

**VICTIMS, SURVIVORS AND *GENBAKU BUNGA*KU:
THE ART OF LITERARY WITNESS AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY**

Erika Lindsay Dofelmier

Professor Kenneth B. Pyle
SISEA 490 A
Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Fall Quarter 2002
16 December 2002

Victims, Survivors and *Genbaku Bungaku*:
The Art of Literary Witness and Collective Memory

Today, the words “Hiroshima” and “Nagasaki” are recognized as far more than just Japanese city names. The words themselves are suffused with meaning, standing as reminders of past and potential nuclear war, modern peace movements, and the intense suffering that humans can and do inflict upon one another during war. It is undeniable that, despite the range in symbolic import and meaning, these places have become symbols of the human condition and occupy a place in our contemporary collective memory. These words did not gain such symbolism overnight, however. The process of elevation from common place names to part of our cultural heritage took time and was influenced, among other things, by the growing *genbaku bungaku*, or A-bomb literature movement, of the postwar years.

Genbaku bungaku is a powerful genre of literature that has been dominated by survivor-writers such as Ōta Yoko, Hayashi Kyoko, Nagai Takashi, Hara Tamiki, Kurihara Sadako, and Toge Sankichi, although other well-established writers, such as Ibuse Masuji, Ōe Kenzaburo and John Hersey have lent their talents and contributed equally, if not more powerfully, to its development and the dissemination of associated political messages.¹

Owing to the nature of war atrocity literature, political messages on victimization and war abound in these works, and the majority of the most famous *genbaku bungaku* writers have veritable leftist political leanings. The political nature of the genre has been extremely influential in buttressing the powerful sense of victimization that spread among postwar Japanese as the Occupation discredited the military and Japan’s wartime leaders—blaming them for misleading the people in support of a doomed war. Ironically, the politics of *genbaku bungaku*,

¹ Japanese names appear in Japanese order: surname first, followed by given name.

while nurturing leftist critiques of American, as well as conservative Japanese politics, have done little to infuse Japan's collective memory of WWII victimization by the West with an equally powerful recognition of Japan's own victimization of other peoples during its own brutal, imperialistic thrust into Asia.

The atomic bombings have become, with their emotional claim to war victimhood, a source of fuel for victim consciousness in Japan—the single greatest barrier to Japan's ability to come to terms with war responsibility. The bombings serve as a shield to deflect criticisms of Japanese aggression during the war, and as a mask of collective memory by means of which—while assuming the stance of war victim—the dark reality of Japanese aggression during the war is consciously suppressed and hidden from public view. These functions of the bombings have been seized on by both Westerners and Japanese—peace activists, politicians and historians alike—and severely handicap any efforts by Japan to objectively examine the historical events of and their role in WWII. The leftist peace movement itself has ironically exacerbated and perpetuated the myth of Japanese victimization, aided and abetted by the powerful voices of *genbaku bungaku* writers. *Genbaku bungaku* has been instrumental in the construction of the collective memory of the bombings and the victimization of the Japanese people during the war. Whatever the intention of the writers for influencing collective memory, the *hibakusha* experience—whether expressed by real *hibakusha* or others—has been increasingly wrested from their control and reallocated as a political tool of the nation to describe a national experience, with severe repercussions for Japan's ability to grapple with lingering war issues.²

² *Hibakusha* literally means “bomb-affected person” but is the Japanese term that designates atomic bomb survivors, since the word for “survivor” is thought to focus too much emphasis on the condition of the living versus the dead.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the relationship among *genbaku bungaku*, victim consciousness and acknowledgement of Japanese war aggression in the post-war period. It is my contention that *genbaku bungaku* has become a powerful weapon in the arsenal of the nation for contending their 'so-called' victimization during the war, and for reinforcing their beliefs that Japanese victimhood outweighs Asian victim consciousness. Part of the foundation for this is the belief that atomic war threatens human existence more than conventional war, thus it is more culpable as a method of warfare and the assertion that nuclear victimization is an exclusively Japanese experience.³ Clearly, the development of this attachment by post-war Japanese to these issues is considerably more complex than I have just outlined, and in this paper we will attempt to illuminate part of this relationship in order to fully grasp its ramifications for Japan's future.

In this paper we will first discuss what victim consciousness is, what has helped nurture its growth in postwar Japan and the role of *genbaku bungaku* in the creation and maintenance of victim consciousness. Next, the issue of victim consciousness and its relation to Japan's war responsibility will be tackled. Here, American Occupation policies which reinforced Japanese understanding of themselves as victim and victimizer, notably the absolution of the emperor's crimes, and the Tokyo War Crimes Trials; the effect of international conceptualization of atomic versus conventional warfare on victim consciousness; and the Japanese concept of 'everyone/every country as war victim' will be covered. Other influences on the development of victim consciousness will also be covered at length. After this we'll examine representative *genbaku bungaku* authors writing about both Hiroshima and Nagasaki and then discuss each

³ Although the prevailing view remains that Japan is the exclusive nuclear victim, some *genbaku bungaku* authors have endeavored to point out that nuclear victimization is not exclusively Japanese, pointing to the aboriginal victims; military and civilian observers and unwitting test subjects of American, Chinese, Soviet, French and British tests throughout the world, as well as the innocent citizens in areas contaminated by radioactive fallout, such as areas in Nevada, Utah, and Montana in the US. For examples see, Kurihara Sadako, "Bikini, Be with Hiroshima and Nagasaki", "Hiroshima Being Questioned (excerpts)", and "The National Responsibility for War and the Victims of Nuclear Radiation (excerpts)" in *White Flash, Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive the Bomb*, ed. and trans. By Lequita Vance-Watkins and Aratani Mariko (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 1995), pp. 16-17, 63, 64.

individual's contribution to the genre. These authors are: Kurihara Sadako, John Hersey, Ōe Kenzaburo, Ibuse Masuji and Nagai Takashi.

VICTIM CONSCIOUSNESS AND WAR RESPONSIBILITY

Although for the most part, *genbaku bungaku* has served to reinforce Japanese victim consciousness to the detriment of raising awareness of Japan's own victimization of Asian peoples, this was not the intention of most *genbaku bungaku* writers. By highlighting the suffering of the atomic bomb many authors hoped to illustrate the horrible reality of war, foster Japanese recognition of their own war atrocities and encourage pacifism. Many authors even claimed that responsibility for the bombings could not be leveled squarely on American shoulders since the emperor had not ended the war before the Potsdam's Declaration of August 3rd, which would have undoubtedly spared Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁴ Nagasaki's Mayor Motoshima Hitoshi himself made a similar sentiment known as the emperor lie on his deathbed in 1989.⁵ Most recently, the issue has also been raised by many prominent postwar historians, who blame the emperor for Okinawa, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the bombing raids on Japanese cities that began with full force in the spring of 1945, claiming that if he had indeed held the power necessary to end the war by intervening in the Supreme War Council after both bombings, did he not hold that power by early 1945 when the war was considered by most to be a lost cause and when Prince Konoe approached him in February about the wisdom of timely surrender?

In fact, many causes outside of atomic bomb literature served as a foundation for Japan's suppression of the collective memory of its own atrocities, and the subtle calls for acknowledgement of war responsibility in *genbaku bungaku* works went unacknowledged as the

⁴ Kurihara Sadako, "The War Experience and Literature (Excerpts)," in *White Flash, Black Rain*, p. 67.

⁵ Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 178.

works were expropriated to national purposes of supporting and perpetuating images of Japanese victimization during the war.

The event that formed the foundation for the subsequent exponential growth of victimization ideology in postwar Japan is arguably the emperor's surrender broadcast of August 15, 1945. Within this broadcast the emperor informed his subjects that the Americans had used a "new and savage bomb" which inflicted injury on "innocent victims," and if he did not exercise his duty as protector of the nation to end the war soon, the "final result would be to bring about not only the annihilation of the Japanese race, but the destruction of human civilization as a whole."⁶ The import of these words on a newly defeated nation inculcated with a belief in the divine nature of their cause and the inevitability of their defeat was striking. The bombings with their threat of annihilation and further injury to innocent victims provided an opportunity for Japan to end the war without having to renounce their cause. They came to believe they were made to surrender because of America's technological superiority—not the superiority of America's cause or the fruitlessness and inferiority of Japan's effort. The psychological effects were far-reaching and paved the way for further obstacles to acknowledgement of war responsibility.

Some of the most significant steps toward retarding Japan's ability to grapple with wartime aggression were actions taken by Occupation authorities during the immediate postwar period. Most notable was General MacArthur's decision to shield the emperor from the issues of war responsibility and, despite international calls for justice, to detach the emperor from the war and reposition him as the center of Japan's new democratic order. In order to reconstruct an imperial image that would be conducive to American interests, the emperor was dissuaded from any acknowledgement of moral responsibility for the war and all that had been conducted in his

⁶ James Orr, *The Victim as Hero* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 134.

name.⁷ The effect of such a policy was summed up succinctly by John Dower: “Serious engagement with the issue of war responsibility was deflected; if the nation’s supreme secular and spiritual authority bore no responsibility for recent events, why should his ordinary subjects be expected to engage in self-reflection?”⁸

Ordinary Japanese recognized the significance of such a policy and added it to their internal dialogue of victimhood. An ex-serviceman reflecting on the emperor’s immediate transformation from sacred, theocratic god to symbol of the new democratic state wrote, “even the emperor gets away without taking responsibility, so there is no need for us to take responsibility, no matter what we did.”⁹

Also prominent in Japan’s developing sense of its role in the war were the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. In the immediate postwar period, the Japanese themselves supported efforts to delve into Japan’s own war crimes and indict those responsible.¹⁰ However, instead of indicating a sincere Japanese desire to grapple with their atrocities and take responsibility for their victimization of other peoples, this trend seemed to indicate that Japan was grasping for someone to blame the war on. In the immediate post-surrender period, George Atcheson cabled to Washington, “Japan is strongly in the mood of fixing war responsibility on the major suspects. Bitterness on account of Japan’s defeat and an apparently growing realization that Japan should not have undertaken aggressive warfare has created a strong resentment against Japanese leaders.”¹¹ It is likely that this “growing realization” stemmed from the Japanese people’s growing sense of being victims of their own leaders during the war—believing they were

⁷ John Dower, *Embracing Defeat* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1999), p. 277-278.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁹ Watanabe Kiyoshi, *Kidakareta Kami—Aru Fukuinhei no Shuki* (Tokyo: Asahi Sensho, 1983) as cited in *Ibid.*, p. 344.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 475-476.

¹¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945*, 6:952-53, 984-85 as cited in *Ibid.*, p. 476.

fighting a war they were winning—not from any true sense of repentance for the war itself. At America’s urging, ordinary Japanese joined the fray in scapegoating; they avoided individual responsibility by blaming their leaders. This action not only inhibited their ability to come to terms with their participation in the war as individuals, but also reinforced the sense of Japanese victimization—the only difference being that now they recognized a sense of victimization at the hands of their own government as well as the West. At the end of the trials, the sentencing of seven wartime leaders as class-A war criminals and the execution that followed, lent itself to a general feeling that Japan had paid for its crimes and could now move forward without further reflection on individual responsibility or fear of future claims for compensation.¹² Thus, the responsibility for dealing with the war was left in the past; Japanese assumed their war guilt had been absolved with the affixation of blame and the subsequent deaths of these seven men.

Another effect of the trials was to reposition the war’s focus from Asia to the West. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East was responsible for prosecuting war crimes against Allied powers, but made no effort to punish the Japanese for atrocities committed against other Asians, such as the Rape of Nanjing or the forced prostitution of comfort women (*ianfu*). Though an indication of Western ethnocentrism, by doing so, the Allied powers also unconsciously lent credence to the pre-war Japanese view that other Asians were sub-human and unimportant, thereby lessening the moral responsibility of Japan for atrocities committed against them.¹³

¹² Tachibana, “The Quest for a Peace Culture,” in Hiroshima in History and Memory, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 169.

¹³ Carol Gluck, “‘The Long Postwar’: Japan and Germany in Common and in Contrast,” in Legacies and Ambiguities: Postwar Fiction and Culture in West Germany and Japan, ed. Ernestine Schlant and J. Thomas Rimer (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 76-77 and Awaya Kentaro, *Tokyo Saiban ron* (On the Tokyo Tribunal) (Tokyo, 1989), 156-8 as cited in Seiitsu Tachibana, “The Quest for a Peace Culture: The A-Bomb Survivors’ Long Struggle and the New Movement for Redressing Foreign Victims of Japan’s War” in Hiroshima in History and Memory, p. 169.

Another SCAP policy that lent itself to inhibiting reflection on Japan's aggression was the Occupation censorship rule which forbade the further use of Japan's name for the war—Greater East Asia War (*Dai Toa Senso*)—and replaced it with “Pacific War” (*Taiheiyo Senso*), a policy which again unconsciously reflected the ethnocentrism of the Allied powers by reducing the focus of the war from Asia to the West, thereby symbolically rendering the war in Asia, and thus its victims, as less important and therefore less worthy of remembrance than their Western counterparts.¹⁴

Aside from specific SCAP policies, world events such as the onset of the Cold War also played a role in downplaying war responsibility as political concerns turned from the creation of a democratic, repentant Japan, to a Japan that would be rearmed as a Cold War ally of the United States.¹⁵

The institutional prejudism of Japan towards its Asian neighbors also played a decisive role in preventing Japanese contemplation of atrocities against such peoples.¹⁶ Such racism stemmed from a sense of Japan's uniqueness in overcoming the obstacles of unequal treaties and Western imperial threats in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Japan succeeded in reinventing itself as a modern nation, rapidly ascending to first-rate status and gaining admission to the club of imperialist nations after demonstrating to the world this transformation in their victories during the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars. Recently, however, as other Asian nations have industrialized and joined the ranks of first-rate world powers Japan's unique position among Asian nations has been compromised, but its racism remains largely intact. The resulting tension between Japan and the rest of Asia threatens Japan's role as a leader in the

¹⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 419.

¹⁵ Tachibana, “The Quest for a Peace Culture,” in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, p. 171-173.

¹⁶ Tachibana also discusses the role of racism in preventing Japanese acknowledgement of war responsibility, although his discussion takes the issue in a different direction. See Tachibana, “The Quest for a Peace Culture,” in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, p. 173.

Pacific region in the future and is another pressing reason for Japan to seek to redress Asian wartime grievances. In the immediate postwar period, however, when Asian nations still existed on the margins of the international community, Japanese racism went largely uncriticized and has continued down to today as a pre-war legacy preventing frank acceptance of war responsibility. Immediately after the war, the Japanese government continued its program of victimization of Asian peoples by stripping foreigners who had resided in Japan by choice or by force, of their Japanese nationality so that they became ineligible for legal, political and social security.¹⁷ This action was consistent with other trends indicating the general disregard for foreign victims of Japan's war. The latent racism in Japan's disregard for their victims and the irony with which they demanded Western acknowledgement of Japanese victims, most notably the atomic bomb victims, while ignoring the application of this principle to their own wartime actions is clearly evident. Another more striking example of the inconsistencies in the application of victim consciousness can be found in accounts of the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki when Korean A-bomb victims were discriminated against in medical treatment, cremation and burial.¹⁸ This institutional prejudism has continued up until recently with Asian victims being barred from medical care, compensation and worst of all, equitable representation at the bomb memorials/museums and in the *genbaku bungaku* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until recently Japanese racism had succeeded in relegating the memorial to the Korean A-bomb victims to the outskirts of the Peace Memorial Park away from the "sacred and inviolable ground" of the main cenotaph, and it was not until 1994 that the monument was moved to the central area; in the same year, the Hiroshima museum expanded its exhibit to mention Japan's

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 170.

¹⁸ John Dower, "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory," in Hiroshima in History and Memory, p. 140.

atrocities in Asia and the presence of Koreans and other foreigners in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the time of the bombings.¹⁹

The perceived difference between atomic and conventional warfare has further contributed to Japan's feeling of being an undeserving victim. Japanese writers, politicians and ordinary citizens can often be heard saying that Japan has been the only victim of nuclear war. Although this is refuted by some, it is still part of a collective memory that separates the Japanese from other people who experienced the war.²⁰ The nature of the attack also separates the atomic attacks on Japan from all the other attacks (victimization by conventional means) that other countries experienced. This separation leaves Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a league of their own—separate and significant precisely because of the contrived degrees of victimization. Such separation in turn, has led many to lump the nuclear attacks with the only other aberration of conventional warfare found in WWII—the Holocaust. Such a comparison has been made by Japanese and foreigners alike and leads many to believe that ONLY these two events surpass all others in human history as true 'crimes against humanity'. Justices Pal and Roling, of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials, contributed to this sentiment that Japan was the victim of unique war crimes. During the Trials, when arguing that the American terror bombing of Japanese cities and the use of atomic bombs were also crimes against humanity, Justice Pal stated:

In the Pacific War under our consideration, if there was anything approaching what is indicated in the above letter of the German emperor ("Everything must be put to fire and sword; men, women and children and old men must be slaughtered and not a tree or house be left standing"), it is the decision coming from the Allied powers to use the atom bomb. Future generations will judge this dire decision. History will say whether any outburst of popular sentiment against usage of such a new weapon is irrational and only sentimental and whether it has become

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 140-141.

²⁰ For a few examples see, Kurihara Sadako, "Bikini, Be with Hiroshima and Nagasaki", "Hiroshima Being Questioned (excerpts)", and "The National Responsibility for War and the Victims of Nuclear Radiation (excerpts)" in White Flash, Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive the Bomb, pp. 16-17, 63, 64.

legitimate by such indiscriminate slaughter to win the victory by breaking the will of the whole nation to continue to fight . . . It would be sufficient for my present purpose to say that if any indiscriminate destruction of civilian life and property is still illegitimate in warfare, then in the Pacific war, this decision to use the atom bomb is the only near approach to the directives of the German Emperor during the first world war and of the Nazi leaders during the second world war. Nothing like this could be traced to the credit of the present accused.²¹

Justice Roling agreed that these events had violated the laws of war.²²

Again in the early 1990's during the debate on the renovation of the Peace Memorial Hall, Japan's feeling of special victimhood was expressed by right wing groups who felt that a section entitled the "aggressor's corner" dealing with Japanese atrocities "would be unfair to Hiroshima by diluting the uniqueness and eloquence of its message as a victim of nuclear inferno."²³

Clearly, the power of Hiroshima as a symbol of the unique victimization experience of Japan has remained to this day; and it is undeniable that such comments as these have led to a psychological processing of the events that has further buttressed Japan's sense of special victimhood.

One final influence on victim consciousness vis-à-vis war responsibility in Japan has been the concept in Japan of universal suffering and universal victimhood during WWII. This idea grew out of American efforts to convince the Japanese that they had been lied to and taken advantage of by their wartime leaders. It was also influenced by the intersection of this concept with the immediate postwar discussion of Japanese atrocities. There was also a growing wealth of literature recounting experiences of Japanese people's victimhood during the war; soldiers and

²¹ TJ 2:982 (Pal); a full translation is available by Tanaka Masaaki, "Complete Translation: On Japan Being Not Guilty" [*Zenyaku: Nihon Muzai-ron*] (Tokyo: Nihon Shobo, 1952) as cited in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 473.

²² Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 473-4 & Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), pp. 37-38.

²³ Steven R. Weisman, "At Atomic Shrine, All the Horror, Nothing of Guilt," *New York Times*, April 19, 1980 as cited in Rachele Linner, *City of Silence: Listening to Hiroshima* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 32.

war criminals, atomic and incendiary victims all stepped forward to recount the suffering they had experienced during the war. Japanese seemed to feel that they all had, as individuals and as a group, been victims of the war. In memoirs of convicted war criminals there is a marked sense of victimhood and of the subjectivity of assigning blame; General Homma Masaharu, General Tojo, and others often quoted a saying, “win and you are the official army, lose and you are the rebels” (*kateba kangun, makereba zokugun*), claiming that they were victims of victor’s justice and were innocent of charges of international crimes. Some even claimed they were victims of their superior’s orders.²⁴ In an atmosphere where war blame was easily assigned, war victimhood was a title that could be applied to anyone—from war criminal to ordinary civilian—in order to absolve one of wrongdoing or war responsibility. Everyone was presented or endeavored to present themselves as “having lacked any real control over the events in which they participated . . . and the final impression conveyed was that no one, from the top to the bottom of the old imperium, was truly responsible for the terrible war and the atrocious acts that had accompanied it everywhere.”²⁵ This sense of universal victimhood within Japan was applied to the war as a whole and thus, the argument for Japan to acknowledge its victimization of Asian peoples became a moot point for many Japanese.

All of these factors played important roles in the construction of a collective memory of victimization that excluded Japan’s victims; however, *genbaku bungaku* and other A-bomb art, *hibakusha* themselves and officials of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have tried to reclaim this contested ground, urging Japanese people and the Japanese government to pay attention to the foreign victims of Japan’s war. Hiraoka Takashi and Araki, former mayors of Hiroshima, as well as Nagasaki’s former mayor, Motoshima Hitoshi, have been working for a broader

²⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 516-8.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 518.

definition of victimization that calls for Japanese reflection into their own war actions. They have established an association to provide *hibakusha* free medical care, including foreign *hibakusha*. Also, both Hiraoka and Motoshima have openly criticized Japan's treatment of Asians, both in relation to the atomic bomb and the war at large, pushing for apologies, investigations, and assistance to these forgotten victims.²⁶ In the early 1990's during the debate over Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Hall's planned renovation, both left and right expressed their desire to use Hiroshima for their political ends; by doing so they eloquently demonstrated their ignorance of the desires of the victims themselves. Instead, they remained locked in ideological dispute over the creation of collective memory in the museum's exhibits. The leaders of the cities, however, recognized the desires of their constituencies, many of whom were indeed *hibakusha*, and the *hibakusha* experience was preserved while the experience of other victims was finally recognized—just as the *hibakusha* had urged. Recognizing the ease in which one could invoke their suffering to present Japan as the victim of WWII rather than the aggressor, many *hibakusha* have worked against this by educating people to the effects of the atomic bombings as well as the policies of Japan during the Fifteen Year War in order to present a “comprehensive mental framework” in which to place the bombings.²⁷ Literature has been a fundamental tool for many *hibakusha* attempting to influence collective memory and the victimization identity that Japan has so desperately clung to in the postwar era.²⁸

²⁶ Tachibana, “The Quest for a Peace Culture,” in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, p. 183-4.

²⁷ See Linner, *City of Silence*, pp. 29-35. for a discussion of Japanese remembrance of the bombings and their wartime actions and the *hibakusha* role in mediating this issue.

²⁸ See John Dower, “Japanese Artists and the Atomic Bomb,” in *Japan in War and Peace* (New York: New Press, 1993), pp. 242-254 for a discussion of art and politics in other mediums of artistic expression related to the bombings, specifically the *Barefoot Gen* cartoon series and Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi's mural paintings.

GENBAKU BUNGAJU: HIROSHIMA

KURIHARA SADAHO

Of all the authors of atomic bomb literature, no one has championed the cause of Japan's forgotten victims more than Kurihara Sadako. Kurihara has tackled these difficult issues with gusto in her writing. Her literary insistence on coming to terms with Japanese war responsibility is undoubtedly rooted in her leftist political beliefs. During the war years, she was one of the few authors who opposed Japanese militarism.²⁹ With such a background, it was only a matter of course for her to become the literary spokeswoman for victims of WWII. In her literature, we find a distinct focus on victims as a whole rather than the atomic bomb victims specifically. She tackles the range of war issues as no author does, but by her acknowledgement of a wider experience of victimization she both challenges and reinforces the current victimization ideology in Japan. The challenges she makes are undeniably essential to the reawakening of atomic bomb literature to its role as a catalyst for change in Japan's concept of their war responsibility, but her very universality of themes sometimes threatens to subsume her efforts back into the victimization ideology of 'everyone/every country as victim'.

In such poems as "Bikini, Be with Hiroshima and Nagasaki", "Hiroshima Being Questioned (Excerpts)", and "The National Responsibility for War and the Victims of Nuclear Radiation (Excerpts)", she challenges the Japanese ethnocentric view of themselves as exclusive owners of the atomic victimization legacy, pointing out aboriginal, military, and civilian victims of American, British, French, Russian and Chinese nuclear tests, and demanding that Japan recognize these other victims as well as its own victimizing actions in Asia which led to Japan's

²⁹ Linner, *City of Silence*, p. 26.

nuclear victimization.³⁰ In “Fish Talk” she grapples with Japan as victimizer—a role that seems to her to render any claim to the title of “victim” as invalid.³¹ In “When We Say Hiroshima” she argues that Japan must recognize its own wartime atrocities if it ever expects anyone to take Japan’s cry of “Ah, Hiroshima” seriously.³² In “Flag” and “Yasukuni”, she again takes up the issue of Japan’s role in the war using the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* as symbols of Japan’s continued victimization of Asian nations and how these two national symbols influence Asian nations’ view of Japan.³³ Despite the particular topic she takes up, however, Kurihara is conspicuous in her reliance on victim ideology as a whole. She may not focus exclusively on Japan’s wartime experience, but she reinforces the apathy of ‘everyone as victim’ ideology in the rapid succession of her focus from one victim experience to another. By trying to awaken us to violence she points out that it is everywhere and that we are all past or potential victims. The realism of such literary statement is effective, but risks numbing readers to the concepts of victimization and responsibility, both of which are essential to building the sense of pacifism her political messages advocate.

Kurihara does recognize this possibility and deliberately takes risks in her works, sometimes even expressing these fears in her works. Despite some ambiguities, for the most part she is successful. In “For the Dead of August” Kurihara’s ability to deal effectively with a number of political issues while maintaining both literary style and the integrity of the atomic experience is clearly demonstrated. In this poem, she tackles the common criticism of atomic bomb literature as over-focusing on the “I” of the experience—which it is argued, leads to the

³⁰ Kurihara Sadako, “Bikini, Be with Hiroshima and Nagasaki”, “Hiroshima Being Questioned (excerpts)”, and “The National Responsibility for War and the Victims of Nuclear Radiation (excerpts),” in White Flash, Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive the Bomb, pp. 16-17, 63, 64.

³¹ Kurihara, “Fish Talk,” in *Ibid*, p. 39.

³² Kurihara, “When We Say Hiroshima,” in When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems, trans. Richard H. Minear (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999), p. 20.

³³ Kurihara, “Flag, 2” and “Yasukuni,” in Black Eggs, trans. Richard H. Minear (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1994), pp. 231, 235.

psychic numbing of readers to the atrocity. In this work, she denigrates her personal experience in favor of a more encompassing narrative of the horror of war; in the midst of recognizing the Japanese victims of the bombing, she explains why Hiroshima was bombed and alludes to Japan's Chinese victims. In this piece, Kurihara admits the limits of survivor literature, and its tendency to be "worn out" and "talked about too much", thus rendering the meaning of such personal experience with atrocity as useless. She argues for a more conscious, calculated form of collective memory—a "well-honed, polished language"—which will resurrect the meaning of victimization and war, and concludes with a call to action:

Let us forge our language
for the dead of August.
No matter how much I speak of "my" details of that day,
it is impossible to even talk about the meaning
of a child who burned to death.

Let the dead talk.
Dead,
you must be able to see our lives
better from your side.
Although the chagrin of the dead was carbonized
and remains black and frozen,
The memories of survivors emit a rotten smell
and cannot tell the truth about that day.

The peace writer J. Gartunk says,
*Hiroshima and Nagasaki were talked about
too much, like an excessive export.*
Hiroshima and Nagasaki were talked about too much,
were worn out and became far distanced from the truth.

Let us forge our language
for the dead of August.
The publishing code of the occupation forces
became a myth,
our language corroded and rusty
with greedy appetites and overtalking.
Let us polish our rasping language and
thrust the anger of the dead
before the ones who manipulate nuclear power.

Hiroshima did not begin the morning of August 6.
It began with the first charge of the Japanese army in Liyuang Lake.
We received the bomb
as the citizens of the army capital, Hiroshima.

Let us remember

Hiroshima exists not only in Hiroshima
but all over the earth.
While the ashes of death swirled the sky,
water, milk, and vegetables were polluted, and
humans became sick
with radioactivity;
don't talk only about "my" details of that day.

Let us freeze the world for a moment
with well-honed, polished language
that pierces the past, present, and future.
Let us make the ones who manipulate nuclear power
turn pallid and halt.

The first time was a mistake,
the second time a betrayal.
Let us not forget our oath to the dead.³⁴

Despite Kurihara's overwhelming focus on broader issues of victimization, her work is not immune from the occasional exclusive emphasis on Japanese victimization. In "Sachiko-san Who Died in the Atomic Bombing," she choose a child as her target protagonist and, emphasizing her youthful innocence and accompanying ignorance of war, she creates a work thick with the implications of victimization.³⁵ Another work emphasizing Japan's victimization and echoing a familiar trend of *hibakusha* to compare Auschwitz and Hiroshima is "Let Us Not Forget Hiroshima/Auschwitz".³⁶

Kurihara's works cover a wide range of topics and perspectives, calling individuals to action and inviting introspection. In using her status as a *hibakusha genbaku bungaku* author, Kurihara demonstrates the value of the genre as a mode for articulating Japan as both victim and victimizer. It is this dichotomy—in which both sides are fully characterized—that is necessary in order to fully comprehend the ramifications of *genbaku bungaku* writers' stories of victimization without resentment and disbelief.

³⁴ Kurihara Sadako, "For the Dead of August," in *White Flash, Black Rain*, pp. 20-21.

³⁵ Kurihara, "Sachiko-san Who Died in the Atomic Bombing," in *Ibid*, pp. 24-25.

³⁶ Kurihara, "Let Us Not Forget Hiroshima/Auschwitz," in *Ibid*, p. 88.

ŌE KENZABURO

Ōe Kenzaburo is a non-*hibakusha* writer whose leftist political views are clearly articulated in his works. In his Hiroshima Notes, a collection of essays he wrote on several different visits to the city beginning in 1963, Ōe—with the characteristic zeal of a non-*hibakusha* pacifist—reinforces the victimization ideology that colors Japanese national treatment of atomic and foreign victims alike. Throughout the work he consistently relies on the word “victim” rather than the less politically contested “survivor”. His over-reliance on this term alone illustrates his contribution to the victimization ideology and its absorption of the Hiroshima experience into its canon as its dominant source of validation.

Ōe’s focus on Hiroshima as the central experience of wartime victimization is confirmed by such statements as the following regarding the bombings: “The atomic destruction of Hiroshima was the worst ‘deluge of the twentieth century’”³⁷; “[it was the] cruelest experience of human history”³⁸; “[the bombings were the] . . . cruelest days in human history . . .”³⁹; “Hiroshima, the extreme point of human tragedy . . .”⁴⁰ With such bold statements Japanese obsession with self-victimization as symbolized in the atomic bombings becomes evident. In this case *genbaku bungaku* serves to reinforce this identity rather than call for coming to terms with Japan’s own victimizer past. He emphasizes the survivors’ victimization further by repeatedly reminding us that these individuals “do not commit suicide in spite of everything.”⁴¹

Another contribution Ōe makes to the canonization of Hiroshima in the ideology of victimhood is made in his comments comparing the horrors of Hiroshima and Auschwitz. As many other before him, Ōe also likens Hiroshima to Auschwitz; quite controversially, however,

³⁷ Ōe Kenzaburo, Hiroshima Notes, p. 118.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

he goes further and claims that the atomic bombings are far more horrific than the slaughter of 6 million Jews in Europe:

While the realities of the Auschwitz holocaust perpetrated by Nazi Germany against the Jews is well known around the world, the Hiroshima experience is not so well or widely known, even though the scope of misery caused in Hiroshima far exceeds that of Auschwitz. Besides, there is very real danger that the Hiroshima-type disaster may occur again (cynics might say that, if so, it will be for an Auschwitz-type purpose!). In any case, the reality of human misery in Hiroshima must be made as well and widely known all over the world as is that of Auschwitz.⁴²

Comments such as this do little to advance progressive calls for acknowledgement of Japan's role beyond that of victim—one that includes the frightening “victimizer” label as well. Instead, they further reinforce Japan's sense of uniqueness and the pervasive ethnocentrism that continues to feed the victimization ideology in Japan today.

In another instance Ōe called the bomb an “absolute evil”; in effect rendering the claims to ‘victim’ or calls for Japan to recognize itself as ‘victimizer’ by other groups as a moot point since the atomic bomb had transcended all these boundaries and stood as the ultimate victim experience:

Few people today view the world in terms of a dualism of good and evil . . . But, all of a sudden one summer, an absolute evil intruded into the lives and consciousness of the A-bomb victims . . . From the instant the atomic bomb exploded, it became the symbol of all human evil; it was a savagely primitive demon and a most modern curse . . . The atomic bomb embodied the absolute evil of war, transcending lesser distinctions such as Japanese or Allies, attacker or attacked.⁴³

Despite Ōe's clearly leftist viewpoints and his obvious, yet perhaps oblivious (at the time), reinforcement of victimhood ideology, he tries to come to terms with this approach later in

⁴² Ōe Kenzaburo, Hiroshima Notes, p. 161.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 114.

his life. In his 1995 introduction to the work, Ōe addresses this lack of perspective in what appears to be an apology:

At the time of writing the essays in this book I was sadly lacking in the attitude and ability needed to recast Hiroshima in an Asian perspective. In that respect I reflected the prevailing Japanese outlook on Hiroshima. In response to criticisms from Korea and the Philippines, however, I have since revised my view of Hiroshima. I have focused more on Japan's wars of aggression against Asian people, on understanding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as one result of those wars, and on the special hardships suffered by the many Koreans who experienced the atomic bombings.⁴⁴

Regardless of his belated public acknowledgment of the narrow focus of his work, even in his original essays Ōe seems to realize the double victimization of atomic survivors. Their feelings are consistently ignored by antiwar activists on both the right and left and rather than being integrated and consulted, their experiences are used to advance political agendas—not to address issues *hibakusha* find important in relation to their experiences.⁴⁵ In Hiroshima Notes, Ōe provides examples of how these ignored *hibakusha* use literature, education and non-participation as tools to oppose this reallocation of their experience to the creation of a national Japanese victim consciousness.⁴⁶ In doing so he illustrates to readers the difference between Japan's national ideology of victimization and the political ideology and personal identity of victim/survivors.⁴⁷

IBUSE MASUJI

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 21-22.

⁴⁷ Refer to John Whittier Treat, Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 229-258 for an in-depth discussion of Ōe's contribution to the genre.

The literary works of Ibuse Masuji had secured him a leading position among modern Japanese writers long before his critically acclaimed masterpiece, Black Rain (*Kuroi Ame*). This piece, however, is undoubtedly his most famous work. It is also the most famous work of *genbaku bungaku* yet produced. This claim has been refuted of course, but the status of the work in educational circles is undeniable. Part of the success of Black Rain is due to Ibuse's ability to divorce himself from the ideological battles waged over the meaning of Hiroshima in other writers' works. The works of Ōta Yoko and Hara Tamiki among others, have been criticized for their marked leftist leanings. The ideological slant of atomic bomb literature heretofore had made it unworthy of being considered *bungaku* by critics or of attracting a large non-*hibakusha* audience because of the self-imposed alienation of survivors by their sometimes fanatical insistence that their experience was incapable of transmission to non-survivors.

In Black Rain, Ibuse relies heavily on journals to bridge the gap in time between the present (five years after the bombings) and the past, as well as to situate himself clearly as an outsider—using the voice of a survivor to describe the survivor experience rather than his own voice as a non-*hibakusha* writer. By using these journals to move back and forth between past and present Ibuse demonstrates how the suffering of atomic victims continues five years later. The implied threat is that this atomic victimization will continue long after the bombings themselves and that all mankind is past or potential victims.⁴⁸ In making this link, Ibuse reinforces the atomic victimhood and elicits empathy from non-*hibakusha* readers.

⁴⁸ John T. Dorsey and Naomi Matsuoka, "Narrative Strategies of Understatement in Black Rain as a Novel and A Film," in Hibakusha Cinema: Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the Nuclear Image in Japanese Film, ed. Mick Broderick (London: Kegan Paul International, 1996), p. 205.

Another tool of Ibuse is the juxtaposition of nature and the 'natural' with the bombing and the 'unnatural' or 'bizarre'. This device is used in both Black Rain and The Crazy Iris.⁴⁹ In Black Rain, the symbols are the black rain that fell on Hiroshima following the bombing. The rain represented a distortion of nature that the bomb had created. As this rain fell it left marks on the victims that were not easily rinsed away. These temporary streaks left by the black rain represent the marks left by the bomb on visibly unscathed victims—they had no physical symptoms related to the bombings, yet they carried the invisible stain of that day in their bodies; Their natural condition had been warped by contact with the bombs and thus their victimization stretched into an unknown future.⁵⁰ Yasuko serves as the medium for the demonstration of this symbolism—she illustrates to the readers that even those seemingly unaffected by the bomb are in fact marked by the frightening power of the device to alter the natural world. In essence—none of us are safe from a similar fate.⁵¹ Shigematsu's memory of seeing unscathed baby eels only a few days after the bombing in a river within the city, serves as a symbol of the hope for the future and a rebirth of the natural world that he felt at the time; however, his wish that a rainbow would appear after Yasuko is taken away in the ambulance at the end of the novel demonstrates the change in his feelings for the future. On the brink of death himself, Shigematsu—in the act of wishing itself—acknowledges that the rainbow is unlikely (i.e. – the recovery of Yasuko, and in a more general sense, the triumphant return of nature in the future is unlikely).⁵² This juxtaposition of natural and unnatural, future and no future are important in reinforcing our conceptions of atomic victimization as something beyond that of other conventional victimhood ideologies. Further, by focusing on the uncertain future of the

⁴⁹ Ibuse Masuji, "The Crazy Iris," in The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath ed. Ōe Kenzaburo (New York: Grove Press, 1985)

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 206.

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 211-212.

⁵² Ibid, p. 217.

hibakusha in his novel, Ibuse ensures that we comprehend the totality of atomic victimization—it ends only with death.

As a result of Ibuse's literary employment of journals and his focus on anti-intellectual, white-collar, 'Joe Japan' type of characters in Black Rain, he brought Hiroshima within the realm of comprehension of non-*hibakusha*. The ordinariness of Shigematsu and his family's lives finally allowed readers to relate to *hibakusha* as people who had the same hopes, fears and problems in the postwar period that any other ordinary Japanese had—aside from their *hibaku* status. It was also seen as an affirmation of Japan's traditions and society, which helped bring social and political conservatives into the movement. By narrowing the gap between conservatives, as well as ordinary people, and *genbaku bungaku*, Ibuse successfully integrated Hiroshima into the collective memory of war victimization.⁵³

Black Rain has undeniably become the most famous work in the canon of victimhood literature in Japan. By situating the Hiroshima experience within the greater context of wartime suffering, Ibuse allows war survivors to transcend boundaries of experience and apply their individual experiences of victimhood as tools in the process of assimilation of atomic bomb victim consciousness. Further, by restricting his focus to ordinary civilians and characterizing the few soldiers that appear in the work as haughty and deserving of civilian contempt, Ibuse ensures that readers will internalize the victimization of Hiroshima as a civilian tragedy rather than an act of war.^{54 55}

⁵³ James Orr, The Victim as Hero, p. 108-109.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 129.

⁵⁵ For further discussion of Ibuse Masuji and Black Rain, see John Whittier Treat, Writing Ground Zero, pp. 261-299. Again, I am indebted for his discussion of this work for helping to formulate my ideas regarding Black Rain's role in the maintenance of victimization ideology.

JOHN HERSEY

John Hersey's work, Hiroshima became an instant success in the United States in 1946 when it was published in the *New Yorker Magazine*. The work succeeded in transforming American perspectives regarding the bomb as no other work had attempted since the bombings. In the period from August 1945 until Hersey's publication in 1946, the atomic bombings had been treated as an inevitability in America and discussions of the events had focused on facts rather than conveying a true sense of the human suffering atomic warfare entailed.

It was Hersey's cultivation of empathy in the readership that contributed most to the perceptions of the Japanese as victims of nuclear war in the United States, but it was not until the Cold War and the nuclear arms race had begun in full-force that American attitudes grew more empathetic as their own fate threatened to mirror that of the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In his cultivation of this empathy, Hersey relied heavily on the natural process of identification with likeness. In choosing six survivors to focus his story on, Hersey arguably picked six of the most uncharacteristic Hiroshima citizens. In his group, there are three Christians, one of whom is a German Jesuit priest, two medical doctors, and many of the individuals are of a social status slightly higher than the typical victim—a very unrepresentative sampling of Hiroshima citizenry. The reasons for his choice of characters were very shrewd. Hersey recognized the truth in Cathy Caruth's statement that, "Empathy . . . is most extended most easily to individuals whose conditions and experiences are readily recognized and assimilated on the basis of likeness."⁵⁶ Clearly, these individuals shared more similarities with Americans than typical citizens of Hiroshima. By highlighting these similarities Hersey hoped that American readers would be able to imagine themselves in the situation of these survivors. It worked; Hersey's description of the

⁵⁶ Cathy Caruth, Trauma: Explorations in Memory (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995) as cited in Kyo Maclear, Beclouded Visions, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 104.

experience from the victim's point of view, and the literary contrast he employed between simplistic prose and the enormity of the phenomena made the book a success both in terms of its literary accomplishments as well as its political agenda.⁵⁷ Although it took several more years for a full-blown foreign consciousness of Japanese victimhood to develop, Hersey ensured the seeds were planted.

GENBAKU BUNGAJU: NAGASAKI

NAGAI TAKASHI

It has often been said that while "Hiroshima rages, Nagasaki prays" and that if "Hiroshima has remained a stark symbol of man's inhumanity to man; Nagasaki is a monument to forgiveness"⁵⁸ Such statements highlight the differences between atomic experience in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The most famous author of Nagasaki *genbaku bungaku* and the first articulator of the forgiveness and prayers of Nagasaki was Nagai Takashi. A devout Catholic whose wife was killed instantly in the explosion and whose own leukemia (contracted through his work as a radiologist) was exacerbated by the bombing, Nagai wrote and prayed ceaselessly after the bombings and until his death in 1951. He rapidly became a symbol of the nation's atomic victimization and the innocence of this victimization. He was visited in his "Love Thy Neighbor As Yourself" shack, rebuilt on the site of his former home, by Pope John Paul II and the Showa emperor, as well as other famous figures.⁵⁹

In Nagai's writings we find a distinctive focus on martyrdom and innocence, heavily influenced by Catholicism:

Is there not a profound relationship between the destruction of Nagasaki and the end of the war? Nagasaki, the only holy place in all Japan—was it not chosen as

⁵⁷ Michael J. Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience," in *Hiroshima's Shadow*, ed. Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz (Stony Creek, CT: The Pamphleteer's Press, 1998), p. 290.

⁵⁸ Linner, *City of Silence*, p. 102.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-118.

a victim, a pure lamb, to be slaughtered and burned on the alter of sacrifice to expiate the sins committed by humanity in the Second World War?⁶⁰

This passage clearly demonstrates the powerful words of Nagai Takashi, words that have been adopted into the victimization ideology whether or not Nagai intended it. This passage in particular is famous for its emphasis on the innocence of the atomic victims. In Nagai's literature the atomic bomb survivors are portrayed as becoming martyrs to the cause of peace. He even goes so far as to claim that only the sinners had been left on earth, while the pure of heart had been called back to God by the atomic blast. Another passage further illustrates this emphasis on martyrdom and victimization in the context of Christianity that is found in Nagai's work:

We Japanese, a vanquished people, must now walk along a path that is full of pain and suffering. The reparations imposed by the Potsdam Declaration are a heavy burden. But this painful path along which we walk carrying our burden—is it not also the path of hope which gives to us sinners and opportunity to expiate our sins? 'Blessed are those who mourn for the shall be comforted.' We must walk this way of expiation faithfully and sincerely. And as we walk in hunger and thirst, ridiculed, penalized, scourged, pouring with sweat and covered with blood, let us remember how Jesus Christ carried His cross to the Hill of Calvary. He will give us courage.⁶¹

Words such as these undoubtedly were adopted with gusto into the collective memory of victimization. Hiroshima and Nagasaki became the ultimate symbols of sacrifice, endurance, martyrdom and victimization.

Despite the obvious utilitarian interpretation of Nagai's words as reinforcing victimization ideology in postwar Japan, Nagai was clearly a spiritual leader rather than a political one. He clearly protested the destruction of the atomic bomb, but he did not adopt a

⁶⁰ Nagai Takashi, *The Bells of Nagasaki*, trans. William Johnston (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1949), p. 107 .

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 109.

politically pacifist stance or anti-American rhetoric.⁶² Instead, he drew from Nagasaki's legacy of Christian martyrdom and the Catholicism of the pre-Vatican II era to construct a framework in which he and other Nagasaki Christians might come to terms with their atomic destruction.⁶³ To say this however, is not to imply that his works did not carry great political meaning for other Japanese. Although most Japanese could not identify with Nagai's messages in a Christian framework, they readily adopted them into their victimization ideology because of their focus on Japanese martyrdom.

Occupation authorities also inadvertently contributed to the interpretation of *The Bells of Nagasaki* within the framework of victimization ideology. When the work was completed on August 9, 1946, Occupation censors refused publication until January 1949. That it was allowed to be published at all is an indication that it was found less threatening than other early *genbaku bungaku* written by *hibakusha*—a testament to the claim that Nagai's works were spiritual rather than political. The commentator for the Civil Intelligence Section felt that it was described as a natural calamity—something unavoidable that one should resign oneself to, and thus it engendered no resentment of the American Occupation forces.⁶⁴ When it was finally published in 1949, however, it was approved with the proviso that an appendix describing Japanese atrocities in the Philippines be attached. By doing so, the Occupation authorities had hoped to prevent the conceptualization of the atomic bombings as a war atrocity, but quite ironically, this implicit comparison of the two events may have in fact contributed to such views on the part of readers.^{65 66}

⁶² Linner, *City of Silence*, p. 114.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁶⁴ Monica Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan* (New York: East Gate Books, M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1991), p. 97.

⁶⁵ Linner, *City of Silence*, p. 113.

⁶⁶ See Treat, *Writing Ground Zero*, pp. 301-349 for a discussion of Nagai Takashi and other Nagasaki *genbaku bungaku* writers.

CONCLUSION

The range of atomic bomb literature is obviously much larger than the brief sample I have undertaken to analyze in the pages above; however, I think that through the works of these representative *genbaku bungaku* authors, it is possible to see the mutually reinforcing relationship that has existed between atomic bomb literature and victimization ideology in the postwar period. The postwar mood in Japan was essential in creating an atmosphere conducive to the crafting of a victimization ideology. In the case of Japan, factors ranging from domestic political to international ideological concerns played vital roles in preventing Japan from coming to terms with its wartime victimizer role. In this environment *genbaku bungaku* became an essential tool to the build-up and maintenance of victimization ideologies, yet ironically, embedded within the same texts that appeared to promote Japanese victimhood, explicit and implicit acknowledgements of the limitations of Japan's dialogue of exclusive victimization are apparent. The reasons for these ironies probably have much to do with the complexities of internalizing war atrocities, a personal feeling of victimization, rational knowledge of the root causes of these atrocities and an unconscious understanding of personal responsibility. Many authors grappled with these issues in their works, but often—except in the most obvious cases of author intent—parts of the works of these authors that suited the needs of a particular individual, group or era were seized upon in the dissemination of collective memory of WWII.

With the escalation of threats of nuclear war in the 1980's, controversy in Japan surrounding the sanitization of school textbooks, the death of the emperor and a growing debate over the rearmament of Japan, the issues that *genbaku bungaku* writers had often tried to raise gained more importance in Japanese social and political discourse. As a result, *genbaku bungaku* began to be reclaimed by both *hibakusha* and peace activists alike in its application to the

creation of collective memory. Although atomic survivor testimonies were once viewed as a powerful tool against Japanese attempts to remilitarize, recently leftists have recognized that this narration of self-victimization is in fact perpetuating the government agenda of the suppression of wartime memories.⁶⁷ In 1982, Japan's literati, including *genbaku bungaku* authors—among them Ibuse and Ōe—issued a manifesto calling for Japan to follow the Three Non-Nuclear Principles; Kurihara Sadako and other Hiroshima literati responded with their own antinuclear statement the following month.⁶⁸ In this atmosphere of articulation of pacifism authors also criticized the nation for subverting their intended messages and using their works to support government agendas. In response, these authors also began to respond to criticisms regarding Japan's postwar neglect of war responsibility.⁶⁹

These steps are of vital importance to Japan's future as a member of Asia and will greatly affect whether or not Japan is allowed to assume a leadership role in the creation of a new East Asian order. Acceptance of war responsibility is a pre-requisite to Japan's participation and if these requirements are not met, Asia will undoubtedly move ahead with the same contempt of Japan as Japan held of them in the early part of the century. *Genbaku bungaku* therefore has the social power to help realign the dialogue of victimization and forge a future for Japan in Asia; alternately, if the exclusive focus on Japan's victim experience is allowed to continue, it will further exacerbate the ethnocentric victimization ideology that has isolated Japan thus far. It is up to survivors, authors and readers to decide which path Japan will tread.

⁶⁷ Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space and the Dialectics of Memory*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 87

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁶⁹ See Kurihara, *Black Eggs*. Her most politically probing poems fall after 1979; also see Ōe's 1995 introduction to *Hiroshima Notes*; and Ibuse's responses to the conservative regime's zealous adoption of his work as a gem of literature validating the Japanese way of life.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

In researching this topic, I discovered early on the limitations imposed on my source material by the page limitation of the paper. Not only did I find, quite expectedly, an overwhelming body of atomic bomb literature, I also found vast source material on the atomic bomb in general, including discussions of *genbaku bungaku* authors and their relationship to pacifism, victimization ideology and war responsibility. Because the connection between *genbaku bungaku*, victimization ideology and war responsibility has not always been made in scholarly writings I had to rely on several different sources, each with a focus related to my topic on a broader level and then extrapolate from these the relationship among them based on the information I found. Both John Dower and James Orr have dealt with the issue of victimization and war responsibility at length and I was grateful for their works. Seiitsu Tachibana's work was also important for its delineation of Japan's struggle to take responsibility for wartime actions. Another author that I relied on heavily, especially for his discussion of *genbaku bungaku* as a literary genre in Japan was John Whittier Treat. Paul Boyer, Reiko Tachibana, Kyo Maclear, and Lisa Yoneyama's works were instrumental in my understanding of the importance of remembrance. Perhaps most influential in framing perspectives regarding history versus collective memory, however, were the works from Hiroshima in History and Memory, edited by Michael J. Hogan. For the atomic bomb literature that I used in this paper, I relied on English translations of these authors' most famous works from a variety of print materials and drew on criticism and analysis by authors such as Linner, Treat and Dower to make conclusions. The other works cited in the footnotes and bibliography were essential in building the framework I

used to build my argument, but my reliance on them was peripheral. Oftentimes my reliance on particular works was as sources of quotes and other factual information.

If time and space constraints were of no concern, I would have liked to have spent more time delving into the complexities of these issues by reading and re-reading particular works after each piece of criticism I encountered regarding that work. As it was, reading each work only once, or even reading only important sections was hard enough. I really believe that more thorough readings could have yielded more information to support my claims.

I also would have liked to survey a broader range of *genbaku bungaku* authors and their works. I feel that my argument could have been greatly expanded and enhanced had I had access to the complete works of particular authors, especially their works in the original Japanese. The use of language in these works is essential, and by being unable to examine the works in their original I was unable to confirm the appropriateness of particular words or phrases used by the authors in their English translations. Although I feel that I greatly expanded my knowledge of this subject, it is quite clear to me that I've only begun to scrape the surface of this topic.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bird, Kai, and Lifschultz, Lawrence, eds. Hiroshima's Shadow. Connecticut: The Pamphleteer's Press, 1998.
- Bix, Herbert P., "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation." In Hiroshima In History and Memory, edited by Michael J. Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Boyer, Paul, "Exotic Resonances: Hiroshima in American Memory." In Hiroshima In History and Memory, edited by Michael J. Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Braw, Monica. The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991.
- Dower, John W. Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of WWII. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Dower, John W. Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays. New York: New Press, 1993.
- Dower, John W., "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory." In Hiroshima In History and Memory, edited by Michael J. Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Dower, John W. War without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Field, Norma. In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.
- Hara, Tamiki. "Summer Flowers." In Hiroshima: Three Witnesses, edited and translated by Richard H. Minear. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Hara, Tamiki. "The Land of the Heart's Desire." In The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath, edited with introduction by Oe Kenzaburo. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1985.
- Hayashi, Kyoko. "Ritual of Death." In Nuke Rebuke: Writers and Artists Against Nuclear Energy and Weapons, edited by Morty Sklar. Iowa City, Iowa: The Spirit that Moves Us Press, Inc., 1984.
- Hayashi, Kyoko. "The Empty Can." In The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath, edited with introduction by Oe Kenzaburo. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1985.
- Hersey, John. Hiroshima. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- Ibuse, Masuji. Black Rain. Translated by John Bester. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1969.

Ibuse, Masuji. "The Crazy Iris." In The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath, edited with introduction by Oe Kenzaburo. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1985.

Kurihara, Sadako. Black Eggs. Translated by Richard H. Minear. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Kurihara, Sadako. When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems. Translated by Richard H. Minear. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Lifton, Robert Jay. Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima. New York: Random House, Inc., 1967.

Linner, Rachelle. City of Silence. New York: Orbis Books, 1995.

Maclear, Kyo. Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art of Witness. New York: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Naeve, Virginia. Friends of the Hibakusha. Denver, Colorado: Alan Swallow, 1964.

Nagai, Takashi. The Bells of Nagasaki. Translated by William Johnston. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984.

Nagai, Takashi. We of Nagasaki. Translated by Ichiro Shirato and Herbert B. L. Silverman. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., 1951.

Oe, Kenzaburo. Hiroshima Notes. Translated by David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa. New York: Marion Boyars, 1995.

Orr, James J. The Victim as Hero. Honolulu: HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Ota, Yoko. "Fireflies." In The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath, edited with introduction by Oe Kenzaburo. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1985.

Ota, Yoko. "City of Corpses." In Hiroshima: Three Witnesses, edited and translated by Richard H. Minear. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Schlant, Ernestine and Rimer, J. Thomas. Legacies and Ambiguities: Postwar Fiction and Culture in West Germany and Japan. Washington, D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1991.

Tachibana, Reiko. Narrative as Counter-Memory. New York: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Tachibana, Seiitsu. "The Quest for a Peace Culture: The A-Bomb Survivors' Long Struggle and the New Movement for Redressing Foreign Victims of Japan's War." In Hiroshima In History and Memory, edited by Michael J. Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Toge Sankichi, "Poems of the Atomic Bomb." In Hiroshima: Three Witnesses, edited and translated by Richard H. Minear. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Treat, John Whittier. Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

The Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings. Translated by Eishi Ishikawa and David L. Swain. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981.

Yoneyama, Lisa. Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space and the Dialectics of Memory. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.