

# The Recognition of Nuclear Trauma in *Sagashite imasu* (I am Searching) [さがしています] 核のトラウマを認識すること

Helen Kilpatrick

## Abstract

The award-winning picture book *Sagashite imasu* (2012) was published in response to 3/11. It combines dynamic poetics with poignant photographs of relics from the Hiroshima Peace Museum to evoke emotions about extended suffering from radioactive fallout. I argue that the work plays an activist role in prompting an empathetic response which raises an ethical consciousness, and that this kind of response in turn generates a broader "recognition" of the dangers of using nuclear power in (and beyond) Japan after the Fukushima disaster.

## Keywords

Arthur Binard, Okakura Tadashi, Japanese picture books, children's literature, Hiroshima, Fukushima, memory

In this essay I read the award-winning Japanese picture book, *Sagashite imasu* (I am Searching), in order to explore how literary art can stimulate an empathetic and ethical recognition of the trauma of irradiation.<sup>1</sup> The provocative book presents a series of personalised stories of suffering through the combination of Arthur Binard's poetic text and Okakura Tadashi's photographs of items from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Each book opening has a photograph by Okakura of an object from the Museum. They are everyday items which bear traces of the atomic blast. In Binard's accompanying text, the relics are personified as searching for their lost owners. The dialogic text provides a space for readers to imagine the trauma of Hiroshima through

dramatising the lost connections between the objects and their owners.

Like other post-Fukushima literature and art, the book makes reference to the fallout from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945 in order to prompt consideration of the emotional suffering caused by irradiation. It also brings attention to the use of nuclear energy. In combining the genres of trauma literature and nuclear art, *Sagashite imasu* blends an empathetic acknowledgment of past suffering through radiation with an ethical recognition of the emotional and social dangers of nuclear energy.<sup>2</sup> By compellingly bringing the pain of the past into the present, it has the potential to raise political consciousness.

Although *Sagashite imasu* is not specifically about Fukushima, it was created in response to the disaster. Binard, who has won several awards for his writing in Japanese, is an acclaimed poet and, particularly since 3/11, an anti-nuclear activist.<sup>3</sup> In a newspaper interview about *Sagashite imasu* which links Hiroshima and Fukushima, he reports that he was visiting the Hiroshima Peace Museum at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake. He travelled to Fukushima, and then came back to the Hiroshima museum and thought about what the museum relics "would have to say about people who continued to rely on nuclear fission".<sup>4</sup> In the same article, Binard asserts the view that people have a duty to answer questions posed by the Hiroshima mementos in order to ensure that future children and all living creatures will be able to survive.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere, in dialogue with Nakazawa Shōko, another activist writer, Binard draws links between Hiroshima,

Chernobyl and Fukushima to suggest that nuclear weapons and nuclear fuel are equally dangerous. He suggests that while these atomic incidents might seem distant, they directly affect us, and he expresses the following concerns: "The atomic bomb has been tidied away as a folk tale, Chernobyl has been left as a distant, former Soviet problem, and Fukushima has gradually been distanced amid cover ups about hazardous nuclear plants".<sup>6</sup> Binard thus challenges the notion that there can be any "safe" use of nuclear energy.

In responding to 3/11 through depicting the emotional trauma arising from Hiroshima, activists and artists like Binard have brought together two forms of nuclear threat: the military and non-military, through the concept of "hibaku" - suffering from exposure to nuclear radiation.<sup>7</sup> Whereas Hiroshima was brought to ruin through nuclear weaponry wielded in warfare, the Fukushima disaster was an apparent "accident" caused by the decision to build nuclear power plants in seismically unstable areas. In its evocation of the continuing pain of Hiroshima, *Sagashite imasu* not only provides an important means by which to keep cultural and traumatic memories alive, but also warns against any future reliance on nuclear energy. As Julia Yonetani eloquently expresses in an interview with Ikeda Asato about nuclear art, one cannot help but see the present and even the future in the past.<sup>8</sup> Binard points out that the Japanese government has concealed information about unsafe nuclear plants since Fukushima; and that Japanese and others have also displayed collective amnesia about the dangers of nuclear incidents and radioactive exposure.<sup>9</sup> *Sagashite imasu* can thus be understood in the context of recent debates about history, memory and trauma.

Mark Pendleton points out that as people become more distant from an experience, memories fade, or people ignore or even actively try to forget the painful implications of traumatic events.<sup>10</sup> As Cathy Caruth indicates

in her studies of trauma, representations of trauma in literature and art have a cultural and ethical dimension because they engender new modes of understanding. "Trauma art is created to be read by others; to connect with, understand, and express empathy for the untenable situations of survivors; and to "move" people emotionally or socially, including those more distant from the immediate effects of a disaster. It is only through the transmission and translation of traumatic ordeals for new audiences who did not personally experience them that people can recognise the nature and social implications of other people's suffering." Artistic works such as *Sagashite imasu* offer new ways of seeing and acknowledging nuclear trauma, an experience that cannot otherwise be replicated or fully understood by those who feel removed from it.

### Literature and Art as Activism

Bringing awareness of the personal, social and environmental dangers of irradiation to young readers constitutes a form of activism; and *Sagashite imasu* forms part of an expanding body of post-3/11 Japanese literature for young people which deals with the trauma of nuclear fission. As Lisette Gebhardt indicates, Fukushima presented a watershed in literature and art, whereby artists wanted to be more politically active and to offer a renewed focus on the environment.<sup>13</sup> Whereas general literary responses to 3/11 have received some international scholarly attention, literature for young people which responds to the crisis has received much less consideration. This is surprising, since a major purpose of children's literature is to transmit cultural values. Moreover, it is young survivors who will bear the repercussions of radioactive fallout in future years. It is thus important to investigate how these artistic works deal with nuclear catastrophes, what messages they convey, and how they encourage consideration of the long-lasting social and emotional effects of potential fallout from nuclear usage. Although *Sagashite*

*imasu* is primarily aimed at young readers, it is a mature work which demands thought, and in no way condescends to its audience, no matter the age.

Activism may take many forms but, as Julia Yonetani has commented on the relationship between art and politics, when art is "just a message, it becomes propaganda art".<sup>14</sup> Creative forms of communication are especially significant as cultural taboos about the nuclear issue are increasing, and public information channels and the right to free speech in Japan are diminishing due to laws such as the 2013 State Secrets Law. One way in which innovative works like *Sagashite imasu* provide a gentle but effective form of protest is through the textual process of imbuing inanimate objects with pain, the metonymic process which displaces the personal trauma experienced by the missing humans on to the museum artefacts. The depiction of ongoing suffering and losses arouses an empathy which can in turn provoke deep ethical recognition of the personal and social consequences of exposure to radiation.

The combination of verbal and visual text in *Sagashite imasu* offers potential for both the personal acknowledgment of suffering (empathy) and the political (ethical) recognition of atomic disaster through the textual process known as cognitive mapping. Cognitive mapping is a mental model of *spatial* relations which can represent the embodied experience of imagined landscapes.<sup>15</sup> This kind of mapping is characterised by conceptual blending, which requires an audience to "adapt one conceptual domain to another".<sup>16</sup> The mental processes work in reading to activate subject positions which are both informed by and extend into our social lives. Reading competency requires conceptual blending and this ability hones cultural skills. As Fauconnier and Turner argue, "children are born into a world richly structured by complex, entrenched, cultural conceptual blends, many of which they must

master to function in society."<sup>17</sup> In trauma art or literature, the blending process means that, in order to be "moved" emotionally or socially, a reader must, as Mark Turner explains, cognitively mix two frames of knowledge (or scenarios) to create a third meaning.<sup>18</sup> In the case of a trauma narrative like *Sagashite imasu*, the third meaning is the political "recognition" which comes through the blend of personal empathy and ethical acknowledgment of injustices associated with suffering from exposure to nuclear radiation.

When reading *Sagashite imasu*, the blend operates by mapping the intimate onto the ethical to potentially move the reader mentally from a personal empathetic insight to a broader political response.<sup>19</sup> This process can be likened to that described in Rita Felski's concept of "recognition".<sup>20</sup> As outlined by Felski, recognition involves two divergent aspects: a reading dimension of self-knowledge, and a political one of acknowledgment of something as publicly valid. "Recognition [in reading] ... refers to a cognitive insight, a moment of knowing or knowing again [which involves] comprehension, insight, and self-understanding".<sup>21</sup> The contrasting concept of recognition from political theory is, she explains, "not knowledge, but acknowledgment ... a claim for acceptance, dignity and inclusion in public life".<sup>22</sup>

Felski asserts that to know other people means to know our own personal commitment rather than simply knowing epistemological circumstances. To Felski, this second type of recognition is an ethical force which entails "a call for justice rather than a claim to [epistemic] truth".<sup>23</sup> She maintains that the former, self-knowledge, is implicated with the latter, public acknowledgment, in that any kind of recognition is "anchored in intersubjective relations that precede subjectivity".<sup>24</sup> In other words, the two forms of recognition come together because any self-knowledge only arises through an awareness of others and, as

such, entails a social or ethical element. Because empathy involves a perception of another's feelings, it enters the social sphere. As a social apprehension then, empathy can transform into an ethical consciousness as the reader becomes aware of a community broader than the self and, more particularly, if the reader becomes aware of something as unjust. Through such a double-pronged process of recognition, the representation of trauma in *Sagashite imasu* can position new audiences to respond compassionately, and thus ethically or politically to injustices associated with radiation, even though readers may not have had direct experience of this.

In *Sagashite imasu*, blending works through the presentation of different story scripts which map onto a "schema", a broader social mentality or knowledge structure which, in this case, is cultural knowledge about nuclear fission. The book provides the framework for both understanding broader knowledge and for possible variations or effects which are applied through narrative "script" modifications. It follows a common picture book format in which a mental blend requires audiences to interpret animals or objects as human protagonists. In this case the photographed relics act as metonyms for their absent human owners. The objects are not only perceived as being able to feel and experience personal human emotions, however. The script also modifies and brings the past suffering of these items into being through the attribution of first person voice to each, and through a dialogic mode of address to the reader which encourages both intimacy and empathy.

Through these elements, the book's script brings a dynamic intimacy to the schematic "memory" of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and an awareness of the traumas and dangers of radiation exposure. A reader's existing memory might include any of the many cultural knowledge structures about, for example, the mushroom cloud, the Hiroshima dome, the

shadows left on buildings by the blast or the suffering of victims or survivors. The given script may jog a memory of a long-lost or cherished belonging similar to those pictured, or the words may trigger a memory or familiar knowledge of Hiroshima, perhaps learned at school, read about, or told by a relative. Besides activating this kind of schematic memory, the blend encourages the mapping of the emotional suffering from radiation exposure in Hiroshima on to other situations. Each new, more intimate script of suffering in *Sagashite imasu* blends with any existing memories to prompt fresh empathy and a consequent acknowledgment of injustices arising from other less visible forms of radioactive fallout (such as that from Fukushima).

As will be discussed in more detail below, the principle of page turning and the repetitive structure of *Sagashite imasu* also establish a trauma script which generates empathetic recognition of continuing human pain and loss. This trauma script unfolds as one of first-person intimacy, experiential memory, and loss, with a "resolution" of continuing grief. Each opening (or double page) follows a pattern by which the pictured memento tells of its (owner's) individual life in three or four stanzas which narrate the experience of the morning of 6 August until the "flash" (*pikaaaaaa tto kita/otosareta/hikatta*) of the atomic bomb. Each object questions and reflects upon the personal tragedy which ended the life of its now absent owner. Ethical recognition builds through anticipation at each turn of the page. The mental processing of the different, intimate trauma scenarios then aggregates through the script modifications for each item. The melancholic prose, the high level of realism and the muted tones in the beautiful photography together reinforce the elegiac script for each item, especially as the relics are photographed on a slab of a serene granite stone which is often used for tombstones. The intimate scripts thus build to prompt broader political

recognition of the lethal dangers of radiation.

### Personal Recognition in *Sagashite imasu*

In *Sagashite imasu*, personal recognition is offered through the paraphernalia of daily life (a clock, gloves, a lunch box and so on) from the Peace Museum. These objects are personal, close and poignant in their expressiveness as each tells of its individual trauma, loss and sadness. Any of these intimate story scripts may trigger an experience of what Felski calls "the shock of the familiar", which also engenders the process of self-intensification.<sup>28</sup> This "self-intensification" - the first form of recognition - in the reading of *Sagashite imasu* may be brought about, for example, through the book's simulation of an intimate dialogue with the photographed mementoes which are each ascribed a personal voice. The first lines of each piece of text address the reader with an "aisatsu" (routine greeting or phrase) in the informal or friendly voice of the pictured relic: "Good morning" (*ohayō*) from the clock; "I'm off now" (*itte kimasu*) from Toshiyuki's boots; "Let's play" (*asobo*) from Toshihiko's marbles.<sup>29</sup> (See Figure 1, for example.) Such phrases, together with the force of the "personalities" of the relics, have the effect of "hailing" the reader and prompting the memory of the conventional schema for greetings. These greetings, for instance, would normally demand a response like: "*ohayō*" in answer to "*ohayō*"; "*itterasshai*" to "*itte kimasu*"; or "*dōzo*" to "*itadakimasu*". This mode of personal address to the implied reader thereby immediately simulates a special intimacy. Moreover, this first person address combines with a private confession of particular pain. While the direct address to the reader enlivens the artefact, the familiarity of each memento's confessional voice also provokes personal recognition of each item's suffering.

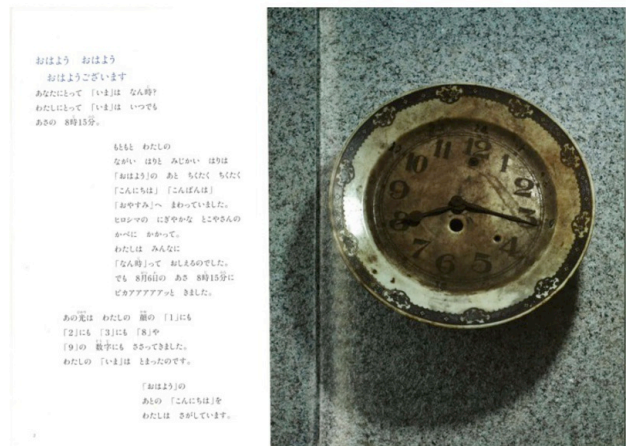


Figure 1: Clock from a Hiroshima barber-shop (donated to the Hiroshima Peace Museum by Hamai Tokuzō).

### Blended Political Recognition in *Sagashite imasu*

If this self-intensifying recognition occurs, the blend will prompt a compassion which brings an ethical or political element to the particular trauma scenario through the social act of caring. This ethical position involves Felski's second type of (political) acknowledgment of an injustice.<sup>30</sup> In *Sagashite imasu*, the personal compassion for any or all of the objects can then blend into an ethical recognition of the broader injustice of radiation exposure. As the *Sagashite imasu* scripts continue, deeper political recognition is prompted through the realisation of the extended and continuous suffering brought about by the atomic flash.

This mapping of the personal onto the political is brought about through the elicitation of empathy for the mementoes which are frozen in time due to the atomic "flash" in Hiroshima. One of the effects of this flash, which is mentioned on each page, is to "freeze" each everyday object, which might otherwise have naturally decayed and been lost to history if it had not been collected in the museum. The blend, which first invites intimacy with each

item, then awareness of the power and temporal effects of the blast through frozen time, reminds the reader of the ongoing suffering associated with past radioactive fallout. The perception of an intimate, traumatic memory combines with empathy for the continuing personal suffering of many so as to activate an ethical recognition of the injustice caused by atomic fission and its after-effects.

The principle of page turning also intensifies political recognition through a cumulative sense of injustice about the pain and damage caused by irradiation. The ethical questions become more intense with each turn of the page, as each new personal memory or "story" anticipates yet another intimate and poignant tragedy from the atomic blast, which is specifically mentioned as "*uran*" (uranium) on later pages.<sup>31</sup> The sense of injustice accumulates through constant references to the flash, radioactivity and uranium as the catalysts of suffering, rather than through the bomb itself which also caused destruction by demolishing buildings and killing people more immediately, for example.<sup>32</sup> The recognition of the atomic flash as the cause of the collateral damage (of each item's loss and pain) accumulates and becomes more ethical or political in a gradually building awareness of the less visible potential harm associated with nuclear fission.

The consciousness of disrupted time in each script creates an intensified experience of loss and disappointment while also displacing the audience's emotional expectations of a friendly encounter. This emotional displacement blends with the sense of horror that stems from the realisation that the person who has been doing the "hailing" (through the item) is no longer alive. After the clock, for instance, asks "What time is it for you now?", the friendly and seemingly innocuous question becomes confronting when in the next line the clock says, "For me, it is always 8.15 a.m".<sup>33</sup> By

immediately referencing its own present as forever "now", the perpetuity of suffering from radiation is emphasised. The temporality in the script works dynamically with the confronting questions to prompt interrogation of the ethics of any continuing use of atomic power. The frozen time, the present continuous tense, and the repetition of "now" advocate against the use of nuclear energy because of the long-term trauma and dangers that may result from any form of fission.

The realisation of stopped time for each item as it remains, without solace, still searching and longing for a cherished memory, also builds and emphasises the anticipation of further loss through nuclear fission. Empathy for all fourteen absent owners accumulates through the endless searching by the sad voices which express their continued loss at the end of each of the scenarios. For example, the crumpled, grieving metal lunch box, which could not protect the food from radioactivity, is still forlornly searching for twelve-year-old Reiko's eager "*itadakimasu*" (Let's eat) (see Figure 2).<sup>34</sup> The expression of words that will never again be heard from the mouths of their owners is both intimate and sorrowful. In this way, each artefact's present-continuous searching and endurance dynamically bring the nuclear tragedy into the current time and prompt consideration of the ethics of the cumulative circumstances. Recognition of each item's continued yearning for something long gone not only prompts compassion for the loss of young lives like Reiko's. The acknowledgment of residual human suffering from radiation exposure also moves from the personal to the public.



Figure 2: Twelve-year-old Watanabe Reiko's lunchbox (donated to the Hiroshima Peace Museum by Watanabe Shigeru).

Moreover, each scenario, in drawing links between the picture of the intimate object and its owner, invites the reader to imagine the life which might have been. It does this by linking their past lives with the present space of emotion about loss and death. As each of the items finishes its discourse with a wistfulness about something it is still searching for, the present is not only brought forward but also invites the reader to imagine a different future for each victim as the implied reader is prompted to ask "What if ...?" about the lost life. The counterfactual temporal signifiers set the precedent for consideration of how the past affects the present emotively. Sometimes the search is for body parts such as the mouth which Masatarō's false teeth will forever continue to wish for (see Figure 3).<sup>35</sup> The act of searching for a disembodied human part such as a gaping mouth or nose-less face further intensifies the shock, and thus the impact of both forms of recognition, personal and political. The political recognition gradually intensifies as the despair evoked by the irradiated artefacts combines with the atomic fission in Hiroshima to bring the suffering and trauma caused by radiation from the past into the present, and future.

The photographed remnants of people's belongings not only prompt empathy for lost parts or past lives but also for lost possibilities. They combine with the implied "what if ...?" question to prompt personal recognition of the regret, the latent but ever-present grief for the life that never fully eventuated. The blended act of imagining a different personal future for each owner provokes empathy for the residual emptiness and sorrow left by the sense of unfulfilled lives. The present-continuous state of each object's longing further prompts recognition of the impossibility of finding what they are looking for.<sup>36</sup> This lack of hope thus opens out an absence for readers to lament lost memories and other personal losses, allowing room to experience the pain of separation caused by the historical A-bomb.

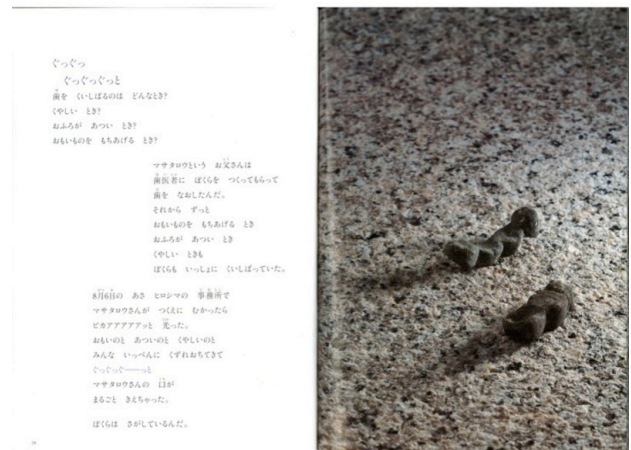


Figure 3: Okahara Masatarō's false teeth (donated to the Hiroshima Peace Museum by Okahara Tsuneko).

The blend further provokes empathy for the loss of community by challenging the audience to imagine each item's sense of past belonging, which thereby stimulates a deeper awareness of the need for human relationships, the need for friends and loved ones. The sense of regret and endless searching prompt political recognition of the possibilities of the

community that might have been if there had been no bomb in Hiroshima or, in the case of Fukushima, no nuclear power plant accident. In other words, personal empathy activates Felski's double-sided concept of recognition by blending with political recognition as the audience is challenged to imagine the horror of the loss of family and friends through radioactive damage.

The individual scripts thus build together to anticipate and map an overall script of the tragedy of death and loss, and to activate the ethical recognition of the fateful effects of nuclear fission. In three cases, the script deviates from its established pattern to prompt further consideration of the futility of the deaths. As John Stephens indicates, "[w]hen readers recognize the beginning sequence of a script, they anticipate what is to come and derive satisfaction from how the text expands the script by completing or varying the expected pattern."<sup>37</sup> By opening 3 (Reiko's lunchbox; see Figure 2), the script's pattern of expectation has been well established, and the reader can anticipate that each item will state what it is still waiting or searching for in the final lines. In the script of Setsuko's purple dress in the first colour image at opening 4, however, the pattern changes to a different temporal expression of regret (see Figure 4). After Setsuko's dress recalls listening to its owner's laboured gasping until she stopped breathing altogether, rather than stating what it is still searching for, the last lines here express the misery of being unable to forget her awful death. The change in tense from present continuous to future negative with the emphatic "I won't forget!" (*wasurenai yo*) combines with the concepts of memory and anticipation to provoke consciousness of the horror of death through radiation sickness and the terrible perpetuity of the loss.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 4: Twenty-three-year-old Fujisawa Setsuko's dress (donated to the Hiroshima Peace Museum by Fujisawa Toshiko).

The second and third script deviations, which demand even more probing, bring empathetic and political acknowledgment to a higher level still. The second deviation is at opening 6, with the glasses belonging to Uncle Tamotsu. He greets everyone (including the reader) happily with a humble: "I'm pleased to meet you" (*hajimete o-me ni kakarimasu*) (see Figure 5).<sup>39</sup> After the spectacles explain that "the nose to which they clung like a butterfly" has disappeared in the world's first uranium bomb, they are still searching for, but cannot find (*mienai*, more literally, "can't see"), the answer to the question: "How can nuclear fission end, once it has been started?" Besides the shocking image of glasses without a nose, the provocative question generates recognition of the improbability of finding an easy solution to nuclear problems. There is also a play on sight and seeing in this script which may prompt deeper cognitive perception. The "eye" (*me*) in "*O-me ni kakarimasu*", the lack of sight in "*mienai*", and the obvious opacity of the glasses in the accompanying picture all combine to suggest a more profound recognition of public or political blindness to the consequences of radioactive discharge.

The third script variation is at opening 8, the



mid-point climax to the book. It is the story of the keys of a Japanese soldier who perished along with imprisoned American soldiers. The accompanying picture is the only full double-page spread in the book and the keys are reproduced on the cover, signalling their symbolic importance. They ask: "What becomes of locking people up? Shouldn't it really be uranium which is contained?"<sup>40</sup> In the final lines, the keys are searching for their ethical duty ("*Oretachi wa yakume o sagashiteru n da*") (see Figure 6).<sup>41</sup> Together with their provocative question about the containment of uranium, the change in the script pattern demands consideration of, and thus a higher consciousness of the broader ethics of uranium usage such as its potential human and environmental impact. The personal shock of Tamotsu's lost nose blends with the more public consciousness of the soldier's keys to deepen the intensity of the ethics of the (mis)use of uranium. These three scripts blend intimate and public trauma scenarios to provoke a more overtly political acknowledgment of the negative effects of radiation.

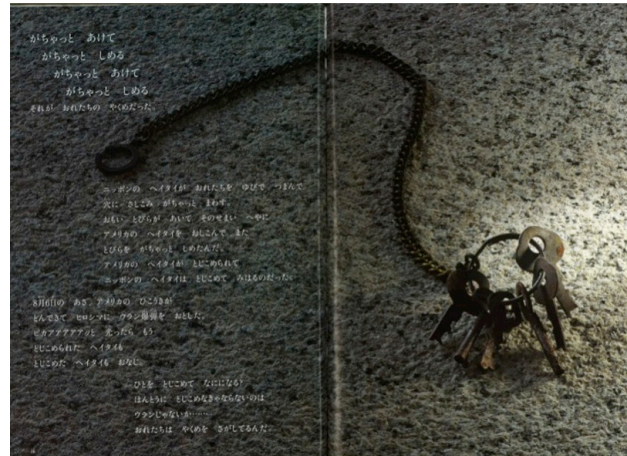
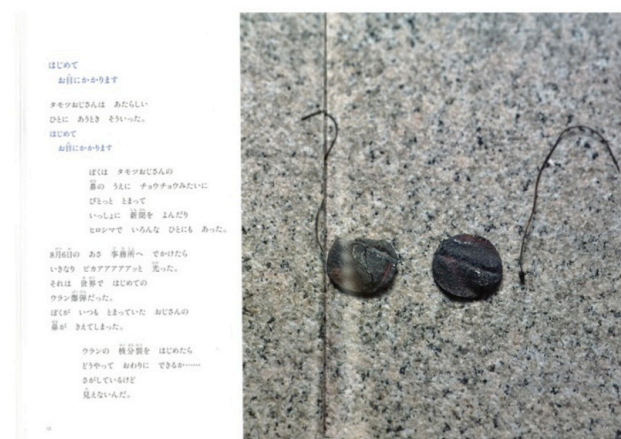


Figure 5: Hiragaki Tamotsu's spectacles (donated to the Hiroshima Peace Museum by Hiragaki Ayano).

Figure 6: Soldier Nakamura Shigeo's keys (donated to the Hiroshima Peace Museum by Nakamura Okio).

Further, such political consciousness comes through an acute and deepening awareness that, although the poignant narratives are fictions, the objects belonged to real people (who are now more familiar through their stories). The fourteen profiles of the actual Hiroshima victims in the end-pages of the book bring their reality into sharper relief. Many of the owners are revealed to be very young – the owners of the gloves and the lunch box were only twelve years old. Especially after reading the personalised poetic accounts of the items, the pathos of the final factual notes is almost palpable. For example, the emergency kit belonging to Mariko, a high school girl, was found by her mother and used as the means to identify her body. The mother died soon afterwards from a stomach haemorrhage due to radiation sickness. This combination of fact and fiction has the potential to provoke an even stronger empathetic and political recognition, and can be seen as a call for action or, at the very least, ethical consideration of the issues associated with nuclear energy.



In writing from the point of view of the anthropomorphised objects who experience

enduring pain through stopped time, *Sagashite imasu* constructs a strong empathetic position from which to consider the ethical effects of a nuclear calamity. It does so by first challenging readers to empathise with the individual and collective voices of the artefacts, with the intimate and continuing pain of these re-awakened and re-valued lives. The poignant, personal textual voices not only combine to animate the photographed objects, but they also foreground their lost owners' distinctiveness and their value as worthy or desirable individuals who make up part of a broader society.<sup>42</sup> Through the mixture of suffering voices, provocative questions, personal stories, artistic photography of real objects, and reportage which explains the actual life circumstances of each of the fourteen owners of the items who have experienced the devastating effects of nuclear fission, *Sagashite imasu* not only affirms the value of these past lives and memorialises them. It also interrogates the after-effects of the atomic blast as the cause of their suffering and demise. The cumulative effect will potentially move readers to a higher level of ethical awareness of the dangers of radiation, and prompt deeper recognition of the injustice of radioactive fallout and the social dangers of using nuclear energy. In doing so, the book moves readers from empathy for the suffering, familiar everyday objects to the social recognition of every person's right to an ordinary life without the threat of nuclear danger.

Further, in their lack of solution or recovery, the scripts in their entirety pose a sense of warning and trepidation for the future. Empathic recognition integrates with the political to prompt a broader realisation of the injustice of atomic energy and the awful social consequences it can bring. The acknowledgment of embodied psychological anguish and loss of community provokes reflection on humanity's responsibility for others and the environment we live in and help

(re-)create. The reading of *Sagashite imasu* thereby contributes to the ongoing debate about the need for consideration of demands for energy which comes at the expense of a more integrated and sustainable community.

Through its integration of reality with a fictional representation of personal anguish, *Sagashite imasu* offers a mode of representation that bears witness to suffering within post-disaster Japan. The book thus helps enliven cultural memories which can move readers towards new political positions. In prompting reflection upon the social implications of emotional traumas associated with past catastrophes, the book not only revives cultural memory, but also ties the past, present and future together. In transferring the effects of the pathos of the personal memories through the historical event of Hiroshima, the blend activates a double-sided acknowledgment which carries through to the present and interrogates the proliferation of nuclear power. In other words, the book's arousal of pain and empathy for the human cost of past atomic devastation gives pause for thought on the ethics of the present social and environmental situation and helps throw light on the current issue of radiation exposure brought about by 3/11.

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### Author Biography

**Helen Kilpatrick** is Senior Lecturer in Japanese at the University of Wollongong. Her research combines her interest in modern Japanese literature and art through the analysis of illustrated literary works produced for young people. She has published in the areas of literary studies, gender and the visual arts, with recent publications on visual aspects of the *shōjo* (girl), and constructions of

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Binard and Okakura Tadashi, *Sagashite imasu* [I am Searching], Tokyo, Dōshinsha, 2012. This book won two prestigious awards in 2013: the 44th Kodansha Publication Culture Award for Children's Picture Books, and the 60th Sankei Award for Children's Books and Publications. See: <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/アーサー・ピナード>. Retrieved 16 October 2014.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the genre of "nuclear art" see Asato Ikeda, "Ikeda Manabu, the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, and Disaster/Nuclear Art in Japan" (<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Asato-Ikeda/3922>), *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, vol. 11, iss. 13, no. 2. Retrieved on 29 March 2014. One internationally-renowned example in picture book form is Maruki Toshi, *Hiroshima no Pika* [The Flash of Hiroshima], Tokyo, Komine Shoten, 1980. Two translations have also been published: *Hiroshima no Pika* (trans. unknown), New York, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1982; and *The Hiroshima Story*, trans. Judith Elkin, London, Black, 1983. Maruki Toshi (1912-2000) is famous for making the Hiroshima Panels in the 1950s with her husband, Maruki Iri (1901-1995). On Japanese nuclear literature, see: John Whittier Treat, *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Tōkyō Shimbun "Kochira Tokuhō"

(<http://megalodon.jp/2012-0309-2311-30/www.47news.jp/CN/201203/CN2012030901002068.html>) "Kochira Tokuhō(ed.), *Higenpatsu "Fukushima" kara "Zero" e*, Tokyo, Ichiyōsha, 2013, p. 1220. Binard's first Japanese award was the 2001 Nakahara Chūya Award for his collection of poetry, "Tsuriagete wa" [Catch and Release]. See Tōkyō Shimbun "Kochira Tokuhō" (ed.), *Higenpatsu "Fukushima" kara "Zero" e*, Tokyo, Ichiyōsha, 2013, p. 1220; and [http://japan\\_literature.enacademic.com/70/null](http://japan_literature.enacademic.com/70/null). Retrieved on 19 October 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Yasufumi Kado, "U.S. Poet Publishes Photo Book of Personal Belongings of Atomic Bomb Victims" ([http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/social\\_affairs/AJ201208020091](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201208020091)), *The Asahi Shimbun*, 2 August 2012. Retrieved 20 October 2014. Also see Binardo Āsā. "Atogaki". Binardo Āsā and Okakura Tadashi, *Sagashite imasu*, Tokyo, Dōshinsha, 2012, n.p..

<sup>5</sup> Yasufumi Kado, "U.S. Poet Publishes Photo Book of Personal Belongings of Atomic Bomb Victims" ([http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/social\\_affairs/AJ201208020091](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201208020091)), *The Asahi Shimbun*, 2 August 2012. Retrieved on 20 October 2014.

<sup>6</sup> "Taidan: Warera Mina 'Kazashimokko' [We are all 'Downwinders']": Āsā Binādo, Nakazawa Shōko", compiled by Nishiyama Rika, *Nihon Jidō Bungaku* Japan Children's Literature, vol. 9-10, 2012, p. 35. (All translations are my own.)

<sup>7</sup> The two forms of "hibaku" are: 被爆 irradiation from an atomic blast; and 被曝 exposure to radiation through more general, "peaceful" or accidental means. For more on this connection, see: Murakami Haruki, "Speaking as an Unrealistic Dreamer" (<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Murakami-Haruki/3571>), *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, vol. 9, iss. 29, no. 7, 18 July 18 2011. Retrieved on 22 March 2014. Here Murakami states: "[In the case of Fukushima] no one dropped a bomb on us ... We set the stage, we committed the crime with

our own hands, we are destroying our own lands, and we are destroying our own lives".

<sup>8</sup> Asato Ikeda, "On Uranium Art: Artist Ken + Julia Yonetani in Conversation with Asato Ikeda" (<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Asato-Ikeda/3915>), *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, vol. 11, iss. 11, no. 1. 18 March 2013. Retrieved on 29 March 2014 from.

<sup>9</sup> "Taidan: Warera Mina 'Kazashimokko'", p. 35. This kind of amnesia is exemplified in the proliferation of nuclear power plants in Japan, despite the fact that Japan had experienced the trauma of nuclear irradiation with the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (All plants are decommissioned at time of writing.) Repression and self-censorship are also evident through complaints like those which caused organisers to cancel Binard's lecture, entitled "Saita Saita, Sesiumu ga Saita" (It's Blossomed, it's Blossomed, the Cesium has Blossomed), to be held in Saitama on 10th March 2012. See Tōkyō Shinbun "Kochira Tokuhō" (ed.), *Higenpatsu "Fukushima" kara "Zero" e*, Tokyo, Ichiyōsha, 2013, p. 1220-1222; and here (<http://megalodon.jp/2012-0309-2311-30/www.47news.jp/CN/201203/CN2012030901002068.html>). Retrieved 19 October 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Pendleton, "Subway to Street: Spaces of Traumatic Memory, Counter-memory and Recovery in post-Aum Tokyo", *Japanese Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2011, p. 360.

<sup>11</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Stef Craps (<http://muse.jhu.edu/results?section1=author&search1=Stef%20Craps>) and Gert Buelens, "Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels", *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 40, nos. 1 and 2, 2008, p. 1; Karen Scherzinger, "Other People's Pain: Narratives of Trauma and the Question of Ethics"(review), *Journal of Literature and*

*Trauma Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, p. 119.

<sup>13</sup> Lisette Gebhardt, "Post 3/11 Literature: The Localisation of Pain – Internal Negotiations and Global Consciousness", in Lisette Gebhardt and Yuki Masami (eds.), *Literature and Art after "Fukushima": Four Approaches*. Berlin, EB-Verlag, 2014, pp. 11-35.

<sup>14</sup> Ikeda, "Ikeda Manabu, the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, and Disaster/Nuclear Art in Japan".

<sup>15</sup> Ryan, Marie-Laure, "Cognitive Maps and the Construction of Narrative Space", *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*. Ed. David Herman. Stanford, CSLI Publications, 2003, pp. 214-42; p. 215, her emphasis.

<sup>16</sup> Roberta Seelinger Trites, "Growth in Adolescent Literature: Metaphors, Scripts and Cognitive Narratology", *International Research in Children's Literature*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2012, p. 65. See also Lisa Zunshine, "Rhetoric, Cognition, and Ideology in A. L. Barbauld's Hymns in Prose for Children (1781)", *Poetics Today*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2002, p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*. p. 390. The back jacket reiterates that "a child's entire development consists of learning and navigating ... blends".

<sup>18</sup> Mark Turner, "The Cognitive Study of Art, Language, and Literature", *Poetics Today*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2002, p. 10. Conceptual blending combines "two schematic frames of knowledge or two scenarios ... to create a third mentalpacket of meaning that has new, emergent meaning". Also see, Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, p. 48.

<sup>19</sup> As developed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, this theory of conceptual blending consolidates cognitive studies research and offers a framework for how the human mind creates new meaning by blending different (imagined or actual) scenarios. The authors

also explain how such a scenario can be inhabited mentally. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*, New York, Basic Books, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature*, Malden, Blackwell, 2008, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Felski also cautions that a moment of cognition or self-apprehension can also trigger emotional reactions that are not necessarily cognitive. Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> Felski, *Uses of Literature*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>23</sup> Felski, *Uses of Literature*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>24</sup> Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> This latter point involves Felski's concept of validity in political recognition.

<sup>26</sup> Schemas, as explained by John Stephens, are aspects of memory which shape our knowledge of all concepts. They "are knowledge structures, or patterns, which provide the framework for understanding. ... Whereas a schema is a static element within our experiential repertoire, a script is a dynamic element, which expresses how a sequence of events or actions is expected to unfold." Stephens, John. "Schemas and Scripts: Cognitive Instruments and the Representation of Cultural Diversity in Children's Literature", in Kerry Mallan and Clare Bradford (eds), *Contemporary Children's Literature and Film: Engaging with Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 13-14. As we read (words and/or pictures), the represented material matches part of a static schema in the memory and activates the core elements to unfold into a more dynamically evolving script. As Stephens indicates in a footnote, the terms schema and script originally come from cognitive linguistics, but have been taken up in more recent narrative theory which draws on theories of mind. See p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> This unique type of granite, often known as Diet Stone, was specially selected as the platform for these objects. Binard and the book's editor had the stone dug up by a stonemason from Kurahashijima, a town outside of Hiroshima. See Binard's "Afterword" to *Sagashite imasu*, p. 33.

<sup>28</sup> Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, pp. 2, 18, and 24. The book uses the more colloquial (and childish) "*asobo*" for "Let's play", rather than the more grammatically correct "*asobō*".

<sup>30</sup> Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> See pages 12 and 16 (Figures 5, Tamotsu's spectacles, and 6, the soldier's keys).

<sup>32</sup> My thanks go to one of the anonymous reviewers for this latter point.

<sup>33</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, p. 3. The Japanese is: "*Anata ni totte, 'ima' wa nan ji?*" "*Watashi ni totte, 'ima' wa itsudemo asa no hachiji jūgofun.*"

<sup>34</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>36</sup> Appreciation for this point must go to one of the anonymous reviewers.

<sup>37</sup> Stephens, "Schemas and Scripts", p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Sagashite imasu*, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Felski, *Uses of Literature*, p.47. Felski is discussing subordinated gender or minorities as worthy here, but the owners of the objects in *Sagashite imasu* who have been long forgotten

also form part of the masses who are subsumed through either time or the active - or political - suppression of their memory.

<sup>43</sup> Other literature is drawing similar comparisons. The pre-3/11 poetry of Fukushima author Wakamatsu Jōtarō, who has been writing against nuclear energy since the 1970s, is now seen as prescient, especially in his 1994 poem "Disappearances" [*Kamigakushi sareta Machi*], written in response to Chernobyl, and his 2008 poem "South Winds 2" [*Minamikaze*

*Fuku Hi 2*], which lists major incidents which were covered up at the Fukushima plant. See: Mark Rainey, "Playing Around With Plutonium" (<http://nyxnoctournal.org/2012/08/08/playing-around-with-plutonium/>), *Nyx: noctournal*, 8 August 2012. Retrieved on 18 March 2014. Also see the poetry collection: Wakamatsu Jōtarō, Āsā Binādo and Sadamu Saito, *Hito Akashi* <sup>What Makes Us</sup>. Tokyo, Seiryū Shuppan, 2012. Nakazawa Shōko's 1988 young adult novel, *Ashita wa Hareta Sora no Shita de: Bokutachi no Cherunobiri* <sup>Tomorrow, Under Fair Skies: Our Chernobyl</sup> has also been re-released since the triple disaster (Tokyo, Chōbunsha, 2011). See: "Taidan: Warera Mina 'Kazashimokko': Āsā Binādo, Nakazawa Shōko", p. 37 and p. 35.