**Trauma and Violence in Contemporary Fiction from Okinawa**

The Emergence of the Basetown in Contemporary Fiction  
Davinder BHOWMIK  (University of Washington)

Spatially Proximate Postmemory: Space, Place and Trauma in Medoruma Shun’s War Fiction  
Kyle IKEDA  (University of Vermont)

Confronting the Ghosts of the Past: Memory and Rupture in Sakiyama Tami’s Kuja Stories  
Victoria YOUNG  (Ph.D. Candidate, University of Leeds)

Chair: Davinder BHOWMIK  (University of Washington)  
Discussant: Michael MOLASKY  (Hitotsubashi University)

This panel addresses the topic of violence and trauma in contemporary fiction from Okinawa through an examination of the work of acclaimed authors Ōshiro Tatsuhiro, Medoruma Shun, and Sakiyama Tami. Davinder Bhowmik will discuss the growing prominence of the basetown, a mainstay of postwar fiction, referencing earlier works by a number of authors but focusing on Ōshiro Tatsuhiro’s *Futenma yo*. Kyle Ikeda considers the impact of inhabiting trauma space on second-generation war survivor Medoruma Shun’s writing about the violent experiences of the Battle of Okinawa. Victoria Young focuses on the questions of memory, narration, and responsibility raised by the ‘Kuja Stories’, a series of seven short stories by Sakiyama Tami set within the hybrid basetown Koza.

In her reading of Ōshiro’s recent basetown fiction Bhowmik demonstrates how *Futenma yo* makes audible the irrepressible violence contained in military structures so often described by critics as naturalized or invisible. Ikeda argues that second-generation Okinawan war postmemory is temporally distant, but spatially proximate, a close and intimate proximity to war space which has significant consequences for Medoruma’s knowledge and understanding of the war. Young considers the impact of Sakiyama’s Kuja as a point of rupture doubly inscribed with the potential for silenced narratives to be heard, and the pain of reencountering a past believed to be forgotten.

In their respective papers Bhowmik, Ikeda, and Young analyze sites of violence in contemporary Okinawan fiction. While the Battle of Okinawa remains the origin for much of the trauma in the writings of Ōshiro Tatsuhiro and Medoruma Shun, these authors show that trauma’s end does not coincide with Japan’s surrender. Rather, military bases and the adjoining townships that emerged soon after the defeat have continued to perpetuate trauma and violence throughout the postwar period. Contemporary authors have employed different strategies to depict the conditions of everyday life in Okinawa. Sakiyama Tami thematizes violence indirectly in her works, though the violence of her writing is quite direct. Medoruma Shun, who identifies himself as a second-generation war survivor, necessarily writes of trauma from some remove. Ōshiro Tatsuhiro aims to keep culture distinct from the politics of the military bases even as his works show how entangled these issues are in Okinawa. The recent works of all three authors not only demonstrate that violence and trauma are major themes in Okinawan fiction, but also that these themes are far from new.