

Kohl: a Journal for Body and Gender Research  
Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 2022)

## **I hesitate to go alone**

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عندي بطاقة خاصة  
للذهاب إلى كوكب آخر  
خلف هذي الأرض  
عالم مريح جميل،  
لا حرّ هناك ولا بردٌ ولا دخانٌ كثير

I have a special ticket  
to another planet  
beyond this Earth.  
A comfortable world, and beautiful:  
a world without much smoke,  
not too hot  
and not too cold.<sup>1</sup>

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Mparntwe was too hot.

They call Mparntwe *Alice Springs*.

Alice Todd, wife of Sir Charles Todd, whose name the town is named after, actually has never been to *Alice Springs* herself.

Pine Gap is on Mparntwe.

*“The top priority for the Australian-US satellite ground station at Pine Gap, near Alice Springs, has been shifted to intelligence gathering in Iraq, including target identification, ahead of a threatened US-led first strike. [...] Pine Gap will also be able to directly transmit information to commanders in Iraq during a conflict. This would include directing the firing of missiles and the dropping of bombs.”<sup>2</sup>*

There was no smoke in Okinawa... the smoke is in Iraq...

*“the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk based at Yokosuka took part in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Combat aircraft stationed at Misawa and Kadena were also deployed in Iraq as of 2003. The bases in Okinawa in particular are crucial to force projection in the Indian Ocean and the Middle East.”<sup>3</sup>*

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We stand together to oppose the dangerous militarization of this region and the destruction of our peaceful communities and our vital ecologies:

<sup>1</sup> “Another Planet” from *The Iraqi Nights* (2014) by Dunya Mikhail, translated to English by Kareem James Abu-Zeid.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/national/pine-gap-gears-for-war-with-eye-on-iraq-20020930-gdfohm.html>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/understanding\\_the\\_issue\\_of\\_u.s.\\_military\\_bases\\_in\\_okinawa.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/understanding_the_issue_of_u.s._military_bases_in_okinawa.pdf)

- We demand a stop to military exercises, which are escalating regional tensions, wasting precious resources, and leading to the mass beaching of sea mammals.
- We demand a stop to dredging to make new artificial islands, a process that destroys marine ecologies.
- We demand a stop to the naval base construction at Gangjeong [Jeju Island].
- We demand a stop to the helipad construction at Takae [Okinawa].
- We demand a stop to the radar base construction at Yonaguni [Okinawa].
- We demand a stop to the plans for base construction at Ishigaki [Okinawa], Miyakojima (Okinawa), and Amami-Oshima [Kagoshima].
- We demand a stop to the plans for base construction at Henoko [Okinawa].<sup>4</sup>

A list of demands issued by the Inter-Island Solidarity Network during the 2015 after the Peace for the Sea International Peace Camp that took place on Jeju Island, South Korea. The Peace Camp drew activists from Guam, the Philippines, the US, Taiwan among others. These demands show how this transnational solidarity network viewed the region as connected by struggles against militarism and war and by struggles for peace and for ecological justice. Activists in the network imagined the region as centred on the islands in East Asia and their struggles rather than the nation states. By reimagining the region, based on their concept of Peace in the Sea, this solidarity network reshaped the political and geographical spaces of the region based on solidarity.

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الكائنات هناك  
دمثة فوق العادة  
والحكومات  
لا تعمل في الخفاء  
لا وجود للشرطة  
فلا مشاكل  
ولا شجارات

The creatures  
are gentler there,  
and the governments  
have no secrets.  
The police are nonexistent:  
there are no problems  
and no fights.

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<sup>4</sup> "Peace for The Sea In 2015": Statement by Participants of the International Peace Camp Held in Okinawa. <http://savejejunow.org/peace-for-the-sea-in-2015-statement-by-participants-of-the-international-peace-camp-held-in-okinawa/>

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Pine Gap is secret.  
Government business is secret.  
US business is secret.

She told me once, that Jeju Island has seen enough blood and death and suffering, this island has also been a launching pad for killings, blood and suffering elsewhere, it is enough... we do not want our land to be used again to launch more killings, neither here nor elsewhere.

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المدارس  
لا ترهق طلابها  
بواجبات كثيرة،  
فلا تاريخ بعد  
ولا جغرافيا  
ولا لغات أخرى

And the schools  
don't exhaust their students  
with too much work  
for history has yet to start  
and there's no geography  
and no other languages.

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Transoceanic, transborder, transcolonial...  
Beyond geography, beyond language, beyond borders.

Mar and Rhook explored how counter networks “formed bonds and projects against dominant forces, and in particular, against the interests of settler colonists and imperialism.”<sup>5</sup> These counter-networks, “transoceanic, transborder or transcolonial alliances, lateral connections and solidarities”,<sup>6</sup> challenge dominant government and inter-governmental relations. Mar and Rhook further explained the dynamic transformative nature of these counter networks: “networks are not in reality two-dimensional lines, and scholars are now moving to

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<sup>5</sup> Tracey Banivanua Mar and Nadia Rhook, “Counter Networks of Empires: Reading Unexpected People in Unexpected Places,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 19, no. 2 (2018). <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/700162/summary>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

view networks as processes of contingent assemblages of three-dimensional objects, to narrate how power moves and is moved along passages and intensifications of desire and of mobility.”<sup>7</sup>

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وأحسن من كلّ ذلك  
إنّ الحرب هناك  
تركت راءها تتمايل وراءها،  
فنامت الأسلحة  
تحت الغبار  
ومضت الطائرات  
بلا قصف إلى المدن،  
والقواربُ  
بدتْ بعض ابتسامات  
في المياه.

And even better:  
the war  
has left its “r” behind  
and turned into love,  
so the weapons sleep  
beneath the dust,  
and the planes pass by  
without shelling the cities,  
and the boats  
look like smiles  
on the water.

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Leave the war behind,  
Let the weapons sleep.

Uncle Chris says: “It’s not only Black Australia that has a sovereignty issue. The Arrernte people have been the custodians and peaceful protectors of their country for thousands of years. Our sovereignty is contained in our songlines, stories and dances, which have been handed down over thousands of years.”

“As the lawful custodians we are responsible for what occurs on our land and the harm it brings to the rest of the world. The activity of the facility at Pine Gap has implicated us in criminal military actions, which threatens

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

the dignity of all people, implicates us in war crimes and generates instability and conflict around the globe as a consequence of US imperialism.”<sup>8</sup>

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كلّ شيء  
هاديء  
ولطيف  
في الكوكب الآخر  
خلف هذي الأرض  
ولكنّي مزلت متردّدة  
في الذهاب لوحدي

All things  
are peaceful  
and kind  
on the other planet  
beyond this Earth.  
But still I hesitate  
to go alone.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Pine Gap occupies Aboriginal lands of the Arrernte people. Uncle Peltherre Chris Tomlins, Arrernte Elder wrote <https://heartwoodsiteworks.com.au/well-of-tears-visions-of-hope-presenters/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://sites.udmercy.edu/poetry/2017/05/01/may-1-poem-touching-a-longing-for-peace-in-a-violent-world-dunya-mikhail/>