Fiction as a Site of 'Self' Mourning:

A Psychoanalytic Approach to Hayashi Kyōko and Her Atomic Bomb Literature

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Abstract

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As one of the most prolific atomic bomb writers in Japan, Hayashi Kyōko's oeuvre demonstrates the ongoing negotiation of her positionality in relation to the *hibakusha* identity. Adopting a psychoanalytic framework to interpret her narratives, this paper divides Hayashi's four-decade-long writing career into three stages and closely examines representative works from each phase. Her early writings heavily focus on her past experiences surviving the bombing, fulfilling a cathartic need. In the transitional stage, Hayashi undergoes a symbolic pilgrimage around and beyond her *hibakusha* self, leading to her 'self'-less final works dedicated to conveying anti-nuclear messages to a general audience. Despite the rich dynamics, Hayashi Kyōko's works remain underexplored in the English-speaking world. Nevertheless, as we continue to live in the nuclear era, the genre of atomic bomb literature warrants further interpretation.

Introduction

Hayashi Kyōko is known as one of the most prolific atomic bomb writers in Japan. Born in Nagasaki on August 28th, 1930, she grew up in Shanghai, China and did not return to her hometown with her family until the spring of 1945. While she was working as a student recruit at a Mitsubishi munitions factory at the age of fourteen, Hayashi experienced the Nagasaki atomic bombing of August 9th. Although the factory was only 1.4 kilometers away from Ground Zero, she miraculously survived, and the label of '*hibakusha* (lit. 'a person who was bombed,' referring to the survivors affected by the atomic bombings)' has clung to her since.

Due to the scarce availability of her works in English translation, Hayashi's distinguished prose remains underexplored in the English-speaking world. It is also notable that Hayashi did not begin writing on her survival experience until thirty years after the catastrophe. Her debut work *Matsuri no ba* ("Ritual of Death")[1] was first released in 1975 when the then-teenage girl was in her forties. The thirty-year-long silence period alleviated her immediate disorientation, and consequently her debut work earned her both the Gunzo Prize for New Writers and the Akutagawa Prize of the year and became a well-established *hibakusha* account. Widely acclaimed for its realistic depiction of surviving the bombing, *Matsuri no ba* was recognized as Hayashi's magnum opus. Nevertheless, this spectacular first reception was not necessarily the zenith of her career as an atomic bomb writer. She continued to write

[1] Given that there was no official English translation available for most of Hayashi's works, I used the Japanese phonetic *romaji* spellings for all the work titles mentioned in this paper. Accordingly, the English titles were not official but were either conventionally employed by English academia or translated literally by me.

voraciously until she passed away 42 years later. Therefore, it is too limiting to evaluate Hayashi's oeuvre based on a single work, as none of her writings alone can illustrate the dynamic course that her life as a *hibakusha* writer went on to take.

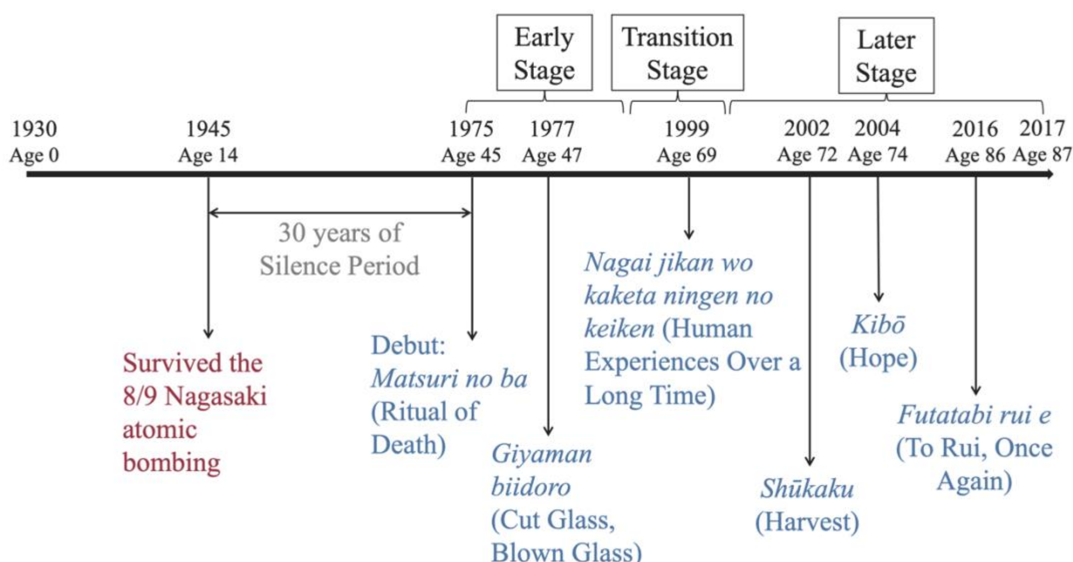

Figure 1. Hayashi Kyōko's Writing Timeline (with Selected Works)

Hayashi's writing career can be roughly divided into three stages (see Figure 1). The early stage, represented by *Matsuri no ba* and a collection of short stories *Giyaman biidoro* (*Cut Glass, Blown Glass*), is heavily centered around her personal experiences and is repetitively negotiating her *hibakusha* identity. Hayashi's other award-winning work *Nagai jikan wo kaketa ningen no keiken* ("Human Experiences Over a Long Time") characterizes her transitional stage around the age of seventy. As the title suggests, it documents Hayashi's accumulative reflection upon her healing process as she is temporally and psychologically distancing herself from the most traumatic moment in her life. This transition of mindset leads her to step into the later

stage marked by a broader nuclear awareness beyond her immediate self. The recurrent nuclear disasters occurring during the last few decades of Hayashi's life trigger the expansion of her writing theme from the specific Nagasaki atomic bombing to many other worldwide nuclear-related incidents which she did not experience personally. From a period of self-introspection early in her career to a broader focus embracing the nuclear-affected community, Hayashi manages to surpass her own ego through her ceaseless marathon of writing—collectively, it is this oeuvre that offers a comprehensive understanding of Hayashi Kyōko as an atomic bomb writer.

Landscape of A-bomb Literature and An Alternative Approach

John Whittier Treat's foundational work *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb* establishes the groundwork for the English-speaking world's understanding of Japanese atomic bomb literature. By surveying works of prominent atomic-bomb writers including Hara Tamiki, Ōta Yōko, and Oda Makoto, Treat outlines the genre with common messages and audience expectations, arguing that this type of literary work carries specific "missions" to be fulfilled: "An 'atomic-bomb literature' must document what happened in August 1945, and at the same time it must help us comprehend what it means to be living today in a nuclear age" (Treat 19). Each author's account is regarded as an essential yet incomplete piece of fragment for restoring a holistic picture of the atomic bombings, and the narratives of different individuals function to supplement one another's experience. Treat's apocalyptic view of the narratives captures the most prominent characteristics of A-bomb trauma as collectivistic and history-oriented, yet at the same time, each author's independent agency is somewhat neglected and dismissed as Treat points to the "absence of individual, private death" in the mass casualty of a genocidal event (10).

In his analysis, Treat roughly centers on the most representative work for each author—for example, *Hiroshima Notes* (1965) for Ōe Kenzaburō and *Black Rain* (1965) for Ibuse Masuji. Although this approach allows scholars to see a rather comprehensive transection of the genre, it simultaneously prevents them from capturing the full dynamics of writers who present evolving perspectives across multiple works. Hayashi Kyōko, as a case in point, wrote about her experience as a

hibakusha for nearly five decades, Hayashi's chronically shifting stance and attitude towards that unforgettable day in August 1945 could hardly be generalized by a single work.

Treat categorizes atomic-bomb writers into three post-nuclear "generations"—the first generation who "convey[s] the unconveyable" and works to restore a sense of reality or reimagine the catastrophe, the second generation who "treat[s] the bombings as a social or individual inner problem" and extends them to a broader political and social context, and the third who "take[s] the meaning of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to be our future as well as our past" and portrays human imagination as permanently threatened (21). Hayashi cannot be simply classified into any one of the generations, or to put it another way, she covers all three of the categories. Throughout her long writing career, her writings at different stages demonstrate traits of each one as she constantly shifts her positionality in response to the larger social and literary discourse of the time as well as her opportune reflection on her life.

Davinder Bhowmik notes the varying nature of Hayashi's self-positioning and characterizes her writings as "free-floating" on the axis of time (Bhowmik 66). Hayashi's frequent revisitation of the bygone August 9th from different points in time blurs the temporal distance between the past moment of bombing and the multiple presents. Her stories follow a rhythmic time that captures the present within the narratives instead of a historical time that restores the objective past. In her writings, the atomic bombing is now accented by narration, and Hayashi is writing at the moment to snapshot her *current* reflection on the disaster. Her writing duplicates and

pluralizes August 9th and thus generates a tension of "strangeness" (*iwakan*) between different versions, as Kuroko Kazuo points to the two conflicting August 9th felt by the *hibakusha* protagonist of *Naki ga gotoki* ("As If Nothing Happened") (Kuroko, *Genbaku* 349). When she attended the lively 1979 Nagasaki Peace Memorial Ceremony, she sensed that "one (August 9th) is weathered while the other is fabricated for the heated atmosphere" (*Zenshū* vol. 1 270).

Sigmund Freud terms such a coexistence of contradictory feelings towards a traumatic incident as the "splitting of the ego" (Freud 3). The protagonist, and thereby Hayashi herself, are simultaneously holding onto two sets of memories regarding August 9th—a teenage self who just experienced the bombing and an older self who had hence survived and lived for decades were witnessing the lively scene side by side. It is commonly observed in Hayashi's writings, since her debut work *Matsuri no ba* ("Ritual of Death",) that she routinely employs the strategy of having two stages of the same narrator at different ages to form a conversation across time. Each ego is living a different August 9th, and each serves as a slice of Hayashi's holistic self.

Freud notes that the splitting of the ego, though justified as a self-protecting mechanism, tends to convert the source of trauma into a "fetish" (5). This corresponds to the severe criticism of the Japanese literary circle (*bundan*) against Hayashi Kyōko in the 1970s and 1980s. Kawamura Jirō, Nakagami Kenji, and Karatani Kōjin openly criticize Hayashi's numerous retellings of her atomic bombing experience as "fetishism" and accuse her of pursuing "A-bomb fascism in the field of literature" (Kawamura et al. 288). Yet their critiques neglect the dynamics of Hayashi's writings.

Her standpoint is hardly static as she keeps incorporating new facts, reacting to recent stimuli, and adopting an alternative attitude. Rather than infatuated reiterations, Hayashi's works are meaningful attempts to examine the life-changing experience from various points of view. Not only is she not obsessed with the atomic bombing as these influential critics indicate, but she also gradually detaches from the moment of the bombing to critically reflect on her life from a distance—in Freudian language, a portion of her self is set over against another to judge it (Lear 5).

Drawing upon Freud's legacy and admitting that the self could be "fluid and multiple," Robert Jay Lifton introduces the concept of "proteanism of self" in response to "an age of fragmentation" (Lifton 28). He captures the widespread anxiety of human beings annihilating themselves after experiencing massive manmade disasters, such as the Nazi genocide and the atomic bombings, and investigates the historical and cultural influences upon self and making meaning thereof:

> This imagery of world destruction and purified restitution taps a universal potential of the individual self: under certain conditions, that is, the self equals its own demise and renewal with that of the world. Cultures have drawn upon this potential in elaborating their particular narratives for giving meaning to death as the harbinger of a better and purer individual and collective future (22).

Self becomes fragmented when contemporary values change, break down, and are reestablished, yet it is legitimate for survivors of the era to reconstitute the self in the face of their loss. As a *hibakusha*—a victim or survivor of the atomic bombing—Hayashi Kyōko journeys through a process of splitting, negotiating, and reconstructing multiple selves in her writing career. A part of her ego is permanently left behind on the day of August 9th, 1945, and even though she navigates her life as a *hibakusha* for more than seven decades, her past ego constantly seeks conversation

with the present self, which urges her to put her pen to paper to reenvision the atomic bombing from multiple presents by different selves.

In that regard, Hayashi's habitual writing serves as her unique mourning ritual. Her works function as platforms that enable communication and reconciliation inside the self. In his recent philosophical writing *Imagining the End*, Jonathan Lear further develops upon the Freudian model that parallels mourning and melancholia as (un)healthy counterparts (Lear 11). The fine line in between is precarious, and failed attempts of mourning have the possibility to deteriorate one's psychological condition by swamping them deeper into trauma. Hayashi's early works, including *Matsuri no ba* (1975) and *Giyaman biidoro* (1977), fall into this toxic category of self-centered mourning in which one becomes both the subject and object of their own mourning activity (7). While *Matsuri no ba* celebrates the thrill of escaping a nuclear massacre and *Giyaman biidoro* laments a haunted middle age, both reveal that Hayashi is inundated by self-pity as part of her mourning process. Lear identifies that "mourning would be healthy only in the extended sense of being efficacious in *getting us back* to ordinary forms of life" (11, emphasis in original). In other words, the ultimate goal of mourning is to resume a healthy mentality before the traumatic stimulus—or at least to a close resemblance. This echoes Treat's designation for the first-generation atomic bomb writers who are expected to restore the reality of the disaster (Treat 21). In Hayashi's case, her early effort lays a foundation for the later stages in which she regains a relatively wholesome mindset through her sustained writing rituals, as shown in *Nagai jikan wo kaketa ningen no keiken* ("Human Experiences Over a Long

Time") and *Futatabi rui e* ("To Rui, Once Again"). The essence of mourning, as Lear points out, is to "transform what would otherwise be a mere change into a loss" and fill the cracks with emotions in order to reconstitute the damaged self (Lear 12). Hayashi's evolving psychology bespeaks of how she apprehends the momentous "change" in her life: at first as a fatal loss and later as a weapon with which she equipped herself to fight against nuclear disasters.

This paper thus aims to adopt a psychoanalytic framework in interpreting Hayashi Kyōko's *hibakusha* narratives. Proclaiming herself as the "storyteller of the August 9th (*hachigatsu kokonoka no kataribe*)," Hayashi's writing becomes the ritual site of her mourning of the *hibakusha* ego. The dynamics of her progressing psyche keynotes the contrasting writing landscapes at different stages, and the writing further rearranges and reshapes her multiple selves in return. The first chapter, "Possession or Obsession? Early Stage of Personal Experience and *Hibakusha* Identity," examines Hayashi's early concentration on her survival experiences and identity crisis. Her obsession with A-bomb narratives could be justified by the urgency in documenting her feelings. The second chapter "From Autobiography to Ethnography: *Hibakusha* Pilgrimage and Triple Readings of the Circular Journey" closely interacts with Hayashi's *Nagai jikan wo kaketa ningen no keiken* ("Human Experiences Over a Long Time") written in her transitional stage and proposes three readings to approach the key symbol of 'circuit' in her writing. The third chapter "Downplaying the Uniqueness of Her 'Self': Anti-nuclear Messages to the Mankind" analyzes Hayashi's final works as achievements of her ego transformation. Her vision is broadened to a

non-personal scope as she dedicates herself to conveying an anti-nuclear message to a nuclear-threatened world. I conclude the paper with a reflection on the barren landscape of atomic bomb literature in English, pointing to the lack of public and academic interest in the genre. As we continue to live in the nuclear era, the genre of atomic bomb literature warrants further interpretation.

Possession or Obsession?

Early Stage of Personal Experience and *Hibakusha* Identity

In 1975, the 44-year-old Hayashi Kyōko published her stunning debut through her autobiographical novella *Matsuri no ba* ("Ritual of Death"). Throughout this first attempt to reflect on her *hibakusha* experiences in the form of formal writing, Hayashi weaves together two narrative voices divided by thirty years of time lag to stitch together her torn sense of time. In the narrative, a teenage narrator who had just survived the atomic bombing in Nagasaki is perplexed and blinded from seeing the whole picture of what happened to her hometown, let alone the realization that this bombing was completely different from any other bombs in the war. This is when the second narrator speaking from thirty years later steps in and introduces the expository knowledge from the future in terms of medicine, science, history, and cultural production to fill in the nescient gaps and establish a holistic understanding of August 9th, 1945.

Compared to other A-bomb writers who composed and published their writings shortly after the bombing incident to express a more immediate reaction to the catastrophe, Hayashi's thirty-year-long silence period makes her unique among the group. The time span allows her panic, agony, and sorrow to subside over time but also slowly tears her apart with part of herself permanently left behind on the day of the Nagasaki bombing. The parallel between the two voices reveals Hayashi's inability to fully reconcile her *hibakusha* memories with her living present. The strategy of constantly switching back and forth between the past progressive and the

present objective narrations conveys the sense of chaos inside her. By way of illustration, she repetitively poses the question, “What on earth is this kind of bomb that causes so much damage as soon as it is dropped,” even though she has an experienced answer to her own question (*Zenshū* vol. 1 25). The first-person perspective of the younger narrator immerses the readers in the post-bombing ruined town in 1945, but frequent interruptions by retrospective facts reminds readers the experience occurred “back then (*ano toki*),” which pulls them back to the present and prevents them from drowning in Hayashi’s past.

Readers’ fluctuating positionality echoes Hayashi’s limbo of life as a living *hibakusha*. For the main character, instead of being emotionally overwhelmed by the unanticipated disaster as a teenage girl would be expected to react, the fourteen-year-old narrator in *Matsuri no ba* appears to be more dispassionate and detached given that she offers a great number of details in observation that presumably exceeds her capacity as an instant survivor. For example, in the scene in which she describes her radiation-induced nausea after she escapes from the most ruined area, she provides an explicit description of her symptoms:

> I couldn’t keep track of time accurately, but about two hours after I experienced the bombing, I began to feel nauseous. I puked in the middle of the field, and it was some white foam. An elder lady with a minor injury thought it was because I didn’t eat lunch, so she brought me some pumpkin from the field. Both the leaves and stems were burned and blown away, leaving only the pumpkins rolling in the field. The lady cut one up with a piece of tile debris and handed it to me. When I sniffed at it, I puked again (*Zenshū* vol. 1 29).

Instead of documentation of her reactive sentiments, whether terrified or grateful, this resembles more of an unconcerned medical record counting the times of vomiting and noting the texture of the vomit. In addition to the loss of affect as a consequence of

the shock, this psychological capacity of restraining emotional venting also reveals the adult-like maturity of the narrator, which does not match the alleged age of the teenage "I." It thus challenges the assumption that the innocent younger voice is independent of the more sophisticated elder narrator and is speaking on her own—it is not the fourteen-year-old Hayashi Kyōko recounting the horrible disaster that just happened to her, but rather, the older self adopting the teenager's point of view and voicing over from behind. The rigid interactions between the two narrators point to the failed communication between her split selves, which serves as a sign of Hayashi's identity crisis as a *hibakusha*.

The narrator's self-diagnosis was followed by a grisly recount of her sensorial memory of the scene:

> The pumpkins rolling in the field under direct sunlight smelled somewhat warmly stinky. When I was chewing it, I puked at the grassy taste. The pumpkins smelled like the grass vapor of summer fields, and if people dried their burned skins under sunlight heat, they would smell the same as the pumpkins. Some people said that tomatoes smelled like blood. The same went for pumpkins (*Zenshū* vol. 1 29).

Humans were not the only victims of the bombing as plants went through the same type of exposure. Here in Hayashi's description, an unpleasant parallel forms between the vegetables and the human survivors: similar to human beings, the pumpkins also survived with severe injuries (leaves and stems burned out), and now they smelled equally burned and bloody as the human beings. In this sense, the pumpkins became metaphoric carriers of the *hibakusha*, and thus eating pumpkins brought not merely the physiological discomfort resulting from the nuclear radiation but more importantly the psychological obstacle of consuming something that smelled like human flesh. A few pages later, Hayashi supplements a section of a pathological research report to

add weight to the pumpkin as a symbol. The Nagasaki Medical University Atomic Bombing Rescue Report disclosed that consuming pumpkins from the exploded area was one of the main reasons that human subjects died of a lethal amount of radiation intake (*Zenshū* vol. 1 37). This additional information further ironized the appearance of pumpkins in the scene—people's means of surviving hunger unexpectedly became their eventual cause of death, coloring Hayashi's *hibakusha* account with a foredoom and tragic hue.

Pumpkins are not the only vehicle that Hayashi employs as a symbolic substitute for her *hibakusha* self. About two years after her literary debut, Hayashi began to publish a series of twelve short stories featuring occurences in her recent life in *Gunzō* in March 1977, an anthology of which is named after one of the stories, *Giyaman biidoro* ("Cut Glass, Blown Glass"). In this title piece, the narrator "I" accompanies her middle school friend Nishida to wander around their hometown Nagasaki in order to look for some Nagasaki glassware, a local craft that is often referred to as *giyaman biidoro*. Visiting multiple vessel shops, both Nishida and the narrator "I" are impressed by the delicate texture and color of the *giyaman biidoro*, yet they have trouble finding a perfectly intact piece that does not have any cracks. They later learn from one of the female owners that all the teacups were wrapped in *washi* paper or cloth and were stored together in a warehouse on the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, but when people opened the boxes afterward, almost all the porcelain and glassware were cracked due to the flash and explosive wind (*Zenshū* vol. 1 143). The narrator "I" soon loses her interest in the glassware hunt as she is

triggered by the shared experience of the vessels and herself. Cracks on the glassware are an embodied form of the physical and psychological damage that the atomic bombing has acted upon local *hibakusha*, and the rarity of "*mukizu* (scarless-ness)" also possessed double meanings and pointed both to the glassware and the *hibakusha* population. The narrator's frustrated response to the damaged glassware indicates a connection Hayashi is making between the flawed glassware and her own broken self. The story ends with Nishida's lament, "No matter how much we look around, there should all be damaged ones." Although Nishida, as a non-*hibakusha*, is likely merely referring to the glassware, the narrator "I"'s agreement to this statement leans more towards an implied sympathy for the wounded *hibakusha*.

Hayashi's endeavor to delineate her *hibakusha* identity is observed across multiple stories from the collection *Giyaman biidoro*. In these accounts, compared to *Matsuri no ba*, Hayashi shifts her focus from telling the survival stories of the teenage girl narrator to depicting the lingering pain that still haunts the middle-aged woman over thirty years after the August 9th. Unlike the catastrophic and momentous representation of the August 9th experience in *Matsuri no ba*, stories from the collection, such as *Seinen tachi* ("Youths") and *Tomo yo* ("Dear Friend"), appeared to be eventless and insignificant. Yet through these glimpses of her current life, one is given access to Hayashi's efforts to cope with her residual trauma.

A significant subject in these works is her social life and friendships with her middle school schoolmates from thirty years ago. *Akikan* ("The Empty Can") features a reunion of the five of them when they revisit the to-be-demolished school grounds

they once attended school together. The school site situated in Nagasaki survived the bombing just as four of the five women did when they were in their teens, and among them, Nishida is the only non-*hibakusha* since she transferred to the school after the bombing. Touring around the campus, the four *hibakusha* become grief stricken when they are reminded of the moment of the bombing by the sight of the old lecture hall, and that is when Nishida's non-*hibakusha* identity comes to the forefront as she cannot join the group recollection of the post-bombing memorial meeting: "when the four of you stood by the entrance of the lecture hall, you were all about to cry. At that moment, you were probably thinking about the memorial meeting, but I didn't have the same picture" (*Zenshū* vol. 1 115). Nishida's otherness as an outlier in the group outlines the others' *hibakusha* status. These shared traumatic memories serve as communal capital and enable them to grieve together without reiterating the past. Nishida's absence of trauma as social capital renders her humble before this *hibakusha*-dominant community, as she expresses her wish to have the same experiences and her guilt for being exempted from suffering their trauma. Through her statement, "when it comes to the topic of A-bomb, I feel weak […] by 'weak' I mean the connections, and the reason for the 'weakness' lies in whether I have ever been bombed personally," the strength of *hibakusha*-*hibakusha* connections is implied (*Zenshū* vol. 1 114-5).

Hibakusha identity as an insider status is further celebrated through a micro-aggressive schism between Nishida and the narrator "I." In *Konpira san* ("Mount Konpira"), Noda, one of the *hibakusha* in the friend group, talks about mistaking

her menopause as pregnancy during their get-together. In response to Noda's story, the narrator "I" and Nishida give markedly different reactions:

> The fact that Noda, who was in the same grade as me back in middle school, had reached her fading period indeed made me sad. Yet on the other hand, I found it marvelous that Noda had always been looking forward to becoming a woman healthy enough to give birth, so I said, "You are so brazen." "That's not true. It's natural for women," Nishida retorted immediately. I looked at Nishida's face in surprise. Her words, "it's natural for women," possessed the wholesomeness of not knowing the horror of blood. I found it even more surprising than Noda dashing into the hospital believing herself pregnant (*Zenshū* vol. 1 130).

While the narrator "I" responds with a seemingly offensive tease, Nishida appears very considerate as she mediates the narrator's offense. Yet the narrator's reaction to Nishida's comment reveals that she is more aligned with Noda than Nishida. The reason that the narrator "I" is justified in making a disrespectful joke to Noda is that their common *hibakusha* identity transfers her outward aggression inward. Derived from their mutual understanding of a *hibakusha*'s precarious health condition, the narrator's seemingly aggressive tease accusing Noda of being "brazen" is more of a self-deprecating—or more precisely, community-deprecating—joke: how would *hibakusha* like us, who can hardly guarantee our own health living an ordinary life, look forward to a risky pregnancy? This can be read as Hayashi's strategy of coping with the *hibakusha* identity as she "pursues critical self-reflection as a means of reconciliation" (Miyamoto 150).

Nishida's mediating comment, on the other hand, serves as a foil to the narrator's inside joke and illustrates the insurmountable threshold of the *hibakusha* community for those who have never experienced the Nagasaki bombing. From the narrator's point of view, Nishida is attempting to resolve a

deadlock that does not exist in the first place. Her counterargument that "it's natural for women" implicitly blames the narrator for a lack of understanding of what it means to be a woman, yet as the narrator's surprised reaction demonstrates, Nishida's simplistic generalization of women does not apply to *hibakusha* femininity. Nishida's understanding of womanhood, along with her "wholesomeness of not knowing the horror of blood," is supposedly normal, yet while "the horror of blood" is intramural knowledge to the *hibakusha* community, Nishida's common sense ironically embodies an ignorance of the plight of *hibakusha* and becomes rather inopportune in this *hibakusha*-dominant gathering. In a Foucauldian model of power/knowledge, Nishida's privileged status as a non-*hibakusha* in this hegemonic discourse is stripped away, and new "privileges of knowledge" are endowed to the *hibakusha* narrator (Foucault 781). By shedding light upon Nishida's incomprehension, Hayashi reforms the power dynamics and celebrates her *hibakusha* identity, rendering her sensible and understandable from the readers' point of view.

On the other hand, Hayashi also frequently borrows her non-*hibakusha* friends' objective perspective and critically inspects her *hibakusha* identity from a distance. In *Noni* ("In the Field"), Hayashi and her middle-school cohort reunites in Nagasaki and attends the annual Homecoming party thirty years after their graduation. During a tea forum, the elder brother of Yamamoto, one of their then-classmates who had passed away shortly after the Nagasaki bombing, tells a touching story of his sister's last moment. A moribund Yamamoto begged her

mother for soda, yet due to a shortage of resources during wartime, leisure goods like soda were nowhere to be found even if people could afford them. To entertain her daughter's final wish, Yamamoto's mother had improvised by mixing baking soda and sugar with water and tricked Yamamoto into drinking it as if it were the real thing. Yamamoto died happily while her mother had fed her the fake soda sip by sip with a spoon,. As the group listens to the story, the narrator "I" cries while drinking a cup of real soda, wishing that her deceased classmate could taste what she is tasting. She believes, as she mutually owns August 9th with Yamamoto, she is able to pass on the taste of the soda that she is drinking to her (Zenshū vol. 1 258).

At the moment, Shiba, a non-*hibakusha* friend who also transferred to the middle school after the bombing like Nishida did, gently knocks on the narrator's knee and teases her for being able to drink the soda even while listening to such a heartbreaking story. When Shiba and Nishida mockingly exclaim over the narrator's "big-heartedness (*shinken no futosa*)," she is abashed for being insensitive and disrespectful to Yamamoto and the solemn memorial (259). In comparison, even though Shiba and Nishida as "outsiders (*bugai sha*)" are barred from entering the mourning zone of the August 9th, they have more scruples about behaving appropriately and respectfully and are hence more cautious in the scene. Through their divisive diction of "you guys (*anata tachi*)" and "us (*watashi tachi*)," it is clear that the non-*hibakusha* are also aware of the community boundary that makes them the insignificant Others in the *genbaku* discourse. Yet

on the other hand, it is their bystander status that allows them to view the scenario from a bird's-eye view and perhaps help the insiders to dredge knots they have in their hearts. Later in the story, Shiba and Nishida explain to the narrator that they are not literally blaming her for being insensitive, as they in fact appreciate the narrator while she was drinking the soda, "Isn't that great? It means that you have survived it for 32 years. In a manner of speaking, you are saved by the way you are drinking soda—that is how you keep living for the future" (259). While in the previous scene in *Konpira san*, the narrator utilizes the otherness of her non-*hibakusha* friends to delimit her *hibakusha* identity, here she embraces their outsider insight and compassion to relieve her traumatic stress.

As demonstrated in the abovementioned scenes, the narrator "I" constantly negotiates her positionality through interactions with her *hibakusha* and non-*hibakusha* friends. These works are mostly written in the first person, and due to the intertextuality in which main characters like Nishida who reappear across different stories, it is reasonable to speculate that Hayashi's early writings are mainly projecting her personal experiences. Even in her first full-length novel *Naki ga gotoki* ("As If Nothing Happened," 1980) which employs the third person *onna* ("the woman") as the narrator, the middle section still shifts back to the first person, and the shadow of Hayashi's actual experiences is observed from place to place in the woman's narration. The autobiographical quality renders the narrators in the stories interchangeable with the author herself, and the narrators' voicing can be considered analogous to Hayashi's own opinions. These early works of

hers reveal her journey going through an identity crisis as she repeatedly revisits her blood-tinged teenage memories and attempts to reconcile them with the middle-aged present. These reminiscences aim to resolve childhood pain through a grown-up perspective but ironically intensify the fracturing of ego at the same time—the teenage self remains traumatized and is constantly calling the present self for another revisit to the past.

Nakagami Kenji and his peers' critique of Hayashi's early works as "fetishism" is not completely overstated, given that Hayashi seems to have been obsessed with writing on the same topic repetitively over a short span of time, at least during the early stage of her writing career. The question that lingers is whether the obsession is justified. Hayashi lagged behind her peer A-bomb writers in terms of the time when she started writing about her *hibakusha* experiences, and her anxiety in the "weathering (*fūka*)" of memories is thus more salient (*Zenshū* vol. 1 270). The sense of urgency she felt to prevent herself from forgetting prompted her to reiterate the same message. On the other hand, Hayashi's early works, especially *Matsuri no ba*, are denounced by the Japanese literary circle (*bundan*) for their lack of artistry, and critics harshly assert that Hayashi's works are not novels and should not even be considered literature (Furuya & Nakagami 217). This was a time when fictional stories such as *Kuroi ame* ("Black Rain") by Ibuse Masuji and *Natsu no hana* ("Summer Flower") by Hara Tamiki had become the sanctioned A-bomb literature due to their inclusion in high school textbooks as educational materials in the 1970s, making Hayashi's

reportage fiction understandably unpopular (Nosaka 46). Admittedly, *Matsuri no ba* and the collection of *Giyaman biidoro* are more autobiographical than they are fictional. Hayashi's possession of genuine experiences as a *hibakusha* writer provides grounds for this quality and legitimizes her use of these experiences as a center piece as she started her writing career. Moreover, fully addressing her personal history and exploring her identity prepared her to move beyond the swirl of self-pity and set her sights on a broader and more compassionate reading of the bombing tragedy.

From Autobiography to Ethnography:

***Hibakusha* Pilgrimage and Triple Readings of a Circular Journey**

In 1999, Hayashi Kyōko published another award-winning work *Nagai jikan wo kaketa ningen no keiken* ("Human Experiences Over a Long Time," hereinafter referred to as *Nagai jikan*). Following the undisputedly autobiographical writing *Matsuri no ba*, *Nagai jikan* arguably preserves the same narration style as the first-person narrator is inextricably interconnected to Hayashi herself. As the title suggests, this piece documents Hayashi's reflection passing the age of 60 and approaching the milestone of 70. During the eventful decade, she made a *henro* pilgrimage which demanded that she follow a circular-shaped route around the Kansai area, visiting dozens of Buddhist temples and sacred sites as a spiritual routine and collecting the *shuin* seal stamps at each stop. The pilgrimage journey was triggered by the disappearance of one of the narrator's *hibakusha* friends, Kana. After Kana's husband, who was also the last living member of her immediate family, passed away, Kana lost all her familial ties and was left alone in the world alone. She called the narrator "I" to inform her of the tearful news, but when the narrator tried to check in with her a month later, neither she nor any of their other middle school classmates could reach Kana. Although it was natural and reasonable to assume that Kana followed her husband in death and left without her friends' knowledge, the narrator held onto a surprisingly optimistic hypothesis that Kana, with her cheerful and unruly character derived from a bourgeoisie family background, simply disappeared to somewhere by herself (*Zenshū* vol. 6 14). Holding on to this belief, the narrator went on the

pilgrimage, collecting the seal stamps on Kana's hand towel to pray for her well-being while she was in places unknown.

Through the narrator's concern for Kana, it is unveiled that Hayashi is projecting herself onto Kana. The shared experience of the August 9th bombing homogenizes the two young women as they both settled into their identities as *hibakusha* thenceforth. While they would go on to make contrasting life decisions—the narrator decided to go through a highly risky pregnancy and give birth to a child while Kana took the path of not having any children—they ultimately become living foils of each other through the choices that they had made throughout their lives as *hibakusha*. For example, the narrator demonstrates great empathy for Kana's choice to disappear from all social connections:

> Even though we have chosen different lifepaths, it doesn't change the fact that we are both chained by August 9th and feel lonely because of that. That's why Kana's actions after Ryōsuke (Kana's husband) died resonate with me. I don't think she is out of her mind; maybe someday, I will also hide myself somewhere where nobody's prying eyes could ever reach me. It was not about whether I have children; I just want to embrace the last day of my life in uneventful peace (*Zenshū* vol. 6 14-15).

Kana's endgame offers Hayashi a perspective of the predicament she may also face someday in the future and urges her to imagine her last moment.

Yet what distinguishes her present perspective from her previous mindset is a remodeled anticipation of her own death. In *Matsuri no ba*, she is trapped in the mind of her fourteen-year-old self as well as the remote possibility that she could have died in or shortly after the bombing. Her narration guiding the readers through that horrific day was breathtaking because they could feel the tension that she would have died at any moment after 11:02 AM—when she fled the factory, when she vomited radiation-

contaminated pumpkin, when she was reunited with her family, etc.—just like many other *hibakusha* who had failed to survive at some point during those terrifying hours directly following the bombing. Witnessing the successive death of people around her over the past thirty years, the narrator in *Matsuri no ba* is haunted by the indecent and painful death induced by atomic bomb sickness (*genbakushō*) since she can envision herself being in their shoes. In other words, as she kept viewing other *hibakusha* as mirroring herself, when they passed away, she felt that part of herself died along with them. Nevertheless, the narrator in *Nagai jikan*, who has safely made it to her sixties and is temporally closer to a 'natural death' than to the teenage when she was first traumatized, finally had the abundance mindset to visualize herself paying the debt of nature. Kana's story serves as the catalyst of the narrator's transformation, turning her vision staring at the despairing selves in the past who could have died at any time to a focus on the plausible future selves who might attain a satisfactory ending eventually.

Nosaka Akio argues that Hayashi's writing career, beginning with *Matsuri no ba* and ending with *Nagai jikan*, forms a "circular ring" (41). For Hayashi, who continuously wrote on the atomic bombing for a quarter of a century, *Nagai jikan* is a landmark piece reflecting on the long journey she had so far traveled. While the 45-year-old narrator in *Matsuri no ba* is reexamining the thirty-year-younger "I" and reevaluating her difficult experiences, the 69-year-old narrator in *Nagai jikan* is also reassessing her past self—the one who was twenty-four years younger and served as the voice of *Matsuri no ba*. As her most representative work, *Matsuri no ba* is mentioned on multiple occasions throughout *Nagai jikan*, yet the current narrator's

feelings for her precedent are rather complicated, connoting both empathy and criticism. Her opinion on the inhumanity of the atomic bombing remained aligns with the middle-aged self, yet the narrative tone grows more compassionate and affective compared to the noteworthy detachment in *Matsuri no ba*. Her early works possess the "acerbity and sarcasm derived from the lost and depressed emotions that sometimes vented at the U.S. and sometimes at herself" (42). In contrast when she penned *Nagai jikan*, she was finally able to reconcile with her past self and speak frankly about her internal struggles.

For example, the narrator recalls her grueling psychological state when she learns about the news of her classmates' deaths after the bombing, an admission that could hardly fit into the debut work *Matsuri no ba*:

> Back then, rather than praying for my departed friends' afterlife happiness, I only begged for my own salvation. About two months after the August 9th, away from the hills of the Matsuyama town, I didn't even chant the name of the Buddha but blindly begged for help—in order to return to the previous me before taking on the blast. After living for a long time since then, now the actuality of death and life in my words is already diluted (*Zenshū* vol. 6 56).

The narrator's emotive reflection supplements her impersonal description of what practically happened to her fourteen-year-old self in *Matsuri no ba*. Her outspokenness regarding her vulnerability then is assuaged by resolutions experienced over a long period of time. In another instance, the narrator even makes a joke, a bitterly ironic one, about her radioactively poisoned body with a doctor friend: "I asked Dr. S, who was quietly drinking his lemon tea, 'if I put a Geiger counter in my body, would the alarm go off?' Dr. S laughed, and I laughed too […] 'Because I have lived till this age, I can laugh on most occasions,' I said" (*Zenshū* vol. 6 72-73). The

use of humor is another sign of the narrator accommodating herself with the unsolvable *hibakusha* condition. Among the discussions on the consequences of the bombing, the lighthearted moment mildly neutralizes the heavy atmosphere and adds a hopeful hue to the work as a whole.

Both instances echoes a phrase that the narrator repetitively mentions in the story, an "enemy from inside (*naibu no teki*)," which is also the title of an official report regarding the explosion of the atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico in the 1945 Trinity test (*Zenshū* vol. 6 70). The "enemy from inside" refers to the residual radiation left in the *hibakusha*'s bodies that makes them remain exposed over decades, but more importantly, it has another implication—what impedes Hayashi from reconciling with herself is also herself. Her acquired candor with her feelings in her sixties thus becomes a countermeasure to the imaginary foe. In an overall survey of her writings so far, the portrayal of pathos in *Nagai jikan* compensates for the deliberate objectivity in *Matsuri no ba*. This equilibrium of self thus annotates the "closing of the circular loop" (Nosaka 41).

In the narrative flow of *Nagai jikan*, the *henro* pilgrimage journey is juxtaposed by multiple interludes introducing the life stories of the narrator's acquaintances. Her neighbor, whom she respectfully refers to as "Philosopher" due to his academic accomplishment in Chinese philosophical research, peacefully passes away with his wife by his sickbed; a stranger *hibakusha* woman whom the narrator meets at the annual Memorial Ceremony pours out her experiences of barely surviving before and after the bombing; the narrator's 80-year-old doctor friend who continuously treats

hibakusha patients through his medical career is in fact a *hibakusha* of the August 6th Hiroshima bombing himself…… Conducting interviews and tracking their life histories, the narrator compiles an ethnography of people she encounters while living a *hibakusha* life until the age of seventy. Compared to Hayashi's previous works which could be reasonably labeled as autobiographical as the "I" along with her personal trauma are heavily involved, *Nagai jikan* shows the self-alienating tendencies of and its narrator as she redirects her attention to others, whose stories also deserve to be heard. Up to this transitional phase of Hayashi's writing career, she has moved beyond the stage where she is trapped in the endless self-pity, remorse, and rage around her own ego. Instead, she has learned to employ her *hibakusha* identity as a lens to comprehend and establish meaningful connections with others with whom she empathizes. This, in turn, allows her to adopt a more open-minded understanding of her *hibakusha* identity.

Up to this point, the writing style in *Nagai jikan* appeals to a tripartite reading of the symbolic structure of a 'circular journey.' First, the physical annular *henro* pilgrimage sketches the contours of this narrative as a circular ring. The narrator visits 33 sacred sites in total during her trip, and it is very impressive for someone her age, not to mention someone with a chronic health condition as a *hibakusha*. Second, as Nosaka argues, *Nagai jikan* closed the circular loop of Hayashi's writing career that began with *Matsuri no ba*. The affective style of *Nagai jikan* supplemented the intentional aloofness of her early works. Third, through her ethnographical style of writing in *Nagai jikan*, Hayashi also makes a symbolic pilgrimage *around* her

hibakusha self. Her life thus far had always been living around the traumatic experience that she could not get rid of, yet when she is finally able to turn her vision from staring inward at herself to looking outward at others who lived through alternative life experiences, the bridge between self and others allows her to reconsider who she really was.

In addition to the triple meaning of 'circular loop,' it is also worth mentioning that *Nagai jikan* includes many concentrated passages depicting the beauty of nature, which was an unprecedented phenomenon in Hayashi's writing thus far. In one scene, the narrator reaches a pilgrimage site located on top of a mountain. After climbing up the mountain with considerable difficulty, she documents the natural view poetically:

> Strong horizontal wind blew from the woods as we stepped into the temple territory. "The greenness here is quite different," said the youths (the narrator's peer pilgrims) who looked up at the tips of the trees that were swinging with the wind. The humid wind coming from the Pacific Ocean should be able to blow away the stinky pollutants generated by humans or vehicle exhaust. If you entered the peninsula driving a car, the air, the greenness of the trees, as well as the color of the soil would all become different. Before people began to seed the local specialty winter daikon, the red soil field was deeply plowed and devouringly absorbed the sun, and the leaves of the widely spread trees were waving like dark tides and shining. The blurry color in between was nowhere else to be found in the scenery (*Zenshū* vol. 6 6).

The tranquil atmosphere created is particularly comforting in the context of *hibakusha* literature. Compared to the stifling density of *Matsuri no ba*, *Nagai jikan* permits several spare moments like this, which corresponded to Hayashi's outward journey. The relaxation of tension goes further beyond nature and reaches a harmony between nature, the human world, and consequently the Buddhist Pure Land through the intermedium of pilgrimage, as shown in the following quote:

It seemed like the abbot was back, as the sound of sutra-reading was flowing out.

> The women also joined the chorus. The bell rang to suture the gaps in between the sounds. Tinkle, tinkle. When the bell vibrated, it made such a beautiful timbre. One ring after another, each sound drew a silver ring to twine in the previous rings as they were blown towards the sea. I believe this was the sound of Kalaviṅka who was living in the Pure Land (*Zenshū* vol. 6 8).

While the pilgrimage is allegedly for the blessing of the narrator's friend Kana, nature's underlying connections with Buddhist ideology also offer potential salvation to the narrator. Religious imagery intertwines with natural elements and forms a fine view. This shift in tone helps mediate the appalling bombing-related scenes that had always been the central theme of Hayashi's works.

While critics accused Hayashi of writing "fetishistically" about her atomic bombing experience based on her early works, her writings during this transitional stage demonstrated the transfer of her obsession towards nature (Nosaka 53). Infatuation with nature serves as a means of catharsis in the midst of her own psychological chaos. Although from the narration, it seems that Hayashi already accepted the bodily damage caused by the atomic bombing as part of her self, she in contrast had grown to deny and expel this identity and instead embraced the fetishism in regards to nature in order to make peace with her past trauma. *Nagai jikan*, though a testament to Hayashi's progress in stepping away from the struggle of self, ironically also stresses her strong consciousness of the ego transformation.

Downplaying the Uniqueness of 'Self':

Anti-nuclear Messages to Mankind

When *Nagai jikan wo kaketa ningen no keiken* ("Human Experiences Over a Long Time") was published in an offprint in 2000, it came along with another short writing, *Toriniti kara toriniti e* ("From Trinity to Trinity"). This piece records Hayashi's other pilgrimage where she visited the Trinity site in northern New Mexico, Ground Zero of the atomic bomb and research site where the two bombs were developed. Astonished by the bleak landscape caused by the unimaginably great amount of exposure, Hayashi exclaimed through tears, "I have always believed that we human beings were the first victims of nuclear energy, but that was not true. Here (the land) is our hibakusha predecessor. Here it is yet unable to cry nor shout" (*Zenshū* vol. 6 106). What shocked her the most was the "pain of the earth (*daichi no itami*)" that is oppressed year after year because, unlike human *hibakusha* with voices, the agony of the earth has no way to be let out. She hence believed that the ground was reticently watching her and guarding her trauma, the remnants from the day she ran away from the bombed factory. This affinity with nature through this status as a common victim as well as the expansion of her definition of *hibakusha* definition marked Hayashi's transit to the final stage of her writing career.

The sunset period of Hayashi's writing career coincided with an eventful development in the nuclear discourse. In 1999, a criticality accident occurred at a fuel preparation facility in the village of Tōkai in Ibaraki Prefecture. During a twenty-hour span, the incident caused the death of two factory workers and exposed more than 600

people to radiation. Twelve years later, in 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake triggered a massive tsunami, which flooded the reactors at the Fukushima nuclear plant and caused a severe meltdown, which impacted an extensive area and kept it contaminated for the next decade. During this time, Hayashi's anti-nuclear awareness began to dominate her passion for writing. Her concerns for the consequences of nuclear disasters started to extend beyond her immediate self and to a wider group of people, reaching a much more macroscopic level. At this final stage, her own ego did not play a significant role anymore.

For example, in 2004, Hayashi released a novella under the title of *Kibō* ("Hope"). The story portrays a medical student Ryō who falls in love with a girl, Takako, whom he has known through their parents. Takako had lost her father, who was a professor at the Nagasaki Medical University, on the day of August 9th, and she becomes a secondary *hibakusha* herself when she goes back to the radioactively contaminated site to look for her father's remains—though the second character of *hibaku* is written as 曝, to be exposed, in place of the conventional 爆, to be bombed. Her heart has been closed thereafter, but as Ryō patiently accompanies her and walks through difficulties with her over the years, Takako finally drops her guard and creates a loving family with Ryō.

The female protagonist Takako is not a representation of Hayashi herself as Takako's story does not match Hayashi's life history. Hayashi composed the narrative around the life story of her friend M-ko based on the letters she used to send to her best friend ("'*Kibō*' *ni tsuite*" 58). Yet some realistic and vivid details in the novel

make it seem like the author has lived through the experiences herself. For instance, in the scene in which Takako goes to her father's university to look for him after the bombing, one of her father's medical students helps her find his skull in the ruins:

> There were twelve or thirteen hills of white bones, and there was a skull away from them in the front. The student of the professor bent down to look at the skull, "That's it. That is very similar to Professor's head shape. It can't be wrong." Surprisingly, Takako was very composed. She slowly embraced the perfect skull on which not any slice of flesh or hair was left, and she was not scared. The only parts left were this fragile skull, three more pieces of backbones around it, and something that looked like a piece of carpal bone. It seemed like everything below the professor's waist was buried under the fallen wall (*Zenshū* vol. 6 321).

The highly realistic depiction of details is a well-balanced combination of Hayashi's personal experience witnessing the tragic situation of the August 9th and her creative imagination as a writer (Xiong 190). Her life history as a *hibakusha* was no longer the theme of her writing but rather an inspirational tool helping her picture a fictional yet related *hibakusha* story. Although Hayashi serves as the voice of Takako and Ryō's story, she had now left her role as an actor who appears on the stage.

Hayashi's 2002 novel *Shūkaku* ("Harvest") presents the story of an elderly farmer Yamada who makes a living growing sweet potatoes. Yamada's daily mood is deeply affected by the sweet potatoes, as he takes great pride in the crops that carries the "taste of the earth" (*Zenshū* vol. 6 265). On the day of the criticality accident—implying to the 1999 Tōkaimura nuclear accident—the dog at the Yamada household first notices the abnormality as it will not stop barking. After Yamada learns about the potential exposure in his village and hence his farmland, he is extremely concerned, first wanting to keep the sweet potatoes buried to protect them from the contamination on the soil's surface and then deciding to dig them out anyway to look at them one

more time appreciatively. The story concludes on a depressing note with an open ending. Yamada plans to try for purple sweet potatoes the following year, yet he also laments that it could be his last time growing potatoes, without clarifying whether it is him or the earth that may not last till the next farming cycle.

Shūkaku is a major departure from Hayashi's works thus far as this is her first 'self'-less novel. Written in the third person and telling a non-Nagasaki-*hibakusha* story, *Shūkaku* is a fully fictional work as the shadow of Hayashi's personal experiences is no longer anywhere to be found. It rather resembles the orthodox Japanese fiction of the time that demanded that writers delicately design the narratives out of their imagination rather than their past experiences. The *bundan*'s early critique of Hayashi, claiming that her early works are not novels and not even literature due to the low artistry and high autobiographical quality, consequently cannot be applied to this work.

On the other hand, Hayashi's shift in focus from the 1945 atomic bombing to the 1999 criticality accident was remarkable. Personal versus non-personal, chronic suffering versus instant turmoil, the established *hibakusha* writer Hayashi's choice of composing the seemingly irrelevant story of *Shūkaku* demands further explanation. Yao Chen points out that this shift was made possible by Hayashi's realization of the inhuman and violent nature of nuclear power (Chen 28). As early as 1979, Hayashi wrote an essay *Doko made nigereba iino darou ne* ("Where Should I Run Away Towards") crying for help in a time when "the world is slowly contaminated by nuclear substance" (*Doko* 114). The eloquent title revealed that she was aware of the

ubiquity of nuclear power and its pervasive growth (Iwagawa 199). The "I" in the title "where should I run away towards" did not merely represent Hayashi herself but everyone living in this nuclear epoch—in the discussion around nuclear power, in contrast with her initial writings about the atomic bombing, this "I" is no longer just referring to Hayashi. Moreover, Hayashi's message has remained relevant and appropriate in the 1999 post-criticality discourse and continuously in the following decades.

In Hayashi's final work *Futatabi rui e* ("To Rui, Once Again"), published one year before she passed away in 2017, Hayashi gave her last lament for the contemporary nuclear era. This piece is presented in the form of a letter, addressed to the narrator's friend Rui. The name Rui first appears in *Toriniti kara toriniti e* ("From Trinity to Trinity"), when the narrator is also writing a letter to her on the night before her visit to the Ground Zero in New Mexico to ask about the Tōkaimura accident that had just happened back in Japan: "I'm very anxious about the severity of the accident. I have too much time before tomorrow morning—when I will head to the Trinity site—so that I can't calm down, and thus I decided to write you a letter" (*Zenshū* vol. 6 97). More than a decade after the first letter, the narrator releases her second and possibly the last letter to Rui. It is when the social discussion around the 2011 Triple Disasters that happened five years ago is still in the present tense, and the narrator is concerned about a potential governmental move planning to disperse the contaminated debris of Fukushima to Nagasaki. When the narrator is asked about her stance on the controversial issue, she refuses to answer, but her frustration with the

proposal is barely concealed: "No matter what the amount, these are 'ashes of death.' This is not a problem of sharing the pain of a natural disaster, or of repaying debts, or of the traditional Japanese value system, 'moral obligation and humane feelings'" (Hayashi, Mitsutani, & Otake 17). As a *hibakusha* from Nagasaki, she voiced the historical trauma of her hometown as a "[site] of human suffering":

> Rui. As soon as I was asked the question, my own answer flashed into my mind. It was the phrase "sacred ground." That surprised even me. I saw the dead and suffering hibakusha in Urakami on August 9—even now they are lying under Urakami, under the city of Nagasaki. As I ran past, they asked for medicine, or water. I'm sure that minutes later, many of them were dead. Rui. None of them said, "Kill me." And now we're going to pile a twenty-first century nuclear disaster on top of them? I can't stand it (17).

Between the two nuclear disasters—one on August 9th, 1945 in Nagasaki and the other on March 11th, 2011 in Fukushima—a connection had been formed, yet the trauma was still separated by the decades in between. The Fukushima problem would not be solved by dumping the debris along with the struggles of the already wounded Nagasaki, and Nagasaki would not be healed by witnessing another city suffering from the same nuclear-induced pain. Hayashi was frustrated that more than seven decades after the first atomic bombing occurred in Japan, the trauma of nuclear disasters in her country was not waning but instead spreading and accumulating.

Kazuo Kuroko argues in his interpretation of *Toriniti kara toriniti e* that the narrator's addressee Rui, while written in *katakana* phonetic script instead of the *kanji* Chinese characters, goes beyond a friend's name and potentially implies the Japanese term *jinrui*, which refers to mankind in general (Kuroko, "*Toriniti*" 494). Aukema further builds upon this reading and points out that Rui's yearning to become someone just like the narrator after she grows up can be read as "humanity's fascination with

atomic energy," and her teasing critique of the narrator's decision to visit the Trinity site, by calling her an "A-bomb maniac," is parallel to the "fetishism" criticism that Hayashi had faced for the entirety of her writing career (Aukema 4). Close to the end of *Futatabi rui e*, the narrator claims that she eventually obtained a tranquil mind after attending a 2012 large-scale anti-nuclear demonstration in the Yoyogi park in Tokyo, as she saw that hundreds of thousands of people embraced the admonishment of nuclear power, a cause she had dedicated he whole life to conveying, as she wrote, "Rui. The uncertainty I've felt since the Great East Japan Earthquake, all that confusion, is over. I'm starting over, from Yoyogi Park, humbled, with nothing but the life I was given on that hill at Urakami. All I have to do now is live honestly for whatever time is left me" (Hayashi, Mitsutani, & Otake 18-19). Hayashi leaves the ending open by asking a simple yet thought-provoking question back to Rui or mankind, "Rui. One last question. Do you affirm your own life?" (19). As her final message, she passes on her ceaseless contemplation of the significance of nuclear power to a broad audience for posterity.

Conclusion and Discussion: The 'Unpopular' A-bomb Literature

In this overview of Hayashi Kyōko's oeuvre, the manifestation of Hayashi's personal growth as an atomic bomb writer is indisputable. After thirty years of silence, her first several works were heavily self-focused on fulfilling a cathartic need. Repeatedly revisiting disturbing memories, she viewed her precarious present as a direct consequence as well as an endless extension of the devastating past. Nevertheless, a continuous abreaction mitigated the urgency in vocalizing her experiences, and by the third decade of her writing career, Hayashi's writing had begun to show signs of an evolution that had occurred in relation to her *hibakusha* identity. The Buddhist pilgrimage documented in *Nagai jikan wo kaketa ningen no keiken* did not merely reproduce the physical journey Hayashi goes through but is also a symbolic representation of her identity pilgrimage around and beyond her *hibakusha* self. Here, her writing starts to transcend the 'curse' of autobiography as she adopts an ethnographical writing style based on her in-depth contact with other *hibakusha* and beyond. After her visit to the Trinity test site during the same year, she completed this shift in focus as the element of 'self' is barely observed in her final works. Instead, her anti-nuclear messages become outspoken for others who were also living under the constant threat of nuclear annihilation.

Throughout my research on Hayashi Kyōko, I encountered a noteworthy academic barrenness in the landscape of atomic bomb literature in the English-speaking world. Few of Hayashi's works is officially translated to English in publication—with one exception of *Toriniti kara toriniti e*, which was published

under the title of "From Trinity to Trinity" in 2010.[2] In the U.S., the availability of translation is usually impacted by the publishers' willingness to take on certain topics, which is in turn determined by their preconception of the works' popularity among readers (Vincent et al.). Hence, it is understandable that "From Trinity to Trinity" is Hayashi's only work translated and published in English because it is the sole story of a Japanese *hibakusha* "confront[ing] American attitudes" (Hayashi & Otake, back of dust jacket). Admittedly, the sensitive relationship between Japan and the U.S. in the discourse of atomic bombing is the mainspring of the incommunicative situation. Both parties resist digging into the issue deeply in case they touch on their respective war crimes. On the one hand, the U.S. avoids disseminating Japanese accounts of the bombing incidents to maintain the authority of the national narrative; on the other hand, A-bomb literature in Japan and the Japanese language also exists in a vacuum as *hibakusha* are portrayed as absolute victims without reflecting on the guiltiness of Japan during the World War II. As a result, the genre of atomic bomb literature has been confined to a limited sphere of discussion to date.

Going back to Hayashi's last work *Futatabi rui e*, her final message addressed to every human being, regardless of their nationality or political stand, to give a warning of the destructiveness of nuclear power and the standing aftermath. The necessity of reading atomic bomb literature in the nuclear age thus surpasses the endless historical debate around war accountability and is generalizable for anyone who coexists with

[2] Hayashi's other translated works including, but not limited to, *Akikan* ("The Empty Can"), *Matsuri no ba* ("Ritual of Death"), and *Futari no bohyō* ("Two Grave Markers") are published in anthologies instead of an independent volume.

nuclear power. Hayashi's resilience as a *hibakusha* as revealed through her writings is especially appropriate to the present, as each individual might become Hayashi—a *hibakusha*—someday and thus is expected to psychologically equip themselves in advance. As long as we continue to livee in the nuclear era, Hayashi's works and the genre of atomic bomb literature remain highly relevant and will surely attract further research and interpretation.

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