for there certainly was. The Yasusada does not pretend to be a pure, well-behaved archive, as it were, innocent, in its unfolding, of contamination and contradiction. But it originates, with all its fated failures, as an empathic expression and not as a punitive marshaling of theoretical polemic cloaked in the lambskin of poetry. That the simple effacement of an authorship from a book of openly imagined fragments about Hiroshima should have been so widely taken in the poetry world as that kind of punitive gesture is, in fact, one of the most interesting and poignant aspects of the writing's history.

The second point I wish to make is more straightforward and more crucial to me, as it would be to Motokiyu: the phrase at the end of the passage ("the reverence for experience and witnessing being a symptom of a prelapsarian attitude toward the text as such") gives the strong impression that the Yasusada corpus presumes to set itself above, and in judgment of, first-order testimonial literature—namely, poetry by those who witnessed, as victims, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Nothing could be further from the truth. *Doubled Flowering*, if anything, stands as a kind of testimonial to the testimony of *hibakusha* literature—a view, incidentally, articulated by Hosea Hirata in an essay published last year by the National Institute of Japanese Literature ("Tsukurareta hibakusha shijin Araki Yasusada: Shi ni shinjitsu was hitsuyouka," *Proceedings of the 27th International Conference on Japanese Literature* [Tokyo, 2004] 155–167). Among the author's close relatives are survivors of Hiroshima, whose fragile testimony Hirata movingly recounts in an afterword he wrote for the forthcoming *Also, with My Throat, I Shall Swallow Ten Thousand Swords: Araki Yasusada's Letters in English*.

I want to be as clear as I can (insofar *as* I can) on this matter regarding Yasusada's relation to *hibakusha* literature, so please allow me to end with an answer I gave a few years back in an interview conducted by the editor of *Atomic Ghost: Poets Respond to the Nuclear Age*, the poet and critic John Bradley:

> The Yasusada is most emphatically *not* motivated by an impulse to critique anything at all in *hibakusha* literature, nor does it presume to set itself as an equal partner inside or alongside that body of work. . . . [Although it is inevitably a part of the broader realm of atomic bomb literature, it] exists in relation to *hibakusha* writing at a distance, as an afterimage or echo of it, if you will. And I would hold that Yasusada's apocryphal status makes that echo no less real. It whispers something about the doubled-fusing and mutually-deformed flowering of our two cultures, about our unacknowledged confusion in each other, about some kind of deeper yearning to find our voices entwined with an otherness that we know has been inside of us always. All of which is pure speculation and fancy on my part, but I do feel strongly that the echo is authentic, and I think it has multiple frequencies.
>
> (Interview, *Readme*, ed. Gary Sullivan, 1999, 19 May 2004 <http://home.jps.net/~nada/johnson.htm>)

I hope these comments help clarify the misleading moment in Hayot's otherwise brilliant study.

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### *Reply:*

I am grateful to Kent Johnson for his kind words regarding my essay on Araki Yasusada and for an opportunity to continue discussing the meaning and value of that strange archive. Johnson wishes to assure *PMLA* readers first that *Doubled Flowering* was not primarily motivated by a desire to stake claims in the authorial politics of the American poetry scene and second that the Yasusada project does not wish to set itself above *hibakusha* literature (which it would then see as hopelessly caught up in a belated theory of authorship) but rather is best understood as an attempt to echo that literature in another context—echoing here being a kind of hearing.

I regret writing a sentence that would give the impression that I disagree with either of those things; my sense of what the Yasusada project does is fairly close to Johnson's. Where it diverges, perhaps, has to do with the complex relation between Johnson and the project. I admit to referring occasionally to Johnson as the poems' author

https://doi.org/10.1632/S0030812900168105 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in casual conversation, but in professional prose I try to respect his continued insistence that he did not write most of the poems. The sentence I wrote has Johnson, not the Yasusada poems, as its subject, because it was Johnson as Johnson who said, in an interview with Bill Freind:

> The fractal proliferation of new, created authorships will show this, dismantling and liberating in a single gesture. Their multiplication across times and places will expose heretofore invisible conjoinings and practices. This will constitute a qualitatively new condition of poesis, one that will unfold beyond the penal, disciplinary rituals of the old order. The world of the Author we are now in is a vast and flattened circle of cells around a great tower at the center which sees from above and all around. Most of the prisoners happily accept their state; a few souls try to wiggle their way under the walls here or there, but they do so while singing about it at the top of their lungs. The song is called, Here I am, my name is inmate so and so, I occupy cell number such and such, and I'm trying to wiggle my way under the wall. Obviously, they won't get out this way.
>
> ("Hoaxes and Heteronymity," *The North American Centre for Interdisciplinary Poetics*, 18 May 2005 <http://nacip.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=25>)

For me, in any case, it seems fair to call this a declaration by Johnson that authorship itself is a kind of hoax (indeed, the quotation forms part of an extended critique of avant-garde complicities with literary institutions). I do not wish to confuse this kind of sentiment with what I think the Yasusada poems do, either in their initial appearance in magazines or in their second iteration as *Doubled Flowering,* which contains not only the poems but also essays on the history of the "hoax," appended in the book to what one might like to imagine as the Yasusada project proper.

Because the notion of the project proper is at stake here, the confusion between Johnson and "Yasusada"—which can ensue, as it seems to have here, from an unclear sentence, but whose fundamental possibility is caught up in the structure of the entire poetic archive, of copyright law, and the like—is in that sense merely a symptom of the larger theoretical impact of the poems and the reactions to them. Johnson wishes to hold something of the poems back from the inevitable discussion of authorship, to insist that the poems (and the notebooks more generally) do more than just intervene in some legal or literary argument about the author. I couldn't agree more: a few months ago I said to Bill Freind that sometimes I wish that the whole Yasusada archive had appeared without the imaginary authorship at all, so that it could be read, like Nabokov's *Pale Fire* or Borges's elegy for Pierre Menard, without the apparatus of the scandal getting in the way. But without the scandal, Bill told me, you would never have heard of Yasusada in the first place.

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https://doi.org/10.1632/S0030812900168105 Published online by Cambridge University Press