafu living in Yokohama, who were raised by a migrant woman juggling work in the water trade and parenting child(ren) as a single mother. We met both at and outside the pub, but he particularly welcomed my presence at the pub, because it allowed him to not attend to mama’s male customers, who have known him since childhood and wanted to act as his
pseudo-uncles, lecturing him about “ideal” manhood. He told me that while he appreciated their care and mentorship, he was also sick of their endless lectures and could not keep listening to them without desensitizing himself with alcohol.

My ethnographic approach was shaped by feminist, anti-colonial, and postmodern research traditions that had offered a strong critique of the objective scientific research method, that instead encouraged and celebrated subjective, embodied and emotional immersion in the field (Irwin 2006, p.155-6; see Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986, Bauman and Briggs 1990, Behar and Gordon 1995 for examples that constitute this tradition). Given that tradition, I tended to too quickly believe that ethical research always required building trust, intimate connections and less hierarchical relationships with research participants. However, as my relationships with Meaw-san and Shin-san became more and more intimate, I simultaneously started to feel disturbed and uncomfortable about these relationships as well. I had this uneasy feeling in particular about my relationship with Shin-san, as our interactions took place in the context of nighttime culture. Building an intimate relationship there almost automatically meant enacting a heterosexual pseudo-romantic relationship. Although in most cases, servers, usually women, offer services by only pretending that they are sexually attracted to and interested in their male clients, there is always the possibility that this role-playing develops into a more committed, serious relationship. “Lies” might come true—which is why the water trade or what I would call relationship-flowing businesses are successful in Japan; what they sell are not just fantasies but also possibilities. Here, it does not usually matter if the client has a more “formal” or “proper” partner outside the club to
begin with. As Parreñas (2011) suggests based on her ethnographic study of Filipina hostess clubs in Tokyo, people in the water trade have “more open attitudes and different moral standards when it comes to sex, marriage, and romance” (p.4). To dip my legs in “muddy water” in order to gain an embodied understanding of the local water trade meant that I had to enact this heterosexual role-playing in my double capacity as researcher and girl-client. I could no longer ignore the feeling of unease that always lingered in my body after I interacted with Shin-san at the pub. I started to worry that my intention of being an empathetic researcher could be interpreted differently by him. This unease was never resolved despite the fact that from the very beginning I made it clear to Shin-san that I had a boyfriend in Yokohama and I was committed to this relationship. Is he seeing me as a researcher or his client? As his client or a girl? What does Shin-san perceive my “empathy” as? At the same time, my enactment of a “girl-client” role at the pub was effectively breaking down the conceptual boundaries I had constructed for myself. My roles as a researcher and girl-client were becoming inseparable and I was indeed becoming a suggestive girl-client, as well as an empathetic researcher, through my performance of roles.

I stopped returning to Pub Mary after my last visit on December 28, 2012. Although I tried to come up with an appropriate way to re-approach Shin-san I ended up losing contact with him. He did not respond to my text messages and I heard from others that he went to Thailand to visit his relatives and consult them regarding the possibility of attending school there. I never saw him before I left Japan. I was not able to fully conceptualize the problem I experienced when visiting Pub Mary to see Shin-san
and hear his stories. Even to this date I cannot draw a firm conclusion from it and the question remains not fully answered.

I can reflect back and identify that there was the problem of “doing structure” (Irwin 2006) through my ethnographic engagement with Shin-san, that is, I was perpetuating inequality and exploitative structures by enacting an intimate relation locally. To be sure, Shin-san might have seen me as “less different and more equal” to him in the context of the intimate pub culture (Dubisch 1996, p.32), because sexually provocative interactions and affairs were conventional there (Parreñas 2011, p.4) and because he was finally able to talk to and share his concerns with me, which he was not able to do with male regulars whom he had to always serve as a listener. However, it remains a reality that I was still in the position of power. My interactions with him reiterated the inequalities that exist between the server and the client, the younger and the older, the racial other and the Japanese, the foreigner and the citizen. Although the gender roles were reversed in the heterosexual role-playing at the pub, it was not sufficient for disrupting structural inequalities. Conscious reflexive practices or experimental, dialogical textualization that characterizes postmodern ethnography offer no solution to this, as long as participants “remain materially isolated from the very texts they are promoting” (Tomaselli 2003, p.858).

Political-economic inequalities, however, were only part of the problem. The intimate field relations are important to critically examine, precisely because our distance was diminished and my acts would more directly affect their social, emotional and
physical lives, as well as their political-economic lives. Based on my fieldwork experience, I follow Katherine Irwin (2006) and argue that we should not always assume that developing an intimate relation with participants is inherently more ethical than keeping distance from them. Intimate relations do happen during ethnographic fieldwork and they do both good and harm to members of the community—no ethnographer, who conducts research by entering into the complex entanglement of social-relations, can be completely harmless to everyone. What I learned is that when intimate interactions happen, particularly within an exploitative structure, we need to be attentive to “how we enact inequalities” in our interactions with participants and ask how those interactions may impact their lives (p.170).

And yet, the uncertainty stays with me. What was the real problem in the interaction I had with Shin-san at the pub? Was there actually a problem? Who decides whether it was a problem? What I can say is only the fact that the particular intimacy that developed between Shin-san and myself affected my methodological decisions—I became more careful about developing intimate relationships with people in the field, or at least no longer assumed that building a close relationship with them made my research more ethical.

**Being Refused, Reading Refusals**

**Moment 4**

“What do you want to know?” mama at Pub Mary sat next to me and asked. “What was everyday life in Koganecho like to the women working there?” “Drinking,
clubbing, doing pachinko,” she laughed. “We still go to places like Maenam to drink and party after work. We take our regulars, because they pay for us. Actually, otherwise we wouldn’t go…I used to work in the countryside like Ibaraki for the first four years, then moved to Yokohama around twenty years ago. I have my business now. I want to work for the same regulars until I am an old lady.” I was able to have this short conversation with mama when her husband, the pub’s owner-on-paper and who happened to be at the pub that evening, called her to our table so that she could answer some of my questions about Koganecho. I did not know whether she had the firsthand experience of working in Koganecho but her husband told me that she was knowledgeable of the place. She had to go back to her table soon, as the pub was busy, crowded with Japanese male customers. “I can tell you more when we meet next time,” Mama said to me when I left Pub Mary on April 9, 2012, the very first time I visited the place. Now, over eight months later, I was back in Yokohama for my second phase of fieldwork and I had not been able to follow up with her story any further. Instead, I was spending most of the time at the pub talking to Shin-san, Mama’s son, who was initially assigned to the role of server for this irregular female customer. A male servant for a female customer—this did look more appropriate in the space. At the same time, I could not entirely give up on the idea of hearing more stories from Mama. Maybe tonight? Since I entered the pub she had been occupied by her regulars, but now she was having a short break after sending off a group of customers. I stood up to go to the washroom and on the way called to Mama, “Hello. I’m not sure if you remember me but I’ve been here before,” “I remember you,” she smiled and nodded. She said she could tell me more. “I wanted to follow up on your story.” But something is not right. “What story?” My gut told me not to continue the conversation. “You seem very busy!” I changed my tone and looked around the pub. “It’s the busiest time of the year,” she sighed and continued, “You know, Shin doesn’t read Thai but he can speak both Thai and Japanese.” “That’s right.”

(28 December 2012, Pub Mary)
As I discussed in Chapter Four, the official and popular representations of Koganecho are characterized by a marked absence of voices of transnational migrant sex workers. The district has been regarded as a place to engage in “criminal” activities by authorities, the city’s arm’s-length organization and resident associations (Narita 2008; Suzuki 2008; Yamano 2008; Naka Ward 2015). It has also been represented by male onlookers and clients as a place to experience exotic sexual encounters with foreign women (Yagisawa 2006, Danbara 2009), or by anti-trafficking activists and scholars as a place to be trapped into sex slavery (Ando 1977, Murata 1992, Shoji 1999, Otsu 2004, Inaba and Saito 2005, Muto 2005, Saito 2005). Through my project I wanted to gain a more nuanced understanding of the place, one that is informed by the complexity and difference of what it might have meant to live and work in Koganecho and what the place might have meant to the migrant women themselves—an understanding that does not call for generalization or closure.

As indicated above, in the initial phase of my fieldwork I generated stories of lives in Koganecho through my conversations with Japanese men—former clients, (ex)spouses of migrant sex workers, owners of Thai restaurants and grocery stores catered primarily to migrant sex workers. Generating stories of Koganecho with those who are not migrant sex workers themselves, especially from Japanese men and former clients, supplied an only “partial” understanding of Koganecho (Clifford 1986) based primarily on Japanese male perspectives, and therefore compromised my feminist and
anti-colonial aim to bring the voices of migrant women to the centre of my work. To address this, I made a few attempts to invite Thai migrant women, who may or may not have been in Koganecho before the police raid of 2005, into the activities I had planned. However, as I elaborate below, my intentions were naïve and my research faced a number of challenges during fieldwork, especially from some migrant women themselves, who “refused” to participate in my ethnographic inquiry in different ways (Simpson 2007, Tuck and Yang 2014a, 2014b). As Amanda Weidman (2008) suggests in her discussion of the relationship between voice and agency, I had to learn that the “presence of voice does not necessarily indicate the agency of the speaker, even when that speaker’s voice is really heard” (p.137), because these voices are “not merely a property of individuals, or transparent vehicles of identity or agency, but are culturally and historically shaped” (p.136). Simply including their voices does not automatically help us cause social change or even express their agency. In the end, I decided to make my ethnographic knowledge accountable by recognizing their refusals to participate in the activities I designed or enter into the research relations I wished to develop. Rather I decided to acknowledge their power to define how I related to them and call into question taken-for-granted research practices.

After all, I ended up not instigating “storytelling” with them or other activities in the same manner I did with other people. This was not a one-time decision but my decision was made in a processual way, as a result of multiple ethical and methodological choices I made in different moments of the two phases of fieldwork. There were practical challenges to begin with. For example, “accessing” migrant women, who used to
work in Koganecho was challenging, particularly in the initial stage of fieldwork, because they had dispersed outside of Koganecho at the time of the raid and became highly invisible due to the increased regulation of undocumented migrants in the city.\(^{65}\) As I started to frequent the Thai community toward the end of the first phase of fieldwork, however, this became less of an issue. It became clear to me that not all migrant women left the city in 2005. Some of my Japanese participants, who both married Thai women and are deeply integrated into the Thai community of Yokohama, told me that roughly “ten to twenty percent of the Thai women,” who made up the majority of sex workers in Koganecho since the 1990s, stayed in Yokohama after the raid. Most of them now have permanent resident status in Japan, which they obtained through marriage to Japanese citizens. One of my participants called them “Koganecho graduates.” In fact, I met some

\(^{65}\) In the initial stage of fieldwork, when I was looking into the possibility of connecting to migrant women who have previous experience working in Koganecho, I conducted interviews with members of a few local non-profit organizations, Kalabaw-no-kai and Kalakasan, that provided transnational migrant men and women with legal and social support. While members of Kalabaw-no-kai spoke to me of their experience of assisting in the rescue of a Thai trafficked woman, who was forced into prostitution in Ibaraki Prefecture in 1991 (called the Shimodate Incident) (personal communication, 15 February 2012), neither of the organizations had close relationships with migrant sex workers in Yokohama. Kalabaw-no-kai has historically served the needs of migrant construction labourers living in Kotobukicho, a day labourer town in the inner-city of Yokohama, who have been exploited as cheap labour with little or no social security. Kalakasan located in the City of Kawasaki just north of Yokohama, on the other hand, offers services primarily migrant women, but a member told me that they had little knowledge of women working in Koganecho or other parts of Yokohama as sex workers (personal communication, 8 February 2012). Their service recipients are predominantly Filipina women, many of whom are likely to have been initially admitted to Japan with “entertainer visas” and married Japanese men, and they bring issues related to domestic violence and the legal status of their children and themselves. I also contacted two other local women’s organizations that offer supports for migrant women, Kanagawa Women’s Space “Mizura” and The House of Women Saala, but I was not able to schedule an interview with their representatives. In a brief phone conversation, a member of Mizura directed me to its publication, which included cases of human trafficking victims handled by the organization. I approached those organizations, being informed that they have built relationships with migrant women engaged in the sex trade. However, in general, I found that they had limited relationships to migrant sex workers, who did not seek protection and supports from them in order to exit the trafficking system. Based on her study of Thai sex workers working in Yokohama, Watanabe (1998) suggests that “Thai sex workers would not approach Japanese women’s organizations, knowing they would only be told to quit the job and go home immediately. They also assumed that Japanese women did not welcome them because their work was related to sex” (p.123)
“Koganecho graduates” during my fieldwork at their workplaces, including Thai restaurants, diners, karaoke bars, pubs, and massage places, both within and outside of Little Bangkok in Wakabacho.

Even if I actually ended up always seeing migrant women, including “Koganecho graduates” at their workplaces, meeting them outside of their workplaces and business hours seemed challenging, because I knew that they worked long hours, mostly over night. When I visited their workplaces, they were always busy attending their regulars and would have been interruptive of me to talk to them. We could have a short conversation at best, “guided walking” outside workplaces was hopeless. I was a customer there, but I was a woman and not an “ideal” type of customer, because I would not be profitable given the tight budget I had to carry out my research. I would also not order extra services beyond items on the menu or take them for meals outside. In fact, at a pub and karaoke bar, I was automatically assigned a male server to accompany or serve me. There was also the language barrier. I speak English and Japanese, two imperial languages, which already speaks volumes of my socio-economic privilege, and this created another layer of difficulty in connecting to stories of Thai migrant women. Before I started fieldwork I was not completely sure whether there were any migrant sex workers remaining in the city then and if so what their nationalities and cultural backgrounds would be, because Koganecho was quite diverse in terms of the demography of women. This made it difficult for me to prepare myself to study an additional language.

And the list goes on. Most importantly, however, I did not instigate memory work
activities with migrant women, because I sensed their implicit “refusal” to participate in my research or lack of interest in my research questions in our brief encounters when I introduced myself as a researcher and described my research (Simpson 2007, Tuck and Yang 2014a, 2014b). For example, I “read [her] refusal” (Tuck and Yang 2014b, p.814) when mama at Pub Mary did not (or pretended not to) recall what “story” I was interested in and tactically delegated her bilingual son as my server. I read refusals when Thai women I met at a karaoke bar and restaurants said, “I’m not good at Japanese” when I initiated conversations with them. I read refusals when migrant women treated me only as their customer and nothing more. At those moments my gut told me not to ask questions, continue our conversations, or “invade” their space and time with my ethnographic inquiry (Tuck and Yang 2014b, p.811), and my intuitions were quite compelling. Some of the advice I received from my other participants had also made me question what my research practice could really mean to migrant women. The master of Thai restaurant Maenam, who introduced me to mama of Pub Mary, advised me not to be “inquisitive” when I talked to her because she might become suspicious that I was police or an immigration officer. No matter what my intention was, asking her questions about her life or knowledge of the Thai water trade community could mean “doing structure” (Irwin 2006) that would constantly put transnational migrant women in the position of the surveyed, turning them into an object of knowledge. Those moments of “refusal” powerfully made me reflexive of my research practice. I return to this point below with another example.66

66 Other scholars (Watanabe 1997, Parreñas 2011) who have conducted ethnographic research among...
Frequenting the water trade venues in the Thai community, I was also faced with situations where I found it ridiculous even to invite migrant women into my “memory work” activities. In my encounters with Thai women, seeing them serving mostly Japanese male regulars in a Thai pub, karaoke bar, or massage parlor, I knew that this would not be the right question to ask. They neither remember nor forget Koganecho’s past, simply because what I was assuming to be of the “past” actually continued to exist in the everyday lives of the migrant women today. In fact, many Thai women do continue to engage in different levels of sex work at pubs in Kangai and young women continue to arrive from Thailand to work at “soaplands” [sex bathhouses] in other parts of the prefecture. Like in other instances where sex work is legally abolished or migrant sex workers are removed from a brothel district (Nichols 2002, Kempadoo 2005), uprooting chon-no-ma businesses in Koganecho did not “eradicate” sex work and exploitative labour, it simply displaced it, made it less visible, or forced it underground. Lives in Koganecho before the 2005 raid were still there in the present, in the community in which I was already participating as a customer and also as a girl. Memories of the place are not migrant hostesses in Japan also report difficulties hearing their stories. In her study of Thai sex workers and hostesses working in Yokohama, Watanabe (1997) writes that prostitution or engaging in any kind of sex trade is considered as an immoral act in Thailand and there was a norm among the Thai women with experience of working in the sex industry in Japan not to expose their past experiences to strangers (p.199). To address this issue, she worked as a non-paid hostess at one of the Thai clubs in Fukutomicho and collected stories from co-workers and others to whom she was introduced later (p.200). Parreñas (2011) also discusses the initial challenge she faced in finding Filipina hostesses willing to participate in her study (p.14). She also worked as a hostess herself and started to see her co-workers agreeing to participate (p.15). She notes that contrary to what journalists in Tokyo told her, “their [initial] unwillingness to participate in [her] study had not been for fear of the yakuza” but because of the “emotional distress from the stigma of their occupation” (p.14). Aoyama (2007), in her study of Thai sex workers, notes that even when an informant shares her story with the researcher, how she represents herself in the story potentially depends on the depth of the relationship between the informant and the researcher. Speaking of a specific informant, who appeared as an autonomous and independent woman in the interview, she writes that the superficial relationship she had with the informant might have affected the informant’s decision not to show her vulnerability or the complex reality of her work and life to the researcher (p.276).
necessarily “retrievable” through recollection of past events, but, as I discuss below, are enacted in the venues of the water trade in the present.

After all, I did not initiate “storytelling” activities with migrant women and even when we had chats at their workplaces I did not try to lead our conversation according to my intellectual interests and research questions. I also stayed relatively distant from them throughout my fieldwork.

**Moment 5**

I walked from Kannai Station to Diner’s mama’s massage parlor. I walked halfway through Isezakicho street, turned right and entered Fukutomicho, passed Pub Mary on my right, turned left, crossed Chojamachi street and finally entered Wakabacho. On the way I was feeling bad about mis-remembering Jim-san’s nickname throughout my past visits to the parlor. Somehow I kept calling her Cham-san and she never corrected me. What a terrible mistake I was making. I was completely embarrassed. What happens if I call her by her real nickname this time? Would she laugh at me for my past mistakes? Or would she not care? I quickened my pace, wanting to have this moment pass as soon as possible. When I finally arrived at the parlor and opened the door, Jim-san was lying down on the tatami floor, relaxed, but as soon as she saw me coming in she quickly sat up. “Jim-san,” I called her. Without changing her face, she asked me, “Seventy minutes?” (23 January 2013, A Massage Parlor)

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During the two phases of fieldwork, there were a number of instances where I misremembered or misrecognized the migrant women whom I encountered in
the Thai community of Yokohama. Sometimes I did not remember their nicknames correctly and other times I made incorrect assumptions about who they were, how they were related to so-and-so. Ethnographic observation “requires a number of personal skills, from tact and flexibility to good memory and intuition,” writes Deacon et al. (2007, p.265). I was not a good researcher in this sense, ironically with respect to “memory” in particular, as I was often forgetful and erred like a wasted customer at a pub, who mixed up the names of the girls he was talking to at his last visit. It also reveals that while I was visiting Thai independent businesses quite frequently, I generally stayed outside of the Thai community. I did not participate in it to the full extent where I would become fluent in their cultural codes, if not language, familiar with Thai nicknames and more knowledgeable in relationships between individuals.

My memory failures, while they can be ascribed to a lack of skill and limitations within my research methods, are also suggestive and have deeper implications for conducting research among transnational migrant sex workers in Japan. To migrant women who are always at risk of being criminalized in Japan, using nicknames has been one of the tactics they use to hide their identities from authorities. Using nicknames is also a common practice in the water trade in Japan where one’s involvement in it is highly stigmatized. My failures, then, can ironically be seen as a measurement of success of migrant women’s tactics and a haunting effect of Koganecho’s past when the place was inhabited by many nicknames, disguised identities and crafted personal stories.

They also reveal how my role as a “customer” was shaped in Yokohama in
relation to Thai migrant women. I came to this realization rather reluctantly and as a result of multiple reflexive moments during my fieldwork where my wish to be an “ethical” researcher, who is egalitarian, empathetic, and empowering—understanding migrant sex workers in their full humanity, being sensitive to their material conditions, respectful of their autonomy, attentive to and advocating for their perspectives, and engaging with them as subjects rather than objects of research—was constantly denied. Often, my intention to develop a more equal, person-to-person relationship with them was ignored or unrecognized, and in my encounters with migrant women, I was again and again only able to occupy a position of customer, enacting and reproducing the hierarchical and (neo)colonial client-server and Japanese-foreigner relations that continue to characterize the Thai water trade community in Yokohama. In a sense, there was another type of “language barrier” that restricted our interactions, as the Thai migrant women whom I met in Yokohama spoke a particular kind of Japanese, which they learned as they worked as sex or service workers, that constantly placed them in the position of a “server” who is supposed to please and entertain her customers. And why would they put extra effort to overcoming such a “barrier” when an egalitarian relationship as such is a fiction at the end of the day and it remains an undeniable fact that I have socio-economic power over them, at least in those particular contexts of our encounters? Making my research “reciprocal” was thus impossible. The best thing I could do immediately for them, in exchange for accessing their lifeworlds, was to perform the role of a “good” customer by ordering food, drinks and other services, while taking a minimal amount of their time and labour, as they have other regulars to whom they must
attend. However disturbing that was to me, I had little agency in disrupting local power-relations. At the same time, as Denise Brennan (2005) notes based on her research on trafficked persons in the United States, it was possible that they actually might prefer a hierarchical relationship that would offer them “tangible benefits” (p.45) and I started to question my assumption that a hierarchical relationship is always unethical.

As I indicated above, I was beginning to doubt my assumption that the intervention I wanted to make through my research would serve migrant women’s own interests (Tuck and Yang 2014a, 2014b). Initially, I naively believed that inviting migrant women into my research would give space for their voices in my construction of an alternative memoriescape. But is this really the case? That my research could potentially give them voice (Simpson 2007, p.67)? Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014a) argue that social scientific inquiry that collects stories of the “communities of overstudied Others” is an extension of the colonial “invasion” as long as the knowledge is produced for the academy that is always already embedded in colonial structure. My research is not an exception. As Amy Shuman (2006) points out, where personal narrative and local experience are gaining currency “at a moment of dispersion, diaspora, and reterritorialization,” we need to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ownership of personal experience narrative (p.148). Specifically, she suggests that empathetic listening, while it seems an ethical and appropriate attitude toward personal narratives, can actually be problematic. Empathy “appropriates the personal with the goal of greater understanding across experiential differences,” (p.149) and it potentially produces “a misalignment in which an emotional response becomes a substitute for
understanding others” (p.152), serving “the interests of the empathizer rather than the empathized” (p.153). On the other hand, Shuman suggests, “entitlement reclaims the personal in terms of ownership of experience” (p.149). It can form a counterclaim against the misalignment created on the basis of empathy and “redraw the boundaries around what can and cannot be told” (p.151).

In my encounters with migrant women, I started to see that their agency in fact may lie in their ability to persistently “trigger responses, engagement and exchange” with/from me that meet their interests and agendas (Castañeda 2006, p.89). Thus, when Jim-san “refused” to acknowledge my attempt to call her by her “proper” nickname, to start building an “ethical” relationship, and instead made me occupy the position of “customer,” I retrospectively realize that that was her way of exercising her agency. Jim-san, mama of Pub Mary, and other migrant women did not engage with me in a way that I wished and did not become speaking “subjects” in my research. Those were moments of “entitlement,” to use Shuman’s (2006) word, where they redrew the boundaries around what could and could not be told.

In fact, I was not necessarily able to completely come to terms with their refusals in those immediate moments. In the back of my head I would wonder, What if I built a more intimate relationship with them? Visit them more often? What if I was able to speak Thai and explain my intentions more clearly? Extend my fieldwork period and participate in their workplaces as workers? I do not know what their refusals really meant. They might have been busy. They might have not recognized my intentions because of the
language barrier. They might have understood my intentions but still were not interested in my research. Maybe they don’t trust the Japanese based on their past experiences. I will never know and rightly so. I read those moments of “refusals” as their way of telling me that their lives are outside of my comprehension and reach. They are “objections” to the “processes of objectification/subjugation, the making of possessors and possessions” that constitute the knowledge production in the academy (Tuck and Yang 2014b; also see Simpson 2007). While it did take time to let go of my urge to make migrant women my “intellectual partners” and “storytellers,” I take those moments seriously and instead turn my attention to “institutions and power” (p.815), i.e. how bodies, voices and memories of migrant sex workers continue to be erased in the material and imaginative landscapes of Koganecho, and how I, as a girl and a customer, was part of the forces that both drove and resisted such erasure.

What follows in Chapters Six and Seven, is an outcome of a process of “reflection” (Csordas cited in Pink 20015, p.26) and “objectification” (Fabian 2001, p.26, 2012, p.448) of my sensory, material and social experience of fieldwork that turns “experience” into meaningful material for intellectual discussion and critique. As it turned out, I ended up reconstructing myself as a somewhat caricatured “researcher,” who is constantly caught in moments of confrontation, refusal, failure, disorientation and becoming in the field where my research and my role were called into question, making the academic research practice strange. While I do not explicitly follow or mimic any preexisting style of ethnographic writing, my textual practice is inspired by members of a working group on critical and creative methodology (e.g. Dara Culhane, Helen
Leung, Kirsten E. McAllister, Roy Miki), who challenge the institutional boundaries of academic research and writing practices (for their critical-creative research practices see Miki 1998, Robertson & Culhane 2005, McAllister 2011, McAllister and Miki 2012, Culhane 2013); and the tradition of “Canadian biotexts” where authors of life writings move beyond the tradition of “autobiography” and instead construct subjectivities as “multiple, performative, and in flux” (Saul 2001, p.259; examples of “biotexts” include Kiyooka 1997, Wah 2006).

My writing also follows the reflexive practice of sensory ethnography (Pink 2008, 2009, 2015); I present myself as an “emplaced researcher” (Pink 2008), being “co-implicated in place-making” in the site of displacement where I, my body, was a “catalyst” of intersubjective interactions that generated the ethnographic events (Fabian 1990, p.7). Instead of presenting myself as an autonomous subject, whose positionality and identity are pre-determined by trans-local sociohistorical contexts prior to my encounters with the ethnographic place, I reflexively enact my “self” in the field in a processual becoming. In my writing I enact how I came to be entangled with lives of others in the field (especially toward the second half of Chapter Six and onwards) and perform locally expected roles, sometimes being objectified by others in the field and gradually bringing to bear a locally shared sense of place. Here, the subject “I” in my

67 This is an initiative developed out of the Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada.

68 I have been developing my creative and critical writing practice elsewhere in my past individual research and an ongoing collaborative project conducted with my colleague at Simon Fraser University, Julia Aoki. See Yoshimizu (2009) and Aoki and Yoshimizu (2015) for past examples.
writing becomes “unbounded and connected” to local relations, part of something larger, “incomplete and partial” (Kulick 1995, p.17) but simultaneously beyond merely the individual and specific. Thus, while speaking from a particular position I also resist speaking as an independent, separate and autonomous subject under control.

Consequently, what is presented through my textualization is “fundamentally relational, the exclusive property of no single individual” (Biehl 2013, p.591). I also share the view in the tradition of Canadian biotexts described above that the “text” is an “extension” of the author, rather than a “replacement,” as assumed in traditional autobiography (Bowering cited in Saul 2001, p.260). I see my textual enactment of ethnographic events and intersubjective place-making processes that unfolded in the field as an ongoing and open site of becoming.

**Ghostscape**

*girls on bikes*

*crossing*

*the bridge after work*

*cycling cheerful laughter*

*speaking into the phone receiver*

*in the phone booth along*

*the river*

*tears flow*

*...images float over the bridge*
Water carries. As I discussed above, lives go on at the margins of Yokohama and the places of water trade continue forming and transforming. At the same time, despite the authorities’ efforts to wipe out the traces of “baishun” in Koganecho, I felt that the memories of displaced lives still constitute the materiality of the city today, being integral to imagined and embodied experiences at the site of displacement. These memories haunt people’s everyday practices, interactions and relationships between them. Sometimes they silently sit in architectural remains, objects left behind, and the built environment. The water also carries memories of lost and displaced lives, and they are like the sediment accumulated at the bottom of the Ooka River resisting being carried away.

I see these memories as a “ghost,” not quite in the same way that I used the term in Chapter Three to analyze the nostalgic memoriescape produced around postwar Yokohama, but by drawing on Avery F. Gordon’s (2008) critical sociological theorization of the term. In *Ghostly Matters*, Gordon (2008) suggests that a “haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with … or when their oppressive nature is denied” (p. xvi). The ghost, here, is something that is repressed and concealed but surely there, “hav[ing] a real presence and demand[ing] its due, your attention” (ibid.). The ghost is less about a past presence that has been lost than an effect of displacement and concealment that produced “something-to-be-done” in the present (Cho 2008, p.11). Haunting, then, is one way we are notified that something is to be done about what’s been concealed (Gordon 2008, p.xvi). In this sense, places of the water trade in Yokohama are haunted by the displaced lives of migrant sex workers that have
been repressed and concealed by the authorities.

Sometimes water stays still and accumulates. In Chapter Six and Seven, as I enact moments in the field through my storytelling, I attempt to evoke a ghostscape of Koganecho, that floats over and across the Ooka River. This ghostscape is a memoriescape populated by the ghost, which “demands” our attention to the lives that were displaced and concealed from our view (Gordon 2008, p.xvi). To evoke the ghostscape, I also insert into my storytelling fragments of recollections, documents and imaginations of Koganecho from the time before the 2005 raid. I present these fragments in both written and visual texts. I have gleaned those fragments primarily from people

There is a debate around the appropriate forms for representing sensory experience and knowledge in ethnography. Anthropologists and film theorists have both theoretically and practically explored the capacity for visual images to express and evoke sensory experiences and challenged the notion of vision as inherently disembodied, distanced and superficial (Stoller 1997; Marks 2002; Grimshaw 2005; MacDougall 2006; Irving 2007). Howes (2003), however, suggests the limitation of visual representation: “in a cinemetic presentation of an olfactory ritual, the visual images would have a strong tendency to “overshadow” the aromatic evocations” (57). Writing has advantages over images, he argues, because it “creates a kind of equality among the senses and makes it possible, for example, to describe an olfactory ritual primarily in terms of its aromatic elements” (57). On the other hand, Stoller (1997), who examines both textual and cinematic representations of sensory ethnography, would say that the question is not which medium is more effective but what mode of representation is employed when the ethnography is produced. Additionally, Ingold (2000) points out that earlier criticism of vision is limited in that it reproduces the distinction between sense perceptions (such as vision, sound, smell, touch) as if they exist independently (245). He argues that activities such as looking, listening and touching cannot be separated from each other and proposes the notion of perception as multisensory. “What is at stake” he argues, “is not the priority of vision over hearing [or other sensory perceptions], but the understanding of vision itself” (253). This argument its supported by visual anthropologists including Grimshaw (2001, 2005), McDougall (2006) and Irving (2007) who offer alternative understandings of the vision and visual representation that are more sensitive to sensory and bodily experience. Grimshaw and Ravetz (2005) suggest that some observational cinema (that of Jean Rouch and David MacDougall, for example) “reinscri[es] the body and the senses into ethnographic practice” (7) instead of reproducing a superficial, distanced encounter between the subject and the ethnographer (Grimshaw 2005, 24). MacDougall (2006) talks about “corporeal image” that is distinct from the scientific vision and is instead “made up of ideas, emotions, sensory responses, and the pictures of our imagination” (1-2). He further suggests that audiovisual media provide us with access to “visual knowledge,” which involves “perceptual,” “sensory,” and “corporeal,” rather than cognitive and conceptual, aspects of human lives (5, 269-270). Irving (2007) uses a visual technology (photography) as a channel of performance, rather than only as a tool of recording and reproduction, to encourage “embodied activities that involve narration, whole-body movement, touch, and negotiation of various social context”
who participated in my “memory work activities” but also from photographic images, films, novels, non-fiction writings produced by local cultural producers, and my experience of being there, which informed my own imaginings of the place.

The ghostscape is a sensory imagination of the place mediated through layers of intersubjective processes – the generation of stories and memories through my engagement with people I met in the field – from which I gained partial access to the past. It is important to note that the ghostscape is based on recollections and imaginings of the past primarily by those, including myself, who themselves did not experience the displacement and are unlikely to experience it in the future because of their privileged status of being citizens or permanent residents of Japan. Some stories of the past might have been idealized or dramatized, shaped as they are by nostalgia and desire for the “lost” time and space. Therefore, the ghostscape does not necessarily represent the voices of those who were actually displaced. It is only a partial and limited image of what the place might have been and it is not an image that is faithful to the migrant women’s lived experience of the place. In fact, the partiality of the ghostscape is precisely what makes it ghostly, as it makes known the impossibility of restoring what was displaced from the site. The ghostscape activates the temporality of delay and too-late-ness in a view of the site of displacement.

and material environment (206). Cultural theorist Laura Marks’s (2002) notion of “haptic visuality” is also in line with this movement as she suggests the “sliding relationship” between the haptic and the optical and examines visual representations that evoke the sense of “touch” (p.xvi). In using both written and visual forms of representation in this dissertation, I agree with Stoller that the question of mode of representation is more important than that of the selection of medium of representation. I also follow Ingold’s argument that senses cannot be separated as if they exist independently but instead they are much more interdependent and co-constitutive. At the same time, I also argue that it is important to remind ourselves that an ethnographic representation is always “partial” and the complete reproduction of sensory and bodily experiences is impossible no matter what form(s) is/are used (Clifford 1986).
At the same time, the ghostscape is also not completely autonomous or independent from the displaced lives, either. Many people, who shared their memories of Koganecho with me, had varied degrees of intimate contact and personal relationships with migrant women, and in different ways their lives were significantly affected by their presence in the city in the past and the present. As an intersubjectively shaped imagination and an outcome of entangled relations, the ghostscape is contingent on both the displaced bodies that were there in the past and lives that inhabit the place now. In a sense, the ghostscape enabled me to make partial contact with the bodies of displaced lives. It has a powerful emotional and affective texture with a real phenomenological effect on the way I “sense the place” (Basso and Feld 1996). Just like other landscapes that are invested with imagination and memory (see Chapter One), the ghostscape is emotional, sensuous and embodied (Riano-Alcala 2006, p.66-67). Through the ghostscape the displaced lives have touched my body, affected me, and changed the way I imagine, relate to and act on the place.

Obviously, the effects of displacement were much more sensible in Koganecho, the very place where the uprooting took place and the present landscape was marked by the absence of transnational migrants. In the space managed by the Koganecho Area Management Center, the efforts to erase the traces of the past were felt strongly and those attempts also provoked tension by attracting the attention of those who did not agree with the Center’s project. In contrast, the notion of the “ghost” was in fact at odds with the Thai community where water trade businesses were still carried out by foreign-born migrant women, some of whom actually used to work in Koganecho and simply
changed their workplaces to the neighbourhood across the river after the raid. Here, the immediacy of their lives, rather than a repressed but lingering sense of loss and absence, was felt much more strongly. In the current Thai community, my imagination of the past was constantly challenged in the face of the lives of migrants in the present. Here, images of the past did not necessarily reveal absences but instead affirmed and further illuminated the persistently exploitative conditions under which migrants lived in the margins of the city today. The displacement was not a thing of the past, but an ongoing, real issue of the present.

I also intentionally left in my presentation of the ghostscape gaps, fragmentedness, incompleteness and open-endedness, which I see as one way I could make the effects of displacement become perceptible. This is an image that we never attain in clear view, reflecting the nature of the stories and images I generated and collected during fieldwork. When I heard stories of Koganecho from the old days, I quickly realized that there were large gaps in these accounts. For example, people were not always sure about the national backgrounds of sex workers, because, understandably, women did not always tell the truth about their countries of origin. Some Thai women did not disclose their backgrounds, because there was a widespread assumption that Thai sex workers were HIV carriers. Japanese men did not distinguish between women from the former Soviet bloc and broadly identified them as Russians, which is one of the categories that carry an exotic and sexual connotation in Japan. In addition, partly because Koganecho was only a temporary workplace to many migrant women, where they made a fortune in a few years at the risk of being caught by the authorities
and deported or of infected with HIV, the turnover of chon-no-ma was high. As a result, stories of individual women tended to be fragmented and sporadic. I might hear from a former client a story of getting involved with a Thai sex worker, but the relationship would last only for a short period of time and he would not know her life before or after Koganecho. Often a relationship is simply an extension of a client-worker relation where he secures more stable and exclusive periods with her by way of renting her an apartment, buying food and jewelry, and so on. Often the relationship ends when she suddenly disappears without giving him notice. I heard stories of sex workers involved in homocides as victims or perpetrators, but my participants were unable to elaborate on their stories beyond those general details. The images of the past were always limited, blurred or distorted. While this is, again, an effect of displacement, I also realize that the presence of gaps in people’s stories of Koganecho results from the fact that throughout its postwar history Koganecho was never a transparent place in the way that authorities are trying to realize today. As such, I have left my representations of the site of displacement incomplete and fragmented rather than trying to create a coherent and seamless narrative. Such a view, I believe, serves to resist the dominant forces that has aggressively transformed the district into an increasingly observable and controllable place. I try to evoke the ghostscape to suggest one possibility or one small opening for different imaginations and rememberings of the place.

While I fully acknowledge the constructed nature of my representations of lives in Koganecho before displacement, I also recognize the legitimacy of it in proving the affective evidence that displacement absolutely did happen. As Grace Cho
(2008) would put it, the ghostscape “allow[s] us to rethink a society’s relationship to [the
displaced lives] who were subject to…social injustice” (p.29). In a sense, the ghostscape
is an “avenue for ethical engagement with the present” (ibid.), one way to imagine how
the past is still with us, how our experiences and conditions of existence now might be
complicit in the conditions that allow[ed] displacement and violence in the past, the
present and the future. Understanding the cultural landscape of Yokohama with
attentiveness to the ghost of neglected lives enables us to see a shadowy side of the city’s
past in contrast to the official historical narrative that celebrates Yokohama as one of the
most international, westernized and thus progressive cities in Japan. By evoking a
ghostscape, I wish to present a view of Yokohama that is dynamic and transnational, and
always shaped by the migration of people from low-income backgrounds and from non-
western countries. These are people who arrived in Yokohama in search of work, work
that goes unacknowledged although it has contributed to the development of the physical
infrastructure, formal and informal economies, social networks and local cultures of
Yokohama.

I organized the following chapters spatially rather than chronologically so that
they effectively showcase the multiplicity and distinctiveness of the interactions and
imaginings that took place in each of the water trade venues and other spaces in the site
of displacement. Some spaces are compartmentalized venues like the Riverside bars and
the Thai restaurants and massage parlors, where performances unfolded within their own
physical boundaries. While these business venues are loosely connected to each other
(e.g. regulars overlap between Riverside businesses; some level of relation exists
between Thai businesses), I noticed that each venue had its own distinct character, set of
codes and conventions, ways of carrying, incorporating, interpreting, appropriating and
transforming past practices. Other spaces are more like pathways (e.g. streets, bridges,
river), which I reiterated through my repeated walks, and I include those spaces to show
movements between times and spaces, and transformation of my body, imaginations and
thoughts. Chapter Six geographically focuses on Koganecho, including the area now
managed by the municipal government through the Koganecho Area Management Center
and the area occupied by Riverside businesses. In Chapter Seven I shift to the Thai
community that is located across the bridge from Koganecho. Chapter Six mostly draws
on the research process from the first phase of fieldwork and Chapter Seven from the
second phase, reflecting the actual processes of my fieldwork.

As I discussed in the Introduction, this memoryscape is neither an assemblage of
“pure data” that I collected in the field nor “just preparatory to…[the] analysis and
interpretation” that follows (Fabian 1990, p.xiv). My performative presentation of the
alternative memoryscape is itself a theoretical, analytical and reflexive practice, and is
not followed by an additional chapter for further analysis and discussion. Following those
two chapters, I will conclude this dissertation with a brief summary, discussion of
implications of the research and a suggestion for alternative memoryscapes or other-
scapes, which are beyond the scope of this dissertation but a possible subject for future
research.
Chapter Six: Along the River, Under the Railway

Bridge

In the old days Thai girls used to stand along the river to solicit men. There were so many girls that I couldn’t walk without being called by five girls to cross the bridge. During the summer time when I walked along the river in the morning, I often saw watermelon rinds scattered on the street and they smelled very bad. That smell—I feel like I can still sense it. (Tani, Amateur Photographer and Community Historian, personal communication, 4 March 2012)

body without memory

crosses the border

the air still

There are many paths to Koganecho. When I was conducting fieldwork I often took a Keikyu train from Yokohama Station and got off at Koganecho Station. The time on the train gave me the only opportunity to read. At home I had to take care of my

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daughter Mia, one to two-year-old at the time of fieldwork, when she was awake. At night after she went to bed, I would write my journal to record whatever happened on the given day. My then husband looked after Mia to give me time to visit Yokohama, and on transit when the train carried me to Koganecho I would transform from a mother to a researcher, or to a “girl.” Mia cried and cried each time I left home. On the train, I told myself to forget it, forget her cries and her voice, and instead tried to immerse myself in the words on those pages of fiction, non-fiction and scholarly writings on Yokohama, different imaginations of the city.

Once I arrived at Koganecho Station and got out from the ticket gate and crossed the street under the train overpass, I would be standing at the corner of the Ota Bridge, which would also be the south edge of the chon-no-ma district of Koganecho. The district narrowly stretches for approximately 500 meters toward the north along the Ooka River on its east side. The northern border of the chon-no-ma district is marked by the Asahi Bridge on the river. When I took a train and got off at Koganecho Station, I always felt like I had already entered the district before I got off the train, because I would pass above the district along the overpass on the way, looking down on the untidy rooftops of chon-no-ma crowded with the air conditioner fans.

Sometimes I got off the train at Hinodecho Station, a stop before Koganecho Station, and walked along the overpass toward Koganecho. In this case I entered Koganecho from the north. A long, quiet and deserted street under the overpass gradually carried me into the district. Other times when I came from the waterfront, I walked along the east side of the Ooka River. I would pass the Asahi Bridge and the Kogane Bridge, then turn right to cross the Sueyoshi Bridge. In fact, the Sueyoshi Bridge was always the gate to Koganecho when I came from Isezakicho, an old commercial district on the east side of the Ooka River. When I crossed the Sueyoshi Bridge, my attention was habitually directed toward a triangle-shaped block of chon-no-ma locally called Koganecho Riverside, which I would see on my left over the river. Riverside is
currently occupied by tiny independent businesses mostly owned by middle-aged Japanese locals and each of them has its own group of regulars. Emerging after the police raid of 2005, those businesses and their customers loosely make up a new community at the margin of Koganecho. This is where I spent most of my time in the first phase of my fieldwork. I met local people, hung out and spent time with them. The humid and sticky human relations are what constitute Koganecho today—people are entangled with each other in a muddy web that attracts those who do not find themselves fitting comfortably in the rest of the society for different reasons.

In fact, I only entered Koganecho when I crossed the Sueyoshi Bridge from the other side of the river. By this I mean that I was more conscious of crossing the boundary when I walked over the Sueyoshi Bridge to step into the district. To me the Sueyoshi Bridge was an invisible gate that determined my day in the neighbourhood. Crossing it I felt that I was testing my luck for the day. During the course of my research, I came to believe that it was not myself as a researcher, who consciously chose whom to talk to and hear stories from, but the place, Koganecho, that whimsically gathered people with its magical powers and let me meet particular people at particular moments at particular venues. Likewise, it was not myself who chose what to see there, but it was Koganecho that let me see certain things but not others, always limiting my view of the place. Koganecho was a place that made me feel vulnerable and out of control but also brought me unexpected encounters and surprises. Whenever I crossed the Sueyoshi Bridge, catching the view of Riverside in the corner of my eye, my heart would start beating, I became nervous and excited in anticipation of whatever events I was about to encounter.

I also took a number of photographs of the Ooka River from the Sueyoshi Bridge. When it was a sunny day, a photograph could capture an array of cherry trees on both sides of the river, Koganecho Riverside, and the overpass. The landscape would be reflected in the murky water on which abandoned papers, plastic bags or empty
cans were adrift. At night, a photograph would capture streetlights, lights from Riverside units and residential lights leaking from apartment rooms, illuminating the water. The water and cherry trees along the riverside offered me a link to the natural world, which was part of the artificial urban infrastructure but regardless added magical ambience to the place. On a day in April, after the Cherry Blossom Festival was over, I would realize that the lantern decorations had been taken away and cherry blossoms had already fallen. I would see the sun going down over the Ota Bridge. After the sunset when there was no wind and the river surface was quiet, the water became like a long, meandering mirror that reflected the moonlight. Other times, I would also see the rain pouring onto the Ooka River from a growling cloud, rippling the river surface and tearing the reflections apart.

Standing on the Sueyoshi Bridge and facing Koganecho, the place overwhelmed me with a mixture of something social, animalistic, organic, inorganic, and supernatural. Then there were layers of time. Memories of the place appeared momentarily when I sensed something ghostly in Koganecho. Koganecho’s ghosts inhabited cherry petals floating on the river, the muddiness of the water, the cold concrete skin of the train overpass, the loud sound of passing Keikyu trains, *karaoke* songs leaking from Pub Admiral of Riverside, the perpetual silence of streets in Koganecho, flirting that took place in Riverside, sexual remarks that filled conversations over bar counters, and performances of heterosexual roles. When I encountered these moments, I had a feeling of something similar to *déjà vu*, a sense that I might have seen or felt it before but I was never sure. Since I actually had never been in Koganecho before the raid, the source of my sense of familiarity remained uncertain.

**Police Kiosk**

The Koganecho Police kiosk stands right by the west entrance of the Sueyoshi Bridge, facing pedestrians coming from the other side of the Ooka River with its
superficial friendliness. When I saw this little police kiosk for the first time, my eyes were drawn to the Isetaka hawk mascot standing on the top corner of the building, watching over the street. Local mascots were gaining currency throughout Japan at the time, playing a significant role in facilitating the economic revitalization of regional communities, and I was not surprised to see an anime-like character associated with a government body. And yet, it was depressing that a community would have a surveillance bird as its symbolic character. Its solemn face and stiff posture give a sense of righteousness and loyalty. But like other local mascots that are designed to attract children, Isetaka also has features, particularly with its generally round shape, that give a sense of sweetness and softness. Ironically, the watchbird was often alone. It was not rare to see no one on duty inside the police kiosk and no pedestrian on the street to watch over.

The newly built police kiosk began its operation in 2009 in a small space where a chon-no-ma building used to stand. The establishment of the kiosk was one of the achievements that had been made by the Kanagawa Prefectural Police, the City of Yokohama and a local citizen organization called the Hatsunecho-Koganecho and Hinodecho Environment Cleanup Initiative Committee. Today, no illegal establishments are able to operate in Koganecho like they would in the old days, at least not in ways that are as explicit and visible as before—evidence of the success of their projects. I also never saw a group of transnational migrant women hanging out in the area. The place was appallingly “clean”...

_I used to own a little food cart along the river around the area where the police kiosk stands today. I had some chairs and a bamboo screen to give customers some privacy. There were two more carts beside mine owned by non-Japanese people. It was a simple business that only required of me a little apron. I usually opened my bar at 6 PM until the following morning, if there were any_
customers. On weekends lots of people would parade on the street just like on festival days. It was fun. I enjoyed the atmosphere. I had close relationships with my customers too. Girls would come by individually early in the evening before work or late at night after work. I sympathized with them like they were my own daughters. They used to say, “I will save money and go home. I miss my kids.” They are still so young, like twenty-two or twenty-three. Some girls had pictures of their kids and showed them to me. I felt bad, you know. (Female Former Vendor in Koganecho, personal communication, 22 March 2012)

Sometimes I saw homeless men, hanging out around the police kiosk. They rested quietly under young cherry trees along the river and often had a small bottle of sake in their hands. Often a police officer walked to them and would ask questions as he filled out a form. The officer eventually drove them out and the street returned to the regular state of awkward peacefulness.

a power washer stands still
no trace of bodies

Chon-no-ma Streets

When I visited Koganecho on January 6 of 2012, I felt like I was entering an abandoned city. Under the typical cloudless sky of the winter I crossed the Sueyoshi Bridge, cutting through the dry and thin, winter air. My heart started racing, as I got closer to the block of Riverside. I was getting nervous about finally approaching my research site, which I knew little of. From my first and last visit to the neighbourhood in February 2010, I recognized one of the Riverside businesses “Cups for Few” on the block but that was the only link that I had with the place.
The block consists of two or three-story, low-cost prefabricated little buildings and each of them is further partitioned into smaller units. Each unit is only two meters wide. These units used to be chon-no-ma brothels but they are now occupied by local individuals, who run their small businesses after renovating the interiors and storefronts. Bar Ring, Cups for Few, Admiral Pub, Bar Nomads, Bar Kikiya, Tunes Teahouse… Unlike in the old days where all the chon-no-ma in Koganecho had consistent exteriors with simple awnings and aluminum doors with no decoration, today the chon-no-ma businesses have different styles, reflecting each master’s [owner’s] character and taste. Awnings are modernized, using different materials such as wood, cloth or plastic, and doors have been painted in different colours. Some masters are growing plants outside their doors. Curtains in different styles also contribute to the variety of looks of these units.

On that day the curtains were all closed. I was both disappointed and relieved after finding out that no business had re-opened in the New Year yet. The fact that the holidays were extended well beyond the first three days of the national new year holidays matched how I remembered the slow and laidback atmosphere of the block from my first visit. I was not able to meet anybody but it made it easier for me to take photographs of chon-no-ma buildings, the only physical traces of the past that still remained in Koganecho. I took photographs of each unit, starting from their storefronts, thoroughly from the beginning to the end. I found a small and shabby obstetric clinic at the end of the block and quickly concluded that this should not be a coincidence.

I went around the corner to take a set of photographs of the back alley. It seemed that those masters did not work on the backside of their chon-no-ma much. There were still some red awnings remaining from the past days, which reminded me of photographic images of the chon-no-ma storefronts from the time when they were still active as brothels. Looking closer I saw old bar names printed on some of the
awnings. Angel, Diamond, Sally… I continued photographing chon-no-ma industriously and although I started to feel uncomfortable about it. Suddenly I felt as if I just had slipped through an invisible gate without getting permission and I was intruding in their space. I was not sure who “they” were, except that I knew for certain that it was not something that the Isetaka hawk on the police kiosk symbolized. In fact, the authorities would not reject a tourist like me, taking photographs of the fresh and clean view of the district. “They” were something bigger, something more intense.

"I take another photograph of empty chon-no-ma collecting a trace of my presence in reflections unbecoming nobody that disappears as soon as I walk away"

Each time a raid happened, the town went completely dark from the morning through the night. Perhaps yakuza and police were connected by bribery. Police would tell yakuza when the raid happens, and yakuza would make an announcement so that chon-no-ma girls wouldn’t get caught. One day, police parked their cars at the riverside and threw a big search light from over there to this back alley. No customer came. From then on they turned the light on
every night and this lasted for a week... They just overdid it. Even riot policemen came out and were patrolling this neighbourhood by bicycle. Girls left town, because they could no longer stand on the street. (Master, Yakitori [grilled chicken] Bar in Koganecho, personal communication, 14 March 2012)

Before the final raid happened in January 2005, people say that there used to be approximately 250 chon-no-ma in the little district of Koganecho. Usually two women shared a chon-no-ma with two bedrooms, and there were daytime and nighttime shifts. A rough calculation gives us a number: there were approximately 1,000 women working in the district. As there were also tachinbo [street sex workers] standing along the riverside and bridges in addition to chon-no-ma women, the total number of sex workers in this district must have exceeded 1,000. On the weekends, streets were full of men shopping around to find the best girl that day or returning to the same girls they were familiar with. Chon-no-ma clients used to pay 10,000 yen [approx. $100] per fifteen minutes for the service, while this rate varied depending on the woman, her nationality, time and other conditions. Each day, chon-no-ma girls would pay either 30 or 40% of their earning or fixed fees to their mama, or madams. Mama usually rented her chon-no-ma from its property owner. According to Tamura-san, the master of Bar Kikiya, who knows a mama who used to manage multiple chon-no-ma units, the highest amount of rent she paid was 1.5 million yen [approx. $15,000] per month. “Mama was drinking when she gave me that number so she might have been exaggerating,” he added and said that the lowest rent he had heard of was 600,000 yen [approx. $6,000]. The master of yakitori bar in Koganecho told me that he saw an advertisement for chon-no-ma units on sale on the riverside and each unit was sold at 20 million yen [approx. $200,000]. Some were sold but others were not. After the price dropped to 18 million yen all the remaining units were sold. Ironically, the final raid happened within a year from then and the owners lost the source of revenue to pay off their bills. Takaaki
Yagisawa in his non-fiction book *Koganecho Maria* (2006) wrote about his encounter with one of the chon-no-ma owners who was ten million yen in debt and currently lived in his chon-no-ma himself while he collected cans for recycling (p.183).

> When I was a kid, I had to pass by those businesses very quickly, because you were supposed to, you know. In the daytime, mamas swept their storefronts and kept doors open. One time I glanced inside and saw three beds, all divided by curtains. They look like pubs from the outside but they had beds, like ones in the hospital, inside! I think it was in the late 80s or 90s. (Lee, Chinese Restaurant in Maganecho, personal communication, 9 March 2012)

Tamura-san, the master of Bar Kikiya, independently runs a historical walking tour of the inner-city of Yokohama, primarily focusing on the former-chon-no-ma district of Koganecho. On January 31st of 2012, I participated in his tour with Mia. The tour started at Riverside. Showing us a map, Tamura-san explained that the tour would cover the former-brothel district of Koganecho and other pleasure districts located in Kangai, areas that were neglected in the official historical narrative but bear a post-WWII history of Yokohama. In my mind I was excited about what would unfold on the tour, but part of me was worried whether Mia would stay calm throughout the duration of the tour. She was crying until a minute previous and it took me longer than usual to soothe her, because I had to breastfeed her while standing, finding no private space to sit.

“So that was the general overview of the history of the area. Let us start walking around, while your baby is happy,” said Tamura-san, quickly concluding his introduction as if he sensed my anxiety. Passing by the riverside storefronts, he continued, “The chon-no-ma buildings you are seeing right now are relatively new, maybe they were built in Heisei [the period which started in 1988 according to the Japanese imperial
calendar] and were used as brothels until they were busted in January 2005. By that time, women were mostly coming from outside of Japan, from South America, Eastern Europe, including the former-Soviet region, and Asia... Currently, these chon-no-ma are rented by local individuals, including myself, and used as coffee shops and bars.”

Going around the block, now we were getting to the backside of the chon-no-ma. I was seeing the same view that I saw when I first came here to take photographs at the beginning of the month, but Tamura-san’s explanation added details to the scene. “We are now standing at the back alley of chon-no-ma. In the old days customers were able to enter chon-no-ma through these back entrances too. Through the glass you see a little counter, which in fact didn't have any real use but was built for the purpose of circumventing regulation, to make it look like a regular bar. Well, in fact, in earlier days there were many chon-no-ma that offered both alcohol and sex, using the ground floor as a bar and rooms on the second floor as bedrooms. Male customers would eat, drink and talk to female servers, get to know each other, and then go upstairs. But in the last period of sex-trade history in Koganecho sex work was McDonaldized, in a way. The process of building relationships through conversation is omitted here—customers negotiate with women at the entrance and directly go upstairs. The counter is a remnant of the old tradition and was just a gesture to show that they meet the requirement to operate as ‘restaurants.’ The government did give them business permits, knowing all that. So in the sixty years of history of Koganecho, baishun [prostitution] was officially tolerated.”

I always felt strange looking at the back entrances of chon-no-ma. In contrast to the newly renovated storefronts on the other side, the backside, which was apparently not being used to take customers in any more, looked like abandoned chon-no-ma units. Being here I felt like I was time-traveling to the period immediately after the crackdown of the chon-no-ma in 2005.
We left the block and went around to the other side of the train overpass. This is a street where the most popular chon-no-ma were clustered. As we walked, Tamura-san directed my attention to a large empty space on our left side. He explained that the space was occupied by a cluster of chon-no-ma called Riverside Restaurant Avenue but there was a plan to build a new apartment there. A ramp, which must have been the entrance to the Avenue, was the only physical trace from the old days. “This will probably be removed soon too,” Tamura-san said. In fact, when I returned to Koganecho in late 2012 the ramp was gone and a new high-rise apartment was already completed at the site that was previously empty.

Walking further ahead, Tamura-san took us into the narrow space in between the two buildings standing side by side. One of these buildings was a cluster of small chon-no-ma units and had doors on its all four sides. He explained that they were now rented by the City of Yokohama like many other former chon-no-ma units in the district. He pointed at a little sticker on the edge of the glass entrance, which said “Hatsunecho-Koganecho Taxpaying Restaurant Association Membership.” “This is another trace from the past,” he said. While chon-no-ma businesses in Koganecho were illegal establishments, they were not completely underground. They had a political, representative organization, which was deeply connected to the local community and the government body. Inside these glass doors was completely dark. I photographed the entrance with a flash but the resulting image was too blurred to know what remained
inside—a sink, a narrow counter and two stools in haze... The glass doors were also stained from rain and dust that filtered out the view.

Tamura-san guided us to another block of chon-no-ma. “Curtains are closed and we cannot see inside now but this unit was occupied by Thai women. Immediately after the raid, I was still able to see a poster of the King of Thailand inside. There was also a calendar on the wall, still showing January 2005 when the crackdown happened.” “I still remember,” Tamura-san continued, “before the raid, women sitting on chairs in front of their chon-no-ma like this, waiting for customers to come by.” Tamura-san reenacted a chon-no-ma woman, sitting on the chair with her face tilted, waiting for the slow time to pass by. Tamura-san continued his tour and pointed to other physical traces of the past, including little emergency alarms attached to the walls of some of the chon-no-ma buildings. He explained that they informed yakuza of misbehaviour of male customers so that yakuza could come in and pull them out of the building. He then pointed at a disproportionate number of air conditioners installed in each building and said that it could be translated to the number of the rooms that made up one little chon-no-ma building. He added the comment that these air conditioners also embodied a strong connection between chon-no-ma and local businesses that supplied all those facilities. Chon-no-ma businesses were well-integrated into the local economy.

But no matter how many more additional pieces of information I gained, the space did not acquire any quality. The only physical trace that struck me was a trace of a sticker with the Chinese character fu, “fortune” in English, which we found at the top of the glass entrance of one of chon-no-ma units. A typical sign I often see at Chinese stores. The sticker had been torn off, but a trace of the character still remained. The fu character was not inverted as I usually see elsewhere, but it was tilted and overshadowed by the reflection of other chon-no-ma standing right in front of it. The entire glass doors were covered by a black sheet from the inside and the interior was blocked out from our view. But the trace of the lost sticker spoke volumes about the
absence of bodies. The streets were deadly quiet as usual.

Tamura-san explained that Koganecho started as a low-end brothel district immediately after WWII when Yokohama was occupied by Allied Forces. Japanese women made a living as sex workers in earlier forms of chon-no-ma under the train overpass. As the Japanese economy grew, chon-no-ma mamas started to “import” women from outside Japan. “The mama I know says that it was her who first introduced non-Japanese women to Koganecho. She brought Taiwanese women first. Back then, only aged Japanese women remained in town so young Taiwanese women attracted numerous men. According to Mama, Taiwanese women worked very hard because they wanted to send money back to their families. The number of foreign women dramatically increased. Taiwanese first, and then Filipinas, Thai, and Chinese. When the Soviet Union collapsed women from that region started to increase. Women arrived in Koganecho through different paths. Some of them were students who came to Japan to study Japanese and worked in Koganecho for extra money. Some came through human trafficking via brokers and they were usually indebted.” We were walking along the Ooka River leaving Koganecho behind. Luckily Mia was staying calm. “I don’t want to introduce Koganecho simply as either a negative or positive place, but as a place that existed among people’s everyday lives,” Tamura-san said to conclude his tour of Koganecho.

*I used to pass by Koganecho when I was in elementary school. It was on my way to my friend’s place, which was a noodle house near the old Koganecho Station. We used to play in this neighbourhood under the overpass, looking for discarded needles and crushing them with our feet. We also fished along the river. Yes, women were already foreigners then. But I was small and I didn’t know who they were, so I just greeted them. Some of my friends were from Koganecho. Some of*
their fathers were yakuza too. But that was not a big deal to me. (Master, Cups for Few, personal communication, 8 March 2012)

When I was conducting my fieldwork in 2012 there were three chon-no-ma units that had been kept untouched since the day when the 2005 raid happened. Those units were intentionally left as they were by the Koganecho Area Management Center, a non-profit art organization, that currently managed them. The director of the Center, Shingo Yamano, said to me during an interview, “When generations change and people start to wonder how the district was before and why we carry out art festivals today, we may need something that testifies to it.” “But” he added, “right now local residents would not agree with the idea of keeping the units like that, because they have been working hard to eliminate any traces of the past. When there is zero possibility for baishun to come back to town the units can finally serve as a clue to reflect back on the past.”

On February 28th, 2012, I got permission from the organization to see inside these units. Two female members of the organization guided me along the Keikyu overpass to the building. It had been snowing since midnight but the temperature was increasing, turning the snow into sleety rain. "So...when did those chon-no-ma come under your management?" I asked. "Since last year. Inside the building hasn't been touched since the police raid in 2005," explained one of the members. "Do you know who owns this property?" "We actually don't know." I remember hearing that the ownership of a chon-no-ma is difficult to trace because it usually has multiple tenants who sublet them. But I was not sure if the organization actually did not know the ownership or if they did but were not supposed to release that information to outsiders.

We were then standing in front of the unit with the “Hatsunecho-Koganecho Taxpaying Restaurant Association Membership” sticker, the same unit Tamura-san took me to during his tour. One of the organization members unlocked the
door and let me in. She turned the light on and it illuminated the entire room in pink. This was exactly what I had been hearing from people about chon-no-ma in the old days. Almost all chon-no-ma used pink lights, making the entire district light up in pink. This chon-no-ma was indeed full of things that were left behind after the raid. In the front room there was a counter, a refrigerator, a micro-wave and a sink. A number of fortune cats of different sizes filled the top of the micro-wave, and dishes and utensils were left in dish racks as if they were just washed. The wall shelf was covered with mugs and tea bags. On the counter there were a few plastic baskets with hairbrushes. Then I saw a poster of the King of Thailand, a menu from a local Thai restaurant, and a small shrine with an offering of flowers that were all dried up. A calendar showing January 2005 was also hung on the wall. Some videotapes were scattered on the floor. “It’s creepy,” one of the members commented. Yes, but why? The space was full of everyday personal objects that were waiting for their owners’ return and I had never seen a space like that before. The space was “creepy,” because the absence of the women was linked to their disappearances. It was “creepy” because I was seeing things that I was not supposed to see. The space was strange to me. I knew so little about the women and their lives in the district. The space did not evoke a sense of loss or mourning, but instead, it was strange and alienating. I also had a strong sense of guilt that I was intruding on someone’s space. I was able to be there only because the women no longer inhabited the space, because they were removed. It was “creepy” because I was complicit in the displacement of the inhabitants of the space.

They let me go to the back rooms where sexual services were offered. At one end of the narrow hallway I saw shoes and sandals piled up carelessly. I stepped into one of the rooms and we turned the fluorescent light on. Again, the room turned pink. In the tiny room there was a Japanese futon, a small rack, a shelf and a massive number of other goods filling up the space. I saw some costumes hanging from the rack. A number of stuffed animals decorated the walls, shelves and even the floor, which might have
been brought by their clients as gifts. I found a timer and baby wipes on the shelf. The traces were extremely graphic and vivid but a sense of emptiness grew even stronger inside myself.

ruins of amusement park
archives another time
excitements, desires, fantasies have lost their temperature
in bone-chilling wet air

Art Studios

I never approached Koganecho when I was little because it was scary. The area was reddish. One time I passed Koganecho by bike. I saw two middle-aged women in front of chon-no-ma and they looked scary. The number of foreign people has decreased today, not only in Koganecho but also in Wakabacho and Isezakicho. I used to hear different languages on the street and see black men, Russian women, Japanese and non-Japanese couples, and homeless men with paper bags. These people are losing their visibility. (Female Customer, Tunes Teahouse, personal communication, 27 February 2012)

According to Shingo Yamano, Director of Koganecho Area Management Center, the Center was managing sixty-seven chon-no-ma units as of February 2013 and using them as art and office spaces (personal communication, 1 March 2013). The City of Yokohama subsidizes the chon-no-ma rents, and the Center leases most of them to young artists with low rents. The government funding and rents paid by the artists constitute most of the revenue of the Center. Currently these units are made
up of fifty-one studios, four event spaces and thirteen empty units. “Our plan is to occupy as many units as possible and renovate them to make the insides of the buildings transparent so that no sex-trade businesses can come back,” Yamano-san commented.

Koganecho Area Management Center was established in April 2009 as a government-funded organization that undertakes administrative work for the Hatsunecho-Koganecho and Hinodecho Environment Cleanup Initiative Committee. The Committee is made up of local residents of three neighbouring towns and works closely with the Kanagawa Prefectural Police to prevent “criminal activity,” namely “baishun,” from occurring in the district. Their past projects include the raid of chon-no-ma in 2005, the removal of chon-no-ma awnings – a “symbol of baishun” – in 2008, the establishment of the Koganecho Police Kiosk in 2009, and regular patrolling. The Koganecho Area Management Center also runs Koganecho Bazaar, an annual art festival. The Bazaar first started in the fall 2008 to coincide with the city-wide triennial art festival, the Yokohama Triennale, which took place primarily in the waterfront area. The idea of Koganecho Bazaar emerged within the municipal government as a strategic measure to transform the landscape of Koganecho into an art town by reusing the empty spaces left behind after the 2005 raid and continuing to occupy them as art spaces.

Right behind the building in which the untouched chon-no-ma units are located, there are three other units that have been completely renovated into futuristic styled art studios. They use clear glass entrances, making the interior completely visible to passersby, and showcase art works that are in progress or completed. But strangely, standing in front of these studios it felt somewhat similar to when I was standing in the back alley of Riverside. Somehow they looked like abandoned spaces. The absence of artists and pedestrians in general contributed to the ghostliness of the area. But this time, the inorganic and modern style of the studios added a different kind of
emptiness to the space. Yamano-san commented that those young artists in residence were not able to sustain themselves with their art practice and usually worked part time elsewhere to make living (personal communication, 7 February 2012). He explained that that was why Koganecho was still empty despite the Center’s attempts to bring young people from outside to the district. Later he commented, “We are actually thinking about increasing the number of short-term artists in residence rather than long-term, because short-term artists tend to focus on their work during the term, and therefore the presence of artists in town can be secured” (personal communication, 1 March 2013). Old practices still haunt the chon-no-ma studios. Indeed, these units were originally built for a quick turnover of migrant sex workers, the majority of whom only stayed in Koganecho for a few years before moving to the next destination. Some even moved between Koganecho and elsewhere frequently, juggling jobs in multiple workplaces.

_The girls spoke Japanese very well and I could tell that they were good people. I would wonder why they would do such a job but I guess they had to do it for a living. Tough thing. I knew that they were good people, just by speaking to them. I’m old enough to know that. When I was doing my vendor business, I sometimes had to use their washroom. You know, I didn’t have my own washroom. So I would visit girls I befriended and borrow theirs._ (Female Former Vendor in Koganecho, personal communication, 22 March 2012)

On March 11, 2012, I joined a walking tour organized by the Koganecho Area Management Center. The tour happens every once in a while as an event during the One Day Bazaar, which takes place outside of the annual Koganecho Bazaar art festival in the fall. The Center does not make the tour’s objective clear in any explicit way but the content of the tour suggests that it aims to bring people in Koganecho together, including artists in residence, who tend to be absent otherwise, visitors and local
residents. A large group of about ten people were guided by members of the Center, who took us to some of the art studios in Koganecho and its neighbourhood and introduced artists, who currently occupied those spaces.

In the middle of the tour we were standing on so-called Puffy Street, which was named after “Stand By Puffy,” one of the popular chon-no-ma standing at the very end of the street. Its awning—the business name printed in pink font against a black background—still stayed as it was, one of the few remaining awnings from the old days. But this was not of concern on the tour. The rest of the group was looking at wooden spoons, brooches, clocks and pens that were produced by a young male woodworker in one of the studios. A tour guide gave a box to the artist, who put his arm in the box to pull out a scrap of paper just as thought it were a lottery draw. The scrap paper was a question: “Do you have any other occupation you wish to engage in?” The artist answered, “An English teacher.” The questions were meant to facilitate interactions between artists in Koganecho and visitors, but this process repeated rather mechanically and ritualistically. The question box was used again when we were introduced to students of Yokohama City University, who were conducting their undergraduate research on community development in Koganecho. They were using one of the buildings managed by the Center as a research base. One of the students drew a question, “Which country do you want to visit?” She answered, “I have been to Thailand and the Philippines a number of times but I would like to visit India next.” Tour participants made no comments but gave polite smiles in return. The place we were standing used to be populated by women from Asia, like Thailand and Taiwan, popular destinations for Japanese tourists. But let’s not mention it. We were a walking-machine of forgetting.

Some of the chon-no-ma units occupied by the Koganecho Area Management Centre stand side by side with Riverside independent businesses. The Center’s walking tour ended in front of the art studios on the Riverside block. The last studio we
visited exhibited some photographs of the areas affected by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami that happened exactly one year ago on March 11, 2011. When we were about to finish the tour the clock hit 14:46, the time when the earthquake happened a year ago, and we commemorated victims by a moment of silence.

\[i \text{ close my eyes}\]
\[t o \text{ remember a lost community}\]
\[i \text{ open my eyes}\]
\[a p p e a r s \text{ a forgotten loss}\]
\[o f \text{ another}\]

The tour guide gave me a feedback form. Realizing that I was standing too close to the Riverside bars and might be seen by the masters, I started feeling awkward about being in the tour crowd. I quickly filled out the form, greeted the tour guide and left the group.

**Overpass**

\[\text{Photographs from the post-WWII occupation era document earlier forms}\]
of chon-no-ma shacks crammed in the space underneath the overpass (Okumura and Higashino 1981). One of these photographs (p.153) captures a day of a festival where families in happi coats and hachimaki headbands fill up the street along the overpass. The photograph shows the space populated by people living in a time of poverty, but the street is full of energy and hope. On one of the houses, right by the door, is posted a wanted ad for a “female server”. The door is open and a woman—maybe one of the “servers” of the pub—stands at the entrance. She does not seem to be joining the crowd on the street or even interested in the event. Instead of looking at the passersby, she stares at the camera. Her face shows no excitement for the festival but only fatigue, and her presence splits the photographic space into two worlds—the world of festivity and that of inexorable reality of everyday.

I often walk along the Keikyu train overpass between Hinodecho Station and Koganecho Station. During the post-WWII occupation by the Allied Forces, this area developed out of a black market of contraband brought in from the U.S. base, later earning a reputation as a notorious breeding ground for the drug market and sex trade. From the post-war period, underneath the overpass was crammed with barracks used for little pubs, brothels and houses. In the 1990s they had to move out, because Keikyu Corporation decided to renovate the overpass to make it earthquake tolerant, having experienced the Great Hanshin earthquake in another part of the country. Of course, it was partly an excuse to get rid of unwanted shacks, says the local cynical voice. A decade later part of the space under the overpass came to be occupied by the Koganecho Area Management Centre and used as a space for art exhibits, stores, workshops and other events organized by the Center.
Another part of the overpass, however, is shuttered with tall iron walls on both sides. People I talked to seemed not to know what was happening inside, what was planned for the space and when the walls were to be removed. Whatever the purpose of leaving the walls, it has the effect of keeping people away from the area. It feels suffocating walking along the walled overpass. Usually, an eerie stillness pervades the street. The iron walls block the view to the other side of the overpass, and because the street is curved and the pedestrians are not able to see the street ahead, it gives a sense that the walls will never end. The space embodies the partiality of view I have of Koganecho. Walking along, I always saw cats hanging out in the area. They might be the ones who know the history of the neighbourhood the best.

\[\text{mumblings of split lives}\]
\[\text{grow behind the wall}\]

\[\text{I walked along the overpass when there were still houses underneath. Most of them were shacks, some of them had straw doors with padlocks and chains. I even saw wild chicken and chicks walking together on the paved street. It was a strange scene. (Artist in Wakabacho, personal communication, 20 February 2012)}\]

Earlier during my fieldwork, particularly in January and February of 2012, I consciously motivated myself to walk along the railway overpass from one end of the former-chon-no-ma district in the north near Hinodecho Station, to the other end in the south near Koganecho Station. I was hoping that the repetitive walks along the same path would give me access to memories of the place. I also hoped that each iteration of my walk would add an invisible layer to the place’s memories. I desperately wanted to develop some sort of bond with the place and even to become part of it. But the more I spent time in Koganecho, the less I was convinced that I knew about the place, in the past and present. Accumulations of stories about Koganecho’s past only made
visible its invisibility, as those stories were often inconsistent and full of gaps. The repetitive walks along the overpass was my way of resolving a fear of not reaching a clear view of Koganecho, and it took time for me to realize that this invisibility of the city was precisely what characterized the place and perhaps how the place should be remembered.

In the meantime, as I continued my research, meeting different groups of local people, interviewing representatives of the Koganecho Area Management Center, participating in its walking tour, and developing intimate relationships with masters and customers of Riverside businesses, my walks along the overpass started to feel heavier and burdensome. By mid-March when I participated in the walking tour organized by the Center, I was already feeling less mobile than how I used to feel a few weeks ago. On my movement from the north to the south along the overpass I had to pass the Center’s main office and an array of art studios before I reached Riverside. This movement was, at the same time, a movement from a space of active forgetting to a space of memories (if not always a space of active remembering). The Riverside block of houses was a newly emerging community where some of the elements that existed in the past could be identified, and people in Riverside are very open about speaking about the district’s past. Beside Tamura-san’s tour that advocated active remembrance of socio-economic lives that were displaced, Riverside masters were generally critical of the authority-driven “cleansing” project happening in the district. My political identification with the Riverside community was sometimes materialized and felt in my sense of guilt for moving freely from one part of the district to another. The Riverside block also stored some of the material traces of the previous chon-no-ma units. For example, Bar Kikiya kept a mirror near the front entrance, which was used by chon-no-ma girls to check the traffic of clients on the street. The mirror was still hanging on the wall exactly as it used to be. Under the counter of Cups for Few was still attached a buzz that was used by the mama or girls to notify themselves and yakuza of emergencies.
My body was beginning to be pulled by the strange gravity of Riverside.

**Cups for Few**

_I don’t really have a vivid memory of the place. I do remember the colour pink, but that was an everyday thing, that was normal—so I didn’t pay attention to it too much... The place never changed throughout my school years. No change, nothing. And one day I returned to my hometown only to find nothing remaining in Koganecho. That was a shock._ (Master, Cups for Few, personal communication, 8 March 2012)

_In the early 2000s, when I was in high school I was meeting with my friend in the Yokohamabashi Arcade and passed by Koganecho by bike. But I felt completely out of place and never went back there by myself. No one was walking and it was dark. From the other side of the river [chon-no-ma] bars looked shadowed because they were covered by huge cherry trees. I wondered why trees were so big in that area. A year later I was in the car with my father and other people and we passed by Koganecho again. I asked, “Why are they lit in red and pink?” He said, “They are doing some business. Those places are called ‘red-light’ districts.”_ (Meaw, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 21 November 2012)

Although sex workers were removed from the district, elements of chon-no-ma culture remain in Koganecho. Memories of the past persistently stick with the place, gathering people and enmeshing them in the local social entanglement in a particular way, transforming their bodies into something familiar to itself. The past haunts those bodies, no matter where they come from, so that they surely pass on past
practices, experiences and sentiments.

Life in Riverside today is still centred around the nighttime and active until early in the morning at 4 or 5 AM. Even coffee and tea bars open at around 3 PM and close at 11 PM or midnight, and almost all businesses serve alcohol whether or not their masters initially planned it when they first opened their businesses. In fact, in order to economically survive in the district, Cups for Few, a coffee bar in Riverside, had to readjust its style of operation in 2013 by delaying its opening and closing times for one hour and increasing the amount of alcohol it served. The district is still very much a place for adults and not accommodating to small children. Chon-no-ma have no space for strollers coming in, for moms to nurse babies or for kids to walk around. For this reason, conducting research with Mia in Koganecho was challenging, if not impossible. Despite this I sometimes brought Mia to Cups for Few after figuring out that this bar was the most kid-welcome place among other businesses in Riverside. Most likely this was because the bar was open during the day; its size was relatively larger than others although a stroller would not fit unless it was folded; and the couple running the business just had a baby when I was conducting fieldwork in 2012. It was not rare to see their baby hanging out in the bar, which made me comfortable bringing mine as well.

On February 9, 2012, I visited Cups for Few with Mia. The business opened at two o’clock. I looked into the bar and found no other customers inside. Umino-san, the master, opened the door for me. “Did your baby arrive yet?” I asked. I knew from my earlier visit that his wife was close to her due date. “Yes, she did,” he gave me a big smile, showing how much he was fond of his baby girl. Cups for Few opened in August 2007, half-a-year after the first bar opened in Riverside after the 2005 raids and at around the same time when other chon-no-ma units were being renovated for new businesses. He did not initially plan to open his business specifically in Koganecho but he “drifted here.” “It was like I was guided here by some magical power,” he said. He was also familiar with this neighbourhood, as he grew up in Noge, the town right next
to Koganecho. “It’s the best to do your business in your hometown,” he said to me one time.

Usually the bar plays bossa nova music in the background, creating a relaxed atmosphere that suits the overall tropical style of the interior. It has a L-shaped counter that accommodates a maximum of six people. On the other side of the wall there are two tables for an additional four people. If all the seats were filled it would feel completely packed. The bar interior is full of decorations, mostly objects and images related to sharks—lots of stuffed animals in a net spread across a corner of the ceiling, a poster on the wall, and a photographic book from Umino-san’s book collection on a long table. “I like sharks, because they don’t pretend to be friendly. They are at least honest. Dolphins are scarier to me, because they look friendly and harmless,” Umino-san told me during my last visit. It immediately reminded me of the cruelty of the softness and roundness of the Isetaka hawk on the police box. I could not disagree with his comment and, at the same time, I started to sense how Umino-san’s sarcastic character permeated the space.

Inside the counter, there are a small sink, fridge, a beer server at the end of the counter, and a wall shelf where glass bins of coffee beans are kept. I grabbed a seat at the counter and ordered the bar’s signature coffee. Soon, a man with long dyed orange hair in work clothes came in the bar. He seemed very familiar with the master just as other customers of the business were. Most of the Riverside customers are regulars and, in fact, some masters do not openly welcome new customers to protect the tight community that has already been put in place. Each chon-no-ma is more like a community centre than a commercial space where members bring stories, rumors, gossip and often food to share with others. “Udon, soba and coffee jelly,” the man with orange hair gave a mischievous smile to the master. “He orders these things knowing that I can’t serve them any more,” Umino-san complained to me. His wife used to serve
food, but she was taking maternity leave and he had to delete some items on the menu.

Another male customer came in and he took a seat at the other end of the counter. Umino-san introduced him to me as one of his childhood friends. The man said that he used to deliver bottles of alcohol to Koganecho regularly when he was working at a liquor store in this area. It reminded me that some old-style chon-no-ma actually served alcohol before the customers went upstairs with female “servers.” “How has the neighbourhood changed?” I asked. “It is cleaner. There are more cherry trees now.” “The river bank got paved ten years ago. The cherry trees were replaced with younger ones recently,” added Umino-san. In fact, the small trees along the river gave a better view of the streets and storefronts from the other side. Koganecho is becoming even more transparent. He also told me that old one-story houses have recently been replaced by high-rise apartments. He started to see moms walking with their children along the river, which would have been rare to see in the old days.

Mia looked frustrated and was making noise. Luckily, the bar was not too busy. I asked Umino-san if I could use the room upstairs to breastfeed Mia. “No one is there. Go ahead,” he said. I carried Mia and climbed up the steep narrow stairs, which creaked with each one of my steps. The room has two couches facing at each other and a coffee table in-between, offering a capacity of up to four people. Usually the room is used when customers come as a group and want to have private conversation. I took one of the couches and started breastfeeding. For a moment I felt relief that I found a comfortable spot to breastfeed Mia, which had been difficult to find in Koganecho out on the streets and inside the little units of Riverside where customers were sitting only an inch away from each other. There was literally no privacy in Riverside.

his eyes catch my body
on display

fire surges up inside me
I blushed. A man was walking pass Cups for Few right below the window and for a moment our eyes met. I did not think that the street was this close from the second floor. I should have sit away from the window at least. Did he notice that I was breastfeeding? All of sudden I became over-conscious of the presence of my body in the chon-no-ma as if the entire space was now my body. This space used to be occupied by migrant women who worked apart from their own children back in their homeland. The same space was now turning into the space of mother-child intimacy on display. Embarrassed and unsettled, I looked at Mia, who kept sucking my breast and did not seem like she would fall asleep anytime soon. She did not seem to have noticed the change in my body heat.

I heard that there is a hidden attic at the top of Cups for Few and it gives access to Bar Ring and Admiral Pub. These three units are connected under the roof. In the past it might have been used as a hiding space or escape hatch in case of a raid. But I’m not completely sure about it. When I asked the master about it, he asked back, “What’s the attic?” (Female Customer, Tunes Teahouse, personal communication, 27 February 2012)

When I visited Cups for Few on March 8, 2012, I was the only customer in the bar. For the first time, Umino-san told me a story of his private life, an aspect of his past life which he said he was ashamed of. “This is embarrassing stuff. Don’t tell anybody,” he wrapped up his story and changed the subject. For a short while, his usual sarcastic tone was gone. Intimate conversations like this reinforced my attachment to Riverside and assured that I finally had a place to be in the community. “My birthday is March 5. Pisces don’t have good luck,” his pessimism was back already. I responded, “I haven’t experienced any real breakdown in my life, at least nothing like yours, and sometimes I am scared if I can deal with it when it happens.” “Maybe it will never happen. You seem
like you have had a very straightforward life and it might just go on like that, but that's what you are gifted." Straightforward life? Really? Maybe. His frank comments pierced me, which was not the first time. I looked for a word to respond but before I found one he continued, “The world is not created equally for everyone. Those who publicly call for equity are usually privileged and they don’t necessarily appreciate it if real equity comes true.” A prick, again.

We started gossiping about Mama, who used to run a number of chon-no-ma in Koganecho in the past. I met her at Bar Kikiya the night before by, according to the bar master, the “strong luck” I somehow grabbed. Indeed, she was a special person to encounter. Umino-san said, “It was just so funny when she said her daily income was always 50,000 yen, whether she only had one customer or five customers.” I wondered how she managed to make 50,000 yen from one customer but she might have been exaggerating or she might have just done it. She was the most assertive woman I had ever met in my life. “She seems like a very honest woman,” I said. “Sure, she is honest but she has also done dirty business. Well, that was normal in the world she was living in so I cannot judge her.” I remembered that she was sentenced to a few years in prison after the raid, but that might not have been the first time she was caught by the police. Before 2005 a number of sporadic raids happened in Koganecho and chon-no-ma mamas used to pay a few million yen in fines for their “first time offence” and then were released. “She is Korean-Japanese,” Umino-san told me and it did not surprise me. In fact, there is a historically founded Korean community in Kangai. They are well-represented in areas like Fukutomicho, Kotobukicho and Nakamuracho. These were locations, just like Koganecho, that are avoided by Japanese residents for having bad ground conditions or the river nearby. “Well, those who go underground are usually those who are already excluded from society. No one wants to live underground if they have other options,” Umino-san commented.

*I never hired foreigners but there were many of them here toward the*
end... some were arrested [in the raid] but some chose to leave the city before that. They went back to their countries. Otherwise they left for Nagano or Gunma, everywhere. They travel using some kind of network, you know, it’s a different world, a world that we will never understand. Every one was sending remittances to their families through underground banks. Many girls built their siblings’ houses back home and made something out of it. But some acquired debts from gambling. (Master, Admiral Pub, personal communication, 25 March 2012)

I knew the boss of the local yakuza group, who was managing Koganecho back then. They would come to check if I was doing all right. I was enjoying my business so much and wanted to continue but the boss got arrested and I lost my motivation. I was sad when I quit it but I wouldn’t have done it without him in town. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. I would love to visit him, but he is in Sendai now and it’s too far. He was such a great person. I guess he did bad things too. But how do you determine good or bad? It’s difficult, so difficult. Life is tough. (Female Former Vendor in Koganecho, 22 March 2012)

Flirting starts in subtle ways in Riverside. “You look like Nausicca,” said a regular customer and an old friend of Umino-san to me when we were sitting side by side at the counter of Cups for Few. This was not the first time I saw him there and I had noticed the awkward orientation of his consciousness directed toward me. At least, I knew for sure that he was enjoying my presence, like some other male customers I entertained at the counters of Riverside bars. In Riverside I was not simply a customer, I was coming to realize, but also, together with other female customers, an attraction for male customers, sort of a free labourer offering conversational “services“ to
them. But how else can I even exist here? In Koganecho even a coffee bar sometimes becomes a mini hostess club. Now, this man was describing me as an *anime* character. *Nausicaa* is a girl warrior, the protagonist in Hayao Miyazaki’s animated film *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*. I knew his comment was some sort of compliment, if not a typical one. “Because I’ve got a baby face?” I asked. That might not have been the best way to respond, as there is a well-known notion that Japanese men have a tendency to prefer young girls, even minors, and I might have just sent a wrong signal. Or perhaps I was simply being overconscious. “No, you have a quality of transparency,” he responded. Does that mean innocence? Cleanness? “Is that a compliment?” I asked. “You can interpret it in any way you want,” the man smiled. “Maybe it means that you don’t exist,” said Umino-san and caused us to laugh. It also offered a break to move on to the next topic. His sarcasm saved me this time.

On April 13, 2012, *Cups for Few* was a playground for babies. Two female customers brought their babies and Tomoko-san, the master’s wife also came down with her baby from upstairs. They turned the bar into a family room. If Mia had been here she would have been the oldest among the four. She would walk everywhere in this little bar, instead of quietly staying on her mom’s lap like the younger babies were doing. Moms with their babies in Koganecho reminded me that I was also a mother. They also upset me. I was upset about Mia’s absence, I missed her and felt guilty about having left her behind at home to conduct my research. When I stayed in Koganecho until late at night my breasts were engorged and felt uncomfortable, and the pain most explicitly indicated the length of time I had been away from Mia. The flashback image and sound of Mia crying obsessed me while I was in Yokohama. When I saw babies in chon-no-ma, I was reminded that many sex workers working in Koganecho were also mothers and they missed their children back home. While the length of time and the conditions under which I was separated from Mia was nothing compared to the separation experienced by migrant mothers, Mia’s absence continued to haunt me.
Tunes Teahouse

I was renting an apartment in Sueyoshicho, right across the river from Koganecho. I used to visit Koganecho a lot, so I decided to live there. I knew Koganecho back then pretty well, including some mamas too. I only went to chon-no-ma where I had a good relationship with its mama. They were all different, you know. (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 16 March 2012)

Businesses in Riverside have one thing in common. Their spaces are so small that one cannot spend time in those places without interacting with their masters and other customers. Initially being an outsider to the Riverside community, it was challenging for me to visit them at first especially as I was very much used to coffee shops in Vancouver where I would go there to work or meet my friends but not necessarily interact with strangers. At the same time, to me, as a researcher, Riverside was the best places to meet local people and hear stories about the neighbourhood. In March and April 2012, I spent a significant amount of time in Riverside, moving from one bar to another each day, and the place began to feel comfortable and safe. I knew what to expect in these venues, I was meeting new people each day, I was more easily able to keep up with conversation, and my body was learning the everyday rhythm of the district. I could spend an entire afternoon and evening at Riverside and completely lose my sense of time. Indeed, Koganecho had a different time, just like the time of the undersea paradise of the Ryugu Castle in the old Japanese tale. This is a story of a boy called Urashima Taro from a little fishing village, who visits the undersea world with the guidance of a turtle, which Taro saved from being bullied by kids. He enjoys a party hosted by Princess Oto, who lives in the Castle, every day for three years. When Taro finally decides to return home Princess gives him a tamatebako box as a souvenir, telling him to never open it. However, he returns to his village only to realize that three hundred years have passed above the sea, and out of desperation he opens the
prohibited box. White smoke rises from the box and transforms Taro into an old, white-haired man. In Koganecho, and particularly at Tunes Teahouse, I was floating in the prolonged time of Ryugu Castle, and at times, this terrified me.

When I visited Tunes Teahouse on February 7, 2012, I was nervous just like on any other occasion when I stepped into a bar in Koganecho for the first time. I gathered my courage and opened the sliding door. There was a female customer at the counter and nobody else. “Is a counter seat okay for you?” the skinny and tall master asked me with his quiet, soft voice. “Yes,” I responded. Classical music was playing in the background. The interior is carefully decorated in western style with a collection of coffee beans in glass bins and spices and dried herbs in glass tubes, which are all tidily lined up on the counter and wall shelves. Sepia-coloured western newspapers and music sheets decorate storage boxes and parts of the walls. The master’s outfit—a wool sweater, a pair of cotton pants, a beret and a pair of glasses with a black frame—is also consistent with the feel of the bar. The bar interior, in fact, evokes minimal traces of the lives of chon-no-ma women.

After having a quick look at the menu I ordered “brown sugar ginger tea.” The female customer smiled to me and said, “I am having the same thing!” The woman’s smile eased my nerves and we started a casual conversation. As I did in every other bar when I first met their masters, I introduced myself and briefly explained my research interests. “I remember you from Tamura-san’s tour,” the master said. He was right. During Tamura-san’s walking tour we took a break at his bar and ordered drinks from Tunes. The master saw me in Kikiya when he delivered the items from his bar. The two units are only two doors away from each other. As I learned later, the female customer, Kimura-san, was one of the most frequent customers of Tunes. She was born in Wakabacho, a neighbourhood located right across the river. Master, Harada-san, lives in another ward of Yokohama but he used to work in a movie theatre located in Wakabacho between 1995 and 2005. A few years after he quit the job, he visited
Cups for Few and met the former business owner of this unit, who was then planning to move to a new location. After this meeting Harada-san decided to take over the unit and started his tea bar.

Hearing that I was interested in learning more about Riverside, Kimura-san told me the distinctiveness of each of the Riverside businesses. “This block is made up of bars with different atmospheres and different groups of customers. The Bar Ring master attracts many young female customers. The master is hot and those women all fall in love with him!” She paused to see my reaction, and I nodded in agreement. “Sometimes the bar is packed and people have to stand up. It plays club music and some customers like to dance. Can you believe it? In that little space! Cups for Few has the widest range of customers, because the master is not picky about customers. The bar has been picked up by a few magazines so it gets new customers from outside the neighbourhood, too. Probably it is the most accessible bar on this block. Tunes attracts many artists and intellectuals, including a used book store owner, people with higher education, writers. Right, Harada-san? The master plays classical music. Master of Kikiya is a bit tricky to deal with…” Kimura-san’s last words made me wonder what she meant, but I did not pursue this further. Gossip about other masters and customers were one of the popular topics of conversation that heated up the counter.

What she described to me was convincing. Riverside houses tiny businesses with different characters and crowds. Each bar has a different way of gathering people, bringing them back, and a different way of operating. Although there is traffic existing between the units, as customers flow from one bar to another and masters themselves visit each other, they still have independent and sometimes irreconcilable cultures that make them unique. Each space often embodies the master’s personality, values and beliefs in the most direct way. In fact, these units are too small to hide them neatly anyway. Harada-san’s soft and amiable manner of interacting with his customers, the visually appealing interior and house-made original items attract many young
female customers. Just like the master, his customers are also quiet and less assertive compared to people in other Riverside bars. In fact, he did not talk much about himself. While he is local I never met his old friends or family members visiting his bar. Even after spending days and days at his bar I still did not have any sense of his life outside of the bar. I was the most relaxed when I was in Tunes and tended to go there when I needed to have some break from difficult times I would experience in Koganecho, confrontations and disturbing encounters with people I met in other bars, and felt at a loss or wanted to escape from my research.

After Kimura-san left, a middle-aged male customer came in. Harada-san’s brief introduction smoothed the way for our conversation. The customer told me that he was familiar with Koganecho from a young age, because he had his high school and workplaces in this neighbourhood. On this particular day, he got off from his car sales work early and was visiting different pubs and bars one after another to drink. “This is the sixth place today,” the car salesman said with his intoxicated red face and ordered a glass of beer. “You also serve beer?” I was surprised. “Yes, not much variety, but I do,” Harada-san replied. The car salesman told me that chon-no-ma on this block were occupied by Chinese women. On the other side, there were South American women “and apparently, Russians,” Harada-san added. According to the salesman, a yakuza car was always stationed around this block and they would come out when problems would arise to deal with them. “You hardly find pictures of Koganecho from back then, because yakuza and mamas watched the street, so no one would photograph their businesses. These were undocumented women and they had to conceal their identities,” he said.

I came across this customer several times after this visit. Harada-san told me in private that he would stop by Tunes on the way to his Korean girlfriend’s apartment in Wakabacho. He always came to Tunes after having a few drinks elsewhere and had another few glasses of beer there as well. Whenever he was around, the counter
was a blast. His stories turned other customers’ drinks, coffee or tea, into alcohol and filled the space with laughter and noise. Topics of conversation over the counter could be serious socio-political issues such as the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, Japan’s new national registration system and criticisms of art projects in Koganecho, or it could be local trivia on the pub famous for a display of a half-broken bike, a cheap noodle place, and updates on other bars and customers in Koganecho. Any matter became a source of laughter when the car salesman was orchestrating the conversation at the counter. At one point, Master mentioned one of his male customers, who used to work as a solicitor for a massage parlour but quit his job because he could not bear the stress of acting as a counselor for girls working there. “Those are tough jobs, you know,” Harada-san commented. The car salesman asked, “Why are women emotionally so unstable?” and looked at me and the other women sitting at the counter. I was annoyed by the question and said, “Maybe it’s the conditions of their work and life that make them unstable.” “I see, so it’s not because they are women,” the man gave a clownish nod.

After this meeting, I stopped seeing him in Tunes. “He was kicked out of his girlfriend’s apartment recently, which might be why he stopped hanging out in this area,” Harada-san speculated. I also learned later that the apartment his girlfriend lived in was one of the major “workplaces” of tachinbo [street sex workers] girls who stand in the street in Wakabacho.

Sometimes other masters stopped by for quick coffee or just to check in, and brought topics from the outside. One time, for example, one of the other masters of Riverside hopped in Tunes with the latest news of the neighbourhood. He saw
police officers gathering around Kogane Gekijo, an old and independent strip theatre, over the river. This sparked a conversation over police raids, one of the ritualistic activities that have happened in Koganecho throughout its post-WWII era. Stories of police raids and arrests are cliché in this neighbourhood. These are almost like a type of greeting people exchange in their everyday lives, like a brief chat about the weather. In fact, while Riverside masters said that there was an atmosphere that did not allow them to talk about anything related to sex when police were still carefully watching new businesses in Riverside around 2007, I did not sense that level of constraint when I was there between 2012 and 2013. Riverside bars are always populated by those who have a close relationship with sex work, as sex workers or mamas themselves, having family members or friends working in the sex trade, or as clients or partners. In fact, sex work is still part of the everyday scene in Kangai, although it is not as visible and extensive in scale it was in Koganecho in the past. For example, it is common sense knowledge to people there that baishun by transnational migrant women still exist in Wakabacho, a neighbourhood right across the river, in the form of street sex work.

I was getting to know more people in Riverside and it was becoming more comfortable and enjoyable to be there. I became one of the frequent customers of these bars just like other regulars. I even felt like I was like those male customers, who used to visit chon-no-ma regularly in the old days, paying fees for services and enjoying the time away from their “realities,” such as work and family life. Sometimes the conversation became so stimulating and exciting that I had to force myself to leave the space as if I was glued to the counter stool or I was pulled into a quagmire. *Where is this leading me?* An acute sense of guilt irritated me especially when I had left Mia at home. In addition, my identification with male customers felt like an epistemological failure that hindered me from imagining the lives of chon-no-ma women.

*I know some girls who died from AIDS. I knew one girl pretty well and I know of*
other cases, because one mama told me about them. This girl was about twenty-five or twenty-six and she was pretty. She was working in Koganecho but could no longer work there because rashes started to appear on her skin. Then she was working at a pub in Wakabacho for about one year. One day she visited my restaurant and was having fun playing games with her friends. She was drinking until late at night and left. The next day I got a phone-call from her and she said she had a headache. She said it should be a hangover so I didn’t tell her to go to a hospital. But then she went to bed and didn’t wake up for two days. Her sister thought it wasn’t normal and she brought her to a hospital. She passed away two weeks later. (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 16 March 2012)

One day, I visited Tunes when I had extra time because my interview appointment for the day was cancelled last minute. It was past 3 o’clock, the bar’s opening time, and there was no other customer at the counter yet. I ordered “housemade pudding” and coffee. “How’s your business going?” I asked Harada-san. He only said, “Not bad,” and kept silent for a while. After cooking pasta for a customer upstairs he served me coffee and pudding, and finally opened his mouth, “One of my customers just passed away.” He told me that this seventy-year-old gentleman used to come here every Saturday and always ordered the pudding I was having. When the master went to his funeral he saw a photograph of the pudding being displayed. Did the man open his tamatebako box? “I was wondering why you are playing jazz today, because you always play classics. Does it have anything to do with it?” The tunes of Miles Davis made me nostalgic, evoking a different time, a prolonged time with a lagging rhythm, in the space I was sinking in deeply. “This customer was fond of jazz. The first piece in this album was played at his funeral,” he said.
Bar Kikiya

A mirror hung right beside the entrance of Kikiya is a remnant of the old chon-no-ma. Sex workers used to check the mirror to see if their potential customers or regulars were walking by. Every time I come to Kikiya I look into the mirror, searching for any clue that might lead me to the past. I sit on a stool and see the reflection on the edge of the mirror. Today I saw no pedestrians on the riverside but the sky was getting darker preparing for the nighttime festivities. After the 2005 raid, Koganecho becomes only modestly vibrant in Riverside during the night. Admiral Pub master’s bike was parked along the railing. I wondered if he finished grocery shopping for tonight. (Journal, 24 April 2012)

On February 22, 2012, I was in Kikiya with Mia in my carrier. We were the only customers. I put my carrier away and rocked Mia in my arms as I stood in front of the entrance. I ordered plum wine on the rocks and continued our conversation. I told Tamura-san, Master, that I was feeling guilty about leaving Mia at home and having drinks at Riverside, that I was starting to identify with the experience of male customers who used to enjoy their after-work life in Koganecho, instead of gaining a better understanding of the lives of women who used to work here. “You can bring Mia here, you know. I have seen some people coming to Koganecho for their research but never seen anyone who brought their kids with them. But I think that would be a good idea. It would make your experience more real.” Kikiya attracted me in a way similar to a
mirror. It never hesitated to show me who I was, what I feared, and what I desired through my conversations with its master and other regular customers. Being faced with an honest mirror was, intellectually and spiritually, the most enlightening thing. At the same time, it was extremely challenging and exhausting. Tamura-san changed the way I felt about Koganecho, perhaps not by gently shining a light on Riverside for me, but by animating the place by causing waves, sometimes exciting and sometimes uneasy ones, in the Ooka River, which otherwise was always quiet and seemed to stay put.

The bar was quiet. I had a sip of plum wine and quickly looked at the electronic clock hanging at the upper corner of the wall. It was past 9 o’clock. I couldn’t stay too long. The interior of the bar is intentionally kept casual and decoration is kept to a minimum. One wall is painted in brown, the other in green. It evoked an old-fashioned working-class pub from the countryside. A horserace calendar is hanging on the brown wall behind the counter. Liquor bottles are lined up on the counter along with an electronic kettle and a golden Buddha statue. The statue is one of the objects that used to belong to chon-no-ma women but were left behind after the raids. They now belong to Kikiya. Later I saw Tamura-san putting his palms together and praying in front of the little Buddha, as he called it a day.

Tamura-san was familiar with the neighbourhood, as his father was born and grew up in Sueyoshicho across the river. When he was young he also tutored a student living in Koganecho. He started his business in the current unit after inheriting the space from Koganecho Project, an early initiative that emerged in the neighbourhood a few years after the 2005 raid (see Chapter Four). When I first met him he told me that he did not start his business as a bar. “I was just sitting at the counter, presenting myself as a kikiya, a listener. I waited for people to come talk to me about whatever they had to say. But nobody came! Then some old chon-no-ma mamas came to me and told me that I had to sell alcohol if I wanted to survive in Koganecho. That’s why it’s
now a bar." His business turned into a bar but he still performs the role of a listener. A wide range of people—salarymen and women, self-employed workers, journalists, writers, photographers, artists, care workers, manual workers, intellectuals, sex workers, their clients, former chon-no-ma mamas, pub mamas, single mothers—came to Kikiya to have frank conversations about their own lives and life in Koganecho, its past, present and future. Tamura-san was one of the pickiest masters in Riverside, and some customers were not allowed to return. At the same time, community ties were most strongly felt in Kikiya amongst the Riverside businesses. Kikiya was also the most erratic business, as Tamura-san tended to have irregular breaks for extra rest or outings, sometimes with his regulars. When Kikiya’s curtains were closed it disappointed me—Koganecho felt dull, tasteless and odorless.

Mia was becoming fussy. Tamura-san heated up a cup of rice for her and brought a train toy from upstairs to distract her. “Kawakami-san gave it to me when I had a girlfriend with kids, but we broke up and its owner is gone. So here you go,” he said. But Mia was not quite happy with the toy and started crying. It was definitely time to put her to sleep. We had to leave.

According to one of the regular customers Kikiya still retains the same smell from the old days—a smell unknown to me. The small space of Kikiya gets quickly filled with the smell of the food prepared by Tamura-san. When the electronic kettle is turned on the steam easily warms up the space and the air instantly gets humid and sticky. Upstairs is used for an office and storage. The space looks bare although it is quite full with the owner’s possessions. In the room facing out to the Ooka River two naked light bulbs on the ceiling show no desire to tell me a story, but when they are turned off the pink neon of a soapland [sex bathhouse] across the river gently spreads on the frosted window like a reminder of the old
On March 4, 2012, I happened to meet Mama, an old woman who used to run a number of chon-no-ma in Koganecho. “We will have a scary-looking lady later tonight so be prepared,” Tamura-san warned me. I was nervous about how things would unfold once she came. An hour later a taxi stopped in front of Kikiya and dropped Mama and another mama, who currently ran a pub in Koganecho. Once they entered the bar and sat beside me, the “scary-looking” mama immediately started complaining about someone I did not know. The other mama sat beside her, and she never said a word but just nodded from time to time to affirm what the angry mama had to say. Apparently she was talking about another mama, a third one, of a pub in the neighbourhood. “She only thinks about her own profit!” she was furious. After spitting a lengthy complaint about this mama, she finally noticed my presence and said to Tamura-san, “Hey, here is a pretty girl. You have to date someone like her!” Please, I silently sighed. “Did I meet you before? There is a girl, who is married but having an affair,” she turned to Tamura-san again. “No, no. She is happily married and has a precious baby too,” he laughed. I almost wanted to disappear.

She changed the topic and started to talk about a takoyaki [octopus ball] bar. A couple owns the bar and they used to run the business in the unit that Tunes Teahouse currently occupies. They moved to Noge, another district of Kangai, because they expected better customer traffic in the new location. Tamura-san was worried about whether they could survive even in a new location since their menu was so low-priced. “I’m a student, so I appreciate a reasonable place like that,” I said. Mama looked at me and said, “You’ve never been there? I will take you there tonight. Call your husband and tell him that you’ll be late.” It felt too abrupt an offer but I received it as an order and made a quick phone call outside the bar, although I also felt a sense of guilt that was spreading in my mind. When I returned she said, “Did you tell him? Good girl,” and
patted my head. The next moment we were taking a taxi to Noge.

"i used to manage ten chon-no-ma
i was the first person who introduced foreign woman to koganecho
i bought a girl at 640,000 yen
i was renting a chon-no-ma at 1,200,000 yen"

"never let a man do whatever they want to do
you have to educate him"
tells me a wrinkled face
with a glass of wine in her hand
my body drifts
down the intoxicated river
of memory

The stairway of Kikiya has been my nursing space. This is also where sex workers used to invite their customers to the rooms upstairs, to their body-worlds. “I wanted to capture things like the foot oil of the women who climbed up those stairs, and the air of the space that is left behind,” said Miyako Ishiuchi when she described her photographic work Endless Night (2001), a series of photographs of former brothels across Japan (personal communication, 6 February 2012). I sat on the stairway and started breastfeeding Mia. I searched memories sedimented in the stairway but the space responded to me with absolute silence and stillness. From the other side of the door I heard other customers coming into the bar. Soon another group joined. The bar sounded packed and extremely vibrant. Mia was sucking the last few drops of my breast milk mixed with Kikiya

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food and drinks, now sedimented in her body. (Journal, 4 April 2012)

Tamura-san was the most active intermediary of the Riverside community among other masters. He often visited other bars to check in on how others were doing and contribute to their incomes as a customer. On March 14, 2012, he dropped into Tunes Teahouse when I was having coffee there. The air of the bar quickly changed to that of Kikiya and got heavier once he was there. Perhaps Kikiya moves with its master. At that time, Harada-san, master of Tunes, was asking me why I came to be interested in Koganecho. “Well, I thought we couldn’t ignore the presence of transnational migrants in Koganecho when speaking about history of Yokohama, especially when the government emphasizes it is an ‘international’ city,” replying to his question I was already feeling nervous. I never successfully conveyed the reason for my visit to Koganecho to local people. The more I added to my explanation the less convinced they seemed. Scholarly rationale was often not satisfactory to local people, who were emotionally attached to the neighbourhood both with love and shame. The question really was, What would bring you here, if not a family tie, an economic necessity or some sort of social problem? But I could not decipher people’s curiosity in the right way, and was failing to respond to the question by giving rational, cold and distant answers to them.

In addition, now, there was Tamura-san, who was recently becoming tough on me with his Japanese masculine stoicism. Sometimes he became an interrogator rather than a kikiya, “listener.” “What do you mean?” Tamura-san pressed the question on me. “Well…I think it is a problem that the government is trying to conceal the presence of migrant women in town. There were in fact so many of them here, working, living and making a community.” “Maybe it wasn’t normal for them to be concentrated here like that,” he said with his unsatisfied face. I knew that it was a rhetorical comment. “But it didn’t feel strange to us locals,” Harada-san responded, “it was an everyday scene.” I said, “Maybe it is not normal now that no migrant women can exist in Koganecho
Tamura-san finally nodded but he left Tunes looking hardly convinced. This short conversation exhausted my energy to the point that I stopped visiting Kikiya for a week. It was a drag to be nailed down by his questions and comments, and this was not the first time. But I also knew that I was not satisfied with my answer either. His reaction was, at the same time, a reflection of my own confusion and frustration. Why did I come to Koganecho? What am I doing here? "Don’t worry about that. Maybe he wasn’t in a good mood, he is a bit moody sometimes,” Harada-san tried to encourage me with his soft voice.

Today.”

a sip of coffee
lukewarm
bitter insides

Koganecho was a place where those who did not have a “normal” family, including sex workers who have left their families back home, were able to build a pseudo-family. Waterfront is a place where you can visit only when you have a “normal” family, Koganecho was a place for people who didn’t. (Tamura, Bar Kikiya, personal communication, 29 March 2012)

In the very early morning on March 24, 2015, I was in what people called a Filipino “restaurant,” which to me was indistinguishable from a Filipina hostess pub. Later I learned that it was actually not a pub in the sense that it did not hire any hostesses, but because of the location and the demography of the customers, the restaurant inevitably became almost like a pub, without ever employing hostesses. The restaurant occupies a space that was formerly a Filipina hostess pub and directly inherited the design of the seating area and the dance hall equipped with a karaoke machine and a mirror ball. Most of its customers are the owner’s friends—Filipina women working at pubs as hostesses in the neighbourhood, who want to enjoy

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Filipino food after work in a familiar environment. Often they bring their male clients and work extra hours by singing karaoke and eat together at the restaurant, so that at least their meals are paid for (by the clients). Without surprise, it was difficult for me to tell how the restaurant was different from a Filipina pub.

In the restaurant it felt that night continued perpetually. Windows were closed off from the outside world by thick black curtains and a mirror ball was illuminating the interior with its never-ending carousel that went around the walls. I was becoming exhausted, after playing darts several times, losing all the games and being made to drink shots of tequila. This visit was made possible by Tamura-san and his customers from his bar, including Kawakami-san, who knew the owner of the restaurant well. We first convened at Kikiya, had drinks there until midnight and moved to the restaurant after Tamura-san closed the bar for the night.

At one point during our visit to the restaurant, Kawakami-san took some of us outside—his ex-“girlfriend” Lisa, a Filipina pub hostess, Kohei-san and myself—to nighttime Fukutomicho, a pleasure district inhabited by a community of Korean Japanese, yakuza members and a number of Filipina hostess pubs. He took us to a pastry shop, which operates throughout the night, catering to male customers who want to pick up pastries as souvenirs on their way to their favorite pubs. Kawakami-san brought over ten sliced cakes as treats for all the workers and us customers. “Have you lived in Yokohama for a long time?” I asked Lisa while we were walking back to the restaurant. “Yes. But when I was an entertainer, for the first few years, I was in the countryside…I have been in Japan for ten years now,” while answering my question, she cheerfully waved at other Filipina women, who came out from the building across the street. They might have just gotten off from work. “Do you like Yokohama?” “I do. I have all my friends here,” she said. I speculated that Koganecho might have been an intensified version of this, being populated by dense networks of sex workers in that tiny chon-no-ma district.
Coming back, I found Tamura-san almost collapsed on the red couch. He was completely wasted but still holding a microphone and trying to sing karaoke. “It’s very rare to see him like this,” his friend Yu-san told me. “Hey, Yu, what do you think about this lady?” Tamura-san rolled his tongue. Making a “pub” interpretation of the question, Yu-san answered, “She hits my target, right at the centre. I would chase after her if I wasn’t married.” He shook his head and stood up for another round of darts. Tamura-san slowly turned his loose face to me and asked, “Why did you come to Koganecho?” This was the second time he had thrown this question at me. I paused, and decided to abandon my reasonable answer, which I had been using to justify my research. I was wasted from glasses of beer and shots of tequila, and days of being consumed by people in Riverside. My reason was vulnerable—so vulnerable when faced with the power of Koganecho and the forces of entanglements that make up of the place. “Why does it matter? What should matter is that I’m here now.” I was guided here by some magical power, I recalled what Umino-san said to me once to explain why he started his business in Riverside. How much choice do we have really? What I knew for certain was that the removal of chon-no-ma businesses created a condition for my presence in Koganecho, and that I was there now, part and parcel of the humid and sticky social-relations that go on, making the afterlife of the neighbourhood still vibrant. “That’s a good answer, a good answer,” he finally looked satisfied.

my gaze
floats around
the ceiling
“but can i actually live here?”
water muddy
deep

Admiral Pub
Girls used to travel back and forth between here and other parts of Japan, Nagano or Kyushu, sometimes in a three-month cycle but sometimes in three days. Whenever regulation became stricter here they moved to another place. They had the information because they had friends scattered all over the country. They knew where jobs were available and all that. Well, of course some women stayed here and didn’t travel too much. (Master, Admiral Pub, personal communication, 25 March 2012)

I mostly saw the master of Admiral Pub in front of his bar when he was getting on or off his bike with a blue plastic basket attached to the back. Everyday he made multiple bike trips back and forth, juggling his jobs and getting groceries. Sometimes I saw him in other parts of the neighbourhood, particularly around Maganecho, the former red-light district in which his brother owned a gay bar. He seemed to be always in transit. I also never knew whether he recognized me outside his pub. He seemed absent-minded when I saw him outside Koganecho.

In a sense, his pub did not really have a master. Usually Admiral Pub is run by a mama, the master’s friend, during the day. Normally the master returns to the pub in the evening and takes over the counter for the nighttime operation. However, I also saw his customers taking the master’s spot behind the counter during the night while the master was absent for his side jobs. Master himself told me once that he just “lets them do whatever they want with his bar.” So even when he was in the pub behind the counter he receded into the background and let his customers run the show. He is a quiet figure in Riverside, and one of few masters who are originally from outside Yokohama, but certainly admired by people as the oldest and most experienced master in the community. All other masters of the block also often visit Admiral with their customers after they close their businesses to drink and sing karaoke. The pub is
open until early morning.

On March 14, 2012, I got off the train at Koganecho Station and walked the alley of the Riverside block. I had decided to go to Admiral Pub for the first time that day but I avoided passing Kikiya storefront so that there was no chance for Tamura-san to catch me and bother me with his challenges. Whenever I didn’t want to be seen by people in Riverside, I walked its alley or along the other side of the Ooka River. Reaching the end of the block, I turned around the corner and passed Bar Ring and Cups for Few. I stopped in front of Admiral Pub and looked at the menu to see if there was anything I could order. Lunch combos. No. I was not hungry at all. I was relieved after I saw toast on the menu and opened the door. I saw three customers in the pub: A middle-aged woman with a medical mask sitting near the entrance; a middle-aged man with a cap sitting close to her with his eyes on the horserace predictions; and a younger, completely wasted man sitting near the back. Master was absent but there was Mama behind the counter. “May I?” I asked. “Sure,” she responded. I took a seat at the very back of the counter, two seats away from the young man.

“Can I have toast and coffee?” “All right,” said mama, but then she told me that she was out of bread. “We never serve toast,” she made an apologetic face. Unexpectedly, the female customer volunteered and said, “I can go get some bread. You, why would you order toast here?” She laughed. “I’m sorry, but thank you.” I simply ordered what was on the menu but I had to learn that real rules were not written on paper in this part of the city, like other rules that governed Koganecho in the past. After she left, I introduced myself to Mama and asked when I could meet Master. I knew that Master had been doing his business for a long time in Koganecho, although Admiral itself was a more recent bar of his, which he started after the 2005 raid. I was anticipating that he would be able to tell me about Koganecho in the old days. “He works outside during the day but he usually comes back to the bar at 5 o’clock. I work here until 5:30. Come back during the nighttime. He is a great person to talk
to,” she told me. I gave her my phone number and business card. The female customer came back with bread and as soon as she saw me giving my business card to mama she said, “If you don’t have money I can get it for you.” “Oh no, that’s not it,” Mama told her.

curious gaze
pins me down
i become exotic fish in a bowl

“Show me your boobs!” The young man was completely drunk. He kept talking to me while I was talking to Mama. “Hey, it’s okay to drink sometimes, right? What do you think?” “It’s all right.” “How old are you?” “I’m thirty.” “Same here! How old do I look like?” “You just said you were thirty.” “I’m not!” Observing the exchange between the man and I, the middle-aged woman sighed and said, “I’m an alcoholic. I cannot quit it.” Admiral was indeed the most inclusive space in Riverside. I had a similar impression about other bars but I had seen or heard of occasions when local men were refused entry to other bars, because they were highly intoxicated or incapable of paying for their drinks. When Riverside businesses started to open in 2007 there some men came there assuming that chon-no-ma girls were back in town, and masters had to tell them at the door that their businesses were not a place for them. When unwelcome people come, masters usually tell them that the bar is “in private use” for the day. That is a roundabout way to refuse their entry.

And yet, my fascination with the inclusiveness of Admiral Pub did not help me not be disturbed by the comments made by the young man. I was still a naïve customer and did not know how to deal with the situation. To distract myself I asked mama what they were planning to do for the upcoming Cherry Blossom Festival. At the Festival each business extends its operation outside of its regular hours and expands to the outside area using folding tables and chairs. They also sell special items that are not
on their regular menu. She said that she was thinking of making special sushi rolls. “I actually tried making them this morning, traced from my childhood memories, you know, those ones with the pattern of a cherry blossom petal,” she sounded excited. I found my conversation with her pleasant but I didn’t stay there too long. Finishing coffee I paid the bill and thanked Mama. “Are you leaving already?” The young man talked to my back.

This part of the city attracted various people from all over the place, people who didn’t have status or places of belonging. Koganecho used to have the capacity to accept them all, although this capacity is linked to its illegality...For example, you would know that the person sitting next to you is an undocumented migrant, but you wouldn’t mention it. People’s status wasn’t important. (Tamura, Walking Tour Guide, personal communication, 31 January 2012)

On March 20, 2012, I revisited Admiral Pub. Master was absent again but a middle-aged man was sitting at the counter. He welcomed me as if he was the master. He said that he was looking after the bar during Master’s absence. “I can serve you something,” he seemed friendly and approachable. Later I learned that his nickname was Gen-chan and he was one of the regulars. I ordered shochu with soda but he couldn’t figure out where all the bottles were kept on the shelves. He finally arranged some unnamed drink for me. Soon the master returned, “Oh, were you coming today for the interview? Sorry, I made another appointment for my other job!” “That’s ok, I’ll come back again,” I answered. After Master left the bar, a pair of customers came in. One was an old man and the other was a young transgender person in a female high school uniform. She introduced herself as Sachiko to me and took over Gen-chan’s role behind the counter. She quickly checked the fridge and started serving food, as if she was a paid server. For a while the old man entertained us by showing us pictures of
himself in drag.

“What was the district like in the old days?” I asked. The old man responded, “Old days? There were only chon-no-ma here! Those were good old days. Do you know why they are called chon-no-ma?” “Tell me,” I was getting excited. Gen-chan responded, “It means that you go have fun quick [“chotto”].” Knowing that I was new to the community they made sure that I was always included in their conversation and informed of local, background knowledge. “Admiral has dozens of regulars. Sometimes the pub is packed with people all standing up. Everyone here is nice and honest,” Gen-chan said. In addition to the counter seats there is a small tatami space that accommodates a maximum of four people, if they squeeze in. Two TVs are hanging from the ceiling for those who want to sing karaoke. Admiral Pub had an atmosphere very similar to traditional low-end pubs from the 1960s or 70s, reflecting Master’s age.

Gen-chan then told me that he used to be a police officer and that the officer in the Koganecho police kiosk happened to be his ex-colleague. Sometimes the officer shows up to Admiral, gets Gen-chan’s car key and drives his car back to his place, knowing that he is intoxicated. In fact, the officer did show up that night. He opened the door, found Gen-chan and said, “Don’t drink too much!” When the old man jokingly asked whether he wanted to have a quick drink, he politely declined the offer by saying, “Thank you, but I am on duty,” and left. It seemed that the tension that I was made to believe to have existed between Riverside and the police did not exist in Admiral. People unmask their official selves there, just like how they used to in the entire district in the past. Others started to sing karaoke but Gen-chan kept talking to me. He shared with me how he came to quit his police job after his colleague and friend was killed during his shift, how he started a new interior-design business, how he had to close this business after having eight hernia operations, and how he ended up divorcing from his wife after giving all his property to her and their child. After sharing his personal stories, he paid my bill and said, “Let’s have another drink again here.” For a moment I was
hesitant to accept his treat but I knew that it was the right thing to do in Koganecho at
least as long as I performed my official Koganecho role of being a "girl," a role I had
learned to adopt by this time. We never met again and I never got to learn whether his
story was true or not.

*I never stepped in chon-no-ma. I used to walk around this area a lot and talk to
girls, so I knew about them quite well. But maybe I couldn’t step in because I
knew them too well. Many police officers were having fun in chon-no-ma,
disguising themselves in workers’ uniforms, pretending that they were doing
undercover investigation. They were the ones who had the best time here.* (Male
Customer, Admiral Pub, personal communication, 20 March 2012)

On March 25, 2012, I was in Admiral Pub for the third time. The woman was
clearly frustrated with me. I was finally hearing stories of Koganecho from Master but
the woman, who was the only other customer in the pub, interrupted our conversation
when Master was explaining how the demography of women in Koganecho shifted.
“No, that’s not right. Korean women were used at first. Japanese women used Korean
and Taiwanese women, and after they saved some money these Koreans and Taiwanese
started to use Thai and Filipina women. They always found those who were lower than
themselves,” “I see,” I nodded. “In the very beginning, this area was all burnt-out ruins.
Women who lost their husbands in the war worked here to support their children.
Koganecho was the margin of the margin, the lowest-end of the brothel district.
Japanese women worked here in order to eat and to support their families. That’s the
beginning of Koganecho. It emerged because Japan lost the war. You have to study
more before you come here.” Her voice was tense. At first I thought the woman’s
response was a nationalistic reaction against my interests in the lives of women from
outside Japan, but later I thought that her response might have been deeply grounded
in her own relationship to the place. I regretted bringing up this conversation to Master in the first place. Stories of Koganecho from the “old days” are not always things of the past to local people.

“I have many more things to learn from local people like you,” I said. “Well, I haven’t lived long enough to teach you. I didn’t exist here back then,” she eased her tone. “Everyone has a complex life,” Master added. I asked the woman how often she visited Admiral. “This is my first time,” she replied, finally with a smile. “Really?” It surprised me because the way she was in the space did not show that she was new to the place at all. “Well, it’s complicated,” Master said, implying that he knew her personally, but I didn’t ask him anything further.

“women had different reasons,
  different circumstances”

stories carried
  in-between his wrinkles

The Ooka River

glossily but softly
lights in blue, red, yellow, green, orange
diffuse on the river and interweave with each other

men of different ages and classes, locals and outsiders, yakuza and police
parade along the chon-no-ma array
dreams and desires, water remembers
now imprinted on my body

I used to live in Spain with my parents but we went back home to Yokohama
during summer vacations. Back then I had asthma and there were some nights I
couldn’t sleep because I couldn’t breathe normally. So sometimes I walked
around this neighbourhood very early in the morning. I couldn’t go too far so I
would hang out here. Because I recognized Spanish, I became aware that there
were many Spanish-speaking women in this neighbourhood. I didn’t feel that the
area was dangerous because most men hanging out here were middle-class
salarymen in their business suits. What I remember is pink...The river was always
pink. (Male Customer, Tunes Teahouse, personal communication, 7 March 2012)

When the Cherry Blossom Festival approaches in the spring, a countless number
of pink-coloured paper lanterns decorate both sides of the river. After dark, the water
reflects the pink lights all along the river together with other lights coming from
Riverside bars. The lights are beautiful, creating a dream-like atmosphere around the
river. Harada-san, master of Tunes, complained that businesses in Koganecho were
pressured to refrain from using pink lights for the reason that they evoked baishun
from the old days, while pink lanterns were always used during the festival. His
comment is certainly convincing, because the pink lanterns do seem to bring back Koganecho’s past. Master of Bar Ring described the district in the past as a “dream-like” place. “I don’t know if it actually existed anymore,” he said. It made me think that to Japanese men Koganecho might have been a festival. It was a place for those men who sought a phantasmagoric space-time after their regular work-hours. But what would it mean to work or live in such a “dream-like” place? What if the festival becomes the everyday?

"The Ooka River flows gently from Minami Ward to the north of Naka Ward, meandering through Sakuragicho and Kannai, and finally into the ocean beneath the Landmark Tower rising above the harbour... A long row of cherry blossoms embellishes the pedestrian path on the riverside. Two groups of street prostitutes stand by the river, wearing flashy coats as if they already forgot about the murder of prostitutes that happened three months ago. (Matsumoto, novel Koganecho Clash, 2003, p.12-13)

One time, Tamura-san, master of Kikiya, described the Ooka River as a muddy swamp. “This river is like a muddy swamp,” he said to me in a quiet but tense tone, as we were about to cross the Sueyoshi Bridge on the way back to Koganecho. Aside from the fact that the metaphor of the “muddy swamp” is often used in Japan to refer to the underground world of yakuza and baishun—the world from which one cannot easily pull “one’s legs” out of once in there—the description sounded like it could literally describe the Ooka River, which was said to have carried numerous wasted lives, unrewarded deaths, forgotten hopes and bottomless despairs that were thrown to it and were entangled with each other, “muddying” the water. I cast my eyes on the grey or brown-ish water. My body felt heavy throughout that walk. “Actually,” Tamura-san continued, “Koganecho is like a swamp.” Whatever words that might follow, I
knew that they were not going to be anything exciting. “This town has so many walls that block off people who try to enter it. Even if you manage to get in, by the time you realize that it was a bottomless swamp you are already bogged down. I am a little bit concerned about you.” I kept silent. “You might want to think over tonight if you really want to do this research. Even if you suddenly disappear, I won’t blame you.”

Embarrassed, I could not find the right words to resist his comments. “I can’t just abandon my research like that. I am committed to this,” I barely said. “Why?” He was serious. Why?

*Those girls are very assertive. They are strong-minded enough to come to a foreign country, leaving their families behind in the first place. So they cause lots of problems among themselves. Close friends fight with each other frequently, usually over money. You know, they come to Japan to earn so they are very strict with money. There is a girl who was killed because of that too. She was found in a suitcase in a park in Kohoku. Maybe it was seven or eight years ago, right before Koganecho was closed down. (Master, Maenam, personal communication, 29 March 2012)*

On April 20, 2012, a young “Russian” woman was murdered in an apartment located in Koganecho along the Ooka River. I was staying in Yokohama with Mia and we were around the district, but I only heard of the news the following day. On April 21, 2012, I visited Tunes Teahouse with Mia and asked Kimura-san and Harada-san if they knew anything about the murder. “It happened at an apartment along the river, just over the Sueyoshi Bridge. The police closed the entire block yesterday and did an investigation in the water to find the knife used as the weapon. I saw a bunch of roses for mourning placed on the ground in front of the apartment,” said Kimura-san. The victim’s personal background was not known but there was an unspoken and
automatic consensus in Riverside that she was a sex worker. Rumors about the incident circulated in Koganecho for some days, as if to reactivate memories of the past scene. A member of the Koganecho Area Management Center also told me that “baishun” still existed in Koganecho in a changed form. “What can be seen today in Koganecho is a business where an agency brings Korean men by deception, register new companies and make them the heads of the companies. You see these company names in this neighbourhood here and there. But what they are really doing is making them dress like women and forcing them into baishun. Sometimes I see these men standing on the street across the river.” As one of the Riverside masters put it, “No matter how hard the police try to ‘clean up’ this place that doesn’t work. Koganecho never changes.”

Sometimes I was horrified when I looked down on the murky water of the Ooka River during the day. It always returned a thick face, tainted by all sorts of things—lost lives and hopes, desires and excitements, sorrows and depressions, industrial scraps, empty and discarded containers, scraps of horse racing predictions, and other unspeakable things—which the river had been carrying throughout its history. The water was too heavy and dense for me to look into. At the same time, I also felt absorbed by it. When I sensed my desire to stay in the community I knew that it was a sign that my body was already half-soaked in the swamp. It meant that the swamp identified its memories in my desire.

*desires, fears, excitements and fatigues*

carried away by the river

*(some persistently deposited underneath)*

flowing into the ocean

to be

diluted and diffused

*underneath minato mirai 21*

*--port of the future in the 21st century*
Chapter Seven: Across the River

In the daytime, Koganecho used to be populated by Thai girls. They would get off work and close chon-no-ma at 5 o’clock in the evening, change their high-school costumes to jeans and T-shirts, and just like factory workers getting off from work, get on their bikes and go home, crossing the Sueyoshi Bridge. From about 7 o’clock in the evening, Taiwanese and Chinese girls would come out and open chon-no-ma again… The most memorable thing about Koganecho is the scene where Thai girls were biking home with friends, chatting cheerfully. (Tani, Amateur Photographer and Community Historian, personal communication, 4 March 2012)

Koganecho was never a self-sufficient district where migrant sex workers’ lives unfolded. In the 1990s when Thai women made up the majority of sex workers in Koganecho, businesses catering to Thai sex workers also flourished in Wakabacho, a district across the Ooka River. Within a small district of Wakabacho, a number of Thai restaurants, karaoke bars, food delivery services, dance clubs, grocery stores,
video stores and gambling venues developed, creating a Little Bangkok where Thai women hung out with their friends, boyfriends and regular clients. Many also lived in the area. In fact, Thai businesses in Wakabacho, although they are much smaller in number, still exist today. I started visiting them in the second half of the first phase of my fieldwork, and spent a significant amount of time there during the second phase.

If Riverside is home for a new community of middle-aged, local Japanese residents that emerged in Koganecho after the migrant communities were uprooted in 2005, the Thai community in Wakabacho is an extension of the migrant community that had existed before 2005. The Thai community is also transforming. A younger generation, including the children of older migrants and new migrants who have arrived in Japan to work more recently, is further diversifying the old community today. Riverside and Thai water trade businesses form two separate communities, although there are few people who move across them—for example, Numata-san, one of the regulars of Cups for Few, is a former Thai grocer in Wakabacho and his wife is a Thai migrant who is part of the Thai community. He is one of few people I met, who has been part of the Thai community and is also familiar with the Riverside community in Koganecho. Thai migrants would not visit Koganecho today. Formerly the most diverse and transnational place in the city is now virtually off-limits to migrants who might appear "suspicious" in the eyes of the authorities.

Crossing the Sueyoshi Bridge, moving from Koganecho to Wakabacho, I move from a space of memory to a space of immediacy. In Koganecho, people—whether they are Riverside owners or customers, members of the Koganecho Area Management Center, or authorities—are keenly aware of the "lost" community. Some people consciously and reactively try to forget or deny the past and others consciously and actively recollect the past as part of their community activism or their everyday practices of nostalgia. In some cases, people are reminded of the past due to old practices that continue to take place in the district (e.g. crackdowns, patrolling,
murders, etc.), which prompt conversations about the old days. In Wakabacho, local Japanese residents similarly reflect on how the district used to be in the past through organized walking tours and other cultural activities. However, among the Thai migrants living and working in Wakabacho and other pockets of Kangai, I was faced with a complete absence of practices of recollection. The historical rupture discursively created in 2005, which was so strongly felt in Koganecho, was not expressed among transnational migrants themselves living and working across the river. In addition to being the home of a Thai community, Wakabacho is also known as a place for tachinbo, or street sex workers. While tachinbo along the Ooka River disappeared in the series of crackdowns, some women and transgender migrants stand on the streets of Wakabacho today, soliciting men from the early evening. After the displacement in Koganecho, the lives of Thai migrants quietly moved on. In a sense, the life of Koganecho did not really become a “thing of the past” outside of the district. Instead, people simply continued their lives as if nothing had really changed after the raid.

**Tachinbo Street**

In *The Stairway to the Distant Past*, the second episode of the series *Private Detective Hama Maiku* (Hayashi 1994), which is set in Koganecho and was filmed in Wakabacho and other parts of Yokohama, there is a nighttime scene that captures the riverside of the Ooka River. The sequence starts from a panoramic night view of Yokohama, which is far less spectacular than quiet and dark, being lit by a modest amount of sparse lights; the camera moves from the Landmark Tower down to the inner-city spreading out below. In the next scene we see Hama Maiku, an independent detective, from behind, searching for Yokohama Mary to obtain information about the whereabouts of the underground ruler of the river, his own father, against a mysterious sound effect in the background. He walks
along the Ooka River under cherry trees in bloom. Tachinbo girls stand along the railing and their faces are barely visible in the darkness. Some girls are chatting in a foreign language amongst themselves, one smokes a cigarette, and some whisper to Maiku: “[My service is] cheap,” “Hey, Maiku.” Some girls notice Maiku’s unusual seriousness: “Hey, it’s dangerous [out here],” “Are you gonna be alright?” He walks pass the girls without glancing at them, and finally finds Yokohama Mary in a white dress under the streetlights. Cherry blossoms are lit in blue, creating a mysterious atmosphere on the water.

march 8, 2012—tachinbo girls
float around in rememory of
koganecho riverside

“in wakabacho
tachinbo girls stand at each corner of
an apartment
it’s like a world map if you look at them
from above
south americans, koreans and maybe thai”

“a transgender tachinbo
in a red coat and high heels
quietly approached me,
‘do you wanna have fun with me?
fellatio, 5000 yen’
i declined and walked pass him to the river
and i saw
people partying and drinking under
the cherry trees
in bloom”

april 9, 2012—coming out from the pub
past midnight
i quickly walk
with intoxicated steps
and pass
women standing
on wakabacho’s main street

december 19, 2012—our eyes never meet
in our encounter with each other
i am not invited
to the space of
waiting

december 26, 2012—a tachinbo girl with
her small shoulder bag
speaks into her cell phone
—an everyday
scene of wakabacho

january 7, 2013—i walk
along the river
a man
stops a car
opens the window and yells out
“do you wanna take a ride?”
i turn around and
realize that he was talking to me

I didn’t like walking in Wakabacho back then. There were gamblers, yakuza cars, transgender women standing on the street... I saw Yokohama Mary too. She was wearing a Lolita dress, one that some men crave, but when I looked her face she was a grandma. There was Columbia macho men wearing tight dresses too. All sorts of people were there. So I wouldn’t have walked there at night. (Meaw, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 21 November 2012)

Massage Parlor

her knees sink into my thighs and butt
my body unraveled by her body
by her joints
firmly with all her weight
her hands and feet move
from my feet to shoulders
now back to feet
up and down
in an assuring pace
her arms tackle mine and
pull my upper body from behind
leaning well back i hear
my breath for the first time
the air breaks down
“you are young and flexible,” she laughs

“you are young and flexible“
On November 29, 2012, I was in a Thai massage parlor in Wakabacho. It was during the day when I visited the business, but after the thirty minutes of service I was almost confused that it was nighttime, maybe because it was dark inside the building. I was not sure what made me so relaxed—a large framed image of Buddha, white lace curtains, the dim lightening, or the woman’s quiet and calm presence—but there was surely a peaceful and even sacred feel in the space. After the massage was over, the woman asked if I wanted to have hot tea. “Oh, sure, please,” I answered and started putting my clothes on. When I stepped out from the partition I saw another worker with short hair, sitting in front of the mirror, putting makeup on. Tea was ready on the table. I sat down on the sofa and looked at a small teacup with a tea bag inside, being placed on a large wooden tray with elaborate gold-coloured decoration. A little flower was sitting right next to the teacup. Over the table, a large TV screen played a DVD of a Thai drama.

A number of DVDs were piled up in front of the TV and they caught my attention. They reminded me of a skinny and tall Thai woman, a close friend of the mama of this massage parlor, delivering DVDs to the store when I was hearing Mama’s story here. I first met her at Mama’s small diner/grocery store, Diner, which is located just around the corner, and it was this woman who introduced this massage parlor to me. The massage parlor was Mama’s second business in Wakabacho following Diner. Mama also has her third business, little karaoke bar Kee Mao, which just opened on the first day of the month. This was impressive, because many other Thai businesses were closing down due to the decreased Thai population in the neighbourhood. When the woman told me about the massage parlor, I was having *tom kha kai*, which became the only dish I ordered whenever I went to Diner. She said to me, “Mama is very kind. Food here is cheap and good.” Having ordered tom kha kai a number of times, I knew that the price actually fluctuated for a reason I never figured out. I never saw this woman again when I returned to Yokohama for the second phase of my fieldwork.
“mama is kind
mama is smart”
the woman says
in her showy clothes
--smoke screens out her
face

The masseuse was having her hair neatly piled up. “Have you been living in Yokohama for a long time?” “Uh-huh,” she nodded without changing her calm face. “How long?” “About ten years.” She walked toward me and sat down on the tatami mat across the walkway. “There must have been more Thai in Wakabacho ten years ago.” “Yes, there were many.” Her answers were brief. “Do you go back to Thailand often?” She nodded, “Like once a year?” She nodded again. “Do you miss home?” “No, I don’t.” Her face affirmed her answer. I was unsettled by the conversation, which I initiated, and felt bad for doing so. Am I interrogating her? Finishing the tea, I said thank you and put my coat on. The woman smiled and said, “It’s 5,000 yen for seventy minutes,” pointing at a menu posted on the wall for my future reference. “That’s right. It is a good deal.” “I can give you 1,000 yen discount. I’ll do it at 4,000 yen.”

Girls in Koganecho all had their nicknames. They still do. Mama’s Japanese name is Yoko. She uses her Japanese name when she introduces herself to Japanese people. She hardly uses her Thai name. Well, she does but only between Thai. She got the name when she was working part time at a pub in Fukutomicho. It is her genji-name [“professional” or sex work name]. Thai people regularly use nicknames so they are comfortable having their genji-names too. (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication 27 November 2012)

The massage parlor was even darker on January 11, 2013. Thin lace curtains
completely screened out the view from the other side. “Cham-san?” I asked. She stuck out her head from a partition and said, “Come on in,” but I could not see her face. Another woman told me that she was working on another customer, and brought me a menu. “Thirty minutes,” I said and gave her 10,000 yen. The woman brought me back seven 1,000 bills.

A man finally came out from the partition and walked to the backside of the floor and started taking a shower. I did not know that there was a shower room at the back. When he finished he came back to the same tatami spot. Cham-san guided me to the section right next to his. Our eyes met. He seemed surprised to see a female customer here. I felt uncomfortable from his gaze. Once I was inside the curtains, Cham-san brought me a T-shirt and a pair of pants. This time I knew that I was supposed to take off everything. While changing clothes, I kept checking if I was actually invisible to the other side through the curtains. In the meantime, the male customer finished changing. “Thank you. I will come back again.” He left.

After I changed my clothes, Cham-san instructed me to put my feet in a little bucket. I sat on the edge of tatami and put my feet in the warm water. She washed my feet with soap one by one and briefly massaged on them. “Your feet are small, like kids,” Cham-san laughed. The other woman was cleaning up the tatami spot in which the male customer just had her service. “How many minutes was it with that customer?” I asked Cham-san. “100 minutes,” she said. “Yes, 100 minutes,” the other woman repeated. “Wow, that's a long time,” I followed. During the massage, Cham-san kept talking to the other woman. I did not understand what they were saying but focused on the feel of Cham-san’s hands and body pressed on my own.

After the massage was over I asked the woman, “Your name is Cham-san, is that correct?” “I’m Cham,” she answered. “I learned your name at Khai Restaurant.” “Oh, at Khai?” She served me the same green tea. “Do you speak Thai?” she asked me. “No, I can’t.” I felt bad. I asked her what the name of the business meant. She pointed at a
poster on the wall and said, “It’s her. She is the wife of an old king.” “So it’s her name?” “Her name is very long.” “So it’s her nickname?” “It’s her nickname.”

On January 23, 2013, I opened the door of the store and found her on the tatami near the entrance. She was lying down but quickly sat up once she saw me. “Jim-san,” I called her by her real nickname this time, embarrassed. She did not respond to it but simply asked me, “Seventy minutes?”

**Khai Restaurant**

_The streets of Koganecho in the daytime were much quieter. I liked to see the daytime scene of Koganecho when girls were going about their mundane lives._

_When not many passersby were around they would come out from their chon-no-ma and chitchat on the street. One time I came out early on Sunday morning assuming most chon-no-ma would be closed but they were already open. I saw Thai girls leaning on the counter and taking a nap._ (Tani, Amateur Photographer and Community Historian, personal communication, 4 March 2012)

Khai Restaurant is like a hidden attic. It is located near JR (Japan Railway) Kannai Station, almost at the border that divides Naka Ward into Kannai, the government district on the waterfront, and Isezakicho, an old commercial district. To find Khai Restaurant I have to divert from the street of Iseamicho into an alleyway where only a modest volume of traffic can be found. When the restaurant is open I see Khai’s electronic sign at the bottom of the long, narrow and dark stairway, the most “welcoming” entrance to the business in Yokohama. To reach the restaurant on the third level, I have to pass a glass door on the second level. This is the entrance to a pub but I have never seen it open and it always looked to me like a ghost house. Once I
enter Khai, especially during lunchtime, however, I usually find myself surrounded by life forces—the busy sound of cooking with pans, the sound leaking from TV speakers, Master’s loud talk, customers’ chitchat, cats, and lots of plants in the restaurant. When business is slow, Khai is quiet and peaceful, receiving lots of sunlight from the windows facing south.

Master intentionally opened his restaurant at the current location near a major train station and away from Wakabacho, expecting Japanese customers. Khai has a number of Japanese regular customers and many of them visit Khai, because they like Mama’s food and Master’s talk. However, Khai also has another role of being a community space for Thai women during and after its business hours. It becomes a safe space where women bring their problems and concerns—troubles with immigration, flight ticket arrangements, international money transfer issues, etc.—and consult Mama in their own language or ask her daughter Meaw-san for help in paper work in Japanese. Mama’s friends also sometimes get together at Khai to party overnight, which I was not able to witness because I was usually elsewhere during the nighttime, mostly at home with Mia and otherwise places that were open only at night. Khai was also partly the family’s home. They often stay overnight there when they decide not to walk back to their home in Maganecho.

I initially started visiting Khai mainly to hear stories from its master about Koganecho in the old days. But as soon as he realized that I “liked” to listen to his stories, he started to talk about other things that occupied his mind in the moment. Gradually, Master started to enjoy having me as his personal listener or even student. As I continued returning to the restaurant, I also became interested in the social space of the restaurant itself. There was something about the restaurant and Khai’s family’s life that resonated with how people had described to me the everyday life of Thai migrant sex workers in Koganecho back in the old days. This was not surprising because many of Mama’s friends were “Koganecho graduates,” to use Master’s term.
When I visited Khai on December 14, 2012, Master was sitting in his “executive” chair and watching TV as usual. At the table near the entrance there were Mama and a woman, who looked strangely familiar, chatting over tea. I looked around to find Meaw-san, who was sitting at her usual spot at the back by a window. “Do you want to have lunch?” Mama asked me with a smile. “No, thank you. I’m full today,” I answered. It was already 3 o’clock. “I’ll make you some coffee,” Meaw-san stood up. That day I was not visiting Khai to eat Mama’s food or hear Master’s story, but to meet Meaw-san, who was taking distance education courses at a university in Tokyo and wanted me to tutor her in writing papers.

Before I moved to the rear of the restaurant, I greeted master. Master said that he was going to be hospitalized next week. He got involved in a car accident on December 5 when he was biking in the neighbourhood. He was hit by a little truck and broke his clavicle. He also injured his semicircular canal, which caused dizziness and a difficulty walking. “I’ll be bored so you can come talk to me,” Master said. “Sure, I’ll probably come visit you on Wednesday or Thursday.” Because of the accident he had to temporarily close his second business, Curry Khai, which he just opened a month ago using the ground floor of the family’s house in Maganecho, just off the Yokohamabashi Arcade. The curry business was his latest project. When I visited it for the first time in November, he shared with me a number of his other project ideas—building an oceanfront cottage in Atami, building affordable apartments for students in Yokosuka, inventing Japanese tuk tuk—for hours in excitement, and it was disappointing and depressing that the accident happened at this time, because I knew that most of the projects were impossible to carry out if he was not physically competent.

Meaw-san brought me a cup of coffee and started talking about her paper, which she was working on for her economics course. I started editing her paper but at the same time I was trying to figure out where I saw the woman, who was chatting with Mama across the room. “Hey, does she work at a massage parlor in Wakabacho?” I
asked Meaw-san. I was right. “I went there and she was my masseuse!” Meaw-san translated it into Thai for the woman. “Yes, I remember you,” she smiled from a distance. Mama followed, “This is my friend, so please go back there again…I actually want to open a massage parlor myself.”

I started to meet Meaw-san at Khai regularly to hear about her university studies and also to listen to her other stories. Initially I asked her whether she remembered anything about Koganecho and Wakabacho from earlier days, but she started to tell me about her experience of migration and her prospects for the future, which eventually became our regular topic of conversation. On November 28, 2012, we were sitting at the usual table at the back, right in front of the window. The table was filled with Meaw-san’s laptop computer, papers and books. It was 3 o’clock in the afternoon. Master was working on something with his computer but left the restaurant shortly. Mama was absent. “I didn’t want to come to Japan,” she said. She was born and grew up in Thailand, and joined Mama, who already had permanent resident status in Japan after working as undocumented status for a while at a pub in Fukutomicho and eventually marrying Master. “I was a good student in Thailand. I wanted to go to university there. I had a clear goal in mind so I thought I would come back home soon. But once I was in Japan I thought, if I stay in Japan for little longer I might be able to work as a tour guide for Japanese tourists when I return. So, here you go.” Meaw-san was one year younger than myself. When she came to Japan she was in a junior high school. She gave up on taking entrance exams for universities when she was graduating from a local high school, because she had to help at the restaurant. Although she started taking courses in a distant education program at Keio University in Tokyo a few years ago, she hardly found time to study. Her progress was slow. She was currently the only person who was able to help Mama with the restaurant. Her brother whom I used to see at Khai in early 2012 was gone for some reason. At 4:40 PM, I had to leave to go pick up Mia from daycare. When I was about to leave Khai, Master came in. “I’ll turn the
light on for you,” he said. A dim light guided me out.

Some Thai girls in Koganecho drugged their customers to get quick cash. I know one of those girls. She was very cheerful and fun, and was one of mama’s co-workers at a pub. Later she married a Japanese man. She also had a long-term relationship with another man but she broke up with him. She had a very bad drinking-habit. Sometimes she used up all her money for drinking and couldn’t even pay for a cab home. But then she would take a cab to a police kiosk, borrow some money there and go home! She came here to borrow money too. But she caused troubles to other customers so Mama stopped letting her in. She came to Japan to make some money but she wasn’t the type of person who could think of baishun just as work like some other girls. She used to depend on drugs herself.

(Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 7 January 2013)

It was past 11:30 AM on January 7, 2013, when I arrived in front of the Khai building. Meaw-san was setting up the business sign and was about to disappear in the stairway. “Meaw-san!” I stopped her. “Hi, teacher. Mama’s friends stayed until really late last evening and I wasn’t able to go to bed until morning. I just came but Master is already upstairs,” she said. When I stepped into the stairway, Mr. Hayakawa came down in haste from upstairs. “Happy New Year!” “Happy New Year. Sorry I have to leave,” he was carrying his worn-out bag and wearing a worn-out suit. His hair was messy as usual and glasses tilted. In addition, he had a band-aid on his cheek, which made his look even more comical. “He was involved in a scam at Kee Mao. They put some drug in his beer and beat him up, took his wallet and everything,” Meaw-san whispered into my ears. “What? At Kee Mao?” The news was shocking.
As I entered Khai, I found Master in his usual spot. “How are you doing?” I was worried about his condition, as it did not seem like it was improving as anticipated by the doctor at the hospital. “I don’t have dizziness anymore. Mama slapped my face twice and I felt better. Shock therapy, you know.” His white beard had grown since he shaved it when he was in the hospital. He sunk in his chair as if he was attached to it and his big belly was sticking out like a little hill. I knew that he had not been walking much since the accident.

I was the first customer of the day. I took my regular seat near Master’s chair and walked to the buffet to put curries and salad on my plate. I had this 800-yen lunch once or twice every week but I never got sick of it. As usual, Meaw-san brought me a cup of soup and dessert. “So what happened to Mr. Hayakawa?” I asked Master. I was not too familiar with him but I had seen him a few times at this restaurant and at Curry Khai in the past. He was one of Khai’s regulars and just quit his salaryman job to join Master’s curry business, which was unfortunately not operating then due to Master’s injury. *What is Mr. Hayakawa going to do now, being job-less?* “Such an idiot. He was just excited that a new Thai business opened in Wakabacho and went there without thinking.” Yes, I know Kee Mao, it’s Diner Mama’s new karaoke bar. I went there in November after getting a free beer coupon at Diner. But I didn’t go back there after my first visit. Something about the place kept me away from it—a black car with tinted windows, two men chatting at the corner table... “A group of three men came in to the bar and they beat him up. He was already unconscious from some drug mixed into his beer. When he woke up he was lying on the street.” Master shook his head and said, “He was too proud of himself, because he can speak Thai, and he got suckered! Stupid man.”

*Mama is good at gambling. Most people give up on it when they keep losing but she never does. If she stops playing she loses, but if she continues she might get a lucky break and get all the money back; that’s her logic. Around the time when*
Meaw and her brother came to Japan in the late 90s, Mama was into baccarat and one time she did not come home for a week. Son told me that she was staying at a gambling place so I stomped in there, kicked her from the back and yelled at her. “What a hell are you doing here?” She said she lost 400,000 yen and couldn’t go home. I gave up and left. But you know what? She came back home two days later with two million yen! (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 20 December 2012)

From where I sat I was always able to see Mama working in the little kitchen during busy times. Master claimed that he was better at cooking than mama, but I was not sure if that was true. When she was not in the kitchen, she was either chatting with her Thai friends at the table near the entrance or lying down on a long chair to rest. Especially after Master got in an accident, Mama looked exhausted all the time and it was not rare to see her resting in the long chair. If Mama falls what would happen to this restaurant? To her friends? To Master? I wondered about this a number of times.

On January 18, 2013, Meaw-san sat in front of me and was having the same buffet lunch she probably had everyday. “This soup is good,” “This curry is good,” she truly looked like she was enjoying the food. “I should be on a diet but I ate a lot yesterday and today. I just had three plates now. I envy you, you are skinny,” she said. “Well, Mama’s food is good so you can’t resist, can you. I sometimes lose my appetite when I am stressed out. It’s not very healthy,” I replied and asked whether Mama had already had lunch. “She was the first one who had lunch,” Master answered. Of course. Then he went on to talk to me about his idea about his Yokosuka apartment project, which I was very familiar with by then. He showed me blueprints of the buildings on his computer screen, assuring that his project was underway. At around 2:30 PM, Mama came out from the kitchen and sat right next to me. She put her moneybox in front of
her and sighed, “Fifteen customers. We will go into bankruptcy.” Their business was not doing well. They had regulars but weren’t getting new customers. There was very little pedestrian traffic on the street and the restaurant was hardly visible from the ground. Master explained that Khai used to be located on the main side of the street and on the ground floor, but they moved to the current location to save rent.

To change the mood, I told mama that I went back to Jim-san’s massage parlor for the third time. “I actually like doing massage myself,” Mama said. “Oh, yeah, you said that you wanted to open a massage parlor,” I remembered her commenting on this during my previous visit. “Right. I have been thinking about this since last year…I want to do it in Yokosuka. They have the American base, so we can expect customers from there…Teacher, do you want to do it together?” Mama turned to me. No no, I can’t do that, I said to myself but couldn’t give Mama a decent excuse right away. “Oh, no, stop it,” Master raised his voice. “Isn’t there anyone else who wants to do it with you?” I asked. “Yes there are, but I don’t want them. I cannot trust Thai. Ask Meaw-chan why,” Mama said. “When Thai people get together they always start fighting with each other,” Meaw-san followed up. “Why don’t you let Mama do it, Master,” I turned to Master. “I used up all the money. I opened the curry business but we have no income,” “Well, that’s because the place is closed.” I regretted the words that had just come from my mouth but it was too late. “Exactly!” Master replied. “But I am sick of this restaurant. I’ve been thinking about a massage business for a long time,” Mama complained.

_Thai girls sometimes went to Khai with their customers or boyfriends when they didn’t want to be caught by people in the Wakabacho community. Maenam, for example, is too loud, you know. So when they wanted to have a quieter time they’d rather go to Khai instead._ (Numata, Former Thai Grocer in Wakabacho, personal communication, 9 March 2012)
On February 13, 2013, I took Meaw-san outside Khai for lunch. It was Wednesday and Khai was closed for lunch. “Today, I wanted to talk to you without being interrupted by Master,” I half-jokingly said to Meaw-san. “You know what. Master feels bad for you. He thinks you can’t focus on listening to his story, because I interrupt him all the time!” We laughed. We had a few more escape lunch dates after this to have a quiet conversation just between us. I mainly asked her about other Thai-owned businesses in Yokohama, how they were connected with each other, and so on, but she also shared with me her concerns about her family. In turn I talked about my family issues, which she was interested in hearing, the challenges of ending my previous relationship and starting a new one in a transnational context. Through our conversation Meaw-san understood the reasons why I sometimes did not have an appetite. By this time, she had started calling me “Ayako-san” instead of “teacher.”

Meaw-san decided to take me to a Thai restaurant called Papaya Thai in Maganecho right by the Yokohamabashi Arcade. It was not the first time for me to go there but from this visit I learned that Papaya Thai’s mama and Khai’s mama were close friends. I also knew that a girl working at Papaya worked at Khai for a short period of time. Khai Master secretly told me this and added that Mama fired her for some reason. “What did she do?” I asked. “She didn’t do anything in particular... Well, Mama is gonna kill me. Just the fact that I am talking about it right now is gonna upset her,” “Oh that is bad.” What if Mama had fired Master instead of the girl?

As we entered the restaurant, a woman stood up and greeted us. Meaw-san introduced her to me, and I realized that she was Mama. Meaw-san reported her that Master was involved in a car accident. Mama looked surprised to hear the news. We took a table and ordered what Meaw-san recommended. Looking around, I realized that there was no Buddhist shrine in the restaurant. “Khai doesn’t have one, either, correct?” I asked Meaw-san. “No. Neither Mama nor Master is interested. I would have a little shrine if I had my own house,” she said. Instead of a shrine, the restaurant had a large
sheet of fabric with an elephant embroidered on it, up on the wall.

“So how are things?” I started our conversation. “Busy busy busy,” her answer was always the same. “I actually want to complete the distant education program as soon as possible and start working in Thailand.” In December, she said to me that she would stay in Japan, because Mama was determined to spend the rest of her life in Japan, but maybe she was ambivalent. “I am telling Mama that we should live in Thailand so that we can visit beaches and enjoy having nice food and drinks there on weekends,” she said. “Does she want to go back to Thailand?” I asked. “She says she can’t, because she abandoned everything when she came to Japan and she has nothing left to return to.” “Master is an impossible man. He always yells at Mama, even when she is sick…But he is a kind person too. I don’t think Mama would divorce him. He was the first person who helped her when she came to Japan.” “Yes, he is a kind person,” I nodded.

A week later on February 20, 2013, we had lunch at Papaya Thai again. Master was back in his hometown in Kyushu and Meaw-san was supposed to be enjoying a short period of freedom from Master’s “dictatorship.” But now she was complaining about Mama. “Master is gone and Mama has been selfish,” she said. Apparently they had a quarrel this morning, because “Mama was being lazy, not doing much of housework.” But she knew that Mama had excuses. “Mama has a lot of issues at hand. She is worried about her son and she is troubled by her friend who wants to start a business with her.” Then she started complaining about Master again, that he was not gentle with Mama. “I will work hard so that Mama can come to me when something happens,” she continued, “I told her that I go to university for her. I didn’t say such things before but I do now because it makes her happy.” The TV screen was playing a video of traditional Thai music and there were a few other customers around. “Ayako-san,” Meaw-san stopped her chopsticks and looked up at my face. “You’ll be all right back in Canada. I know life is tough for you now, but you have your precious daughter.
You’ll get through this.”

**Maenam Restaurant**

Wakabacho used to flourish. Girls would reserve an entire restaurant at 200,000 yen for some hours. They are crazy, because they have lots of money to spend for pleasure, you know, those who have finished clearing off their debts... Sometimes their boss would say, “Throw a birthday party for her.” Then they'd have a blast. Thai girls are cheerful, they scream and sing no matter how late it is. They have fun until morning. The restaurant master must have had a hard time, because he's had to deal with a police officer coming to tell them to shut up. (Numata, Former Thai Grocer in Wakabacho, personal communication, 9 March 2012)

I always felt that Maenam Restaurant stood in stark contrast with Khai Restaurant. While Khai is targeted at Japanese customers and have Thai migrant women outside of its business hours for informal social time, Maenam started as a Thai restaurant targeted at Thai women in Koganecho. Even today, young Thai sex workers from other cities, such as Kawasaki, come to Maenam to socialize after work, and Thai pub girls in Kangai bring their customers here for extra work after pub hours. Master, Mama and servers often join customers to talk, drink and sing with them. Khai is open during lunchtime and usually closes before midnight, but Maenam is clearly a nightlife scene; it is open from 5 PM to early morning. In fact, it would be more accurate to call Maenam a karaoke bar rather than a restaurant. The only thing in common between the two venues is that they are both located on low-traffic streets and attract fewer customers compared to some years ago.

Since Maenam’s master always only showed up to the restaurant at 10 PM and I wanted to talk to him to hear what he remembered about Koganecho in the past, I
visited the restaurant on only a few occasions when I was staying in Yokohama with Mia or Mia was under her dad’s care and I was able to stay in Yokohama overnight by myself. As I visited Khai during or after lunch hours and Maenam in the late evening, my spatial movements from Khai to Maenam were also temporal, from day to night. This also felt like a movement from “aboveground” to the “underground,” which were governed by different sets of rules and orders. The two places had very different ways of attracting their customers. Khai’s master makes no effort to please his customers but he also makes the restaurant’s rules crystal clear: if they do not want to listen to Master talk and quarrel with Mama they cannot stay in the restaurant. In contrast, at Maenam staffs perform their “professional” roles. Master would greet each customer, give compliments and let them occupy the space in the ways they wanted. Because Master would not explicitly force his own policies and rules in regulating the space, the ways in which performative encounters and interactions take place are left up to the customers. Maenam is also more spacious than most other Thai restaurants in Kangai and there is almost no wall or partition that divides the space. Dynamic interactions would happen between tables, groups may merge into one, and servers would talk from a distance from one end to the other. Maenam is also a much more sexualized space than Khai where customers and workers always perform their roles based their heterosexual identities. Whenever I came to Maenam, I transformed from Meaw-san’s “teacher” or Khai’s master’s “student” to a “girl” or “potential girlfriend” of Maenam’s master or a young server, the only positions I was able to exist and be recognized in.

When I was little, my mom used to take me to Thai restaurants frequently, because she wanted me to be familiar with Thai food as a Thai person. But I didn’t like anything Thai, so I don’t remember anybody there. It was nighttime too and I just wanted to go to bed. But she would take me to those places at around 10 PM and we would come back home at one or two in the morning. This happened when she
had few clients and got off work earlier. (Shin, Pub Mary, personal communication, 11 December 2012)

On April 25, 2012, I visited Maenam with Mia. It was already 10 PM and I felt guilty about taking Mia outside when she was supposed to be fast asleep in bed. But in fact, it was not the worst place to bring Mia in the middle of night. I recalled a comment made by Meanam’s master the other day. He told me that his Thai customers, many of who were single mothers, would bring their small kids here late at night. Looking around I saw a group of four Thai women, a Japanese and Thai couple, and an old Japanese man sitting by himself by the kitchen. The women started karaoke. All four of them were singing a Thai ballad together, and Mia was quietly watching the karaoke screen. I did not understand the words but it made me sentimental. Inside the bar was very dark with lighting from pot lights, a mirror ball and two TV screens. “Happy Birthday” and “Happy New Year” banners were permanently left on the wall so that customers could celebrate friends’ birthdays or a new year any time. I noticed a Japanese male customer standing up and getting ready to leave. “Are you already leaving?” A Thai woman, his companion, asked. The man whispered something into her ear and they smiled to each other. They looked intimate. The karaoke song was over and the group of women started chatting.

a woman puts on lipstick
looking into a little
mirror
getting ready for
a long night

On December 19, 2012, I visited Maenam at 9:30 PM. In addition to Mama and a female worker, Master was already there. “You showed up early today,” I said to him. “I had to, for the Christmas decorating,” he answered. I took my regular table, which
allowed me to see the entire floor, the kitchen and entrance. I looked up and saw
colourful party decorations in red, green and gold spread across the ceiling. An imitation
Christmas tree and a large stuffed polar bear were sitting on the karaoke stage. Behind
me there were two male servers—one was young and the other looked young,
although, I learned later, he was much older than I had thought. Master told me that he
was an old friend of Mama and they grew up together in the same village; “He was
stuck in the village doing nothing productive so we decided to take care of him here.”
Those two faces had already been familiar to me by then. They were occupying an
entire table and making a list of Christmas gifts. “Good evening, sister,” the younger
server, Ton, greeted me. As I learned from Master, Ton’s father had also been working
at a Thai restaurant in Japan before Ton came to Yokohama to work at Maenam.
Maenam’s mama and Ton’s father had known each other and Mama offered Ton a job.
“Good evening!” I answered. “Are you coming to our Christmas party?” “When is it?”
“From tomorrow to the end of the year,” Master broke in. I tried to think if there was
any day I might be able to come out, but my answer was negative.

“Hey, did you see Shin?” Master asked me about the son of Pub Mary’s mama in
Fukutomicho. “Yes, I did, at round 6 PM today. We met outside the pub,” “Whoa, you
cheated on me! You just had a date with him!” As usual, he was performing my “boy
friend” role. “Nah, I was conducting an interview with him. We just met at a coffee
shop,” “Cheater. I will put lots of salt in your pad thai,” he said and jokingly gave his
instructions to Mama in the kitchen in Thai.

A group of three Japanese men came into the restaurant and sat on the sofa in
the centre of the floor. One of them in an orange sweatshirt was obviously drunk. Soon
a Thai woman entered the restaurant, saying that she just came from Kee Mao. She
took a seat on the sofa next to the group. “Do I know you?” The orange sweatshirt
asked the woman. “I think you’re looking for someone else,” she answered but he was
persistent. “You are living in Tsurumi, aren’t you?” he asked. “Yes, I am,” she answered.
“I knew it! I’ve known this person for twenty years,” he cheerfully said to the other two men. *For twenty years? Really? Did she really not recognize him, or did she pretend not to know him?* I tried to imagine what was going on in her mind, while I was also doing my best not to attract his attention. But now I was sensing his gaze. He started to talk to me in Thai and I could no longer ignore him. “I am actually Japanese,” I told him. “Oh, I see, I’m sorry. You know what, I’ve known this person for twenty years,” “Oh,” “Don’t sit there alone like that. Join us here and let’s drink together,” he invited me over. “Thanks, but I’m waiting for Master,” I answered. I was frustrated that I did not know how to maneuver myself better in this space. *What if I joined them?*

Finally, Master came to my table and sat in front of me with a can of coffee in his hand. I was going to ask him additional questions about Koganecho and Wakabacho in the old days. I was relieved that I could finally perform my researcher role at least for a short period of time under Master’s “protection.” I was still desperate for more stories. Another group of customers were singing karaoke loudly. A female server joined the table by the sofa and started drinking with the group. The space was becoming more vibrant and I wondered how the restaurant felt in the past when it was filled with more Thai women. “It’s fun in here when there are lots of customers around. I would like to come here when it’s busier,” I told Master. “Then you have to come during the Christmas party. It goes crazy when it’s busy!” He then explained to me why there were so many balloons above the karaoke stage. Each balloon contained a slip of paper with a number, which was associated with an item, a Christmas gift. The balloon is purchasable at 1,000 yen each. “Hey,” he quickly changed the topic, “why don’t you go on a date with me?” I became a girl, again.

In the end I missed the year end craziness at Maenam. On January 11, 2013, I visited the restaurant for the first time in the new year. After I ordered pad thai, the female server said to me, “You are always by yourself.” “That’s right. I am,” I laughed. Maybe I was the only customer who came to this restaurant alone and did not have
servers accompany her meal. Master came in past 10 PM and told me that he was extremely busy during the Christmas period. He disappeared into the kitchen to work but came out to the floor frequently to talk to me. "Hey, that young man is saying that he was born into the world a little too late," he pointed his finger at Ton, one of the male servers of the restaurant. "Master!" Ton was sitting with a Japanese man on the other side of the floor, but noticing that master was talking about him he tried to interrupt. "He is only twenty years old. He is just a baby," I joined in Master's teasing. Master flashed a grin at him and went back to the kitchen. Soon he came back to me and said, "You are always by yourself so that guy is worried that you might be feeling lonely. So I asked him, 'Can you buy her dinner then?' He said 'You can take it out of my salary'," Master laughed. "Master, stop!" Ton waved his hand from the other side. "Hey, I guess you are teasing him too much," I said to master.

"you are lonely
he is lonely
everyone is in one-sided love"

he pulls one shoulder
down

When I was about to leave the restaurant, Ton and Master stood by the entrance to see me off. "Next time, please appoint me for service," Ton vowed to me. "Don't worry, I will get the appointment fee from his salary," Master laughed. They started performing paper, rock, scissors to decide which one of them would escort me to the hotel I was staying. I was laughing at their skit and gave a side-glance at the kitchen to find Mama. Khai's master knew her from chon-no ma in Koganecho in the old days and he often told me about her. She must have been about fifty years old now and her child back in Thailand would be around my age. "She asked me to marry her once," Master proudly told me. This did not happen. Mama ended up marrying Maenam's master and eventually they got divorced, while they continued to run their business
together. "So don’t worry, I’m single," Maenam’s master told me earlier when he was asking me out on a date. “All right, I’m leaving,” I opened the door to the stairs. The two men waved at me and saw me off until I reached the ground floor and disappeared into the street.

*Thai girls lie all the time, but they do it not to trick people but to protect themselves. Even experienced Japanese police officers have told me that they have no idea how to investigate them because they couldn’t tell if those girls were telling the truth or not. No wonder. They tell lies for survival and to do justice to themselves. They wouldn’t feel guilty about it, so officers have no clue.* (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 16 March 2012)

Ton was absent on January 23, 2013. Seeing me come into the bar, Mama and the female server got up from the rear seats. There was no other customer in the bar so they must have been resting. Mama quickly moved to the kitchen but the other woman came to me and told me that Ton had a fever and was taking a few days off. After I ordered fried rice, I watched the TV screen for a while. As usual, the other male server, Mama’s old friend, brought me the dish but to my surprise the woman came to me to talk while I was eating. As she was always occupied with male regulars, it was the first time for us to talk and I was glad that business was slow. "It’s cold out there," she said. "Yes, it is. Sounds like it’s gonna snow tomorrow." When I told her that I just went to a massage parlor, she explained that there were soft masseuses and strong ones. I had only visited Diner’s Mama’s store and had no other places to compare it to. Jim-san’s massage was probably “soft” but I liked it. “Only strong ones work on my body. I often go to those places when I have stiff shoulders,” she said. Working here must be physically demanding. I symphonized with her and said, “Your sense of time must be reversed. You have to sleep during the day, right?” “Yes, I sleep during the day. I come out here at as early as 3 PM to clean up… But I can still secure eight hours of
sleep, especially when business is slow. We can close the restaurant at 4:30 AM and leave.” She said that she had been working at Maenam for nine years.

For some reason I started to talk about Mia. The woman was surprised that I had a child, because I “looked younger,” but it might have been another Maenam compliment. “Do you have a child too?” I asked her. “Yes, I do. She is thirteen years old and she is in Thailand. I have to go see her.” She told me that she went back to Thailand twice last year and three times in some other years. “I will bring her to Japan during her next school break,” she said. When I told her that Mia was a tomboy, she said that it was a good thing and complained that her daughter was an introvert. “She doesn’t do things like put on makeup and go out. She likes to read comic books and play games at home. She likes Japanese comic books.”

While we were chatting, it passed 10 PM and Master showed up at the restaurant. “Master is here now, so I’ll go home to take a shower,” the woman left. “She has been employed here for a long time, huh” I said to Master. “What are you talking about? She is Mama. We started the business together.” I was completely confused and embarrassed. *How come I assumed that the cook was mama in the first place? But wait, she said her daughter was only thirteen years old. Khai’s master said that her child should be at around thirty by now. Does she have more than one child? Or did she just make up a story?* Either way, she looked much younger than fifty. Perhaps time passes slowly here, like in the Ryugu Castle. Later I learned that the cook was Mama’s sister-in-law and that Mama’s daughter currently lived in Yokohama and was running a business in Wakabachio with her Thai husband. I never figured out if she really had a small child in Thailand. “So what were you guys talking about?” Master asked me. “Well, things like kids, massages…” “You might like oil massages better. I can do it for you, for free, of course.” A joke again. “No way, you’d have to pay me.” My turn.

On March 24, 2013, I visited Maenam for the last time. “Hey, this is gonna be her last visit,” Master called to Ton. Ton came to me from the other side of the room
and said, "Let's make a Thai-Japanese baby together."
"Nah, nah, nah," I responded to his "service" with dismissive laughter. While I was eating, Master joined a couple, a young Thai woman and a middle-aged Japanese man, sitting at the sofa table. Master seemed familiar with the woman in the group. "Do you want me?" He acted like a pervert, sitting beside her and touching her face and hair. She did not refuse but was cheerfully performing her part. I was confused about who the client was for a while but kept listening to the performance unfolding at the centre of the floor. I realized that I was now behind the scene.

Pub Mary

*There used to be two kinds of girls in the Thai community: chon-no-ma girls working in Koganecho and companion girls working at pubs in Fukutomicho.*

*Koganecho girls did not choose clients. They knew work was work and didn’t devote their hearts to it. So they could deal with a number of men on a single night. But pub girls were selective about their clients. They only served men they liked, and usually they ended up being really into specific men.* (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 27 November 2012)

According to Khai’s master and Maenam’s master, the 2005 raid resulted in the dispersion of migrant women from Koganecho to the outside of Yokohama and Japan, but some chon-no-ma girls stayed in Yokohama, finding alternative workplaces on the streets, pubs, restaurants, and factories. As police regulation of transnational migrants became stricter and the nighttime economy became less vibrant due to the general recession of the Japanese economy, it became extremely difficult to live by street sex work. The number of pubs also decreased and many women found their jobs at newly opening massage parlors, which was increasing at a strange rate over a few years in Kangai.
Pub Mary was one of the few surviving pubs run by a Thai mama. She came to
Yokohama almost twenty years ago after working in Ibaraki for four years, most likely
as an “indebted” sex worker. She used to work at another pub in the same
neighbourhood for a long time, but she started her own pub a few years ago. I was
introduced to the pub by Maenam’s master, who had a long-term friendship with
Mama. Mary’s mama would go to Maenam almost every night with her clients after her
pub’s business hours, and Maenam’s master would send their customers to Mary in
return. When Maenam’s master first told me about Pub Mary, he said that female
customers were welcome there and there would be no problem with me going by
myself. On April 9, 2012, Master walked with me to the pub. Maenam and Mary are
connected by a single street, and they are only six or seven blocks away from each
other. We left Maenam past 10 PM and walked along the Wakabacho Street. Crossing
Chojamachi Street, we entered Fukutomicho, a nighttime district where a number of
small pubs and bars could be found. Mary is located in one of the multitenant buildings.
Master took me to the pub on the second floor, advising me not to ask Mama too many
questions, because she would feel like she were being interrogated by police. As soon as
I entered the pub, I realized that Master’s description was not very accurate. I did feel
out of place in the pub where all other customers were middle-aged or older Japanese
men.

Usually, Japanese male customers visit Mary individually or in small groups. Girls
would gather around them at tables, serving drinks, singing karaoke, applauding when
customers sang, and dancing with them. Because I am a woman, each time I visited Pub
Mary I had male patrons engage me in conversation. On April 9th, 2012, Mr. Fujita,
Mama’s Japanese husband and the “owner” of the pub on paper, happened to be there
and he accompanied me for my entire stay, although Mama also joined us for a short
period of time when she had a break from serving male customers. In November and
December of 2012, Mama’s son, Shin-san, was helping at the pub almost every night and
he served me the whole time. Initially, I wanted to hear Mama speak about what
she knew about Koganecho and the Thai community in the past. However, I ended up spending almost the entire time hearing stories from her son about what it meant to be a “hafu,” mix-raced, who has a mother engaged in the water trade in Yokohama. I also started to pay attention to the sociality that made up the space of Pub Mary and how relationships unfolded there between the client and the worker, between Mama and her employees, and between family members.

When I was little, every night, I would step out on the balcony and call my mom by cell-phone. “What colour is your car tonight?” I would ask her, because she usually came home in her clients’ cars. When she told me it would be a white car, I would call her again and again, every time I’d see a white car passing by. Usually she came home two hours past the time she had told me she would be back. (Shin, Pub Mary, personal communication, 11 December 2012)

On December 11, 2012 at around 7 PM, the Starbucks on Isezakicho Street was packed. Unable to find a table inside, Shin-san and I took seats outside although it was already dark and the temperature was dropping. Shin-san was having Matcha Cream Frappuccino, which I bought him, and perhaps he was regretting that he did not choose a hot beverage. We agreed to go back inside once a table became available, but Shin-san started smoking a cigarette and we ended up staying there for full two hours while we chatted.

“I didn’t know exactly what she did at work until two years ago. But one time, before I went to the States to study, we had a quarrel and she told me about her work. I think she wanted to convince me to study hard, because she went through a lot of hard times doing her job to raise me. Well, I didn’t want to hear it but I also kind of already knew it.” Shin-san was telling me about Mama, her life and work, and his experience of growing up without her physical presence at home almost every night throughout his
childhood. “I heard from Maenam’s master that they used to deliver food to you, because Mama was working at night,” I said to Shin-san. “Ah, I remember it. Every night, I would be waiting for mom to come home and couldn’t go to bed. Then I would become hungry and call Maenam, and they would deliver food to me.” “When I was in daycare, I had a different woman coming to pick me up everyday. Mom was busy working so she sent her friends to pick me up. I didn’t like Thai people back then so I forgot all the names and faces of these people.”

He did not hesitate to share his story with me. I felt like I was seeing his words overflowing from his mouth. We had only met once at Pub Mary two weeks ago on November 30, 2012. On that day, Mama was absent but Mei-san, a woman from Ayutthaya, served me for the first while with her perfectly professional smiles. After finding out that I was in the process of separating from my husband, she told me that she was also living separately from her husband. “Japanese men are nice only in the beginning. I hate them because they cheat. My husband cheated on me many times.” Her smile was gone. Then she told me that Mama’s son, who just recently returned from studying in Seattle, would come to the pub shortly and could serve me. In fact, he came to the pub soon and greeted me in Thai with a bow. He took over Mei-san’s seat and started to talk to me. Mei-san quickly joined a group of Japanese men. In fact, the pub was getting busier. Shin-san said that he thought that I was a new “girl,” because otherwise it was rare to see a young woman there. Realizing that both of us had migratory experiences—Shin-san lived in Bangkok to attend an international secondary school and studied at a college in Seattle, and I lived and attended a Japanese school in Moscow as a child and studied at universities in Seattle and Vancouver—we instantly clicked and spent the next few hours chatting over the bar counter. He was willing to meet outside the pub and tell me more about Thai water trade businesses in Yokohama.

As it turned out he mostly shared with me stories about the lives of Mama, Mary girls and himself. “Mama works long hours. Even today, even after becoming an
employer, she works until 7 AM. Her pub girls go home when the pub is closed but Mama has to work after that. Especially when her longtime clients ask her out for drinks, she cannot refuse. She never says she wants to go home. This morning, too, she drank with her client until 7 AM.” He was concerned about her health. “I know it is bad for your body, because now I help her at the pub. You can’t do this type of work without drinking. In the beginning you drink to enjoy it but later you are urged to drink, because you feel like you can’t keep talking to your clients cheerfully without alcohol. You don’t want to lose your clients, right? I drink so my clients enjoy their time with me.” He went on to say that Mama had been taking sleeping pills the last few years and was having a difficult time quitting. She would sleep the whole time she was home to prepare for her long hours of work. She hadn’t walked in the sun for a long time. “But I can’t financially support myself now, so I can’t tell her to quit her job. Well, at least she isn’t sleeping with clients now.”

he inhales the smoke
squints his eyes
concealing his childhood

“Maybe she wants me to help her so that she doesn’t have to go to a hotel with her clients. She can go home with me if I’m there with her…I’m okay seeing her clients kissing her cheek, but I hate to see them rubbing her ass.”

He repeatedly said that he had very lonely childhood. He also told me that the experience was common for many hafu kids, friends of his, whose migrant mothers worked at pubs. “I want my own child so much. I often have dreams of having a baby. I don’t know the baby’s mother, because I don’t have a girlfriend. But I would be so happy to have my own baby. When I’d wake up in the morning, I would look for my baby and be disappointed to realize that it was only a dream.” “What’s funny is that every time I have my palm read, I am always told that I will be a single-father. Can you believe it? This happens every time. I will have a child but won’t have a spouse,
and I can actually sort of see it.” I was not sure if his palm-reading story was true but his sentiment was felt real. “My mom actually said recently that she wants to adopt a child. Her feelings and my feelings are in sync. When she wants a child, I do, too.” Shin-san started to shiver in the cold. It was a time to leave.

*Naoko took twenty clients each day. She was beautiful. I was drawn into her chon-no-ma immediately after I saw her in the storefront for the first time. She came to my apartment the next day and told me that I was like her dad, and I started to see her almost as my daughter. She said that she was taking a day off and just hung out there. We saw each other for a while like that. Then one day she asked me to give her two million yen, because that would repay her debt and set her free. I knew that it was a lie; she was already free and she just lost money from gambling. But I gave her the money anyway. This happened twice… Later she disappeared for a while—well, she disappeared every time I gave her money—and I started living with Mama. One day Naoko came to my apartment and came face-to-face with Mama. They started talking between themselves. And do you know what she said to Mama? “I don’t need that man, because he doesn’t have money”!* (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 27 November 2012)

On December 27, 2012, I visited Mary to see Mama and Shin-san. I was nervous. In the past, whenever I talked to Mama and Shin-san in person they looked very happy about my presence. However, once I left the pub I became unsure of whether their words and actions really meant what they first appeared. I also had a constant fear of losing contact with them as if they could disappear at any time. In fact, Shin-san and I exchanged our phone numbers so that we could meet outside the pub. I did meet
Shin-san twice but I also failed to meet him twice: the first time he had to cancel our appointment last minute because, he told me, he had an emergency shift at his new workplace; the second time he did not show up, because, he said, he simply forgot. For some reason, I could not believe that what he told me was always true. Relationships were precarious and promises were fragile. In fact, why would they keep promises when they mostly serve their clients’ interests anyway?

When I anxiously opened the door and entered the pub, Shin-san gave me a big smile from behind the counter. He was there. I was relieved. The pub is small with about six little tables along the walls and a bar counter, but there were always groups of customers in the pub and the space was full with the sound of karaoke. The room was lit up with sporadically placed pink lighting on the walls and there was a comfortable dimness at the seating area. Seeing tables occupied by male customers, a more reliable source of income for the pub, I decided to take a counter stool. “I was sick and tired of listening to male customers’ lectures, so I’m glad that you came. I was wondering if you’d really come tonight,” he said. I was surprised that he suspected that I would not show up. “When I say I come, I come,” I assured, but I was not sure if he was convinced. “Do you want to have JINRO again? I can mix it with water or oolong tea,” “I’ll have it with oolong tea,” I answered. The price for the service was 5,000 yen, which was a flat rate, so long as I did not order anything other than JINRO. Shin-san told me that Mary attracted working-class customers, who were not able to afford services offered by Japanese women at high-end kyabakura [hostess club]. Indeed, the pub felt much more casual and relaxed than what I imagined kyabakura would feel like based on what I had seen in Japanese TV dramas.

As he prepared my drink, Shin-san said, “I’ve never talked about myself and Mama to others like that before.” I was worried whether I had intruded on his life too much. “If there is anything you don’t want me to write about, you just let me know,” I said to him. “No, that’s ok. I didn’t mean that.” I quickly looked for her in the pub. She
was sitting in the corner of the room with her clients. Her hair might have grown since I saw her last. She was wearing a short yellow skirt and showing her skinny legs. In the second phase of my fieldwork I never saw her husband, Shin-san’s stepfather, and Shin-san told me that their relationship was currently not going well. “He is having an affair with one of the Mary girls,” he said. Mama should be in her fifties but she did not look like that at all. “This is her nickname,” Shin-san wrote down a Thai word on a sheet of paper. “She was named after a female monster that is two hundred years old.” She seemed busy entertaining her clients and I was almost certain that I wouldn’t be able to talk to her that night.

The food delivery arrived at the pub as usual. It was girls’ dinner, delivered from Nan, a Thai restaurant in Wakabacho. Last time I visited Mary, I saw people from Diner delivering food there. Nan and Diner seemed to be two places from which Mary ordered food regularly. “Nan wants to hire me, because I can speak both Thai and Japanese. I might actually just work there,” Shin-san said. Working at Mary might be too demanding, physically and emotionally, I thought. “I’m really glad that you came here today. Please visit me everyday.” “Well, I cannot afford 5,000 yen every night,” I sighed. “You don’t have to pay anymore,” “No way, Mama will be upset,” “You’re right,” he laughed. He started telling me again that he had a permanent sense of loneliness. “I cannot be in a relationship with the same person for a long time, because I’m so scared of being dumped. I want to be loved but I cannot love anybody.” What he said was depressing but for some reason it did not sound that way. It was like it was from a script, although it did not sound entirely like fiction, either.

“i don’t dream about my baby
any more”

he poured me
another glass of jinro
I realized that my glass was never empty because Shin-san poured me more JINRO every time he saw any room in it. Somehow I did not feel the alcohol but maybe my senses were gradually becoming dull, and I was not sure anymore if I was a researcher, a customer, or a girl. “I want to get a girlfriend before you leave Japan. If I do, you’ll have to sing me karaoke here to celebrate,” he said to me. “Sure, but you have to hurry up, because I only have three months left,” “Don’t say anything sad like that. We have to see each other thirty more times. We’ve met many times already, so we’re friends, aren’t we?” he said. Maybe this is a pub girl’s tactic, which he adopted while working here, but maybe it is not 100% a lie, either. Nothing was assured in this space, and instead, there was permanent ambivalence produced by the performance of roles and expressions of desire and anxiety.

The following day on December 28, 2012, I returned to Mary. The number of nights I was able to stay in Yokohama was limited, and I felt compelled to visit Mary one more time before the year ended. In fact, I told Shin-san that I would return the next day when I left the pub the previous night, but he gave me a call a few hours earlier to make sure I was really coming. When I opened the door, Shin-san was cleaning up a table with a girl and did not notice that I was entering. “Good evening,” I said. “Welcome! Long time no see,” he looked excited. Long time? We just saw each other yesterday. “I didn’t think that you would really come tonight,” he said it again. “I told you I would come.” Mama was wearing a pair of white pants and long boots. She briefly greeted me but was busy talking to her regulars.

I was guided to a table in the middle of the room. A middle-aged man, who was sitting at the corner table, teased Shin-san, “Hey, bro, is this your girlfriend?” “No, she’s a customer,” he replied. Both Mama and Shin-san told me earlier that their customers were usually regulars. They are also longtime customers and know Shin-san’s childhood, and Shin-san often used the term miuchi, “relatives” or “insiders” in English, to refer to them. When I first met Mama, she said that she wanted to keep serving the same group
of customers at her pub until she became an old woman. The comment suggested her personal attachment and familiarity to them. Shin-san said that these customers saw him almost as their son and were looking forward to taking him out for drinks once he reached the legal age. Now that he was twenty, he had to take their offers and drink with them. By this time, I had started to recognize the presence of an intimate community in the pub. It did feel like a pseudo-family at times. A man in an orange hoody came to me and told me, “Shin used to be a delinquent when he was younger. His ears were plugged with headphones all the time and he wouldn’t respond to us. He had a lot of difficult times, you know, with his mother working like this.”

I also learned that Mary, like other Thai pubs and restaurants, financially supported its girls, for example, by taking care of their rent. In fact, Mama’s sister in Thailand sent her daughter to Mary and Mama took care of her niece’s travel costs and monthly rent in Japan in exchange for her labour at the pub. However, Shin-san told me that Mama and her niece were in conflict, because the niece fell in love with a Japanese man and she had not come back to the pub in a while. She now had two children and was juggling her work at Mary and Maenam to support her family. “Her husband wastes all his income gambling. Every time he gets paid, he doesn’t work for the next two weeks, just plays pachinko,” Shin-san said.

That night, Shin-san kept pouring me JINRO again, and this time I started to feel the alcohol affecting my body early. Before I came to Mary I was at Khai, but Khai’s mama was sick and resting, and the food was not available. I ended up spending the entire time there chatting with Meaw-san and a group of regular customers over beer and a small amount of snacks. At Mary, my stomach was almost empty and absorbing alcohol quickly.

I was instructed to move to a table at the rear, and as soon as I sat down, a man at the next table teased Shin-san again, asking if I was his girlfriend. I was the one to deny it this time, but perhaps the facts did not really matter to the man. He was
about to leave the pub, and extended his arm to offer me a handshake. When I responded with my hand, he pressed his lips on my hand. Disgusting. The word came into my mind but I did not really feel that way. My senses were dull and I was not even sure if his lips actually touched me. When he left he squeezed 1,000 yen into Shin-san's palm and Shin-san quickly put it under my thigh. “Why me?” I was perplexed. “It’s okay, you just take it,” “No, no, I shouldn’t be taking it,” “That’s okay, you are supposed to take it.” I was not sure if the man intended to give the money to me and asked Shin-san to pass it along, or if Shin-san decided to give the money he received to me, but the result was the same. I quickly folded the 1,000 yen bill and inserted into my pocket.

“you are mine”

the hoody wraps me with orange arms

nonsense

no sense

After the man left, a girl sitting next to me started talking to me. She said that she came from Shanghai two years ago. Another girl joined us, adding more cheerful laughter to our table. She hummed a song and asked me if I knew it. She wanted to sing it on karaoke but could not figure out the title. She might have thought that I was familiar with Japanese pop songs but my knowledge was too outdated. An old customer was occupying the microphone by himself, singing American pop songs one after another. The man in the orange hoody, now totally drunk, told me that the man singing speaks multiple languages, including Thai. “I want to become like him,” he expressed his admiration by extending both his arms toward him with his palms up. On the other side of the pub, Mei-san was sitting on her client’s lap, face-to-face with him and shaking her hips. Another girl pointed at her, laughing, and said that we should not look at them because they were embarrassing. All these things were happening at the same time, creating a kaleidoscopic landscape in the pub. I did not see Shin-san anymore. He might have been just sitting beside me or serving other customers but he disappeared from my
consciousness. The space was filled with loud karaoke, girls’ screams and laughs, and extremely thick air—I had to go to the washroom badly.

Parking Lots

The Great Air Raid [from WWII] turned the entire city into completely burnt-out ruins. Yokohama became a “vacant” lot, so the American military built rows of barracks during the Allied Occupation in Fukutomicho, as we know it today...

Wakabacho was turned into an airfield. My father was born right there on the boundary where the airfield ended. It’s right near the spot where a fashion health massage [sexual massage parlour] is currently standing. He would hold on to the wire, looking at an aircraft with fascination, with the propeller wind blowing on his face. (Tamura, Walking Tour Guide, personal communication, 31 January 2012)

There are a number of parking lots in Wakabacho. In addition to the large lots where Negishiya used to stand until 1980, small parking lots fill in the gaps in the district. In fact, there are an unusual number of small parking lots in Koganecho too. During his tour, Tamura-san described to me that the developer created parking lots as a “tentative” use of the “vacant” spaces after the authorities wiped out all the chon-no-ma businesses in 2005 (in fact, prefabricated chon-no-ma that emerged in the 1990s, as
well as old wooden barracks located underneath the overpass, were cheaply and quickly built as if intentionally temporarily; throughout its post-WWII history, Koganecho has always been shaped by tentative plans for making-do). Parking lots are the easiest way to fill the space, allowing the occupant to make a profit in the meantime, until a new development plan can be implemented.

When I walked the streets of Wakabacho, I was always struck by the large parking lot, the former site of Negishiya, by its artificiality, its inorganic look. It appears between blocks of little buildings as if it is a spatio-temporal void that bears no trace of the past. The space is awkwardly large for the little district of Wakabacho; and it is awkwardly quiet to those who know the vibrant nightlife scene that used to flourish there. There are always cars temporarily parked there but the lot is never full.

Rarely did I notice the presence of other little parking lots in Wakabacho when I walked by them, but there were moments where they entered my consciousness when people told me about what used to occupy these places; “There used to be an old little bar in Wakabacho, which is now a parking lot. The bar was famous as a film location for Private Detective Hama Maiku.” There was also one occasion when I was walking passed a small parking lot on a narrow street of Wakabacho. I saw a tachinbo girl standing at the corner and for some reason the empty space behind the woman’s body unsettled me. In the darkness, the space looked like a little black hole into which the woman might disappear. Not to be absorbed by the space I passed it at a quick pace. In any case, I was rarely attentive to or particularly interested in these little parking lots.

Parking lots are little pockets, tentative plans, which fill in-between times and spaces. They cover up memories of the spaces with thick concrete, never to show the ground that used to support past lives and stories and never to allow other lives and stories to leave traces.

But they are also, inherently, a space of waiting—waiting for a new time, a new
space, and a new life to emerge. To the new life, the past sometimes does not want to show itself.

**Little Bangkok**

*There used to be a crazy number of Thai before. If you’d go downstairs and step outside onto the street there would always be Thai people walking around, particularly on the main street of Wakabacho... There were many Thai businesses but they are gone... Maybe twenty percent of the Thai people stayed, got married to Japanese men and so on. Thirty percent left the city because they lost their jobs. The rest were caught by the police over the years since the raid.* (Master, Maenam, personal communication, 29 March 2012)

If I cross the Sueyoshi Bridge leaving Koganecho behind, passed two blocks and then turn left, I would be standing at the entrance of Wakabacho’s main street. The district is currently divided into two communities: Japanese stores, restaurants and other commercial spaces owned by local Japanese people; and so-called “ethnic” restaurants and other businesses run by transnational migrants, who started their businesses in the last decade or so. The district is quiet and its economy is in decline today, resulting in constant failure and frequent turnover of new businesses. However, it used to be a busy and vibrant nightlife district in the post-war period when American G.I.s were present, which had the effect of introducing American popular urban culture to the city. This was also a time when the district was populated by Japanese “pan pan” girls, or “prostitutes,” who solicited American G.I.s and sailors from overseas. In the 1990s, the district flourished again as Little Bangkok, and was populated by many migrant women who worked in Koganecho. Many of them were from Northern and Northeastern Thailand, who lived, worked, and spent free time in the district. There were a number of services catering to Thai women, including restaurants, karaoke
bars, grocery/video stores, food delivery services, dance clubs, underground banks and baccarat venues. Just like chon-no-ma in Koganecho, subletting was a common phenomenon in the Thai community. People would take over a previous business by changing the name but without officially changing the tenant’s name on the lease. Most of those places also functioned as community spaces where Thai migrants hung out with their friends, shared private stories and sentiments, discussed new business plans, and simply spent time together like a family.

Wakabacho was a diasporic space where everyday lives here were imaginatively, affectively, emotionally and materially connected to lives lived in their homeland. Migrant women actively produced such a space through their interactions with other migrants but also by coming into relations with local Japanese residents.

**Grocery Store**

*Occasionally, a Thai girl came by to my store and asked, “Can I have some drinks here?” I’d say, “All right, let’s drink,” and we’d share a few bottles. She would talk about her kids and burst into tears, saying she has to work more years still. Girls working this area were young and had two or three-year-old kids back home.* (Numata, Former Thai Grocer in Wakabacho, personal communication, 9 March 2012)

**Karaoke Bar/Restaurant**

*When Thai women were working at chon-no-ma in Koganecho, lots of Thai men worked as manual labourers at factories. Just like girls, those men used to go to Thai karaoke bars in Wakabacho after work to sing traditional Thai songs. This is a type of music from the Northeastern region of Thailand and it sounds like enka*
[traditional Japanese ballads]. They'd take turns, sing songs one after another and cry, for missing their families back home. On the karaoke screen you'd see migrant fathers working away from home, just like those at the bar. It felt like they were singing for their kids. I often saw tears flowing non-stop. (Chikada, Representative Director of Terra People Act Kanagawa, personal communication, 27 November 2012)

Dance Club

There used to be a Thai dance club. Servers were men. Girls would come to the club at around two or three in the morning after work. They would do a dance competition and go crazy. They’d start fighting over men, too. In the morning, girls would buy men at these places. A popular man was worth like 50,000 yen per night. (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 16 March 2012)

Baccarat Venue

Gambling places were located in apartment buildings so you couldn’t tell from the outside. If you were Japanese and wanted to go to a Thai baccarat place you had to be accompanied by a Thai person. Their security was very strict. Once you were in you could stay there overnight, however long you wished. Food was free, cigarettes were free, everything was free. They were open twenty-four hours. At a busy time, there were almost thirty people in a little apartment. The most popular game was baccarat. Everything went super fast. The dealer, who always had to be female, distributed cards, two
cards per person. One game lasted only for a minute. Then they counted bills quickly. There would have been five or six Thai mafia guys checking from behind to catch cheating. Those who won would pay 10% of their earning to the banker. There used to be five or six gambling venues in some apartment buildings. They constantly changed the venues to avoid crackdowns. (Master, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 16 March 2012)

The first Thai dining business, Sawasdee Thai Restaurant, in Wakabacho started as a food delivery. In fact, during the earlier days of Little Bangkok many food delivery services were located in apartment rooms, often in the same building where Thai migrants lived and played baccarat. According to Khai’s master, they would make pastries and bento boxes and deliver them to baccarat venues in Wakabacho and chon-no-ma in Koganecho. They sold bento boxes at around 1,000 yen each, which later dropped to 500 yen after their businesses started to slow down. They were also paying street fees to yakuza, which was 30% of their revenue according to Khai’s master. Grocery stores used to sell a wide variety of daily items, ranging from drinks and foods, including smuggled fruits and spices, to videos, magazines and international phone cards. Numata-san, a former Thai grocer, told me, “When they got off from their shift girls would come to my store with friends, groups of four or five. They would get a mountain of stuff, both food and alcohol.” His store was open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Most of these businesses are gone. Sawasdee Thai Restaurant did exceptionally well when the economy was still good and moved to new, mainstream locations in Yokohama and Tokyo, now almost exclusively targeted at middle-class Japanese customers. The rest, however, simply could not sustain themselves due to a decrease in the population of the Thai community. The community lost most women after the chon-no-ma were raided and has not gained many incoming migrants since.
Women in the community are also gradually aging: they are in their forties or even fifties. Even during the time I was conducting fieldwork, restaurants and a pub in the district closed down.

On February 27, 2012, Mama of Diner, the only Thai grocer and dining place remaining in Wakabacho, showed me around the district. After I talked to her in her massage parlor, her second business, and hearing that she used to work at a Thai restaurant in Wakabacho and has seen Thai businesses close down in the neighbourhood, I asked her to walk with me and show me where all those businesses used to be located. “This was the restaurant where I used to work. Its owner changed three or four times,” “Was it a Thai restaurant the whole time though?” “Yes.” I looked into the hollow hallway, which was connected to a little pink door at the end with a heart-shaped mirror and the Chinese character that stands for “purity,” the name of the current pub. An electronic sign standing on the street said, “Taiwanese-style pub.” I was not positive that even this new pub would be able to survive for long. Wakabacho itself is located one street west of Isezakicho Street, the main, commercial street of Kangai, and this pub was further west of Wakabacho’s main street. I rarely saw pedestrian traffic around this area. She then took me to another restaurant, which was located right underneath Maenam and would close down soon. In fact, when I came back to Yokohama in November of the same year, the restaurant was already gone. Mama directed my attention to the building across the street and said, “There used to be a bar, but now it is a massage parlor… That was a Thai dance club. This was a restaurant, and that one is still operating but seems like they’ll close down soon. This was a grocery store but they shut down half a year ago… See that building over there, the big one? Underneath there was a Thai restaurant, too. It was the biggest in the neighbourhood. Now, there’s no tenant.”

There was no sense of nostalgia when she told me about all the businesses that were no longer there. This might have been partly because many of these businesses
were simply replaced with Thai massage parlors. “There are about seventy of them around this neighbourhood,” Maenam’s master estimated for me once. They possibly offered jobs for the same members of the community who used to work at those restaurants. Mama pointed at some of the new massage parlors in the neighbourhood for me. In fact, it even seemed that the number of massage parlors exceeded the number of workers the community was able to supply. “Girls work at multiple massage parlors. When business is slow at one place and you get a phone-call from a busier place, you just make a trip there,” Maenam’s master told me. According to him women obtain a massage certificate at Wat Pho, a Buddhist temple in Bangkok known as the birthplace of traditional Thai massage, or a Thai Buddhist temple in Narita in Japan, which also issues massage certificates. “The training only takes a week,” he said. In fact, he added that some women in Yokohama practice massage without obtaining a certificate but based on their own experience. “Nobody asks for a certificate.” To describe the change in the Thai community, Meaw-san simply said, “before it was all about baishun, now it is all about massage” in a tone that suggested that nothing significant really changed in the community. When they lost their jobs women created new ones—massage parlors, restaurants, diners, bars and pubs—in order to survive and to continue to have community spaces for themselves.

Despite the decrease in the number of Thai restaurants, elements of the old community can still be found in Wakabacho. Not only does Diner continue to operate 24/7, Mama also started a new karaoke bar Kee Mao in the neighbourhood in the fall of 2012, creating new jobs for her friends in the community. “There used to be more karaoke bars in Wakabacho but many are gone. Karaoke is essential for Thai people so they needed more bars again,” Meaw-san said to me when we were chatting about Kee Mao over lunch. Although insignificant in scale, the nightlife culture of the Thai community is not completely disappearing from the district but rather coming back in a subtle way.
On March 8, 2013, I visited Nan to have dinner. Nan itself opened only a few years ago but I had heard from Mr. Fujita, Pub Mary’s mama’s husband, that its Thai owner used to have a food delivery business targeted at chon-no-ma girls in Koganecho. Mr. Fujita himself used to help them when he was young. Nan today still has its delivery service and Pub Mary is one of its regular destinations. When I entered the restaurant, I immediately realized that the space had turned into something else: casual dining tables were replaced with heavy and dark stone-made tables; chairs were replaced with black sofa seats; the lighting was much darker and there was an electronic mirror ball emitting yellow and red lights; showy Christmas decorations in gold, green and red hung like a web from the ceiling although the season was well over.

The only things that had stayed were the two TV screens hanging from the ceiling, which used to show soccer games but were now used for karaoke. There was also a picture of the king of Thailand and a piece of fabric with elephant embroidery on the wall, which I remembered seeing before. What used to be a casual dining place was now a karaoke bar. A group of two Japanese men and two Thai women were sitting next to me. The women seemed familiar with Master and the other workers. Are these women servers or customers? A male server joined the group’s conversation, but soon moved to the kitchen and left the restaurant with a large tray of bento boxes for delivery. Master, who was quite blunt during my previous visits smiled to me every time our eyes met. When I pointed out the change in the restaurant, he was delighted to find out that I was a returning customer. But he was also in and out, busy talking to the women sitting with Japanese customers and carrying bento boxes outside. The space felt more vibrant than before.

"It's been a long time

in Japan

twenty years

I married a Japanese man"
divorced him
and married another man
--next time
bring your friends”
says a karaoke girl
a mirror ball goes around and around
christmas lights blink
on a little
imitation tree

Phone Booths

You know those days when cell phones were not available like they are today.
Girls used to call their loved ones back home using public pay phones. There are
some phone booths along the river. I often saw them in those booths, speaking
into the phone receiver and crying. (Tamura, Bar Kikiya, personal
communication, 4 March 2012)

I was walking along the overpass to go to the public library. Women came out but
once they knew I was a woman they went back into the bars. I have passed
the area during the nighttime, too. I saw red and purple lights all around. One
time I saw many pre-paid telephone cards left on the ground inside the public
phone booth. They only had five or ten points remaining, not enough to make an
international call, so they might have just discarded them there. (Resident of
Yokohama, personal communication, 3 March 2012)

Along both sides of the Ooka River, there are public phone booths standing
quietly. When transnational migrants were around, these phone booths were much
more actively used than today, being one of the few spaces where migrants were able
to contact their families back home. Numata-san, a former Thai grocer, told me that
prepaid phone cards were one of the most popular items in his store. “Well, actually
that is an old story,” he added. “Some of those who married Japanese men and stayed in
Yokohama stopped contacting their families. If they’d call their families, women would
know for sure that they’d be asked for money. Families think that their sisters or
daughters are able to do that, because they are married to Japanese men. They think
these girls are rich” (personal communication, 9 March, 2012). During the two phases of
my fieldwork I did not notice anyone using the phone. Inside the booth, there were no
pink billstickers, or sex flyers, which used to be posted all over their walls in the old
days. Instead there was just a thin phone book sitting beside the old-fashioned phone
that was never in use. These boxes were clean, transparent and never-opened,
suggesting no links to the outside world.

“i have two boys back in homeland
now serving the military
they ask me for money
but i can only send some
i have lived in yokohama for ten years
i want to go home      but maybe after working a few more
After my last visit to Pub Mary in December 2012, I never saw Mama or Shin-san. When I left the pub after my last visit, Shin-san said that I could give him a call any time but I never did, and he never called me. I sent him a short New Year message but I did not receive a reply. When I visited the pub before its business hours on February 13, 2013, the girls said that Shin-san had just left for Thailand to study at university. “He may come back next year.” I was a little surprised by the news, because he only mentioned to me that he was going to Thailand in January to obtain a formal “letter of exemption” from the military. The letter would permit him to be cleared of participating in a military recruitment lottery in April, which is supposedly “mandatory” for Thai men turning twenty in the given year. He had also started a new part-time job in Yokohama in December and did not tell me he was thinking about quitting. Although I always had a sense that he might “disappear” at any time, it felt like it happened too soon. But why not? I was only a customer after all.

On March 24, 2013, when I visited Maenam for the last time, Ton said that he was leaving for Thailand on the same day I was leaving for Canada. He was also twenty years old that year and had to participate in the military recruitment lottery. If he drew a red ticket he would have to serve the military for two years and would not be able to return to Japan. “I might see you at the airport,” he said, but this did not happen.

Toward the end of my fieldwork, whenever I went to Khai, Mama said, “You will be leaving soon, teacher,” which made me sentimental. Meaw-san repeatedly said
that she would visit Vancouver to see me one day. “I’ll go there to study English,” she promised me. “The summer time is good,” I replied. The spring was coming and cherry blossoms were starting to appear along the Ooka River. With the warm and gusty spring winds, Mama’s son came back to Khai. “He can help at the restaurant now. Finally, I have time to study,” Meaw-san looked relieved. In the fall of 2013, after I returned to Vancouver, Meaw-san contacted me by email seeking suggestions for English schools to attend in Vancouver. In a more recent email I received in January 2014, Meaw-san wrote that she postponed her plan to come to Canada to study English and instead decided to travel Europe in April and spend the summer in Thailand. She told me not to tell Master about her plan to visit Europe, because it was a secret. She was still making slow progress in her distant education program.
An Opening (By Way of Conclusion)

A Reflection

I conceived of this project in December 2009 when an online news article was referenced on a walking tour that took place in Kotobukicho. Kotobukicho is another marginalized district in Yokohama, historically known for being home to male day labourers who had migrated to the city from other regions of Japan and other countries in search of manual jobs. The report described Kotobukicho as an “ethnic town,” and with further research on the district, I learned that Filipino day labourers were quite visible there especially in the 1980s and 1990s when the Minato Mirai 21 redevelopment of the port was underway. Zainichi Korean residents had always had a strong presence there as managers of doya [social housing] and they have offered labourers reasonable accommodations throughout the postwar period (see Stevens 1997, Ventura 2007, Yamamoto 2008). Through my casual online research, I also learned of other areas in Kangai, including Koganecho, Fukutomicho and Wakabacho, that have been equally transnational but where the labour was primarily offered by women from overseas who engaged in sex and water trades.

Around this time, I was starting to develop ideas for my dissertation research, vaguely thinking of a topic around transnational cultural spaces in Japan, but unable to nail it down with a specific site, a community or a set of questions. As I always had a strong attachment to Yokohama and had imagined it as my mythological “home” ever
since I moved to Canada (Yoshimizu 2013), my encounter with this article came with excitement and also embarrassment. I realized that there were places in Yokohama that were always invisible to me, as someone who only visited the commercial and tourist districts of the waterfront where I would spend my leisure time. The only non-western transnational place in Yokohama I was familiar with was the famous Chinatown, which was increasingly becoming a tourist site. I was embarrassed by the fact that I never engaged with the city with a critical awareness of its postcolonial reality. During all those years when I was developing a sense of belonging to the city, I never gave myself a chance to encounter the lives of transnational migrants, who lived and worked in Yokohama under socio-cultural and legal conditions that made nurturing a sense of “belonging” much more challenging. Immediately, I knew that Yokohama would be my research site. Conducting my research in Yokohama was financially feasible, because I could commute there from my parents’ house. It was advantageous, too, given the limited period of time I could carry out fieldwork, because I was already familiar with the city and knew how to get around. More importantly perhaps, I also wanted to face my ignorance and change the way I related to the city. I decided to focus on Koganecho where a significant number of transnational migrant women worked and lived until quite recently. This was consistent with my general research interest in the experiences of women transnational migrants (Yoshimizu 2008).

Having conceived of the project after the police raid of 2005, which resulted in the eviction of all the chon-no-ma businesses and dispersion of migrant women elsewhere, I had a fundamental methodological question. How could I effectively approach the issue when the communities of migrant women in question were no longer
there? Like Takahiro Nakamura’s documentary film *Yokohama Mary*, I imagined this project as a “project with an absent subject” in the initial stage. I decided to generate stories of lives in Koganecho from the time before displacement by working with local people, who currently inhabited Koganecho and surrounding neighbourhoods. At the same time, through this research I wanted to consider the political, social and cultural meanings and implications of the displacement itself.

As I discussed in the Introduction and Chapter Five, however, this dissertation ended up being less about recovery what was displaced from the site than a query of what happens after displacement. I have done this by critiquing the cultural processes through which the displaced women and communities are further excluded from dominant memoryscapes in the city (Part I). This dissertation also ethnographically engages with the generative processes through which something emerges anew at the site. Specifically, I paid attention to how the (ongoing) experiences of displacement are interpreted, appropriated or coped with and what possibilities arise or are foreclosed at the level of the everyday (Part II).

Yokohama’s displacement of migrant sex workers has broader implications and these are not limited to the current lives of migrant workers in the water trade. How migrant women were displaced from the city and its memoryscapes is suggestive for thinking about how Japanese society handles more recent (2008 onwards) arrivals of care workers and nurses from Southeast Asia. These workers engage in physical, emotional and exploitative work under bilateral economic partnership agreements between governments, and have very limited opportunities to stay and settle in the country (Lopez
2012, Yoshimizu 2014). This labour force has strategically been deployed by the government to specifically manage the rapid aging population of Japan and the shortage of Japanese care workers. What is more, recent news reports (e.g. “Poppins” 2015) indicate that the employment of foreign workers by private corporations has just started in the area of child care and domestic work. This is a government measure to encourage Japanese women to have children while continuing to work outside the home, thereby mitigating the demographic problem from a managerial perspective. For example, in March 2016 in Kanagawa Prefecture (in which the City of Yokohama is located) the private “babysitting” and domestic work agent Poppins started to hire foreign workers and send them off to clients’ homes. Kanagawa is one of the officially designated “special zones” where less strict regulation can be applied and transnational migrants are permitted to work and live in the capacity of domestic workers. But these new measures are short-sighted and exploitative. While they highlight an aspect of migrants’ functionality in Japan’s labour market, they imply that migrants constitute a temporary labour force and they can conveniently be displaced when they become unnecessary or undesirable. These measures allow transnational migrants to legally work in Japan—and thus their work and living conditions would differ from that of undocumented migrant sex workers—but there is still little recognition that migrants are important members of Japanese society and their rights and well-being need to be safeguarded for the longer term.

Methodologically, this dissertation is grounded in memories, imaginations, improvisational and performative encounters, and multisensory experiences. In part, this is a methodological decision I made, influenced by particular streams of cultural studies
and sensory ethnography (see Introduction, Chapter One, Chapter Five) that are shaped by the traditions of critical theories, postmodernism, postcolonialism, feminism and phenomenology. Epistemologically, I am more interested in the view that realities are socially constructed and they can only be interpreted, instead of “discovered,” from a particular perspective and subject position. The only way I can intellectually engage with them is through my body as a concrete perceptive and experiential location and a site where power-relations are materialized.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that embodied knowledge, as opposed to “hard facts” and “objective data,” was not only what I intellectually chose to pursue, but also the only thing I could rely on in this specific context of research. “Material evidence,” as such, that document the lives and experiences of migrant sex workers were not produced in the first place because the women lived underground or their lives were regarded as insignificant by mainstream society. In Koganecho, the material traces of their lives were deliberately erased, because these were undesirable in the eyes of authorities. In this sense, working with people’s memories, fictional narratives, and my own ghostly encounters with lasting practices and experiences was not

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70 For example, at Yokohama City Hall I collected demographic data of people of Thai nationality in the City of Yokohama, and more specifically, Naka Ward and Minami Ward, which cover the Kangai area in which I was conducting my fieldwork (see footnote 5). While the data gave me some sense of the presence of Thai migrants in the city, there were large gaps in the data, as they did not include a whole group of undocumented migrants who never officially registered themselves as “alien residents” at city hall and who actually accounted for most of the sex workers in Yokohama. The only officially produced documents that record the presence of undocumented migrants in the city that I was able to access was a series of crime reports produced by the Kanagawa Prefectural Police. These reports were filed under Operation Bai Bai, which was carried out in Koganecho to remove migrant sex workers and chon-no-ma businesses between January 2005 through December 2006 (see footnote 17). According to the reports I obtained, fifty undocumented migrants were arrested during the two years of the operation for their illegal status in Japan. However, these reports again revealed gaps and ambiguities, having a number of redactions that cover “private information” and only leaving limited types of information that show nationality, age, sometimes sex, the location of their initial entry to Japan, and criminal charges suspected of them.
only my methodological choice but also one of few options available to me in order to acknowledge and speak of their past and present presence in the city. This methodology is consistent with the work of many other critical, postcolonial and feminist scholars who have shed light on the experiences of socially marginalized subjects that are barely documented or are documented in ways that primarily serve the purposes of the authorities and dominant groups in society (e.g. Robertson and Culhane 2005, Hirsch and Spitzer 2006, McAllister 2006, 2010, 2011, Riano-Alcala 2006, Walsh 2006). I also intentionally left gaps in my representations of the current water trade communities in Koganecho and surrounding neighbourhoods to protect the privacy of those who participated in my research or were situated in their community networks. For this reason, I used pseudonyms for most individuals and businesses. I also excluded some knowledge I acquired about individuals, businesses and organizations, which might expose them to political persecution, police harassment and shaming within the community, despite that this knowledge might have been useful in supporting my critique and argument.

Through my critical and reflexive approach, I have shown how I was also implicated in the production of dominant memoryscapes and the reproduction of hierarchal structures that continue to marginalize and exclude migrant women. In my analysis of dominant memoryscapes in Part I, I included my autoethnographic voice in my analysis to make visible my position as Japanese citizen, a “member of the colonizer nation state” for which the “decolonialization” process is incomplete (Hanasaki 2000, p.78). In Chapter Two, for example, I exposed my own privileged relationship to the city and my class background that enabled my mobility in accessing and critiquing dominant
memories of the city. In Chapter Three, I also disclosed a process through which my
body was increasingly “nostalized” (Niemeyer 2014, p.10) by popular memories of
Yokohama Mary (and the collective life and the Showa streetscapes she symbolizes). My
sense of nostalgia grew because of my background and experience of being a Japanese
national, who has a particular historical relationship to the consequences of WWII, the
subsequent occupation of the country by Allied Forces, and the economic growth the
country experienced in the second half of the 20th century. By including my
autoethnographic voice in my analysis I wanted to make visible a place from which I
critique—it is an uneasy place full of tensions, which enables both my critique of and
participation in the process of the discursive and material displacement of the lives of
migrant women. At the end of Part I, I was unable to resolve these tensions and instead
concluded the section with questions to orient myself towards unresolved past violence in
a more ethical way.

In Part II, I presented an exploration of these questions from my emplaced and
entangled fieldwork experience at the sites of displacement. Here, I reflected on and
textually enacted moments when my memory work project and my role as a researcher
were made strange in the encounters with people in the field. In these moments I was
objectified, forced or encouraged to perform the roles of “girl,” a customer and a teacher.
Ultimately, I was entangled in the local relations that constituted the water trade
communities that continued to exist at the margins of the city. I did not end Part II with
definitive answers that would reconcile my contradictions. Presenting my engagement
with people in the field further illuminated yet another set of tensions, when my research
interests and agendas were met with the interests of others. Throughout my fieldwork,
they “confronted” me and my research in unexpected ways (Fabian 2001, p.25). These moments of confrontation were significant as they forced me to be reflexive and turned my gaze from the memories and experiences of others to my own as a site for critical scrutiny and ethnographic practice.

I am based in Vancouver, Canada, where the legacy of colonialism is still very much present in varied manifestations, including violence against indigenous women, homelessness and displacement of marginalized urban communities. I am immersed in and strongly influenced by a social and intellectual environment in which resistance against ongoing colonial practices is also very much alive in the form of activism and postcolonial scholarship (see Aoki 2011, Blomley 2004, Robertson and Culhane 2005, Culhane 2011, Christian 2010, chapters in Mathur et al. 2011, for examples). As such, my dissertation has been shaped by my strong political determination to acknowledge and demand public recognition of the old colonial structure that still shapes present realities. I have also been trained in the tradition of critical research that a number of scholars and researchers have historically cultivated before me in the School of Communication and other departments at Simon Fraser University, which has been my institutional home throughout my graduate studies. Building on this tradition, my project started by politicizing cultural and communicative practices through a critical perspective, giving serious attention to everyday meaning-making processes as a matter of politics and a site for social change.

While this dissertation may not offer a clearly articulated set of findings, conclusions or concrete recommendations for future action, it creates an opening for
different ways of remembering and imagining Yokohama in the future. I do this against the dominant forces that strategically turn a place of inhabitance to a “vacant” space in which urban and cultural policies can be experimented and economic and industrial interests can be imposed. In Yokohama, particularly in Koganecho and Kangai, the authorities rigorously regulate and remove “undesirable” bodies and activities to manage city life. In Ben Highmore’s (2005) words, they attempt to “render the city legible” (p.7) by literally making the city space transparent and observable through the installation of clear glass windows, regular patrolling by the police and strict censorship. Against this background, I have attempted to “render its illegibility legible” (ibid.) or “recover [its] heterogeneity” (p.8) by evoking a ghostscape and showing how lives at the margin of society continue to unfold beyond the intention and calculation of the authorities. I have also strived to make my representation of the city process-oriented. That is, while there are dominant tendencies that treat the city as a static place to “occupy” by “furnish[ing] [it] with already-existing things,” replacing a group of bodies and objects with another, I see it as a place characterized by ongoing processes of “inhabiting” (Ingold 2008, p.1797). It is a place where new and old lives come into relation with each other and continue making the place inhabitable, while being constrained by various forms of power structures.

Thus, rather than use the conclusion as an opportunity to close off the memoryscapes presented in my dissertation, I would like to use this space as an opening for further, future investigation. In so doing I want to bring the “unfinishedness” of lives, imaginings and memories into my ethnographic storytelling (Biehl 2013, p.574). I could have done this by discussing some of the changes that have happened in the
neighbourhoods since I left Yokohama—in the programming of Koganecho Bazaar, the way Koganecho’s past is treated by the Koganecho Area Management Center, the demography of Riverside businesses, and the lives and whereabouts of the Thai migrants I met in Yokohama. However, I would rather do this in a more reflexive manner by retrospectively “returning to my engagements with [my participants] in the field” (Biehl 2013, p.575) and revealing moments from my fieldwork that offer a glimpse into what I call other-scapes at the site of displacement. These are moments that I omitted or did not give my full attention in my analysis. However, they may allow other possibilities for imaginations and rememberings to emerge. By including these moments, I suggest new questions and problems for future inquiries, which this single dissertation could not adequately explore. I present them as textual enactments of the conversations I had with my research participants.

**Other-scapes**

Some people choose to work in Japan, because even low-skilled work pays you better here than in Thailand. But, thinking of myself, I might have been able to do more meaningful work in Thailand... I sometimes regret that I came to Japan. I liked studying there, so if I’d stayed I might be in grad school by now. I didn’t know what it really meant to come here. Maybe I didn’t plan things well. I thought I would go back home shortly, but once I was living here I had to help the restaurant and it became difficult to leave. There are advantages to being in Japan, too. Maybe I can work as a tour guide for Japanese tourists when I return. So, there you go. Many women didn’t bring their kids. Some did but those kids left Japan after a few years. I think they missed Thailand. They had all their friends
there. See, you should do research on migrants’ children next time. (Meaw, Khai Restaurant, personal communication, 28 November 2012)

Unable to speak Thai and being half or one generation younger than the generation of women who arrived in Yokohama in the 1990s, I developed much closer relationships with their children, like Shin-san and Meaw-san (see Chapter Five and Seven). Shin-san is half Japanese, the son of Pub Mary’s mama, and grew up in Yokohama until he entered an international high school in Bangkok, then spent one year in Seattle for further education. Meaw-san is the daughter of Khai Restaurant’s mama, who, with her younger brother, joined Mama in Yokohama when she was in high school. When I met her in Yokohama, Meaw-san had already lived in Yokohama over ten years. While I was initially interested in hearing the experiences of their mothers and other Thai women engaged in the water trade, the series of conversations I had with them alluded to current issues that were specific to younger generations of the migrant community. Migrant children’s experiences of transnational migration, racism and exclusion in Japan are distinct from their mothers.

In fact, this was brought up when I was conducting an interview with Motoko Yamagishi, a representative of Kalakasan Migrant Women Empowerment Center on February 8, 2012. She told me that the Center was originally established to support primarily Filipina women, who entered Japan with entertainer visas but overstayed in order to continue working in Japan or to live with their Japanese partners. The Center had assisted migrant women in obtaining visas and offered consultation for cases of domestic violence. According to Yamagishi, however, the Center has increasingly dealt with
concerns of children who do not have Japanese citizenship, issues around custody in divorce cases and issues pertaining to children’s access to education in Japan.

During my fieldwork I felt that migrant children’s experiences could especially be challenging when their mothers engaged in the water trade. This is not only because of the stigma attached to the water trade but also because their mothers would work evenings, usually for long hours, were very likely involved in precarious heterosexual relationships, suffered from alcoholism or drug addiction, and so on. The following two quotes from an interview I conducted with Shin-san vividly portray his experience of being “hafu” and having a single mother engaged in the water trade in Japan:

Most of my hafu-friends have single mothers in the water trade. Women in the water trade might marry but their relationships don’t last long unless they quit their jobs, because usually their husbands don't like their wives to work in the water trade. Single mothers put their kids in daycare and work...I was always alone at home until I was in Grade Six. Those hafu-kids usually want to own pets, because they are lonely. I had a hamster first and then a snail. My mother didn’t let me have a dog or a cat because she is allergic to them. She didn’t even like hamsters in the end and said, “You can have a snail, because it doesn’t have hair.” But a snail isn’t fun at all. They might move but you don’t really notice them growing much. (Shin, Pub Mary, personal communication, 11 December 2012)

Hafu-kids don’t mingle with people in their own community. Thai, Koreans, Taiwanese – they’d all rather hang out with Japanese kids or other hafu-kids.
They don’t speak their “own” language either. I also noticed that many hafu people don’t finish high school. They drop out. I have ten close friends and four of them are hafu—one Thai, one Korean and two Filipino. All four kids dropped out of high school. (Shin, Pub Mary, personal communication, 11 December 2012)

Meaw-san grew up in Thailand and lived there until she was in high school. When she came to Japan to join her mother, she experienced cultural barriers and racism that limited her opportunities in education and work. After she graduated from a local high school in Yokohama, she worked some part-time jobs for short periods of time. She worked as a server at banquets at a hotel; at a convenience store and a dollar store; and at a shipping company, doing manual work. But she also has had the experience of being rejected by a few potential employers because she was a “foreigner,” despite the fact that she had permanent resident status, which legally permits her to work in Japan. She said, “Many Thai children brought to Japan by their mothers do not want to do regular jobs here [because they are scared of being rejected]. But I have done many part time jobs because I have a strong personality and I don’t care if I am told ‘Sorry, we don’t take foreigners.’ Of course, I would be disappointed at first but I forget about it quickly. I know that the discrimination exists” (personal communication, 14 December 2012). When I met her at Khai Restaurant, she was helping the restaurant because, she said, it gave her the flexibility to do her schoolwork. At the same time, it seemed that she was busy with not only helping the business but also helping Mama’s friends, who needed assistance doing paperwork in Japanese. As it turned out, she hardly found time to study. Meaw-san often expressed that she had always had mixed feelings about living in Japan, ever since she left her homeland. Her aspirations and hopes to build cultural
competencies in Japan that she could use back in Thailand were always in conflict with her longing for her extended family and friends in her homeland, where she had once promised to build a successful educational career.

Experiences of migrant children suggest other ways of remembering and imagining the transnational space of the city, and different landscapes of the city that require our immediate attention. While I was unable to fully elaborate on the experiences of migrant children in this dissertation, these are important issues to examine in future research. I also noticed during my fieldwork that a younger generation of Thai men and women continued to arrive in Yokohama, using their family and friends who already worked in Japan to help them arrange jobs. Like Ton at Maenam Restaurant (Chapter Seven), they find work at Thai businesses, including restaurants, karaoke bars, massage parlors and also in the sex trade. Questions for further exploration include: How do children and younger generations’ experience migration, work and life in Japan? Under what conditions do these experiences take shape? How do they differ from the experiences of older generations?

I am also interested in exploring what Jenny Burman (2006) describes as the “spatial poetics of relation” (p.281) – how migrants of different national backgrounds, scattered from their homelands, arrive and are “emplaced,” “coming into relation with other city residents and their multiple affiliations” (p.282). This requires looking into interrelations between people with different national, social and cultural backgrounds, who do not necessarily share the same language and experience of migration, but get entangled with each other in the city through everyday encounters, making the urban
space “diasporized” (Hall 1990). An example of this might be the community created by hafu children with different cultural backgrounds, like Shin-san and his friends, who came together because of their shared experiences, struggles and desires to find and create a place of belonging. I am interested in examining how migrants’ movements produce a diasporic space in the city, and further, how such a space is shaped by and affects the lives of all other city residents, who do not identify as transmigrant or diasporic (Burman 2006; also see Brah 1996 on the “disaporic space”).

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After a long wait at Khai, at around 2PM on January 24, 2013, Pat-san finally walked in to pick me up. She is a masseuse and long-time friend of Khai’s mama. Knowing that I was visiting Jim-san’s massage place, Mama introduced Pat-san to me as a “real” masseuse. “Jim-chan’s massage is very gentle and soft but hers is really strong. It actually works. You should try it,” she said. Pat-san was fluent in Japanese and we chatted the entire way as she guided me to her massage parlor in Akebonocho, just off of Isezakicho. She said that her store opened at 3PM and would run until the following morning. Apparently, the business hours are centred on nighttime hours to cater to the needs of office workers, both men and women. She usually doesn’t work after 3AM but this morning she had a customer until 8AM. “Sorry, I haven’t even taken a shower today, yet. I am not even wearing my bra!” It sounded like she had just gotten out of the bed. Like many other Thai masseuses in Yokohama, she also obtained her certificate from Wat Pho Buddhist temple in Bangkok and has been working as a masseuse in Yokohama for the past ten years. But she told me that she originally came to the city over twenty years ago and she had known Khai’s mama from the time when Mama was working at a hostess club in Fukutomicho. “Do you teach others too?” I asked. “Sure, I actually taught Jim-chan how to massage. I teach other women too.”
The massage parlor was located in an apartment. It reminded me of a story I heard from others that in the old days, in the initial period of development of Wakabacho’s Little Bangkok, Thai grocery stores were located in apartments. As I stepped into the room I immediately felt like I had entered into someone’s private home. There were some business-like decorations on the walls and a stack of business cards placed on the table near the entrance, but it was also clear that people also lived there. In addition to the massage room, there was a private bedroom with a Japanese-style sliding door left wide open where I found futon bedding spread out on the floor. I was told to wait in the living room until Pat-san finished setting things up for the operation. I greeted other staff: there was another Thai woman who looked familiar (maybe I saw her at one of the Thai restaurants) and a Japanese woman in Thai costume, the only Japanese female worker I had ever seen in any of the Thai businesses I visited in Yokohama. There was also a girl, who perhaps was around ten years old, hanging out in the room, watching a Thai TV show on the computer. Isn’t she supposed to be in school? It was the middle of the day on a weekday. The girl walked into the kitchen to let a white parakeet out from its cage. “Here you go,” she said in fluent Japanese, as she passed it from her fingers to mine. I guessed it was her pet.
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Male Customer, Admiral Pub, 20 March 2012

Male Customer, Tunes Teahouse, 7 March 2012

Mama, Diner, 27 February 2012

Master, Admiral Pub, 25 March 2012

Master, Cups for Few, 8 March 2012

Master, Khai Restaurant, 16 March 2012; 27 November 2012; 20 December 2012; 21 March 2013

Master, Maenam, 29 March 2012; 13 & 19 December 2012; 16 February 2013

Master, Tunes Teahouse, 27 February 2012

Master, Yakitori Bar, 14 March 2012

Meaw, Khai Restaurant, 21 & 28 November 2012; 14 December 2012; 20 February 2013; 13 March 2013
Numata, Former Thai Grocer, 9 March 2012
Server, Papaya Thai, 13 February 2013
Shin, Pub Mary, 11 & 19 December 2012
Tamura, Bar Kikiya, 4 March 2012; 29 March 2012

**Artists, Writers, Independent Activists**

Artist in Wakabacho, 20 February 2012; 8 February 2013
Danbara, T., Non-fiction Writer, 30 January 2012
Ishiuchi, M., Photographer, 6 February 2012
Tani, Amateur Photographer and Community Historian, 4 & 18 March 2012

**Non-Profit Organizations**

Chicada, Representative Director of Terra People Act Kanagawa, 27 November 2012
Ueda, Y. & Ando, M., Volunteers, Kalabaw-no-kai, 15 February 2012
Yamagishi, M., Representative, Kalakasan Migrant Women Empowerment Center, 8 February 2012
Yamano, S., Director, Koganecho Area Management Center, 7 February 2012; 1 March 2013

**Government**

Mori, Y., Creative City Promotion Division, Culture and Tourism Bureau, City of Yokohama, 28 February 2013
Residents

Resident of Yokohama, 3 March 2012

*Walking Workshops/Tours*

Walking Tours Instigated by Researcher (see Appendix C)

Danbara, T., Non-fiction Writer, 30 January 2012

Mama, Diner, 27 February 2012

Meaw, Khai Restaurant, 20 February 2013

Tani, Amateur Photographer and Community Historian, 4 & 18 March 2012

Locally Organized Tours and Workshops

Art Lab Ova. Deep Yokohama Wakabacho tsua [tour], 9 February 2013


Koganecho Area Management Centre. Machi-aruki tsua [Town Walking Tour]. 11 March 2012

Tamura, T., Deep Yokohama nikoniko tsua [tour], 31 January 2012

Yokohama Minato Film Festival, “Shiritsu tantei Hama Maiku” rokechi tsua 2013 [“Private detective Hama Maiku” Location Tour 2013], 17 March 2013

*Map-Making Activities*

*see Appendix D

Master, Maenam, 19 December 2012

Shin, Pub Mary, 19 December 2012
Appendix A.

Interview Protocol

(This protocol was included in my dissertation proposal and approved by my dissertation committee on December 14, 2011)

1. About participants

For members of NGOs:
Can you tell me about your organization?

(Prompt questions)
What are your mandates?
What are your core activities?
Whom does your organization serve (work with)?
What do you offer them?

For cultural producers:
Can you tell me about your work on (migrant) sex workers in Yokohama?

(Prompt questions)
How did the project start?
What were your objectives?
What does your work tell us about migrant sex workers?
Who is your target audience?
How has your work been received?

For people in the community:
Can you tell me about yourself/your business?

2. About migrant sex workers (for everyone)

Can you tell me about the former-red-light-district of Koganecho and women who used work there? To protect their privacy, you can use pseudonyms and only tell me things that you think are appropriate.

(Prompt questions)
What types of services were offered in the district?
What is the demography of sex workers who used to work in Koganecho?
Can you tell me about the police raids that happened in Koganecho in 2005?
Do you know anything else about migrant sex workers in Yokohama in general?
Appendix B.

Storytelling Protocol

(This protocol was included in my dissertation proposal and approved by my dissertation committee on December 14, 2011)

For participants in the first phase:

Topic 1: Participants’ relationship to Yokohama’s waterfront:
Can you describe your relationship to Yokohama’s waterfront?
How did you come to live/work in Yokohama’s waterfront?

Topic 2: History of transnational migration into Yokohama:
Can you tell me anything you know about people who come from abroad to work and/or live in Yokohama?

Topic 3: History of sex work in Yokohama:
Can you tell me anything you know about history of sex work in Yokohama?
Can you tell me about history of migrant sex workers in Yokohama?

Topic 4: Places that are related to migrant sex workers:
Can you draw a picture of a place/places that you think are important or relevant to migrant sex workers in Yokohama?
Can you tell me what is in the picture and why you included them in your drawing?
Can you tell me about other places where something reminds you of migrant sex workers who are no longer in Yokohama?

For migrant sex workers:

*These questions will be modified depending on the specificities of each participant, including their backgrounds and experience of migration and work.

Topic 1: On Yokohama’s waterfront:
Can you draw a picture of Yokohama’s waterfront?
Can you tell me what is in the picture and why you included them in your drawing?

Topic 2: Participants’ relationship to Yokohama’s waterfront:
Where do you usually go to eat in Yokohama?
Where do you usually go to shop in Yokohama?
Where do you usually hang out with your friends in Yokohama?
Is there any particular place in your neighbourhood/Yokohama’s waterfront you feel comfortable?
Is there any particular time/occasion in your everyday life in Yokohama you feel comfortable?

Topic 3: Participants’ vision of future Yokohama
Can you draw a picture of Yokohama in the future?
Can you tell me what is in the picture and why you included them in your drawing?
Is there anything in your everyday life in Yokohama you wish to remember?
Is there anything in your everyday life in Yokohama you wish to be remembered?
Appendix C.

Walking Tour Protocol

(This protocol was included in my dissertation proposal and approved by my dissertation committee on December 14, 2011)

For participants in the first phase:

Step 1: Please take me to a place/places that you think are important or relevant to migrant sex workers who used to work in Koganecho. Please tell me how the place/places are important to them.

Step 2: Please take me to a place/places where something reminds you of migrant sex workers who used to work in Koganecho.

Throughout the tour: If you wish please take photographs of places/objects you think are relevant or important.

*Any of these steps can be skipped if repetitive or uncomfortable for participants.

For migrant sex workers:

Step 1: Please take me to a place/places that is/are familiar to you. Please tell me how it is/they are familiar.

Step 2: Please take me to a place/places where something reminds you of homeland. Please tell me what details in this place/these places remind you of the homeland.

Step 3: Please take me to your favorite place(s). Please tell me what you like about the place(s).

Step 4: Please take me to a place/places you wish to remain as it is/they are. Please tell me why you want it/them to remain there.

Throughout the tour: If you wish please take photographs of places/objects you think are relevant or important.

*Any of these steps can be skipped if repetitive or inappropriate.

**This guideline was partly modeled after O’Neil and Hubbard’s (2010) “Sense of Belonging project.”
Appendix D.

Map-Making Protocol

(This protocol was included in my dissertation proposal and approved by my dissertation committee on December 14, 2011)

For participants in the first phase:

Please make a map of Yokohama’s waterfront that represents places/landscapes that are important to migrant sex workers who used to work in Koganecho. Please use photographs and any other print materials that are available. You can draw any picture or add any text on your map. Your map does not need to resemble how Yokohama’s waterfront would look from the above or how it looks like in reality. Feel free to make a map based on your imagination.

For migrant sex-workers:

Please make a map of Yokohama’s waterfront that represents places/landscapes that are important to you. Please use photographs and any other print materials that are available. You can draw any picture or add any text on your map. Your map does not need to resemble how Yokohama’s waterfront would look from the above or how it looks like in reality. Feel free to make a map that represents how you personally experience and imagine Yokohama’s waterfront.

Please tell me what materials and tools you need to make the map. I will provide the necessary materials and tools.