

Character's POV creates empathy in War literature-- examples from Japanese Post WWII literature.

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I. Introduction

It is hard for us to put ourselves into others' shoes, and understand others' pains and traumas. Therefore, literature is there to help us to understand and imagine others' traumatic experiences. The core of war literature, specifically, is not to dredge the right or wrong, but to expose the human suffering experienced by all whose lives are shaped by war, especially non-combatants. Adhering to these purposes, war literature doesn't need to justify the positions of the combatants so much as it needs to evoke empathy for those who experience the effects of war. When attempting to grasp the complexity and effects of war, arguably literature provides the most humanizing perspective on history. Who should speak for the dead, the mute, the traumatized? Ogawa claims, "Through the language of literature, we can finally come to empathize with the suffering of nameless and unknown others. Or, at very least, we can force ourselves to stare without flinching at the stupidity of those who have committed unforgivable errors and ask ourselves whether the shadow of this same folly lurks within us as well" (Ogawa 3).

Reviewing the traumatic experience of others during wartime from a humanizing perspective is necessary if humanity is to make a progress on redressing the harm caused by war, and if we are to make progress towards avoiding war in the future. Literature provides a means of humanizing the experience of war because it can evoke readers' empathy and make readers feel invested in protagonists' emotions and situations, even when those protagonists are from cultures or sides in a war that is different from a reader's own. This paper argues that war literature plays the important role of helping readers to view the effects of war, even in other cultures, with a humanizing perspective. This paper looks specifically at literary representations of the experience of WWII in Japan as examples that illustrate the human suffering in Japan for both later generations of Japanese and non-Japanese readers. War equals a massive murder that can be decorated with sophisticated and non-sense reasons, such as fighting for justice, rights, authority, revenge, or punishment. There are multiple reasons to start a war, such as extending the territory, economic benefit, and natural resources. Regardless of how it starts, all of the participants in the war are damaged and destroyed by the war, and all participants' stories should be told and sympathized with. In war, civilians are praying for their safeties and peaceful lives while suffering from death, short of living resources, losing families, and so on. Literature is especially effective at creating feelings of empathy for protagonists of stories that involve war experiences. This paper highlights how, in literature, a character's point of view provides an effective strategy to evoke the reader's empathy and imagination, inviting an experiential sense of the painful and traumatic war

experiences of others, even if those others are from a culture or nation-state that may have been in combat with the reader's own during the events depicted. The paper further makes a case for Young Adult literature plays an important role in understanding the war. The paper suggests that empathy is an essential emotion that is helpful for young adults' developments and looks at some examples of the way literature represents young adult experiences of WWII in Japan. This paper examines three novels and one short story. *Sachiko*, by Caren Stelson, is a novelization of the real individual Sachiko's experience of the Nagasaki atomic bombing. *Black Rain*, by Masaji Ibuse, takes place during the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. *Twenty-four eyes*, by Sakae Tsuboi, show the changes students and teachers undergo at a village school throughout the war. The short story "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)", by Akiyuki Nosaka, presents a tragedy of two war orphans. These four examples depict survivors' stories during WWII in Japan, and, the paper argues, those traumatic experiences need to be listened to. Encountering the experiences as literature helps the reader to inhabit them deeply. These four literary examples are all based on the real individuals' experiences during WWII in Japan. The paper highlights some of the techniques these works employ to create reader empathy. The paper also points out some ways the experiences of young adults in these stories especially inspire empathy and provide a humanizing perspective on the historical events for readers, especially young adult readers. In *Sachiko*, readers walk closer to Sachiko's life from the time she is young. In *Black Rain*, readers take Shigematsu's point of view to walk through the damaged Hiroshima on the day of the atomic bombing. In "Hotaru no

Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)”, readers suffer both physical and psychological pain with Seita until his death. In *Twenty-four Eyes*, readers watch the Pine Tree Village elementary school’s students grow up during the terrors and suffering of the war. The protagonists in these four literary examples lead readers to identify with and invest in their life stories.

II. Empathy and War Literature

Some Chinese scholars regard Post-World War II Japanese literature as "refactoring the memories," and claim that Japanese authors sell their sympathetic experiences during the wartime, especially the atomic bombing, to gain readers' empathy. Worse, some Chinese critics see Japanese Post-WWII literature as attempting to whitewash Japanese heinous behaviors, or even more, trying to rewrite history. Zhu argues, "Not only that, the reason for the damage the Japanese suffered due to the war was the evil results of the war launched by the Japanese government, but Japanese focused their attention on the actual damage suffered by the war and the loss caused by the atomic bomb dropping by the United States" (Zhu 1). This theory critically points to the cause of the war as Japanese militarism, and the Japanese government as the prime "criminal." Scholars think some post-war literature written and published by the conquered countries has the effect of bleaching or restructuring their "sins." However, with the humanizing lens of literature, viewing basic human rights, and focusing on human beings as the only subject becomes the crucial theory. Viewed this way, the purpose of writing literature is to reflect the history and the antiwar ambition, but not rewrite the history. About some exhibitions

about the Pacific war in Japan scholars criticize: "In contrast to the 'war' museums, these 'peace museums pay attention to the Japanese as victimizers as well as victims'..." (Jeans 167). Jeans mainly claim that the war museums, textbooks, and war debate are biased in not presenting the full history of the Pacific War; instead, it only exhibits the perspective of Japanese victims. Jeans notes that "While some museums in Japan (government-operated and/or affiliated with Shinto) still prefer to emphasize Japanese sufferings while ignoring the catastrophe their country inflicted on the Asia-Pacific area during the 1931 and 1945" (Jeans 193). Even so, I support a humanizing perspective as the review lens. Standing from a Japanese perspective, their victims and soldiers are natural priorities. For example, the Japanese Veterans' Association announces, "the original purpose of the museum was to pay tribute to the souls of the war dead, by displaying their belongings. That way, their children can live with pride" (Jeans 158). This has the effect of narrowing down the historical issue to a single family or person, and only focusing on human characters as the subject in war exhibition and literature. Thus, the war literature is about anti-war cognition from a human or humanizing perspective, but not to discuss war crime from the political perspective. The purpose of war literature is to review the history, the harm of war, and the suffering of survivors. The main emotion needed is empathy, but empathy has two aspects -- affective and cognitive empathy. Empathy has two factors that work together: affective and cognitive empathy. The four texts discussed in this paper evoke both types. Empathy combines affective empathy and cognitive empathy. "Dependent variables were empathic concern for the protagonist (i.e. 'affective empathy'),

perspective taking for the protagonist (i.e., 'cognitive empathy'), and trust for the protagonist" (Lissa 48). Affective empathy is what contents present to readers objectively, and cognitive empathy is the thoughts of readers subjectively. And when the author provides both affective and cognitive empathy, the sense of empathy will affect the readers the most. Readers experience affective empathy first with the protagonist characters, and then cognitive empathy is the freedom that authors have left for readers to feel empathy. After readers think through the entire story that they have witnessed with protagonist characters and come up with their feelings is when the strongest empathy is provoked. In these four texts, each one raises a core question or issue that challenges readers to think about, which is the main thread to evoke readers' cognitive empathy. In *Sachiko*, the protagonist Sachiko claims, "this is the only world we can live in, Hate only produces hate" (Stelton 79); "Never again. Never again" (Stelton 73). In *Black Rain*, Shigematsu struggles with the knowledge that, "the enemy must have known that Japan was beaten already; it was hardly necessary to drop the bomb. Either way, those responsible for setting up the organization . . . started this war" (Ibuse 292). In "Hotaru no Haka" (Grave of the Fireflies), the major question that Seita hints at is, "Who is really responsible for these kids' deaths?" In *Twenty-four Eyes*, the question that Oishi sensei marvels over is, "how quickly children adapted themselves to the change of times" (Tsuboi 196). The characters invite readers to think about these issues and questions, and the hidden answers only have one theme: anti-war, which is the primary theme in most war literature.

Literature is an essential treasure, and it is no doubt a shining star in history and humanity. Even though the audiences cannot heal the victims by just listening to their stories, the audiences can share the warmth of humanity, experience empathy, and feel grief with the survivors, which is an accomplishment of literature. Listening to their stories, feeling the pain with them, and sympathy for them creates the humanizing perspective of literature, especially war literature. I think the readers can practice their empathy with the victims then bring this ability to feel empathy to their lives. Literature has a mission of recording and processing the glory and darkness of humanity. Humanity is an essential factor of literature. "Humanity is perpetually involved in the movement of becoming, with the conditions of its present forever ceding to the prerogatives of the future" (Smith 95). Human beings are the subject and object of literature, and the Japanese post-WWII literature especially meditates on war stories with a humanizing lens. "Humanity is pre-eminently a historical being, and its being is defined and conditioned by this, its rootedness in time" (Smith 95). Smith claims that a humanizing perspective can be regarded as a historical perspective in that humanity is the root of time. But there are differences in the ways that a humanity perspective is achieved by wearing the lens of empathy with a character, or ways a story easily evokes reader empathy. In other words, a humanizing perspective is viewing literature with a glass of empathy. Besides the historical understanding, the humanity perspective focuses on characters' experiences and stories. In common sense, people all know that war and fighting are atrocious actions, but the victims have the strongest proof and suffer the

most, and that is why they need to tell their stories. The Pacific War is a personal trauma for each victim and survivor, and it is also a national trauma for Japan and the worldwide, which is the reason why people should care about and listen to the stories of the victims, reading the literature about historical events and thinking about it with empathy. The humanity perspective is reading with empathy, and empathy is one important influence of literature. Gillespie states, "This is the first argument I would like to offer for literature, its capacity to stimulate the imagination, to offer different perspectives and wider worlds that the young reader can wander at leisure and experience in safety, without pressure or judgment. We can read ourselves imaginatively into other lives and by this act expand the pages of our own" (Gillespie 17). Wilder imagination is very effective for both authors and readers. Authors can build a world within novels, and readers adopt the imaginations to sink into the world that authors create. No matter how wild people's imaginations are, the pain that survivors have suffered is inconceivable, and the character point of view has the most direct and closest emotion to the war and the pain. "No matter how much the larger traits of our life-stories are similar, I still do not recognize myself in you, and even less, in the collective we" (Davis 13). Readers tend to find themselves in the literature. However, every subject is unique, and the experiences are certainly different. Therefore, the details we can experience by reading literature can help readers imagine the situations in the books, which can bring readers closer to the plots. In this way, imagination can promote empathy as well.

- Reading *Sachiko* as an Empathy-Evoking Text

Sachiko is the book title, but also the protagonist's name. Sachiko's name in Japanese kanji usually means blessed child, a name that turns out to be ironic in this work. The character Sachiko grew up in Nagasaki, and she experienced the atomic bombing when she was only six years old. "Of the 260,000 to 270,000 people living in Nagasaki at the time of the bombing, approximately 74,000 died-- about half of them on August 9" (Stelson 52). Sachiko survived, but two of her brothers and uncle died because of the radiation sickness, and her sister Misa died because of leukemia later, which is a continued symptom of radiation sickness. She muses, "Toshi. Aki. Ichiro. Uncle. Now Misa. Sachiko felt numb as if trapped like a cicada in a net of death" (Stelson 81). Radiation effects are long-termed and continuous. In the novel, Sachiko's father died of the liver cancer, and Sachiko herself was diagnosed with thyroid cancer later in her life. The reader is invited into the human cost of that suffering by inhabiting the story of Sachiko herself. Beyond the physical damage, the reader also experiences the psychological trauma of the character, who is bullied and alienated:

"Why do you wear the same ugly clothes every day?" "Why is your neck so dirty?" "Don't you ever wash your hair?" "How come you can't read?" "How come you can't even add 2+3?" "Are you stupid? Lazy?" One child stole her lunches... "Why can't you understand anything?" Sachiko's teacher tapped her fingers on her desk. "Tell me, why?" Even the teacher couldn't make sense of Sachiko's behavior (Stelson 61, 62).

The bullies and misunderstandings Sachiko experiences in school are like another bomb dropped on Sachiko's heart, and the first only knows to helplessly cry about it. However, Sachiko was a very mature kid and she understood every family member had their struggle, so Sachiko chose to reveal all her weaknesses to her dead brother Ichiro: "Through her tears, Sachiko called to her brother in the clouds. *Ichiro. Help me*" (Stelton 63). All of the childhood bullying shapes Sachiko as a mature and brave female after she grows up. Thus, Sachiko starts to tell her stories worldwide, and she powerfully tells young adult readers, "[T]his is the only world we can live in. Hate only produces hate" (Stelton 79). She vows, "Never again. Never again" (Stelton 73). The lessons from war that should be learned by the world. Sachiko's wishes are the wishes that should be heard by heaven. Her hopes are the hopes that should be respected by the people. In the book, these truths are the phrases told by a little girl, Sachiko from Nagasaki, but the experience of inhabiting her story helps the reader to feel empathy with her suffering and to appreciate the true claims she makes about the horror of war. Sachiko is a strong female, but her experiences still need to be respected and listened to with an empathetic heart.

- Reading *Black Rain* as an Empathy-Evoking Text

Black Rain by Masaji Ibuse is a splendid example of the humanity lens of literature on real events. *Black Rain's* tone is grief, helplessness, and hope. It is a story of understanding of Shigematsu's family's experiences, through which a comprehensive picture of the Hiroshima atomic bombing emerges so that readers from other cultural perspectives and times can feel the empathy and memorize this. *Black Rain* by Masuji

Ibuse is about the Shigemasu family and how they suffered under the atomic bombing, especially the prejudice and pain of atomic sickness and the portrayal of innocent civilians in Hiroshima. Shigematsu experienced and survived from the Hiroshima atomic bombing; however, there is a rumor about his niece, Yasuko, that she has the radiation disease so that nobody wants to marry her. In order to prove Yasuko was not in Hiroshima on the bombing day, Shigematsu reviewed his memory and wrote it down in his diary. However tragically, after black rain dropped, Yasuko got radiation sickness as well. One impressive thing about *Black Rain* is the detailed description, which took over the major part of this novel. While reading it, readers will see the disgusting and horrible "pictures" that Shigematsu took with his eyes and memories. Shigematsu's story that is retold by Ibuse bravely directly presents the picture of physical injury in front of the readers. Readers could imagine the situation back on that atomic bombing day and walk the path under radiation with Shigematsu in Hiroshima. "A full understanding of the concept of reason requires being inclined to be affected or immediately motivated by reasons-- to form, change or confirm beliefs or other attitudes in accordance with them-- when those reasons apply to one's own attitudes" (Burge 1). Simplified, readers' understandings of the stories and events have a connection with the shift of their own attitudes. Furthermore, the innocent and uninitiated civilians' cognitions of the atomic bomb are heartache as well, and this is an unexpected personal angle. Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing is the first time using nuclear weapons in human history, and during that time there was no information and knowledge of the cruel damage; hence,

when people (the characters) saw the mushroom cloud, they were curious instead of panic. "In its texture, it reminded me of cumulo-nimbus clouds I had seen in photographs taken after the Great Kanto Earthquake " (Ibuse 53). Two other people think the mushroom cloud is a portent of a shower. Shigematsu thinks this is odd weather or natural disaster as well, and he still has not aware that he is the witness of the atomic bombing, "the head of the mushroom would billow our first to the east, then to the west, then out to the east again; each time some part to other of its body would emit a fierce light, in ever-changing shades of red, purple, lapis lazuli, or green" (Ibuse 53). Shigematsu described more weird details of the mushroom cloud beautifully, and it contrasted with the melancholy environment. The atomic bomb planted a giant poisonous mushroom in Hiroshima, and it released the spore to everyone, and it was spared like a disease in the city that people started to call it the radiation disease. Without any treatment and knowledge, the victims never crawled out of this forever harm and nightmare.

Viewing *Black Rain* from the humanity perspective, human lives and behaviors are essential. Another astute observation was recorded by Shigematsu of human society. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a stain in human history, but the little side stories can show it. The power of little stories is essential for literature that small related stories accumulated logically and ethically in one, and these small side stories can cast the tone of the major story. In *Black Rain*, Ibuse recalls a memory about father and son whose house had been ruined by the atomic bomb, the father ran out, but the unlucky son

was trapped under the house debris. At first, the father tried to help his son out; however, as the fire burned stronger, his father abandoned his son. " "It's no use. Don't think ill of me-- I'm getting out. You won't think ill of me, son?" and flinging the log away, he fled. The boy shouted, "Dad, help me!" but his father only looked back once before vanishing from sight"(Ibuse 120). Exhibiting the father and son story can be intense for the helpless, even though the father and son are not main characters, and they didn't even have a name in the novel. The atomic bomb has not only burned the house into pieces but also cracked the boy's heart and faith in his own father. The father would not be a very reliable father character already, but if the bombing had never happened, I assume that the boy wouldn't have lost his trust in his father. The family bond is burnt out, and the most selfless love and relationship in the world were so vulnerable at that moment. The son escaped out fortunately, and when the father and son met again, there flowed a freaky atmosphere between them that the father couldn't say anything, and the son decided to go back to his mother's hometown. There is no absolute judgment for the father in that situation, but the heartbreak of the son is undeniable as well. The boy not only suffered from the atomic bombing but also his father's abandonment. The boy took his life back, but he lost his family. This is only a short paragraph told by the boy, but the sadness and helplessness are leaking out from the plain words.

In addition, the primary story of *Black Rain* is about Shigematsu's niece, Yasuko's marriage. The purpose of *Black Rain* is that Yasuko's fiancé heard Yasuko got the radiation disease and refused to marry her. However, Yasuko was not in Hiroshima on

the atomic bombing day, and Shigematsu wrote this memoir to prove that Yasuko is clear of radiation disease. Unfortunately, Yasuko was caught in black rain and walked on her way to take care of Shigematsu, which brought her the radiation disease. "The cause of her radiation sickness was almost certainly not only the black rain, but also the way they had wandered through the still-hot ashes of the ruined city" (Ibuse 236). Radiated grains stay for years and years, and Yasuko walks into the radiated environment, and the radiation sickness affects her body clandestinely. The last several pieces of Shigematsu's diary record Yasuko's illness, and it is like a nurse journal record that recorded what she ate, what's her temperature, and how is her condition. Instead of complaining of Yasuko's pain, Shigematsu's diary was not extremely emotional, quietly shouting out the helplessness and also leaving all other mourn and sadness to readers. "July 25 *Thundery rain. Festival of Tenjin Shrine.* 10:30 Attack of violent pain and retching. Yasuko suffers pitifully. The pain subsides after ten minutes or so. Temperature 100. A little hair falls out" (Ibuse 226). Shigematsu recorded Yasuko's sickness day by day and never gave up on her. The sickness record is the affective empathy, which drags readers to the cognitive empathy, like why would she suffer this illness, or this sickness effect is horrible. And the answer the reader may create is the war and atomic bombing is the reason. At the end of *Black Rain*, "Shigematsu looked up. "If a rainbow appears over those hills now, a miracle will happen," he prophesied to himself. "Let a rainbow appear-- not a white one, but one of many hues-- and Yasuko will be cured." " (Ibuse 300). This part can be seen from two different angles. First, Shigematsu is still hoping and sees things positively. In some

previous chapters, Shigematsu has discovered some green grass and baby fishes reappear in Hiroshima, which symbolized the vigorous lives. On the other hand, Shigematsu is hopeless that he cannot find any treatment for Yasuko, except, he can only pray for a miracle to appear and cure Yasuko, which I agree with. Because the ending of *Black Rain* is “So he told himself, with his eyes on the nearby hills, though he knew all the while it could never come true” (Ibuse 300). It completely shows the crooked psychological states of Shigematsu, of the survivors. In addition, both of these two comprehensions have a common concept, which is the helplessness of survivors.

Black Rain is a pile of Hiroshima atomic bombing records with powerful details and evidence written by Ibuse and experienced by Shigematsu, which should be viewed in the humanity aspect. From Ibuse's impressive rearrangement of Shigematsu's story and Ibuse's writing style, the attitude shift effect arises silently. Instead of whining and complaining about the pain, Ibuse or Shigematsu only describe stories and facts. Ibuse or Shigematsu only told readers that his left facial skin got burnt and easily fell off, but he did not shout or sob in pain. Was he feeling hurt, but he did not want to cry about it, or were his senses numbed already? Either way is a sad interpretation, which leaves the imagination and judgment to the readers in order to let readers feel empathy. Audiences can mobilize their comprehensions to decode the literature, which can alter their attitudes and beliefs quietly. *Black Rain* includes both affective empathy and cognitive empathy. The depiction of the environment after the Hiroshima bombing and the radiation sickness of Yasuko is the affective empathy. Cognitive empathy is the most important part, so that

every literature embeds a core question or a theme to challenge the readers. And the common theme of war literature is antiwar. Shigematsu asks himself and the readers, "the enemy must have known that Japan was beaten already; it was hardly necessary to drop the bomb. Either way, those responsible for setting up the organization that had started this war" (Ibuse 292). I think this is the core question that the author wants her readers to think of, which affects the reader's cognitive empathy. Even if the war is necessary, is the atomic bombing essential? And instead of telling readers to think, Ibuse designs Shigematsu to question himself in the book, which leads the readers to think along with him mutely.

- Reading "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" as an Empathy-Evoking Text

"Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" is a true story based on the author Nosaka's own experiences. "Hotaru no haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" originally is a short story by Akiyuki Nosaka published in 1967 and produced as an animation movie by Studio Ghibli in 1988. It is a sad heartbreaking story of war orphans, Seita and Setsuko, and Nosaka himself is Seita the big brother in this story, and Nosaka makes the story more dramatic than his real experience. The entire story of "Hotaru no haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" starts with the powerless Seita dying in a train station, and nobody offers any help, some even avoids him.

Merciless onslaught of diarrhea continued, he crossed back and forth to the toilet, once having crouched down his legs trembled in the act of rising, pressing his body against

the door, its handle already wrenched off, he stood, supporting himself with one hand on the wall he walked; finally with his back propped up against the pillar he like a deflated balloon reached a state where he could no longer move his hips, still the diarrhea attacked relentlessly, in an instant staining yellow area around his bottom (Nosaka 446).

Nosaka tells the crucial and painful suffering of little boy Seita without any emotional word. Therefore, Nosaka mutely leads his readers to feel their empathy, which is a master way of showing their traumatic experiences and weakness. Back to the beginning of the air raid, Seita's mother died. So, he has to take care of his little sister Setsuko, but Seita is a teenage boy so he cannot find a legal job, and Seita cannot afford any food. The basic living demand becomes the major issue for Seita and Setsuko, so they had to live in their aunt's house at first. However, their aunt treated them awfully. Their aunt asked them to sell their mother's gorgeous kimono to exchange some rice, but she used those rice for her own family not for Seita and Setsuko. "whether unreasonable or not with an expression of pure contentment she was fixing her daughter's lunch box, making rice balls for the lodger, with rice bartered for his mother's kimono, while for their lunch she served parched oilless beans" (455 Nosaka). Because at wartime, serving for the war is the best and the most respectful work. The people are educated and told the war is the priority, and none of Seita or Setsuko work for war, so their aunt is mean to them. The different treatments had not comforted the orphans' feelings. Moreover, the horrid aunt even did not fake about it when Seita and Setsuko decided to move out,

“pardon us for being such a burden for so long a time,we’re moving someplace else,”

“someplace else? to where?” “we’re not exactly sure yet,” “is that so, well, take care of yourselves, by-by Setchan,” she worked up a forced smile, immediately withdrawing into the house (Nosaka 457).

This part is the society under the war that the family bonds were apart because of food and war. The aunt is protecting her own family, because at that time, most of the people worry about their meals. Nosaka also introduces the food black market and the prices, which Seita can never afford. Reviewing these pictures, the overall society and the close family relatives are like invisible hands that push Seita and Setsuko to death.

- Reading *Twenty-four Eyes* as an Empathy-Evoking Text.

Twenty-four Eyes is a book covering the entire wartime, which crosses more than 10 years. There are 12 students in the Pine Tree Village, and one day, the new teacher Koishi Sensei came who is also the main narrator of this novel. Koishi Sensei as a teacher recorded her interactions and thoughts of her students. She is the survivor, the witness, and the recorder during the war. Koishi Sensei gets married later in the novel and changes her last name to Mrs. Oishi, and her husband is a soldier who died in the war. Pine Tree Village is just a tiny corner in Japan, but it is the epitome of people's lives during wartime. Mrs. Oishi experiences the hopes and dreams of her dear students, and also sees the lights are gone from her students' eyes. Mrs. Oishi is not only a young music teacher in pine tree village, but also plays a role as a mother or mentor.

In another word, the protagonist's main mission is to provide affective empathy to readers, then readers will consider the cognitive empathy spontaneously. in these kids' lives. She is the witness of the Pine tree village, her students, her children, and the society. Mrs. Oishi's role is very important and complicated in the book that she is 12 students' teacher, 3 children's mother, and wife of a navy soldier, but her most important role is a survivor in wartime. In the book, Tsuboi calls students as pupils, and it also means eyes, which is an interesting pun. There were twelve students in total, seven girls and five boys at first, but five of them died during the war, and one boy lost his eyesight. Before the war started, all these pure kids wanted to accept more education and they were all singing with joy, but the joyful, shining eyes were gone. One of the saddest student characters is Isokichi, he wanted to open his own store, but he was forced to conscription and released from the army because he lost his eyesight. He went back to Pine Tree village and opened a small store; however, his personality has reshaped crucially, and his hope of living was gone as well. "He had muttered discouraged, with his head bending almost as low as his knees, that he would rather have died" (Tsuboi 224). This dialogue senses two things. One is that Isokichi was so depressed by the war that he lost his eyesight and his dreams. The other is that the students who are still alive become crucial because they said Isokichi would rather die, and they sound like they do not appreciate lives, except Mrs. Oishi's career life. She is also a single mother.

“People lived and died, sacrificing all human rights. They either kept their eyes wide in apprehension or had to hide their tears that streamed from the corners” (Tsuboi 195).Mrs.

Oishi moaned the ruthless war that massively killed innocent people and the autocratic government that took the free speech right from their people: "They had become so used to it in time that they forgot to think about it; spiritually as well as physically, they had become completely coarse and wild. Rebelling against that tendency would have meant death" (Tsuboi 195). The government at that time told teenagers to die on the battlefield and serve in the war, which these concepts of honor are unhealthy. Each of them is like a piece of fresh and blank paper, and that page adapted whatever color the society daubed on it; each of them is like an unshaped clay, and the wartime society is the hand and machine shaped them. However, Mrs. Oishi or Tsuboi as adult critics questioned this phenomenon that teenagers adapted the hurtful information senselessly, but the adults were afraid to speak. In which is the cognitive empathy that the readers should think by themselves and care about. *Twenty-four Eyes* is a warmhearted tragedy, and every character has been through many suffers in their lives. However, they overcame those traumatic experiences and sang together at the end. "Ruined lies the castle old, Where the warriors sar relaxed, Passing sake' north the moon, While cherry blossoms were in bloom" (Tsuboi 224). The small parts and side stories that Tusboi arranged together create the time machine for readers, and evoke their empathy. War literature needs to be reviewed with a humanity perspective that humans are the only subject and be able to feel empathy for their losses and pains.

III. Character point of view

The major writing angle I will analyze is the character's point of view, which is a reading angle for readers. We can live inside a character from the character's point of view when the psychic distance is very close. Character's point of view (POV) is when a character or narrator tells the story, and the author chooses "who" is to tell the story by determining the point of view. For example, in *Black Rain*, Ibuse chooses Shigematsu's point of view to tell the Hiroshima atomic bombing. The narrator should not be confused, and the character's point of view is not the same as first-person narration. First-person narration is close to the author's point of view that the author uses "I, me, my, we, us..." to tell readers what happens in the story. But the character's point of view can use some characters as the outside viewer and narrator. For instance, *Twenty-four Eyes* brings readers to Mrs. Oishi's teacher's point of view, but the main subject of the story is the village, the school, and the kids. Character's point of view is an angle of observing the memories, and retelling the story, the truth from different characters just as Shigematsu in *Black Rain*, Seita and Setsuko in "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)", Koishi sensei in *Twenty-four Eyes*, Sachiko in *Sachiko*. "While the closeness first-person offers for memoir writers is essential, the subjective nature is unacceptable in many academic contexts" (Berve 8). Readers take over the main characters' perspective instead of the author's perspective. "Memory, experience, and the capacity to take another's perspective (all matters traditionally considered cognitive) have roles in empathy" (Keen 213). These characters carry authors' experiences and memories with them, embed authors' ambitions, describe the world to the readers, and also leave the judgment to readers. The character's

point of view is like a tour guide who walks readers through the story and makes the reader witness their sufferings. Reading with the character's point of view is like playing virtual reality games in which readers adapt the players' perspective. Players put themselves into the story as the main character so that players can follow the progress closely, but also think of strategies by themselves. The character point of view occurs when the protagonists present the stories of themselves, and leave some freedom to readers to imagine, and keep some emotional distances. The character point of view promotes both affective empathy and cognitive empathy. The character point of view can influence readers' attitudes and cognitions silently, which is an effective way that readers themselves think of it and come up with their own answers. In the empathy orientation, the first-person narration limits the affective empathy but reduces the cognitive empathy because it writes the emotional states out to tell readers very directly.

However, reading from the character point of view focuses on cognitive empathy as well as the affective empathy, which is essential for historical and cultural contexts. And for the empathy purpose of Japanese war literature, there is an empathy gap between author and readers that the readers have different historical, political, and cultural backgrounds. First-person narration has more chances to turn the empathy feeling to self-pity than the character's point of view. The author's empathy could come from self-pity. "Author's empathy can be devoted to socially undesirable ends that may be rejected by a disapproving reader" (Keen 215). First-person narration includes strong emotion and that may cause that authors review their memories and exaggerate the facts, in order to push

their readers to feel empathy. In other words, the authors' purpose becomes complaining and whining about the sufferings instead of representing the history. Therefore, the emotion becomes self-pity. "Plumbing the Swamp: The modern mode of Self-Pity" argues that a rejection of modernist self-pity enabled the social action of the 1960s. McElrath recalls his urge to "break out the truly walled enclosure of the self", where he feared that he might suffocate" (Otis 128). When authors use self-narration to write about their experiences, the disclosures of themselves, and the facts, the purpose can easily become a complaining emotion that affects readers more directly than the character's point of view. "It has been argued that vicarious trauma may have socially and ethically useful effects, but it may also be self-indulgent and ethically delusional" (Davis 27). Readers are worried about being used or manipulated by the words, such as strong emotions with exaggerated evidence, which is a simple problem first-person narrative cause. "In addition to these speculations about modes of representing inner life, the person of the narration often seems likely to effect readers' responses to narrative fiction and its inhabitant" (Keen 220). There are some voices against the self-narrative, which those scholars considered as self-pity. "We should not have the arrogance to assume that we can share some part of what happened to the victims" (Davis 11). The ethics and pathos of victims' trauma are hard to find a balance that does not sound like whining about the trauma, but also spreads the cognitions of the historical racist. Davis notes that, "It has been argued that vicarious trauma may have socially and ethically useful effects; but it may also be self-indulgent and ethically delusional" (Davis 27). And some

literature about personal experiences can be biased so that readers may regard it as self-pity. "McElrath associates self-pity with swamps, enclosure, stagnation, and restricted motion" (Otis 128). Self-pity affects feelings rather than an emotion.

Moreover, reading from the character's point of view has the effect of inviting readers who have a little historical or cultural context for the experience of WWII in Japan to encounter it through human experiences. Whereas a more data-focused presentation of history and facts might allow readers to remain detached or even hostile to the Japanese who lived through WWII, the encounter of a wartime experience through the point of view of a protagonist character invites a reader to invest in the character and the culture and to suffer empathetically with them. The character point of view design a time machine through the contents that can take readers on a ride with the protagonist characters in the stories. "The time machine angle. Reading actively allows us to converse with the greatest minds in history" (Smith 19). As Smith claims, the historical or time-machine angle creates the context to readers who are not familiar with the environment in Japan during WWII. Japanese literature for English readers is unusual because there are language differences that are hard to translate and also cultural background differences. Using the character's point of view can establish the environment and atmosphere for readers. Furthermore, the character's point of view requires much detailed writing that can perfectly and fully show the settings. The innocent readers who have no experiences with the war, and need affective empathy, such as the environment descriptions, side character stories. In "Hotaru no haka (Grave of

the Fireflies)", Nosaka takes himself out of the real-life story and creates a new protagonist-- Seita. Seita shows readers around the world and his struggles by fully using the affective empathy. And seeing Seita's aunt from the character's point of view also promotes the side character's function that can encourage cognitive and affective empathy. Therefore, readers will speculate the cognitive empathy, which is a changing of their minds, in which way strengthen their empathy to Seita and Setsuko. In *Twenty-four Eyes*, Tsuboi shows the entire village's changes and the young generation's changes during the war. It leads the readers to the feeling of sorrow for those students' lost, but they feel fortunate for them at the same time.

On the other hand, one of the main points of reading war literature from the character's point of view is feeling empathetic for the characters. War literature needs a humanity perspective, and the magnifier of this humanity lens is the character point of view. "One of its potential benefits is to enlarge a reader's sense about the many possible ways to live. This enlarged sense seems to be an important part of our traditional national ethos. Hoping for a better world and belief in the possibility of re-making oneself or improving one's situation breeds optimism and elbow grease" (Gillespie 17). And this recalls the time machine angle of literature and brings it to the humanity level. All of these four pieces of literature are deeply engaged in character point of view writing style, which can bring the readers closer to the story. All these works make use of the character's point of view to bring readers closer to the events especially *Black Rain*. First-person narration or self-narration is the author's angle of telling the story, and it may contain the author's

bias. And the first-person narration howls the emotions more directly than the character's point of view. The first-person narration is taking the protagonist's angle of looking at the story, but leaving enough freedom of imaginations and feelings to the readers. The first-person narrative is using "I, me, my..." as the protagonist's pronoun, and easily becomes too personal and self-pity. On the other hand, the character's point of view presents the vivid world and situation to the readers by using abundant details for the affective empathy. Using the least emotion, but the author gains massive empathy. This kind of contrast emphasizes the sadness of the story. The survivors tell their traumatic stories without a hysterical attitude, but with a normal or even positive mindset. Therefore, the readers' empathy and the novels' ethos will be magnified.

In the immersing process of reading, readers feel empathy spontaneously, which way it strengthens the empathy feelings. Empathy is a spontaneous emotion, "can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading" (Keen 2008). Reading through war literature is another device of hearing other's experiences, and the character's point of view is like witnessing others' emotional states. Using the character's point of view can create an unfamiliar environment and cultural background vividly for the readers. Plus using the character's point of view can describe the abundant details of the situation including the different senses, like smells and touching. In addition, the character's point of view leaves the judgment to the readers, and authors do not give their attitudes directly, but they ask questions instead, which makes their readers think along with them, and get the answer they want spontaneously.

Character's point of view drags readers close to the scenes in books; meanwhile, it keeps the cognitive and emotional distance with readers.

- *Black Rain* from the Character Point of View

The narrator of *Black Rain* is Shigematsu who is also the protagonist. *Black Rain* fulfilled the character's point of view advantage in literature. *Black Rain* is a real story of Shigematsu that Ibuse borrowed from the evident record, embellished and retold as a novel, which is a common form of literary creation that novels usually come from real lives but written more sensational than real lives. Ibuse uses the character's point of view to tell Shigematsu's story that Ibuse wrote *Black Rain* as Shigematsu's diary to record what he saw and experienced that the miserable happened every second after the atomic bomb was dropped. Shigematsu Shizuma is the original protagonist who is a farmer in Hiroshima who has experienced the atomic bombing, and he recorded this for his progeny, and Ibuse decided to borrow the diary and breed the *Black Rain*. *Black Rain* is retold from a diary of an old man called Shigematsu Shizuma. In *Black Rain*, the reader sees the world after the atomic bomb from the perspective of the survivor's eyes (Shigematsu), and will come to judge the events from his viewpoint as well as feel his grievances, sadness, and helplessness. Detail writing can be a powerful pen and the stories and emotions are the ink, and authors make the ink sink in readers' hearts. And writing from the character's point of view can provide more details vividly and enhance the strength of the effect. Shigematsu told what he had seen with all the details of his journey back home from Hiroshima train station into his diary, which makes it a very

heart-aching novel. On August 6th, Shigematsu was on a train while the bomb dropped, and nobody knew what was going on. They just felt burnt by air, smelled chemicals, and saw the brightness by some unknown lights. The chaos happened instantaneously. The whole city had fallen to hell all of a sudden, and the multitudes were all unenlightened about that situation. In the first chapter of *Black Rain*, Shigematsu remembers the moment of the atomic bomb dropping,

the people in the street by the shrine grounds were all covered over their heads and shoulders with something resembling dust or ash. There was not one of them who was not bleeding. They bled from the head, from the face, from the hands; those who were naked bled from the chest, from the back, from the thighs, from any place from which it was possible to bleed. One woman, her cheeks so swollen that they drooped [dropped] on either side in heavy pouches, walked with her arms stretched out before her, hand drooping forlornly, like a ghost (Ibuse 44).

This is the opening scene of the novel, and it immediately shows the painful image of the atomic bombing that drags the readers into the situation. And this is the first image of an atomic bombing that innocent civilians reacted to the unheard radiation bomb, which people previously regarded as a normal air raid attack. This is an overall picture of the minute while the bomb dropped, everyone in the train was having normal daily lives in the wartime, and just one "Pika" sound set fire to the city and the evil sparks fell on everyone's body. It is like God has decided to sentence the entire Hiroshima to Hell, so that the eternal hellfire has eaten these people's bodies, their houses, and their living

supplies. After Shigematsu came out from the train, he had to walk back home, and the scenes on the street are worse. Their faces are covered by chemical dust, and their faces and bodies were changing strangely: "I ran my hands over my face. The left hand came away wet and sticky. I looked, and found the left palm had something bluish-purple like little shreds of damp paper on it" (Ibuse 45). And this injury on Shigematsu's face couldn't be cured by itself, and he had to wear a scarf instead of a clean gauze, which made the wound worse. "The whole left cheek was a blackish-purple color, and the burned skin had shriveled upon the flesh, without parting company with it, to form ridges across the cheek"(Ibuse 143). Ibuse writes the subjective injury from the character's point of view. Ibuse only describes the injury physically without telling the pain and psychological fear. The image of people's injury and the chaos is affective empathy, and these facts put the actual scenes in front of readers and let readers imagine the detail back in history. Ibuse presents fruitful evidence by using a diary, which is actual privacy. Moreover, Ibuse tells the story in a very tender tone, which fully displays that less is more. Ibuse uses the least feeling and emotion to create the mournful and painful story. If Ibuse cried and shouted out rambunctiously with Shigematsu's story, it probably would not be as heavy as *Black Rain*. Ibuse stacks a single survivor's life stories into a first-person perspective novel, which enhances the grief and sorrow of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Ibuse treats Shigematsu's diary and his point of view as proof for affective empathy but leaves the cognitive empathy to readers.

- "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" with Character Point of View

The life-based literature, like "Hotaru no Haka (A Grave of Fireflies)" can stimulate the readers' empathy. Character's point of view is very helpful for the affective empathy that shows readers around the story's world. In "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)", Nosaka recurs the air raid scene, "the smell of burning, the sound of the fire carried by the wind, seemingly right on top of them, the falling of missiles, like the sound of a sudden downpour..." (Nosaka 448). Seita and Setsuko were on the way to find their mom and they encountered the air raid, from this scene readers may imagine two kids standing in the ruins with hot wind. And Setsuko didn't cry or panic,

yet Setsuko, her head covered in an air-raid hood of a fine splashed pattern, wearing a white shirt, trousers of the same pattern as the hood, red flannel tabi, and on one foot only the black lacquered geta she valued so much, was not crying at all, she held a doll and her mother's old large purse firmly in her hands (Nosaka 448).

A little girl acts very calmly in the air-raid, which is heartbreaking. The unspoken fact is that Setsuko has gotten used to the air-raid, even though she is only 4 years old. Moreover, the worse thing happened to these two kids, their mother died. When Seita arrived at the school as a shelter in wartime, he finally saw his mom, but she's already died.

The seriously wounded had been interned in the industrial arts room at the end of the first floor, those even worse off, on the verge of death, had been laid in the teacher's room instead; the upper half of his mother's body was covered with

tape, her arms looked like wrapped up baseball bats, her face too wound round and round with rolls of tape, only at her eyes and nose and mouth black holes opened up, the end of her nose exactly like a coating of tempura, her hardly recognizable trousers were everywhere covered with burn holes (Nosaka 451)...

The tempura metaphor is very ironic. Nosaka describes Seita's mother's wound as a coating of tempura. And the overall condition of his mother's death is horrible that almost all of her body has been injured and covered, but only by her eyes, nose, and clothes' patterns, Seita recognizes it is his mom. However, Seita decides to take this misery by himself, and he lies to Setsuko that "mamma isn't feeling so good, but she'll be better real soon" (Nosaka 451). Later on, Setsuko died because of malnutrition, and Seita buried her. Seita died helpless at the end, but Nosaka describes some symptoms instead of letting Seita ask for help. Moreover, Seita is not the only cause, it is a common phenomenon during wartime. "The afternoon of September 22, 1945, Seita, who had died of privation inside Sannomiya station, was cremated along with the corpses of 20 or 30 homeless children as a temple above Nunobiki, his bones consigned to the crypt as an unsurvived soul" (Nosaka 461). Nosaka mourns for Seita and other homeless children who couldn't survive. The corpses of these kids were like a temple that needed to be respected and mourned. Readers can use their wild imagination in the scene Nosaka creates. Nosaka manipulates the world explicitly, like the health situation of Seita and Setsuko, their aunt's family, the cave they stay in, and the place Seita died, which are affective empathy that readers will feel empathy from their imaginations by reading. Moreover, all of these

can range as crucial war and bland humanity. Nosaka silently accuses these elements of the reason for Seita and Setsuko's death. The social environment and the frigid humanity that readers can find from the affective empathy evidence accelerate their tragic endings. Nosaka does not answer, but he makes his readers get it from Seita and Setsuko's story.

- *Twenty-four Eyes* with Character Point of View

Tsuboi features a group of people's development instead of a single protagonist's journey like other books. Readers take over Mrs. Oishi's point of view and witness 12 joyful and bright teenagers' frustrated destinies at wartime. Sanae wants to be a teacher, Misako wants to go to high school, and Masuno wants to enter a music school... But the flame burnt their dreams away. "On the other hand, Masuno, the music lover, had had an extremely hard time. Obsessed with the desire to sing, and rebelling against her parents, she had run away from home several times" (Tsuboi 180). The education has been polluted by war propaganda, and people have been narrow-minded that Masuno couldn't achieve her dream. Seeing a teenager's dream disappear is a very dismal thing. In Chapter 8 of *Twenty-four Eyes*, "Yellow rose", Tsuboi introduces a few students' lives after the war starts. In addition, everyone has to serve as "human resources" for the war, "the military was the sort of organization that would grant a week's leave just to increase "human resources." Women who produced "human resources" ought not to worry even if the future of their babies might lead to wooden grave-posts. Did both men and women have to submit to their fate" (Tsuboi 179)? This is very crucial that society regards people as human resources for the war, and everyone including these kids in the Pine Tree

village has sacrificed their dreams. Readers don't put themselves in any of the students to feel their helplessness, but as witnesses, readers probably will sigh for the kids' story. These facts bring the issue to readers, these kids couldn't achieve their dreams because of the war. The character's point of view will drag readers into the story, and the readers sink in with the emotional flow of stories. "We believe that life-based literary narratives as described in this article reveal much about what it is like to be adolescent in contemporary society" (Bach 203). The deeper emotion the readers feel, the more reflections on their real-life behavior. "Because readers routinely report feeling empathic responses while reading, the widespread assumption that empathy can be taught through books seems reasonable" (Jurecic 13). Children learn before they can judge, and that will follow them in their lives, and children are the most innocent victims in the war.

IV. Japanese Young Adult War literature

First, the definition of Young Adult literature is "all genres of literature published since 1967 that are written for and marketed to young adults" (Crowe 121). A young adult normally means a person "old enough to be in junior high or high school, usually grades seven through twelve" (Crowe 121). However I think this is too limited, young adult literature appears in university libraries as well and the target readers are not only under twelve. "YAL also has its fair share of golden nuggets, and if they're willing to give a try, readers of all kinds-- teachers and students, adults and teenagers-- will discover a plentiful treasure of terrific books" (Crowe 122). Therefore, YA is usually identified as a genre published after 1967 that writes for young readers, and usually, the story's

protagonist is a teenager, and the narrative perspective is also from a teenager's point of view. On the other hand, YA literature should not be limited to young readers but should be read as long as it has good content.

In addition, three of these four Japanese War literature are YA literature-- *Sachiko*, "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)", and *Twenty-four Eyes*. "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" both the short story and the film become required and useful text and movie to young audiences for anti-war and peace education in Japan. *Sachiko* is a story of a teenage girl's grown-up process. Even though it tells from the character's point of view, the protagonist is a teenage girl, which is the common element of YA literature. "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" is a typical YA short story in which the protagonist is a teenage boy, and the story is told from a teenager's perspective. This short story and its film "can be watched for the purpose of remembering the Asia Pacific War as an important historical lesson not to be repeated in the future. This animation film as well as the original novel can be utilized as teaching material for peace education at home, school and in the world" (Akimoto 43). "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" is recommended and taught in most Japanese schools for peace education. *Twenty-four Eyes* creates a group image of a group of teenage characters. Readers view and experience a group of teenagers from the teacher's point of view. And *Twenty-four Eyes*'s target audiences are also teenagers. *Black Rain* might be a little outrange for YA literature. The protagonist is not a teenager, and the story is not even from a teenager's

perspective. But as Crowe claims, YA literature can be read by different readers. And *Black Rain* is a deep detailed anti-war literature.

Anti-war education is essential to younger generations who have not experienced the nightmare; therefore, the YA war literature is important. "Although not everyone agrees about the centrality of empathy to the future of the planet, there is a surprising level of agreement, from educators to politicians and philosophers, and even talk show hosts, that *reading literature makes us more empathic*" (Jurecic 10). YA literature is important to young readers, and it helps with development and self-development. Especially self-development is important to young adult readers, and they adapt how they feel, what they see and imagine from the books through the first-person perspective, which they will develop and learn cognitive empathy, and reflect on their social empathy. Young readers can read and imagine the war experiences, feel the pain and suffering with the characters, and develop their empathy; moreover, to react to the social and cognitive empathy. Reading war literature from the character's point of view involves imagination, cognitive effect, and empathy, which are important to young adult readers' development. "The developed narrative imagination allows readers to actively empathize with others"(Bach 200). YA war novels bring the young readers back to the time, wild their imaginations, and form their empathy. "Teaching the concept of prejudice to your students is much more than discussing hatred directed at various religious, ethnic and national groups" (Potucek 567). The young adult war literature writes out the war experiences to the young readers, and the purpose is empathy. Specifically for young adult readers, as *Twenty-four*

Eyes points out, children adapt changes quickly and they change by what they saw and felt. From these character points of view war literature, young readers will learn to put themselves into others' shoes, which will develop their cognitive abilities and skills of reading and thinking. "There have already been many collaborative efforts between practitioners who recognize the powerful role YAL can play in motivating students to read, deal with societal issues, and improve reading skills" (Bach 204). Even though young adult readers have not been through the war, seeing the experience from others will have them learn to care and sympathize with the characters. "They practiced empathy in their interactions with the characters in the novels. They matured by reading a text that asked them to stretch their empathy muscles and connect with characters and settings less and less like those readily familiar" (Goldsmith 113). YA literature is important to young readers, and it helps with development and self-development. They can read and imagine the war experiences, feel the pain and suffering with the characters, and develop their empathy; moreover to react to the social and cognitive empathy.

- *Sachiko* as YA literature

Sachiko is a touching and encouraging documentary-like book, which is a brilliant example to show how the war awfully affected people, and how literature helped Sachiko as a little girl to overcome her traumatic memories, which is an overall picture of the concept of war literature's humanity perspective. Stelson records not only Sachiko's sufferings but also records Sachiko's contributions and "counterattack" that Sachiko becomes an encouraging female who inspires people and especially the younger

generation. Readers can see Sachiko's teenage stories, and how those experiences and sufferings contribute to her career and life. Sachiko is the book title, but also the protagonist's name. Sachiko's name in Japanese kanji usually means blessed child. Sachiko grew up in Nagasaki, and she experienced the atomic bombing when she was only six years old. Due to the Nagasaki bombing, Sachiko had to transfer to a new school, but she was left behind, and the principal suggested her to start from the first grade again. "The principal's words feel like a slap" (60 Stelson). Sachiko refused to go back to the first grade, and after her insistence, she set in the second grade finally. But Sachiko was a kid from Nagasaki that was strange and new to everyone, Sachiko is like a catfish put in a shoal of sardines, and her new classmates are the sardines. Instead of making the sardines stronger and lively, Sachiko's classmates turned out to be tough on her. The bullies and misunderstandings sort of behavior from school is like another bomb dropped on Sachiko's heart, and the first only knows to helplessly cry about it. Sachiko's mother taught her to transform all her negative and positive feelings through her pen, a metal rod. "With mother's help, Sachiko pressed the rod's tip into the round. A vertical line. A curve. Then a horizontal line. Each character of each word had to be carefully drawn" (63 Stelson). Sachiko and her mom practiced writing on the dirt every day, and these activities helped Sachiko to rebuild her home and found hope again. Sachiko's emotion flowed under her pen, all of her sufferings appeared in a composition, and Sachiko told her story to everyone and herself, and the most honest and touching feeling of a little girl properly unfolded in front of the audiences for the first time.

The air-raid siren that morning. The all clear. Her friends who asked her to play house. How she loved playing house. The laughter, The mud dumplings. Then the whining coming from the clouds. Her friend shouting "Tekki". The flash. Pikadon! Sachiko let the memories of the atomic bomb explode in her mind. The horror. The heat. The smell. The fear. Little Toshi. Aki. Ichiro (71, 72 Stelson).

Sachiko's story is inspiring and encouraging, which Sachiko has very important characteristics for young adult readers to absorb from her story. Young readers can feel the helplessness of Sachiko in front of the challenges, the bullies, and the loss of families. Her mother inspires her to write and face the tough life. Young adults can learn the strong mind and personality of Sachiko that she doesn't give up hoping and working hard no matter what happens to her. Sachiko bravely preached her experiences and stories everywhere to alert the children, the young generation that war should not happen again, and discrimination and alienation from fellow citizens caused by the radiation disease should not happen again. On the other hand, *Sachiko* as an anti-war YA literature presents not only the anti-war concept but also the essential personality that young readers can bring to their real lives. I think this is the prior mission of a YA book.

- "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" as YA literature

"Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" is an anti-war short story for young adult readers. "Hotaru no haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" originally is a short story by Akiyuki Nosaka published in 1967, and produced as an animation movie by Studio Ghibli in 1988. It is a story about two kids, Seita and Setsuko who lost their mother in an air raid in

Kobe. Seita is about 14 years old and Setsuko is 4 years old; therefore, young boy Seita not only has to take care of himself, but also his little sister Setsuko, and both of them died in the story. Setsuko died earlier than Seita, and Seita died and was burnt with other 20-30 homeless children together at the end of the story. This tragedy of war orphans is just a page of post-WWII Japanese history, a short chapter in the wartime tragedy stories. Definition of YA literature requires page limits like 200-300 pages novel, but "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)" is a short story. However, the major elements for YA literature are the protagonist is a teenager and told from the teenager's perspective. And "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)"'s protagonist character is Seita, a 14 years old teenage boy, and readers survive with him and see him die from Seita's character point of view. The family relationships and environment setting are very native Japan. There are some minutiae about the title "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)". Normally, Hotaru's Kanji is "螢" in Japanese, but Nosaka used "火垂る", which emphasized the image of fireballs, even though these two Kanji have the same pronunciation. In addition, the film director Takahata continued this "design" in the animation "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)".



The left one is the common poster people see when they search, but the right poster is after brightened the original poster, and there is an aircraft appearing on the upper right corner. The fireflies plaintively symbolize firebombs. And it is also a metaphor Setsuko used, one night Seita took Setsuko for a walk and urinate, "above them the red and blue beacon lights of Japanese planes heading toward the west flashed on and off, "those'r [those're] kamikaze planes," "mm," Setsuko having no idea what he meant, nodded, "they look like fireflies," "they do, don't they" "(Nosaka 457). The young and pure little Setsuko doesn't even understand what is a plane, she just sees the firebombs as fireflies. Seita and Setsuko in "Hotaru no haka (Grave of the Fireflies)"died due to starvation, malnutrition, diarrhea, and their aunt's mistreatment. Family and social environment is an important theme in young adults' lives. "Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)"

presents the family and social relationships crucially and pathetically, which young readers can feel the suffering for Seita and Setsuko, and mourn for them. Moreover, the young readers will feel the anti-war apperception.

- *Twenty-four Eyes* as YA literature

Twenty-four Eyes is a YA novel, and getting attached with young readers is an essential mission of the novel. The Freudian theory believes that childhood experiences have a huge impact on adult life, and shape personalities, which implies the protagonists in war literature. Young adult readers are at the initiation process of their lives, and being able to empathize is a lesson of their lives. Furthermore, YA is a new genre, but the impact is huge that the target readers are experiencing the beginnings of their own cognition, and literature can make them deeper thinkers and develop other characteristics. Young adults are like a bridge that connects kids to adults, and they certainly need some guides and inspirations for their lives. Literature is a common tool for them. "We often read to find out what happens to people about whom we care" (Smith 19). I want to add up that readers also read about what they care about, and War literature fits in this approach. The survivors are the group we should care about, and the war and history are the facts we should care about. Telling these factors in a YA novel is a smooth approach to the readers. *Twenty-four Eyes* mainly focuses on how children's personalities had changed by war and war propaganda. Propaganda is a media method that was widely used by countries from both sides of the war, which vilify their enemies. Young adults do not have a fully developed view of the world, and teenagers and little kids absorb these

information without the ability to distinguish right from wrong unconsciously. However, Mrs. Oishi or Tsuboi as adult critics questioned this phenomenon that teenagers adapted the hurtful information senselessly, but the adults were afraid to speak.

“Isn’t that a shame! Why do those boys with such big smiles have to be made into targets for bullets?” “It’s really a shame.” “I can’t say this aloud. If I did, I’d be like this.” Still holding the knapsack, he put both his hands behind his back as though they were ties, and went on to say in a quiet voice: “The Anti-disturbance Law, you know, I’d be thrown into jail” (175 Tsuboi).

This conversation happened between two old men on the street, these two side characters seem not important ideas, but they expressed an important idea and reflected the situation in wartime that the public has lost their free speech rights and frightened, to be honest, due to the government law. No exception for the protagonist Mrs. Oishi, she held a big amount of dissatisfaction with the war and the society, but her tender and soft characteristics helped her self-heal those pains. Mrs. Oishi's kids were educated by the wartime propaganda as a patriotic who thought that the only meaning of their lives was to become a soldier and die in the battlefield. On the day Japan announced surrender, Mrs. Oishi was relieved a little bit, but not for her children. Her son Daikichi was desired to be a soldier like his father, so he felt the anguish of Japan losing the war, which is the total opposite of his mother's hope.

“Mother, we lost the war. Didn’t you hear the radio?” His voice faltered tearfully. “I did.

The war's over anyway, though. Isn't it a good thing?" "Even though we lost?"
"That's right. No one will be killed in battle anymore, you see. Those who are
alive will come back." "we didn't stick to the motto 'Death and no surrender.' "
"No. Good thing we didn't." "Don't you cry even though we were beaten?" "No."
"Are you glad?" Daikichi asked reproachfully. "Don't be silly, Daikichi. Think of
yourself. Daddy was killed, wasn't he? He will never come back, Daikichi"
(Tsuboi 197).

This conversation is the most honest and selfish thought of Mrs. Oishi that she hates the war from the bottom of her heart. Mrs. Oishi's belief fits the humanity perspective perfectly. Mrs. Oishi's simple wish is compassionate that no more people died from the war around her so that she would not feel heartbreak anymore, not only for someone she knew but also for everybody who suffered from the war.

Teachers are enormous characters in most young adults' lives, but most of them serve more than just teachers from school. Teachers may impact students' lives. So do YA novels. From *Twenty-four Eyes*, the students are deeply and unconsciously affected by the war and their thoughts are restricted by the government, and the education process is interrupted. Mrs. Oishi is a responsible teacher. Overall, *Twenty-four Eyes* is a book that makes readers smile for the innocent of the kids but also makes readers cry for the kids' loss and depression. Tsuboi uses Mrs. Oishi's eyes and the teacher's identity to witness and observe; similar to other literary works that used the character's point of view. Tsuboi leads the readers to the Pine Tree Village full of singing and happiness, then Tsuboi also

takes the readers through the war that shows what happened to a small village, to a normal teacher, to a mother, to students, and to every ordinary person.

In a young adult reader's life, the teacher is a common figure. Even though the main theme of *Twenty-four Eyes* shows the crucial effect to the young generation in wartime, the main narrator is a teacher. Seeing the wartime from a teacher's perspective and focusing on the young generation's education, which fits the anti-war peace education idea of Japanese War literature.

V. Conclusion

Consequently, the war and historical issues should be something people care about because millions of people died and suffered from it. War literature reflects the history and speaks for victims and the dead. Their value should be respected as much as any other participants. The veterans were heroes for anywhere during the war no matter what the consequence is. "The voices of the dead are eternal because human beings possess the small boat-- the language of literature-- to carry them to the future"(Ogawa 7). One of the purposes of war literature is to make people think and carry their answers into their future lives. War literature always exposes the sufferings of war and expresses the anti-war theme. Hope is a beacon of humanity, which is also an important and common purpose of literature. Hope is an ambitious and energetic topic, and viewing hope in war literature can help readers feel sympathy. Compared to war-time lives, people who can live in a peaceful world are lucky, who can have more stable lives, resources, education,

and entertainment. Reading the stories of survivors holding the torches of hope tightly can spark people to find hope in their own lives. There are always some people frustrated sometimes, and hope may suspiciously sound fantasy, but it can boost the ambitions and energy of lives. All of them have the same names-- survivors and witnesses, and they had not given up on prospects. On the ruins, they picked up rubbles again and rebuilt their homes; in the places that were once hell, they tried to paint the appearance of heaven; there are always seeds that can survive. No matter what kind of hell was in front of them, even in the endless darkness, these survivors had not closed their eyes; therefore, they saw the light of hope. All these four pieces of literature embed hope in the worst situation; thus, war literature needs to be viewed from a humanity perspective. The character's point of view borrows the protagonist whom the readers may see or plug themselves in to see the environment, the atmosphere, and the emotions. The character point of view introduces the objective matters, which is the affective empathy. Authors leave all the strong and direct emotions and judgments behind to the readers, which is the cognitive empathy that readers use their own imagination and thoughts. The less is more, and the fewer emotions that authors give out the more empathy the readers will feel. In addition, young audiences should be the spotlight on that they have wild imaginations and in the process of shaping themselves. The war literature will show something they should care about; the humanity perspective will elicit their empathy; the first-person perspective will drag them closer to the texts and stimulate them more.

In *Sachiko*, Sachiko hopes the young generations listen to her experience, and the war and bombing will never happen. In *Black Rain*, Shigematsu hopes Yasuko will be cured, and he hopes Hiroshima will bloom again. In “Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies)”, Seita and Setsuko hope to stay alive during the war. In *Twenty-four Eyes*, it is a story all about hope and loss. Sachiko has suffered from sickness, losing her family members, and being bullied in her new school; Shigematsu has suffered from physical pain and illness from atomic bombing, and Yasuko suffered from the illness and the abandonment by her fiancé; Seita and Setsuko lost their mother, psychological violence by their aunt, and died because of malnutrition; Mrs. Oishi has lost her husband, her students, and her kids, the students in the Pine Tree village have lost their dreams and hopes.

War literature is an essential tool to help the survivors to confide, and war literature can represent the scenes in their memories back in time. Especially this war literature needs to be reviewed with a humanity perspective that humans are the only subject and be able to feel empathy for their losses and pains. Anti-war is the eternal theme of War literature. The war is a burden on all the war participants; therefore, every survivor's suffering should be respected, reviewed from the humanity perspective, and felt empathy for. No matter what their nationalities are, either Japanese, American, or any other countries, everyone has the same name at the wartime-- victim. There are two types of empathy-- affective and cognitive empathy. Affective empathy is the main cause of empathy that collaborates with the objective settings and environment of the stories, which evoke readers' imaginations and reduce the history and cultural distance between readers and

author. The character point of view's main mission is to introduce the affective empathy scenes to readers vividly. The next step is the cognitive empathy, which is mainly the reader's job. Based on their imaginations, interpretations, and thoughts of each book, they can conclude the anti-war theme from these Japanese war literatures by themselves. The character point of view is an effective way to write war literature, and it is an important method to YA novels as well.

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