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The Literature Trapped Under the Mushroom Cloud:

The Brave *Hibakusha* Authors the Appropriation of their Narratives by Non-*Hibakusha*

Japan became the only nation in the world to have experienced the trauma that is atomic bombing when the United States dropped Little Boy and Fat Man on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Besides the catastrophic physical damage done by these bombs, that reduced the two cities to ruins, the bombs claimed thousands of lives and affected the lives of even more. There are over 175,000 names of the dead commemorated at the peace park in Hiroshima and over 70,000 people died due to the bombing at Nagasaki.[1] Beyond these immediate deaths, survivors were subject to radiation sickness and Hiroshima's newspaper, the *Chugoku Shimbun* cites that by 1950 there had been over 280,000 deaths related to the bombing, with the same count in Nagasaki reaching around 140,000.[2] The atomic bombs subjected those present in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to terrible horrors and pain that the rest of us can only imagine. These people are now referred to as *hibakusha* (被爆者), which translates literally to a person who was under attack by a bomb but conveys the connotation of those who were attacked by nuclear weapons such as atomic bombs, the only of which were used on Japanese in Hiroshima and

[1] Naono, Akiko "The Origins of 'Hibakusha' as a Scientific and Political Classification of the Survivor." *Japanese Studies* 39.3 (2019): 333-52. Web.
[2] Ibid.

Nagasaki (as well as Bikini Atoll).[3,4] The *hibakusha*'s narratives shed light on to what their experiences as the only survivors of atomic bombs were like.

Following the atomic bombings, several *hibakusha* wanted to document their experiences and stories as literary works. However, due to criticism from the literary mainstream, censorship during U.S. occupation, and disagreement amongst *hibakusha* on how to respond to the bombings, they struggled to get their works published, recognized, and widely read. Although a number of non-*hibakusha* came to promote hibakusha stories through their own literary works, in doing so they appropriated *hibakusha*'s narratives, diminished the event of the bombing, and made it harder for *hibakusha* authors to have their works accepted.

This paper first highlights some of the *hibakusha* authors that wanted to document and reflect first-hand what it meant to experience the atomic bombings in literary works. Ōta Yōko, Hara Tamiki, and Hayashi Kyōko sought to use literature as a platform to commemorate what *hibakusha* experienced in the bombings and allow their stories to reach wider audiences. However, these authors' efforts were never as successful as they hoped them to be. The paper then examines the obstacles *hibakusha* faced in having their stories heard. First, there was the personal hardship of sharing one's trauma amidst the growth of a city trying to be reborn. Secondly, during the occupation period, the United States enforced strict censorship that prevented works from being published and fostered an environment in which publishing houses were hesitant to take the risk of publishing works about the atomic bombings. Thirdly, literary

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[3] 被爆者（ひばくしゃ）の意味 - goo 国語辞書. Nov 30, 2019. <https://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/word/%E8%A2%AB%E7%88%86%E8%80%85/>.

[4] In 1954 there was a U.S. hydrogen bomb test conducted on the island of Bikini Atoll. The fallout from this experiment exposed Japanese fishermen to radiation, increasing the count of Japanese harmed by U.S. nuclear weapons and inciting further antinuclear movements in Japan. John W. Dower. Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World. New York: New Press, 2012. Web.

circles were opposed to celebrating works about the atomic bombs, scrutinizing atomic-bomb literature as unworthy of being considered literature at all. Yet, there were some works about the bombings by non-*hibakusha* that were wildly successful. The final portion of this paper examines why works about the bombings by non-*hibakusha* were accepted, continue to be some of the most widely read on the topic, and how these works misrepresent a narrative that is not their author's own.

The Literature of Hibakusha

Those who survived the atomic bombings at Hiroshima or Nagasaki, and came to write about their own experiences, share with readers a direct interpretation of their memories. Although any literature about an event, certainly becomes a work of fiction, those who were present at the atomic bombings sought to write works rooted in their own experiences that are heavily autobiographical. In doing so, they can document their experiences through pieces that present what was experienced and felt at the bombings as well as what the *hibakusha* had to face after. These works can provide non-*hibakusha* readers with a literary account, more personal and emotional than documentary works. Additionally, they can provide other *hibakusha* with a publication of stories aligned with their own experiences and allow them to see individuals like themselves in the literary spotlight.

The first author to publish a piece on the atomic bombings was Ōta Yōko, arguably one of the only *hibakusha* authors who was a well-known literary figure before the bombings.[5,6] She

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[5] Treat, John Whittier. *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Print. Ōta Yōko and the Place of the Narrator. p. 201.

[6] Treat, John. "Hiroshima and the Place of the Narrator." The Journal of Asian Studies 48.1 (1989): 29. Web. p. 29.

wrote a brief essay in the *Asahi Shinbun*, describing how "the calamity of Hiroshima had inspired its citizenry to heroism and greater patriotism."[7] This stood in stark contrast from her later works and sheds light on how Ōta struggled to discern how exactly to write about the horrors of the bombs. In her1953 short story, "Fireflies" she describes the hardship Hiroshima residents still face seven years after the bombing. Her protagonist, an author herself, "was trying to live, but on the other hand there was always the danger of death" that looms over *hibakusha.*[8]

This occupation with death and obsession over how to portray the bombings stayed with Ōta throughout her career after the bombing on Hiroshima. She struggled with how to place the bombings in her work, finding it "hateful to write the word *genbaku* 'atomic bomb', [although at the same time] neither could she refrain from its writing."[9] At times, she even took a more direct approach towards sharing her opinions on the bombing, as her narrator author, in Hiroshima to discuss with other *hibakusha,* lapses into a political discussion of the bombs as an American diplomatic display of power.[10] This is not to say that Ōta's post-war works only focused on the bombs, as themes from family to marriage are incorporated alongside the narratives of *hibakusha.* Ōta's works, the shift she took towards focusing on the bombings, and the struggles she put herself through as she wrote on the bombings shed light on the experiences of *hibakusha* and are an important effort by one individual to commemorate the bombings through literature.

Another writer quick to respond to the bombings with a literary work, Hara Tamiki, notes his reason for writing on the bombs when he states, "I could consider myself as one who

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[7] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero.* "Ōta Yōko" p. 201.
[8] Ōta, Yōko. "Fireflies." Atomic Aftermath: Short Stories from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Tran. Koichi Nakagawa. Ed. Kenzaburō Ōe. Tokyo: Shueisha Press, 1984. 93-119. Print. p. 96.
[9] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero.* Ōta Yōko. p. 200.
[10] Ōta. "Fireflies" p. 108.

survived. I have to keep a record of this."[11] In his thorough analysis of atomic-bomb literature, *Writing Ground Zero*, John Whitter Treat contextualizes Hara as a native of Hiroshima, born in 1905, who attended university in Tokyo and returned to Hiroshima briefly before the bombings to join his family after the passing of his late wife.[12] He worked as an author before the bombings, and after he suffered in Hiroshima, he sought to write on the bombings with a documentarian approach.[13] However, his work does much more than archive as there are literary choices made throughout.

"Summer Flower", written in 1945 (although published later as discussed in the next section of this paper), starts with a contextualization of why Hara's self-related narrator is back in Hiroshima, briefly detailing a visit to his wife's grave in the cemetery that also houses his parents. This also gives the short story it's title as the narrator presents yellow flowers of a "summer variety" on his wife's gravestone.[14] Before describing the horrors of the bombing, Hara shares a relatable quibble between the narrator and his younger sister and the ironic statement that "My life was saved because I was in the bathroom."[15] What follows is a literal description of the horrors faced in Hiroshima after the bombing. With retelling, he can reveal details about the shock of the bomb the chaos the ensued—smoke, displacement, loss of life, the masses of bodies encountered—and some of the emotions that came out of this situation. However, in stating his experience in a work that sits between documentary, short fiction, memoir, and contains passages of poetry, Hara presents what happened in a matter-of-fact tone without blatantly forcing upon

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[11] Hara, Tamiki. "Summer Flower." *Atomic Aftermath: Short Stories from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.* Tran. George Saito. Ed. Kenzaburō Ōe. Tokyo: Shueisha Press, 1984. p. 41. Print.
[12] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. Preface. p. 125, 132.
[13] Ibid. Hara Tamiki and the Documentary Fallacy. p. 126.
[14] Hara. "Summer Flower." p. 37.
[15] Ibid. p. 37-38.

the reader his own reflection or analysis of the events that unfolded. He simply reveals the trauma he and so many others had to experience and tries to make sense of it—just as the readers themselves have to now do. In doing so, he prompts the reader to do this on their own and consider what it was truly like for the *hibakusha* to experience the bombings.

Another *hibakusha* writer who credits herself as the "reciter of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki" is Hayashi Kyōko.[16] Similar to Hara in that they both returned to their respective sites of the bombings just before August, Hayashi was born in Nagasaki in 1930 but relocated with her family to China at a young age.[17] At the time of the bombing, Hayashi was a teenage girl working at a Mitsubishi factory. In addition to writing on the horrible physical pain and suffering *hibakusha* faced from debris, wounds, and horrible injuries, for example, Hayashi conveys to readers the emotional trauma suffered by atomic bomb survivors over time—particularly the guilt felt by *hibakusha* towards others who didn't survive and the guilt felt by non-*hibakusha* towards *hibakusha.*

In her work, "Two Grave Markers", Hayashi describes the painful decision a fourteen-year-old girl must make to leave behind her dying friend as maggots overtake her.[18] Wakako, Hayashi's protagonist, escapes from the factory she worked at when the bomb hit, but "as she slipped free, someone had grasped her ankle."[19] She becomes haunted by the concern of who this had been, especially later when she is reunited with her friend Yōko, who she discovers to be in a

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[16] Davinder L. Bhowmik. "Temporal Discontinuity in the Atomic Bomb Fiction of Hayashi Kyōko". Ōe and Beyond: Fiction in Contemporary Japan. Eds. Stephen Snyder and J. P. Gabriel. Honolulu, Hawaii: Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999. Print.
[17] Treat, Writing Ground Zero. Nagasaki and the Human Future. p. 315-316.
[18] Kyōko Hayashi. "Two Grave Markers." *The Atomic bomb: voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.* Eds. Kyōko Selden and Mark Selden. Armonk, N.Y.: Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989. Print.
[19] Ibid. p. 33.

condition much worse than herself. "Wakako had been saved by chance, but Yōko seemed unhappy about it."[20] Wakako ultimately passes away a few months after the bombings, but the end of her life is filled with guilt for escaping the horrors of the bombing unscathed, leaving Yōko behind. Feeling judged by Yōko's mother and other non-*hibakusha*, Wakako wonders, as many *hibakusha* do, "[h]ow could anyone who had not been there then understand?"[21]

In "The Empty Can," Hayashi shares the story of four grown *hibakusha* who return to the school where they experienced the bombing with another non-hibakusha classmate. The non-*hibakusha* classmate describes the guilt she feels for not having suffered through the bombings as her friends have, yet all the women express guilt towards their fifth friend who still suffers from injuries due to glass in her back and struggled immediately after the bombing to cope with the loss of both of her parents.[22]

With these two stories, Hayashi reveals many aspects of the *hibakusha* experience. She sheds light on the horrors faced by *hibakusha* at the time of the bombing and the painful physical and emotional conditions that *hibakusha* had to endure. Further, she discusses the guilts–felt by *hibakusha* towards other *hibakusha* as well as non-*hibakusha* towards *hibakusha*. Finally, she sheds light on the extent to which the pain experienced in August 1945 can carry on throughout *hibakusha*'s lives, both physically and emotionally. Although the atomic-bomb is a consuming topic that repeats throughout many of Hayashi's works, she can bring in other literary themes such as friendship, family, and time among others.

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[20] Ibid. p. 39.
[21] Ibid. p. 30.
[22] Kyōko Hayashi. "The Empty Can." Atomic aftermath. Tran. Margaret Mitsukani. Ed. Kenzaburō Ōe. Tokyo: Shueisha, 1984. 135-151. Print.

Another notable work of atomic-bomb literature by *hibakusha* is Nagai Takashi's 1949 work *The Bells of Nagasaki*. The work from Christian, doctor, and author Nagai flows through first-person and third-person accounts multiple *hibakusha* in Nagasaki.[23] Rooted in this religious view of the bomb, Nagai's novel "strives to discern the bombing as a good thing" taking a markedly different position than that of other *hibakusha* writers.[24]

Historian "Hayden White points out, it is precisely in such 'literature of fact' that 'the discourse of the historian and that of the imaginative writer overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other.'"[25] With their pieces, Ōta Yōko, Hara Tamiki, and Hayashi Kyōko share stories that align very closely with their experiences as *hibakusha* and record their personal histories in literature. In doing this, they make great contributions to atomic-bomb literature that can portray to readers directly what survivors experienced. These authors often decide to write about the bombings in the first person, positioning their narrators, and similarly themselves, as *hibakusha* that can relay their first-hand accounts of the bombings. These accounts provide non-*hibakusha* with a glimpse of the pain and suffering endured, and, perhaps more importantly, works like these by *hibakusha* open the doors to more *hibakusha* to commemorate and process their experiences, memories, and history through writing and reading.

Obstacles Faced by Hibakusha Writers

There are numerous obstacles that Ōta Yōko, Hara Tamiki, Hayashi Kyōko, other published *hibakusha* writers, and even less circulated authors all faced in telling their stories and

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[23] Yuko Shibata. "Dissociative Entanglement: US-Japan Atomic Bomb Discourses by John Hersey and Nagai Takashi." Inter-Asia Cultural Studies 13.1 (2012): 122-37. Web. p. 123.
[24] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. Nagasaki and the Human Future. p. 328.
[25] Treat. Writing Ground Zero. Hara Tamiki and the Documentary Fallacy. p 145.

having these stories accepted. There was the hardship associated with telling their story–the emotional and literal labor required to write and the potential discrimination that discussing the bombing could present on them. Further, even if an author surmounted these challenges and wrote a piece on the atomic-bomb, the publication of such a work was another issue. The Supreme Commander for Allied Powers administered censorship during the occupation period, and the topics of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were closely under control. Finally, if an author was able to get their work in print, literary circles were critical of atomic-bomb literature.

After the atomic bombing, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were left in ruins. The struggle of daily life on its own was enough of a mountain to climb and many survivors were left without additional time or energy to spend on creative pursuits. Paraphrasing Treat's quotation of *hibakusha* poet Kurihara Sadako, Hiroshima was an "atomic waste land" and survivors faced struggled over food and starvation leaving no chance for time to pour into cultural endeavors.[26] Further, there was a fear that the discrimination associated with status as a *hibakusha* could socially bar one from marriage prospects and present challenges in receiving employment.[27] For this reason, many *hibakusha* sought to hide their past. Finally, there is a certain personal turmoil and emotional processing that is and prerequisite to writing on one's trauma. This may not have been something that all survivors of the atomic bombings were willing or interested in doing.

Despite all of these personal hardships associated with writing on the atomic bombings, there are some authors, like those discussed earlier who did.[28] Unfortunately though, even though

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[26] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. The Three Debates. p. 89.
[27] Monica Braw. "Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Voluntary Silence." Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age. Eds. Laura E. Hein and Mark Selden. Armonk, N.Y.: Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 1997. Print.
[28] Although, it is worth noting that Ōta, Hayashi, and Hara left their respective cities sometime after the bombings, so the physical hardship of being there while writing didn't apply to them. Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. Ōta Yōko and the Place of the Narrator. p. 214.

they vulnerably took the initiative to share the horrors they faced with the world, the time at which many *hibakusha* sought to write on their experiences, information could not flow freely through Japan. Treat writes "[a]mong the topics of print and electronic communication deigned the most sensitive, and thus subject to the most severe censorship, were the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."[29] Hara Tamiki himself faced this censorship in his publication of "Summer Flowers". He first submitted his work to a popular publication the same year as the bombings under a more direct title "The Atomic Bomb", but was unable to get it published until two years later when it was accepted under the more "palpable" title in a less known literary journal.[30]

One important example of a literary work that was able to progress through censorship and be published during the occupation period is the aforementioned novel, Nagai's *The Bells of Nagasaki*. It was initially submitted to censors in 1947, which led to a controversial debate amongst the occupiers that even reached General Willoughby, the head of the intelligence section of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers. Finally, the work was permitted to be published in 1949 alongside a story of the inhumanity of Japanese militarism in Manila and became a best seller.[31] Perhaps it is the Christian stance of Nagasaki as a sacrifice that allowed Nagai's work to receive permission for publication during this period. Notably, his work has

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Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. Hara Tamiki and the Documentary Fallacy. p. 135.
Bhowmik. "Temporal Discontinuity" p. 59.
[29] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. "The Three Debates". p. 90.
[30] Shibata. "Dissociative Entanglement". 122-37. p. 123.
[31] Monica Braw. The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan. Armonk, N.Y.: Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe Inc, 1991. Print. SCAP Takes Charge of the Press. p. 33. Censorship of the Atomic Bomb. p. 94-99.

been cited to take a "transcendental position" much like that of his non-*hibakusha* counterparts as discussed in the next section of this paper.[32]

Ultimately a number of works were published despite the constraints of censorship. However, upon publication, works of atomic-bomb literature were met with harsh criticism from literary circles across Japan. Although, indeed, a large number of the authors of atomic-bomb literature were not professional writers, there are, as discussed in this paper several *hibakusha*, who, writing professionally, sought to shape out this genre—namely Ōta, Hara, and Hayashi.[33] The critics of the 1950s saw atomic-bomb literature as a trend specific to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "a minor literature concerned with a minor theme" to quote Treat. Anthologies and collections of this time didn't include atomic-bomb literature and even for decades after the bombings many detailed literary encyclopedias still failed to include atomic-bomb literature.[34] Critics viewed their works as "not a documentary literature but documents which are not literature", "unartistic", and "old news".[35] Nagaoka Hiroyoshi, a leading scholar of atomic-bomb literature attests to this disdain of atomic-bomb literature in his discussion of how as late as the 1960s "it took him more than half a year… to find copies of Hara Tamiki's "Summer Flowers" and Ōta Yōko's *City of Corpses*, [two works that were] surely among… the most widely read works of atomic-bomb literature by any *hibakusha* writers.[36]

With these obstacles in front of them, who can blame so many *hibakusha* for choosing silence over sharing their stories. Even those authors who did overcome their sickness and the

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[32] Shibata. "Dissociative Entanglement". 122-37. p. 129.
[33] Treat cites poet and scholar of atomic-bomb literature Nagaoka Hiroyoshi's remark that many of the authors of *genbaku bungaku* are not professional.
Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. "The Three Debates" p. 89.
[34] Ibid. p. 95.
[35] Ibid. p. 99-105.
[36] Ibid. 85.

death that loomed over them to write were met with censorship and criticism from Japan's literary elite. These forms of suppression that kept works by *hibakusha* from the public are likely the reason that they were never as widely read or accepted as they sought to be.

The Atomic-Bomb Literature of Non-*Hibakusha*

Although the works by *hibakusha* discussed earlier remained in the shadows of the literary world, a number of mainstream authors chose to write about the atomic bombings and saw the great success of their works. Two such authors that have written literature particularly on the *hibakusha* experience are Ibuse Masuji and Ōe Kenzaburō. Although, as some have argued, these works by non-*hibakusha* have helped increase accessibility to *hibakusha* stories for other non-*hibakusha* readers, simultaneously, these non-*hibakusha* authors are appropriating a story that is not their own to tell, and in doing so they take opportunities from *hibakusha* to properly share their stories.

Many narratives about the atomic bombings pay notice to the location at the time of the bombing. This not only contextualizes characters as *hibakusha* but relates to the reader to the severity of the blast they experienced during the bombing. However, Ibuse, himself a non-*hibakusha* separates his narrator from those present at the bombing in his fictionalized memoir, "The Crazy Iris", published in 1951. In the first sentence of this work, he reveals where his protagonist is during the bombing. He writes "shortly after Hiroshima was bombed, I was at a friend's house in the outskirts of Fukuyama looking at an Iris."[37] In this work, Ibuse details his narrator's experience as a non-*hibakusha* separated from the bombing by a mountain and

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[37] It is also worth noting that "The Crazy Iris" is the title story of Ōe's edited collection of atomic-bomb short stories in certain editions and translations.
Masuji Ibuse. "The Crazy Iris." Atomic Aftermath. Tran. Ivan Morris. Ed. Kenzaburō Ōe. Tokyo: Shueisha, 1984. p. 17. Print.

hundreds of kilometers such that he couldn't see the mushroom cloud and only witnessed the degree to which the bombing inflicted horror in those around him.[38]

Ibuse is even more famous for his work *Black Rain*, published in 1966, which is undoubtedly a work "more widely read, translated, and taught than any other single example of Japanese atomic bomb literature."[39] In this work, Ibuse did precisely what the literary critics of the time had been asking of *hibakusha* writers. As a series of critics called atomic-bomb literature too documentary, they argued that the bombing should, rather than be the topic of a literary work, serve as "a 'symbol', a sign, something less than real" and be placed in the context of more general themes.[40] Ibuse achieves this so much such that his translator, John Bester, asserts that "*Black Rain* is not a 'book about the bomb' at all."[41] In his story of *hibakushas* Shigematsu and his niece seeking marriage, Yasuko, temporally drifting between the postwar and the day of Hiroshima's bombing. In this novel, Ibuse doesn't "dwell on the eerie unreality of the *hibaku* experience" and he ties in Japanese traditions throughout his story.[42] This is ultimately what may have allowed *Black Rain* "to become the only atomic-bomb novel even in Japan to have achieved… a canonical status."[43] While this work is widely praised for bringing the experiences and perspectives of *hibakusha* into an "ordinary 'novel'", at the same time, "Ibuse himself termed the work a failure and reportedly vowed to never write about Hiroshima

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[38] Fukuyama, where Ibuse's narrator of "The Crazy Iris" experiences the bombing is about 100 kilometers from ground zero. Ibuse. "The Crazy Iris". p. 17, 21.
[39] Treat. Writing Ground Zero. "Ibuse Masuji: Nature, Nostalgia, Memory". p. 263.
[40] Ibid. "The Three Debates" p. 105.
[41] Masuji Ibuse. *Black Rain*. Tran. John Bester. New York: New York: Bantam Books, 1985. Print. Translators Preface. p. 8.
[42] James Joseph Orr. The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan. Honolulu: Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. Print. p. 132-133.
[43] Treat. Writing Ground Zero. The Three Debates. p. 92.

again…on account of the criticism his novel generated [from] the city he sought to memorialize."[44,45]

Just the year before Ibuse published *Black Rain*, in 1965 another non-*hibakusha* author shared his literary work about the atomic bombing with the masses. Ōe Kenzaburō, a widely appreciated and celebrated novelist, visited Hiroshima many times as a reporter and author in the years leading up his publication of *Hiroshima Notes*. With this work that analyzes numerous accounts of *hibakusha* and reflects Ōe's own views on Hiroshima, along with anthologies of atomic-bomb literature (by *hibakusha* and non-*hibakusha* alike) that Ōe has compiled, Ōe placed himself as "an editor and publicist of atomic-bomb literature."[46] And, Ōe's work has undoubtedly made *hibakusha*'s stories more widely read and available. However, as someone who didn't experience the bombings himself, what right does he have in telling the stories of those who did?

Ōe starts *Hiroshima Notes* with some words from one of the *hibakusha* he interviewed, Matsusaka Yoshitaka, in his prologue, citing that "People in Hiroshima prefer to remain silent until they face death… [those] who know first hand the horror of atomic destruction choose to keep silent, or at most… leave their testimony for the historical record."[47] Matsusaka's letters, that Ōe quotes, are a criticism aimed directly at Ōe himself for writing on the *hibakusha* experience, especially as a non-*hibakusha*. Despite, this, Ōe proceeds to share Matsusaka's

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[44] Ibid. Ibuse Masuji: Nature, Nostalgia, Memory. p. 262.
[45] Ibid. p. 272.
[46] Ibid. Ōe Kenzaburō: Humanism and Hiroshima. p. 229.
[47] Kenzaburō Ōe. *Hiroshima Notes*. Trans. David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa. New York: New York: Marion Boyars, 1995. Print. Prologue. p. 19-20.

experience with the masses including the article that he chose to write under a pen name to conceal his identity.[48]

Treat discusses how, Ōe, through writing on the *hibakusha* misrepresents them on multiple fronts. He appropriates their stories for his own goals of gaining a better understanding of living life "free" and his own status as a "Japanese writer" but these goals are adopted in the work without a necessary consideration of the survivors' motives had they chosen to speak out and share their stories on their own rather than through his retelling.[49] Ōe chooses to frame his exploration of *hibakusha*'s experiences in an exploration of himself–an outsider that doesn't have any true connection to experiencing the horrors of the atomic bombs. In doing so, he not only construes some *hibakusha*'s narratives but he repeatedly, throughout his work, groups these survivors' experiences together as if they are homogenous in their experiences, views, and attitudes towards life.

In response to this, Ōe has received harsh criticism from Hiroshima's natives. Kanai Toshihiro called him out on this "misrepresentation", charging "Ōe with seeking a Hiroshima that is not necessarily the real Hiroshima but rather one that inspires him and many others."[50] Further, the aforementioned poet Kukihara, scolded Ōe for his "'idealization' of exceptionally brave *hibakusha* [that makes] it impossible for all the *hibakusha* to understand what it is that determines their common condition as victims."[51] Although well-intentioned it is not Ōe's work to make sense of what the atomic bombings meant to those who survived it nor is it allowable for him to inject himself into their experiences to make sense of the hardships he faced in his own

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Treat. *Writing Ground Zero*. Ōe Kenzaburō: Humanism and Hiroshima. p. 254-255.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid. p. 257.

life. A critical reader has to wonder why Ōe chose to analyze and appropriate the narratives of a select group *hibakusha* rather than let the diverse voices of the *hibakusha* that did choose to write on their experience speak for themselves.

Conclusion

After the end of World War II, Ōta Yōko, Hara Tamiki, and Hayashi Kyōko among other *hibakusha* authors sought to document their experiences and stories in literary works. Despite their efforts though, it was hard for their works to be recognized and widely read after they were published. After overcoming the hardship of producing literary works after surviving the bombings, these authors were met with censorship from U.S. forces and additionally criticism from the literary world of post-war Japan. At the same time, numerous non-*hibakusha* authors came to incorporate hibakusha stories into their works, and in doing so they appropriated *hibakusha*'s narratives, diminished the event of the bombing, and made it harder for *hibakusha* authors to have their works accepted.

The present-day has seen a greater celebration of atomic-bomb literature, as written by the *hibakusha* themselves, as never before. Many of the works by *hibakusha* authors have been published in anthologies in Japanese and further translated into English among other languages as Japanese and international scholars of atomic-bomb literature seek to honor their works. However, this came too late as many *hibakusha* authors didn't live to see their works rise to this status. One can only wonder what they would have been able to write in a climate where their works had been more celebrated.

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Bibliographic Essay

In doing this research, as a non-*hibakusha*, I am most indebted to the authors who survived the atomic bombings and persevered to represent their experiences in literary works. Further, as a young student of the Japanese language, I owe great thanks to the scholars who have translated and compiled these stories in English, aiding in the efforts to promote their stories and allow them to reach wider audiences. Although I am critical of the lens he views hibakusha with in *Hiroshima Notes*, I call upon Ōe's compilation of atomic-bomb short stories by survivors themselves frequently throughout this work. As one of the first advocates for acknowledging *hibakusha*'s literature, Ōe did a great service in compiling these works. Numerous other scholars have helped compile stories, notably for my research Mark and Kyōko Seldon but there are many others.

For analysis of these works, there is no work as comprehensive as John Whittier Treat's *Writing Ground Zero* which walks through not only the works and context needed to read them but further goes into a discussion of much of the criticism and response to these works in Japan. In considering the censorship faced during this time, Monica Braw's works on the subject proved to be very comprehensive and valuable.

There are numerous topics that given more time and resources, I would find to be valuable to further explore in light of this paper. Braw's analysis of censorship discusses an overview and many of the decisions surrounding SCAP administered censorship, but it would be interesting to examine the path more works took through censorship as she follows Nagai's *The Bells of Nagasaki* through this process. It may be that many works never progressed to consideration of publication, but it would be valuable to see which works were submitted to publishing houses, which were submitted to review by SCAP, and of those which were

successfully published. I found two bibliographies, of sorts, of atomic-bomb literature. One, compiled by Lammers and Masaoka in the 1970s was, although comprehensive for its time, somewhat outdated and failed to give a chronological sense of the works (*Japanese A-Bomb Literature: An Annotated Bibliography*, Wayne P. Lammers and Osamu Masaoka). The second, published in 2001, is in Japanese and only cataloged a single exposition but would be a useful source (*Genbaku Bungaku Ten.* Kanagawa Bungaku Shinkōkai). Further, it would be interesting to explore non-*hibakusha* works by non-Japanese and the space that these works occupy in this conversation. This would include John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and Elanor Coerr's *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* among other works.

Finally, I am thankful for Professor Kenneth Pyle and the members of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki seminar for the readings assigned as part of the course, the valuable feedback that shaped my paper, and many recommendations for further reading. My paper wouldn't be anywhere without this support.

I came to this research topic first as I read some of the stories literary figures had produced about the 3/11 triple disaster. I noticed a divide in the works by authors from Fukushima and the mainstream authors that had written on this, although notably often as an act of charity. As I read literary works on the suffering forces upon thousands in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atomic bombs, I wondered why some of the most widely works in this category are by those who hadn't been present at the bombings. In telling a marginalized group's story it is important above all else to be respectful of that group's experience and viewpoint. Rather than appropriating for our own goals, it is more considerate and productive to elevate the voices of the marginalized so they can be properly heard.