

This semester our class has read two books; *The Samurai's Garden* and *Farewell to Manzanar*. These two books have some things in common and some differences. The one thing that is very similar is that they are both being told as a story from an adolescent's point of view. *The Samurai's Garden* is written in a current diary form and is told by an 18 year old Japanese boy. *Farewell to Manzanar* is written from memories and told by a 7 year old Japanese girl. I think that these books are similar but to an extent. They're both living in times of war, but Stephen from *The Samurai's Garden* isn't affected by it personally. Then Jeanne from *Farewell to Manzanar* experiences Pearl Harbor first hand by leaving California and going to live in an internment camp on the other side of the country.

One thing that I feel both of these main characters have in common is that they're both struggling to find who they really are. For example, Stephen didn't have or do something that defined who he was, he just liked things but didn't have a passion for anything. Then with Jeanne, she's still a young girl and you can't actually know who you are at age 7. But I do feel that she has carried over some of her father's identity issues. The reason that I believe her father has identity issues is because of the fact that he doesn't agree with the anger that Japanese have built for Americans. He feels that he is just as much American as Japanese. A quote to prove my theory is a part in the beginning of the book where he is being interviewed and the last thing he says is "When your mother and father are having a fight, do you want them to kill each other? Or do you want them to stop fighting?" The way I've interpreted this quote is looking at the fact that he thinks of America and Japan as their mother and father which makes him have an equal love for both. This is something that proves he is on equal sides and the majority of other Japanese are taking their countries side. I know that he is being honest with the interrogator because he has said other things to show that he is for America. For this reason I feel that Jeanne is confused to who she is because she is influenced by her father. Throughout the book she doesn't mention how her mother feels about Pearl Harbor and how they're being treated unfairly by Americans. Her mom doesn't agree or disagree with her father

Another thing that these two books have in common is that both Stephen and Jeanne's fathers aren't good to their wife's, they might not be exactly the same but they're both bad enough to leave Stephen and Jeanne in that position where they want to help but they really can't. In *the Samurai's Garden* Stephen's father is cheating on his mother and has been going on for many years which makes Stephen want to confront his dad and ask him questions as to why he would do such a thing. Then in *Farewell to Manzanar* Jeanne's father is aggressive and abusive towards her mother and it makes Jeanne in an even worse position because she knows that her mom is in pain but she is afraid to stand up to her father for the same reason that he could hurt her too.

In conclusion to the similarities and differences between these two books I feel that these characters both have struggles in their lives and obstacles to overcome. Overall I think that *Farewell to Manzanar* was more of an eye opening book because of the fact that it was being told by a little girl who had to grow up too quickly and have to see the world for what it really is. Another reason I liked this book was because of the fact it was based off of true events and it was more connected to the current time than *The Samurai's Garden*.