

Trauma and Reconciliation in *In This Corner of the World* (2016)

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Abstract

This study examines trauma and reconciliation in the Japanese animated film *In This Corner of the World* (2016) by analyzing the psychological experiences of its protagonist, Suzu Hojo. Through Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, this study examines how Suzu experiences trauma in the film, and by utilizing Dominick LaCapra's concepts of acting out and working through, this study analyzes how the scenes and dialogues in the film exemplify the reconciliation process of the main character. The findings reveal that Suzu experiences trauma through intrusive thoughts, belatedness, and emotional numbing following the delayed-bomb incident, demonstrating the fragmented and enduring nature of traumatic memory. Moreover, Suzu's gradual movement from acting out toward working through reflects the documented reconciliation process experienced by Japanese civilians, specifically the Hiroshima bombing survivors after World War II. The study concludes that the film portrays trauma as an ongoing psychological condition while presenting reconciliation as a gradual process of remembering, articulating, and living alongside traumatic memories. By resonating fictional experiences with historical realities, *In This Corner of the World* (2016) functions as a medium for preserving and communicating Japan's wartime memory.

Keywords: In This Corner of the World; Trauma; Reconciliation; Anime; Literature

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis trauma dan rekonsiliasi dalam film animasi Jepang *In This Corner of the World* (2016) dengan mengkaji pengalaman psikologis tokoh utama, Suzu Hojo,

menggunakan teori trauma Cathy Caruth serta menelaah rekonsiliasi trauma masa perang melalui konsep *acting out* dan *working through* yang dikemukakan oleh Dominick LaCapra. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menganalisis adegan dan dialog terpilih untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk trauma serta proses rekonsiliasi yang ditampilkan dalam film. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Suzu mengalami trauma yang tercermin melalui *intrusive thoughts*, *belatedness*, dan *emotional numbing* setelah peristiwa bom waktu, yang menggambarkan sifat ingatan traumatis yang terfragmentasi dan berkelanjutan. Selain itu, transisi Suzu dari *acting out* menuju *working through* beresonansi dengan proses rekonsiliasi yang terdokumentasi pada masyarakat sipil Jepang pasca-Perang Dunia II, yaitu para korban bom Hiroshima. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa film tersebut merepresentasikan trauma sebagai pengalaman psikologis yang berkelanjutan serta rekonsiliasi sebagai proses bertahap untuk mengingat, mengartikulasikan, dan hidup berdampingan dengan ingatan traumatis. Melalui resonansi antara pengalaman fiksional dan historis, *In This Corner of the World* (2016) berfungsi sebagai media pelestarian dan artikulasi terhadap memori Jepang terkait perang

Kata kunci: In This Corner of the World; Trauma; Rekonsiliasi; Anime; Literatur

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1. Introduction

World War II was one of the most destructive conflicts in modern history, causing extensive human casualties, displacement, and material destruction across the world (Chmielewski, 2024). Beyond its physical devastation, the war left profound psychological consequences for civilians who experienced bombings, the loss of family members, forced displacement, and prolonged uncertainty (Budge, 2016). Japan was among the countries most severely affected, particularly during the final years of the war when continuous air raids and the atomic bombings transformed everyday civilian

life. These experiences not only reshaped Japanese society but also produced traumatic memories that continued to affect survivors long after the war had ended (Michio, 1984; Yamashita, 2023). These responses shaped how the war would later be remembered and represented.

One medium through which war can be remembered and represented is anime, or Japanese animation. Japanese animation functions as a medium of cultural memory by articulating experiences through visual and narrative forms. Cavallaro (2009) argues that anime approaches memory as fragmented, fluid, and subjective, emphasizing impermanence and the instability of historical narration rather than fixed historical truth. Through its reliance on allusion, temporal disjunction, and understated visual expression, anime resists linear historiography and instead presents memory as a constellation of partial and affective traces. As a result, anime operates as a form of *mnemotechnology* that records and transmits cultural memory through aesthetic mediation rather than direct representation. This capacity allows anime to engage with historical experiences such as war by embedding them within personal narratives and everyday life, rather than overt historical exposition.

This function of preserving memory also positions literature as a medium for representing wartime trauma. As Caruth (1996) states, *“If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing.”* From this perspective, literature extends beyond storytelling by articulating experiences that are often difficult to express or fully comprehend, enabling the exploration of fragmented memory, silence, emotional disruption, and the delayed impact of trauma. Moreover, LaCapra (2014) argues that literature and art may function as a means of *“bearing witness to, enacting, and, to some extent, working over and through trauma whether personally experienced, transmitted from intimates, or sensed in one's larger social and cultural setting.”* This suggests that literary works not only depict the psychological consequences of traumatic events but also portray how individuals gradually confront, negotiate, and coexist with traumatic memories. Consequently, examining trauma and reconciliation through literary representation provides a deeper understanding

of both the enduring psychological impact of historical violence and the ongoing process through which survivors articulate and live alongside their traumatic past.

One literary work that illustrates these processes is *In This Corner of the World* (2016), directed by Sunao Katabuchi. Set in Hiroshima and Kure during the final years of World War II, the film follows the everyday life of Suzu Hojo, whose ordinary existence is gradually transformed by wartime violence and personal loss. Rather than portraying warfare through military strategy or battlefield conflict, the film emphasizes civilians' experiences by depicting how historical events reshape everyday routines, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being. These characteristics and the personal perspective on life during wartime make the film an appropriate literary work for examining the representation of trauma and reconciliation within a wartime context.

Based on this background, the present study examines trauma and reconciliation in *In This Corner of the World* (2016) by employing Caruth's trauma theory together with LaCapra's concepts of *acting out* and *working through*. Specifically, this study aims to investigate how Suzu Hojo's traumatic experiences are represented throughout the narrative and how her reconciliation process resonates with documented wartime experiences of Japanese civilians presented in Lisa Yoneyama's *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (1999). By connecting individual psychological trauma with documented historical experiences, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how anime functions as a medium for representing and articulating wartime memory.

2. Literature Review

Trauma has become an important framework for examining how literary narratives represent psychological suffering and its lasting consequences. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Caruth conceptualizes trauma as a psychological wound that is experienced too suddenly and unexpectedly to be fully comprehended at the moment of its occurrence. Consequently, Caruth states several signs of how an individual experiences trauma. The first one is through intrusive thoughts, in which trauma comes back in the form of flashbacks, nightmares, or memories that appear

out of nowhere. Another instance is through the belated nature of trauma, in which the effects of trauma come later after the incident, and lastly, through emotional numbing, which renders the victim of trauma unable to exhibit emotional engagement.

While Caruth's theory explains the manifestation of trauma, LaCapra (2014) extends trauma studies by focusing on the survivor's response to traumatic experience. He distinguishes between acting out, in which individuals repeatedly relive or remain psychologically trapped within traumatic memories, and working through, a gradual process in which trauma is acknowledged without entirely disappearing from one's life. Rather than presenting recovery as complete closure, LaCapra emphasizes reconciliation as an ongoing negotiation with traumatic memory. Together, Caruth's and LaCapra's perspectives provide a complementary framework for examining both the representation of trauma and the process through which literary characters negotiate its enduring effects.

Previous studies have demonstrated the applicability of trauma theory in analyzing literary and animated narratives. Husnia (2024), for example, employs Caruth's trauma theory together with LaCapra's concepts of *acting out* and *working through* to examine the portrayal of trauma in the Japanese animated series *Violet Evergarden*. The study identifies manifestations of trauma through intrusive thoughts, belatedness, and emotional numbing while illustrating the protagonist's gradual movement from *acting out* toward *working through*. Similarly, Devianti et al. (2025) analyze the anime *Mononoke* (2007) using Caruth's trauma theory, focusing on how visual imagery and narrative structure represent traumatic experiences. Rather than examining trauma solely through character psychology, the study demonstrates that symbolic elements, such as the presence of *yokai*, can function as manifestations of unresolved trauma. Together, these studies illustrate the versatility of Caruth's trauma theory and LaCapra's concepts in examining both psychological experiences and symbolic representations of trauma within animated narratives.

Research on *In This Corner of the World* (2016), however, has primarily emphasized perspectives other than trauma and reconciliation. Adhitya et al. (2021) examine the manga through

Greenblatt's New Historicism, demonstrating that its depiction of wartime Japan closely corresponds with documented historical conditions experienced by civilians during World War II. Likewise, Narayan et al. (2021) investigate the film using Caroline Moser's Gender Analysis Framework and reveal how wartime conditions shape women's social roles and community responsibilities, and Syahidah et al. (2023) analyzes the movie through the concept of *mono no aware*, demonstrating how its visual composition conveys emotional sensitivity toward loss and impermanence; however, their aesthetic approach leaves the film's representation of psychological trauma comparatively underexplored. While these studies establish *In This Corner of the World* as a significant representation of Japan's wartime history and society, they devote limited attention to the protagonist's psychological trauma and the process of reconciliation following traumatic experiences.

Building upon these studies, the present research employs Caruth's trauma theory together with LaCapra's concepts of acting out and working through to provide a more comprehensive analysis of *In This Corner of the World* (2016). While Caruth's framework explains how trauma manifests through delayed and disruptive psychological responses, LaCapra's concepts make it possible to examine how survivors gradually negotiate traumatic experiences without reducing reconciliation to complete recovery. Combining these perspectives enables the analysis to move beyond identifying signs of trauma toward understanding the dynamic relationship between trauma and reconciliation within the narrative. Furthermore, this study contextualizes Suzu Hojo's reconciliation process by relating it to documented testimonies of Japanese civilians presented in Lisa Yoneyama's *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (1999). By integrating psychological analysis with historical context, this study seeks to demonstrate how *In This Corner of the World* represents both the enduring impact of wartime trauma and the gradual process through which traumatic memory is articulated and negotiated.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the representation of trauma and reconciliation in *In This Corner of the World* (2016). Since the research seeks to interpret meanings conveyed through the film's narrative and visual representations rather than quantitative data, a qualitative design is the most suitable method (Creswell, 2014). The following subsections outline the research design, data source, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques used in this study.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design using close textual analysis as its primary analytical approach. Close textual analysis enables an in-depth examination of how meanings are constructed through the film's narrative, dialogue, visual composition, symbolism, and character interactions. Rather than identifying broad patterns across multiple literary works, this approach facilitates a detailed and theoretically informed interpretation of *In This Corner of the World* (2016), allowing the study to examine the representation of trauma and reconciliation through selected scenes and dialogues.

3.2 Data and Data Source

The primary data for this research are taken from the scenes, dialogue, and monologue transcripts in the film related to Suzu Hojo's traumatic experience. Additionally, the selected scenes and transcripts are chosen based on the shift in emotional response, narrative disruption, and the aftermath of the traumatic event. As for the secondary data, Lisa Yoneyama's *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (1999) is chosen to provide contextual grounding for the film's representation of trauma.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process involves repeated viewing of *In This Corner of the World* (2016) to gain a comprehensive understanding of the film's narrative structure and character development.

Through this process, scenes and transcripts relevant to the research questions are carefully identified and documented. The visual and narrative significance of each scene and transcript in relation to traumatic experience guides the selection of data. This approach ensures that the collected data meaningfully reflects the film's portrayal of trauma and reconciliation.

3.4 Data Analysis

Lastly, the data is analyzed using Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, drawn from *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), to examine how traumatic experience is narratively constructed through the character of Suzu Hojo. This analysis focuses on the ways trauma emerges belatedly and disrupts the character's engagement with everyday life. In addition, Dominick LaCapra's concepts of acting out and working through, as proposed in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2014), are employed to analyze Suzu's response to trauma and her process of reconciliation. To further contextualize the findings, the analysis relates Suzu's experiences to documented accounts of Japanese civilian life during the wartime period in *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (1999).

4. Results

In the film, the primary source of Suzu's trauma occurs during a delayed-bomb incident that results in the death of her niece, Harumi, and the loss of Suzu's right hand. Although the explosion itself is sudden, its psychological impact unfolds over time, marking a significant rupture in Suzu's everyday life. Rather than responding immediately, Suzu's trauma manifests through emotional withdrawal and disruptions in her daily routines, indicating a delayed confrontation with the event.

4.1 Trauma

Intrusive Thoughts



Figure 1: Suzu's thoughts after the incident

Immediately after the delayed-bomb incident, the film transitions into a sequence of fragmented memories from Suzu's past, including moments with her grandmother, Lin, and imagined scenes related to the explosion. Rather than following a chronological progression, these memories interrupt the present narrative and repeatedly return to events associated with the traumatic incident.

One of these scenes depicts Suzu imagining an alternative course of events in which Harumi's death might have been prevented. In this imagined scenario, Suzu reflects on what she could have done differently during the explosion, stating, *"I should have run barefoot."* The statement suggests that Suzu believes removing her wooden sandals would have allowed her to move more quickly, thereby increasing the possibility of escaping the blast. The scene presents Suzu revisiting the traumatic event through a hypothetical scenario in which different actions could have altered its outcome.

Belatedness

While recovering from the delayed-bomb incident, Suzu is visited by her sister, who encourages her to return to Hiroshima, explaining that it is safer and that no one would mistreat her there. Their conversation is shown in the following dialogue:

Suzu's Sister: *Suzu, why don't you come back to Hiroshima?*

Suzu's Sister: *The bombings aren't bad and the ogre brother won't even be there. There'll be no one to pick on you.*

Suzu: *I suppose...*

The conversation introduces the possibility of Suzu returning to Hiroshima. However, her hesitant response indicates that she does not immediately make a decision despite being presented with a safer alternative.

Later, after another air raid, Suzu is rescued by her husband, Shusaku, after being caught outside the bunker. During their conversation, she finally expresses her intention to return to Hiroshima internally, as shown in the following dialogue:



Figure 2: Suzu affirming her husband's guesses on why she wanted to return to Hiroshima

Suzu: Shusaku, I'm going to Hiroshima

Shusaku: For good? Is it about your hand? The air raids? Harumi?

Suzu: Yes, yes, yes, it's all of those things.

Unlike her earlier hesitation, Suzu now explicitly acknowledges that her decision is influenced by the loss of her right hand, the repeated air raids, and Harumi's death. The scene presents a clear progression from uncertainty to the direct recognition of the experiences underlying her decision to leave Kure.

Emotional Numbing



Figure 3: Suzu saying she's all wrong

While visiting Suzu in Kure, Suzu's sister encourages her to return to Hiroshima and informs her that their older brother, who had previously caused Suzu distress, has died. Instead of immediately expressing sadness, Suzu reflects:

Suzu: *Something is wrong...*

Suzu: *I'm glad that my older brother is dead.*

Suzu: *I'm all wrong, like a drawing using my left hand.*

Rather than grieving her brother's death, Suzu first acknowledges a sense of relief before immediately questioning her own emotional response. Her statement, *"I'm all wrong, like a drawing using my left hand,"* suggests that she perceives her reaction as unusual or inconsistent with how she believes she should feel. The sequence presents a contrast between Suzu's initial emotional response and her subsequent awareness of that response, emphasizing her uncertainty in understanding her own feelings following the delayed-bomb incident.

4.2 Reconciliation

Acting Out



Figure 4: *Suzu remembers the gratefulness of the people around her*

Following the delayed-bomb incident, Suzu collapses during the post-air raid reconstruction. The film then transitions into a flashback in which she recalls several moments when those around her express gratitude for surviving the bombing and its aftermath:

Shusaku: *I'm glad that you're alive.*

Shusaku's Mother: *I'm glad you're getting well.*

Shusaku's Father: *Boy, I'm glad it was a dud.*

Shusaku's Mother: *I'm glad it was extinguished.*

Although these statements convey relief and gratitude, Suzu does not respond in the same manner. Instead, the flashback shifts to her internal monologue as she repeatedly reflects on the loss of her right hand.



Figure 5: *Suzu's repeated flashbacks regarding the moments she uses her right hand*

Suzu: *I'm glad. I'm glad. I'm glad.*
Suzu: *I don't know what I should be glad about.*
Suzu: *The right hand that held Harumi's hand in June.*
Suzu: *The right hand that drew Shusaku's face in May.*
Suzu: *The right hand that held Teru's lip balm in April.*
Suzu: *The right hand that held my brother's brain in February.*
Suzu: *The right hand that botched Keiko's kimono last November.*
Suzu: *The right hand that drew watermelon for Lin last August.*
Suzu: *The right hand that cooked Lord Kusunoki's rice...*
Suzu: *The right hand that drew...*
Suzu: *The right hand that drew my hometown last February.*
Suzu: *The right hand that loves to make nori...*

Rather than recalling a single event, Suzu recounts a series of ordinary moments associated with her right hand. The memories move across different points in time, connecting family, friendships, artistic activities, and everyday routines. As the monologue progresses, the surrounding visuals become increasingly abstract, drawing attention away from the physical setting and toward Suzu's recollections. The sequence presents the loss of her right hand through fragmented memories that repeatedly return to its significance in her daily life.

Working Through

Near the end of the film, after deciding to remain in Kure and gradually resuming her daily life, Suzu finally reflects on Harumi's memory while observing the battleship *Haruna*. Rather than

recalling the delayed-bomb incident itself, she speaks about how she wishes to remember her niece, as seen in the following scene:



Figure 6: *Suzu's declaration to smile whenever she remembers Harumi*

Suzu: *Harumi always laughed, so I'll smile whenever I think of her.*

Suzu: *From now on, this body will be here to smile.*

Old Lady: *That's right. It'd be a waste to cry all the time.*

Unlike the earlier scenes that center on Suzu's grief and recurring memories of the bombing, this sequence focuses on her present outlook and future. Instead of dwelling on the circumstances of Harumi's death, Suzu chooses to remember her through her cheerful personality and expresses her determination to continue living while carrying that memory. The old lady's response further reinforces Suzu's decision, presenting a shared affirmation of moving forward despite the enduring loss

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that *In This Corner of the World* (2016) represents trauma through three interconnected manifestations: intrusive thoughts, belatedness, and emotional numbing. Rather than depicting trauma as a singular emotional reaction to the delayed-bomb incident, the film presents it as a continuing psychological experience that unfolds through recurring memories, delayed recognition, and disrupted emotional responses. Suzu's intrusive thoughts repeatedly return to the bombing through fragmented recollections and imagined alternatives, illustrating how traumatic memories persist beyond the original event. Likewise, her delayed acknowledgment that the loss of her hand, repeated air raids, and Harumi's death influenced her decision to leave Kure reflects the belated nature of traumatic experience, in which overwhelming events are only fully recognized after

a temporal delay. Furthermore, Suzu's emotional responses, particularly her inability to grieve her brother's death conventionally, demonstrate the disruption of ordinary emotional engagement following trauma. Collectively, these findings correspond to Caruth's (1996) argument that trauma is not fully experienced when it occurs but returns belatedly through involuntary repetitions that continue to shape the survivor's present consciousness.

Rather than portraying Suzu as a passive victim of wartime violence, the film depicts her as an individual whose everyday life is continually shaped by unresolved trauma. The recurring memories of her right hand suggest that trauma extends beyond the moment of physical injury. Instead, the delayed-bomb incident continues to influence how Suzu remembers the past, understands herself, and relates to the people around her. Consequently, the film presents trauma as an enduring psychological condition embedded within ordinary life rather than as a temporary emotional response to catastrophe. By emphasizing everyday experiences instead of dramatic expressions of suffering, *In This Corner of the World* (2016) illustrates how traumatic memory gradually permeates an individual's thoughts, emotions, and identity.

Although the findings reveal that trauma continues to shape Suzu's psychological life, the narrative does not conclude with her remaining trapped within these manifestations. As the story progresses, the film depicts gradual changes in Suzu's relationship with her traumatic memories, suggesting that trauma is not only represented through psychological disruption but also through an ongoing process of reconciliation. This progression can be understood through LaCapra's (2014) concepts of *acting out* and *working through*, which distinguish between repeatedly reliving traumatic experiences and gradually negotiating their enduring presence.

The acting-out findings reveal that even after the delayed-bomb incident, Suzu is still stuck in the past. This can be seen from her response to the memories of the people around her who are grateful for their situation. Her inability to feel grateful and focus on the moment is shown when she uses her right hand as she stares at her nonexistent right hand, indicating that she is still bound by her traumatic experience. Such a response is related to LaCapra's (2014) description of acting out, in which

survivors remain psychologically caught within traumatic experience instead of establishing a critical distance from it.

In contrast, the working-through findings depict a gradual transformation in Suzu's engagement with trauma. Suzu's decision to smile whenever she remembers Harumi further reflects the process of working through. According to LaCapra (2014), working through involves re-engaging with the present while maintaining an openness toward the future, rather than remaining entirely governed by the traumatic past. This is reflected in Suzu's phrase "from now on," which signifies her awareness of continuing life in the present. Her statement that "this body will be here to smile" further suggests an acceptance of both survival and loss without denying the pain associated with them. Moreover, by choosing to smile whenever she remembers Harumi because "Harumi always laughed," Suzu transforms the memory of Harumi from a source of grief reliving into one of commemoration. Rather than being overwhelmed by the traumatic memory, she begins to establish critical distance from it, demonstrating a gradual movement toward working through her trauma.

Beyond Suzu's reconciliation process, the findings also reflect documented testimonies of Japanese civilians, specifically the Hiroshima bombing survivors presented by Lisa Yoneyama in *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (1999). Relating to Suzu's acting out process, the film portrays that rather than experiencing trauma as a completed past event, both Suzu and the survivors remain psychologically bound to the moment of loss. Suzu repeatedly reenacts the delayed-bomb incident through her inability to detach herself from the loss of Harumi and her right hand. Likewise, Yoneyama describes survivors who continued to experience remorse, guilt, sorrow, and resentment years after the bombing, with many questioning their own survival while remaining haunted by memories of those who died, as seen in this line:

"The medical and social workers frequently observe that many survivors live with a powerful blend of strong emotions, including remorse, loneliness, fear, sorrow, guilt, and resentment."

This parallel suggests that the film represents trauma not merely as an individual psychological response but as a pattern of emotional persistence that also characterized documented

civilian experiences after the Hiroshima bombing. Through this resonance, Suzu's acting out can be interpreted as reflecting the continuing psychological captivity experienced by many wartime survivors rather than as an isolated fictional experience.

Another comparable pattern emerges in the inability of both Suzu and Hiroshima survivors to articulate traumatic memories. The findings show that Suzu rarely verbalizes her emotional suffering, instead reliving the delayed-bomb incident through intrusive recollections and emotional withdrawal, such as when she asserts her inability to feel grateful for her situation internally. Yoneyama (1999) similarly documents how many survivors remained silent about their experiences for decades, with family members recalling that those who had suffered the most often refused to speak about the bombing. One line from the son of a survivor supports this statement:

"A newspaper corporation worker, for instance, remembered that his father, whose entire family—including his first wife and all their children—was killed by the bomb, never uttered a word about the experience during his lifetime."

Rather than indicating the absence of memory, this silence reflects the overwhelming persistence of traumatic recollection that resists ordinary narration. The parallel demonstrates that *In This Corner of the World* (2016) represents acting out not only through repeated memories but also through the inability to transform traumatic experience into coherent testimony, thereby resonating with documented postwar civilian responses.

Similarly, the working through process of both Suzu and the Hiroshima bombing survivors also shares similar patterns. Suzu's decision to smile whenever she remembers Harumi signifies a transformation in her relationship with traumatic memory. Rather than attempting to erase the loss, she assigns new meaning to remembrance by preserving Harumi's joyful memory while continuing her own life. Yoneyama (1999) similarly explains that many survivors gradually shifted from remaining silent to documenting and narrating their wartime experiences through memoirs, testimony, and commemorative writing. From LaCapra's perspective, both responses represent memory work in which survivors remain connected to the past without being completely governed by it. Although Suzu expresses reconciliation through personal remembrance whereas the Hiroshima

bombing survivors do so through public testimony, both reflect the gradual search for meaning following traumatic loss.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that *In This Corner of the World* (2016) portrays trauma as an ongoing psychological experience demonstrated by intrusive thoughts, delayed recognition, and emotional disruption while simultaneously depicting reconciliation as a gradual transformation in the victim's perspective towards the traumatic memory. In addition, the resonance between Suzu and the Hiroshima bombing survivors' reconciliation process reflects how the film serves not only as a historical narrative, but also as a literary representation that preserves and articulates Japanese civilians' wartime experience.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the portrayal of trauma and reconciliation in *In This Corner of the World* (2016) through Cathy Caruth's trauma theory and Dominick LaCapra's concepts of acting out and working through. The findings demonstrate that Suzu Hojo's trauma is portrayed through intrusive thoughts, belatedness, and emotional numbing, illustrating trauma as an ongoing psychological condition rather than a singular reaction to wartime violence. Furthermore, Suzu's gradual movement from acting out toward working through portrays reconciliation not as the erasure of traumatic memory but as the gradual ability to acknowledge loss while continuing to engage with the present. These findings show that the film presents trauma and reconciliation as interconnected psychological processes that continue to shape the survivor's everyday life.

Beyond examining Suzu's individual experience, this study also demonstrates that her reconciliation process resonates with documented testimonies of Hiroshima bombing survivors presented by Lisa Yoneyama. The similarities in emotional disruption, silence surrounding traumatic memories, remembrance, and gradual re-engagement with life suggest that the film reflects broader patterns of postwar civilian experience without reducing them to direct historical representation. Consequently, *In This Corner of the World* functions not only as a historical narrative but also as a literary medium that preserves, articulates, and reflects Japan's collective wartime memory through

the intimate perspective of everyday civilian life. Future studies may further explore the *manga* and live-action version of this title or approach the film from different perspectives, such as memory studies or postmemory studies.

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Patria Prana Nugraha Halmust is an undergraduate student of English Literature at the State University of Surabaya. His research interests include literature studies and the application of critical theory to literary and popular media. This journal article is drawn from his undergraduate thesis,

which analyzes the trauma and reconciliation in *In This Corner of the World* (2016) alongside the representation of wartime reconciliation in documented civilians' testimonies.

