

TWO DAYS AND SEVENTY YEARS:  
SITES OF MEMORIES AND SILENCES FROM  
HIROSHIMA, NAGASAKI, AND THE UNITED STATES

by

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## ABSTRACT

JULIE HAWKS. Two days and seventy years: sites of memories and silences from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the United States. (Under the direction of DR. AARON SHAPIRO)

My primary goal for this thesis was to investigate current American and Japanese practices of remembrance about the atomic bombings and to trace cross-cultural influences on the commemorations and narratives. On the surface, these narratives and practices appear divergent; however, investigation reveals that they are intimately connected, and over time, have influenced one another. Icons of history that seem to be set in stone develop from these stories, but if we look at them carefully, we see that they present to us the true process of memory, and thus history.

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## INTRODUCTION

It seems odd that Hiroshima, a city that was decimated and irradiated by the world's first atomic bombing, has come to be known as the "City of Peace." Even more surprising is that this designation arose in concert between the Japanese and American people. *Hibakusha* (atomic bomb-affected people) found meaning in transforming their experience into a warning for the world about the human cost of nuclear warfare, while at the same time, the United States encouraged Hiroshima's transformation into an icon of peace in order to further our nuclear and imperialist objectives.<sup>1</sup> Lisa Yoneyama wrote:

Historical records show that the most powerful initiatives to construct icons to commemorate world peace and the beginning of the atomic age came from U.S. officials in the Occupation's headquarters. One might assume that US Occupation authorities, as the representatives of the perpetrating nation, would have been reluctant to publicize the bomb's "effects." However, they expressed a strong interest in turning Hiroshima into an international showcase that would link the atomic bomb with postwar peace. According to their reasoning, Hiroshima's new memorial icons could demonstrate to the world that international peace had been achieved and would be maintained by the superior military might of the United States. In other words, if transformed into a symbol of world peace, Hiroshima could offer justification for further nuclear buildup. The Occupation authorities thus welcomed the proposal to convert the field of atomic ashes into a peace park, while simultaneously enforcing censorship on Japanese publications concerning the bomb's devastating effects on human lives and communities.<sup>2</sup>

The respective origin narratives, publically displayed artifacts, and commemoration rituals that have generated through this symbiotic relationship continue to inculcate new generations to these disparate worldviews, even after seventy years. In addition, both cultural viewpoints vie for dominance on the international stage, as well as domestically;

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<sup>1</sup> Lisa Yoneyama, "Remembering and Imagining the Nuclear Annihilation in Hiroshima," *Conservation Perspectives, The GCI Newsletter*, Newsletter 17.2(Summer 2002).  
[http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/newsletters/17\\_2/news\\_in\\_cons1.html](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/17_2/news_in_cons1.html) (accessed April 26, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

examples include the Smithsonian's *Enola Gay* exhibit fiasco in 1995, America's contestation of UNESCO naming the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (*Genbaku Dome*) a World Heritage Site in 1996, and most recently, Japan's published concerns over the establishment of the National Park Service's Manhattan Project sites.<sup>3</sup>

My primary goal for this thesis was to investigate current American and Japanese practices of remembrance about the atomic bombings and to trace cross-cultural influences on the commemorations and narratives. At first glance, these narratives and practices appear diametrically opposed: one of the righteous victor and one of the aggressor/victim. However, closer investigation reveals that their histories are part of a stochastic process, where the stories are constantly going back and forth, in the action of adjusting and being adjusted by each other.

A 2015 Pew Research Center survey found that 56% of Americans still believe that the use of atomic weapons was justified, while only 14% of Japanese concur. These numbers have significantly dropped from an 85% approval rating by Americans in 1945, according to that year's Gallup poll.<sup>4</sup> American newspapers and television news reports continue to maintain a national myth that dropping two atomic bombs within a span of

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<sup>3</sup> "UNESCO," <http://en.unesco.org/> (accessed March 4, 2016). From the UNESCO website: "UNESCO is known as the 'intellectual' agency of the United Nations. At a time when the world is looking for new ways to build peace and sustainable development, people must rely on the power of intelligence to innovate, expand their horizons and sustain the hope of a new humanism. UNESCO exists to bring this creative intelligence to life; for it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace and the conditions for sustainable development must be built."; "Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) a World Heritage Site (360° Panorama)," Nippon.com. <http://www.nippon.com/en/images/k00009/> (accessed March 6, 2016); Arin McKenna, "Manhattan Project National Historical Park: Scholars' forum launches park interpretation," *The Los Alamos Monitor*, November 22, 2015, <http://www.lamonitor.com/content/manhattan-project-national-historic-park-scholars%E2%80%99-forum-launches-park-interpretation> (accessed March 9, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Stokes, "70 years after Hiroshima, opinions have shifted on use of atomic bomb," *Pew Research Center*, August 4, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/04/70-years-after-hiroshima-opinions-have-shifted-on-use-of-atomic-bomb/> (accessed March 9, 2016).

three days on large civilian populations was justified because these acts ended the war and tentatively saved more American and Japanese lives than were lost.<sup>5</sup> Our museums and national parks that are dedicated to telling the story of the bomb celebrate the science and technology that precipitated the United States winning the war, the resulting economic prosperity, and (ostensibly) our ability to maintain world peace through the threat of nuclear annihilation.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps information that has been presented in American media and cultural institutions is more prescriptive than representative of how Americans understand the atomic bombings and their effects.

In 1999, the Pew Research Center published a survey about American attitudes and memories at the turn of the century.<sup>7</sup> Science and technology was placed at the top of the list of American achievements. Successes in the realm of world peace, such as winning the World Wars and the Cold War, were mentioned by just 7% of the public. And when asked to name the nation's greatest failure of the twentieth century, Americans named the Vietnam War.<sup>8</sup> The atomic bombings were not mentioned at all in the survey report; and, the end of World War II did not rank highly for successes or failures recalled within American collective memory.<sup>9</sup> However, during that same year, the *Newseum* surveyed Americans to find the top news stories of the century; the bombing of

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<sup>5</sup> Gregg Herken, "Five Myths about the Atomic Bomb," *The Washington Post*, July 31, 2015, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-the-atomic-bomb/2015/07/31/32dbc15c-3620-11e5-b673-1df005a0fb28\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-the-atomic-bomb/2015/07/31/32dbc15c-3620-11e5-b673-1df005a0fb28_story.html) (accessed January 15, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Yoneyama also maintains that the Atomic Bomb Dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park are the physical manifestations of the rationale to maintain peace through nuclear threats. Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>7</sup> "Technology Triumphs, Morality Falts," Pew Research Center: U.S. Politics and Policy. <http://www.people-press.org/1999/07/03/technology-triumphs-morality-falts/> (accessed January 2, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> I found no information about the questions that were posed or whether those questions were open-ended or strictly controlled.

Hiroshima headed the list.<sup>10</sup> Concurrently, John Hersey's "Hiroshima" was selected by New York University's Journalism Department as the most important piece of journalism in the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Both of these results suggest that, even decades later, the atomic bombings remain at the forefront of American cultural consciousness.

The Pew Research Center survey revealed insightful information about the American mindset at the turn of the century. Overwhelming majorities (over 80% of respondents) agreed that the Constitution, free elections, and free enterprise were major reasons for the success that the U.S. had enjoyed during the previous 100 years. In addition, more than two-thirds of the public credited freedom of the press for the nation's success. A similar majority also gave credit to divine sources: 65% stated God's will was a major reason for American success.<sup>12</sup> Each of these American values was foundational to the reformation of Japanese society that occurred during the American Occupation of Japan.

On the contrary, most Japanese people reject war as a viable solution to solving problems in the world.<sup>13</sup> The Japanese Constitution, which was written by American military officials, has not been changed since its inception following the end of World

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<sup>10</sup> "Top News Of 20th Century," CBS. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/top-news-of-20th-century/> (accessed October 15 2015).

<sup>11</sup> "The Top 100 Works of Journalism in the United States in the 20th Century," New York University. <https://www.nyu.edu/classes/stephens/Top%20100%20page.htm> (accessed October 15 2015).

<sup>12</sup> "Technology Triumphs, Morality Falters". Although not explicitly stated in the report, one can assume respondents had an American Protestant version of divine power in mind.

<sup>13</sup> Jon Queally, "In Japan, Tens of Thousands Anti-War Protesters Reject Return to Militarism," *Common Dreams*, August 30, 2015, <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/08/30/japan-tens-thousands-anti-war-protesters-reject-return-militarism> (accessed February 1, 2016); Jonathan Dresner, "The Two Essential Steps Needed to Turn Iraq into a Peace-Loving Country," *George Mason University's History News Network (HNN)*, August 8, 2005, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/1361> (accessed May 1, 2016). "The vast majority of the Japanese public still believes that WMD -- and aggressive wars -- are unacceptable, and Japanese political leaders work hard to maintain strong diplomatic relationships with the United States and with the other Asian nations."



War II.<sup>14</sup> That is not to say that certain factions in society have not pushed for political change. In September 2015, the Diet (Japan's parliament) voted into law a new defense policy that could allow troops to fight overseas for the first time since 1945. *ABC News* reported that the "legislation has triggered massive protests from ordinary citizens and others who say it violates the pacifist constitution and could ensnare Japan in US-led conflicts after 70 years of postwar peace."<sup>15</sup>

Recent scholarship has promoted the idea that subsequent to Japan's defeat in 1945, the state fostered victim consciousness centered on the inhumanity of the bomb in order to shift attention away from Japan's criminal aggressive acts.<sup>16</sup> This argument suggests that the Japanese maintain a "victim as hero" war narrative. But, as with all history, the story is far more complicated, especially considering the looming role America played in shaping postwar Japanese history during the seven year Allied Occupation.<sup>17</sup>

I wanted to have a more direct experience of the atomic bombing sites before beginning archival research. So I traveled to Japan for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombings as fieldwork to explore key memorials and participate in peace ceremonies. I

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<sup>14</sup> Under General MacArthur's orders, members of his staff drafted the constitution and then handed to the Japanese Cabinet, who were told they had to accept the American draft as the model from which to base their own new constitution. The Japanese government was also told to publically claim this draft as their own. The postwar Constitution of Japan has never been revised. John E. Van Sant, "Constitution-Making In Occupied Japan," *H.net US-Japan*. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3609> (accessed January 15, 2016); Shoichi Koseki and Ray A. Moore, *The Birth of Japan's Postwar Constitution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> "Japan's parliament passes changes to pacifist WWII constitution allowing troops to fight abroad," *ABC News*, September 19, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-19/japan-parliament-passes-change-to-pacifist-constitution/6788456> (accessed February 28, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> See James Joseph Orr, *Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Ran Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> This history is addressed in Chapter 1: Shaping Memory.

was fortunate to learn about a summer study tour to Hiroshima and Nagasaki that has been hosted annually since 1995 by American University's Nuclear Studies Institute. Led by Professor Peter Kuznick, the study abroad course exposes students to a wide range of information and experiences related to the atomic bombings of Japan. Students live and study with Japanese and other Asian students, professors, peace activists, and policy experts, and meet with atomic bomb survivors and Asian victims of Japanese atrocities to hear first-hand accounts of their experiences. Students also participate in a broad range of Japanese commemorative events, visit peace museums and relevant cultural and historical sites in Kyoto, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki.<sup>18</sup>

Participating with this group provided me with a case study for seeing how Americans and Japanese work together to teach a generally uninformed public about the atomic bombings. Approximately 60 students participated during the ten-day tour (half from the United States and the other half from Japan and other Asian countries).<sup>19</sup> Most were undergraduates between 18 and 25 years of age, although several were much older, and two were still in high school. Everyone was there willingly (they all registered for the peace tour), although there were two young white males who vehemently disagreed with some of the content that was presented (mostly related to American culpability).

We visited a wide range of sites that included the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, and peace parks in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>20</sup> The most beneficial aspect of traveling

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<sup>18</sup> "Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Beyond." American University's Nuclear Studies Institute. <http://www.american.edu/cas/history/institutes/abroad.cfm> (accessed October 15 2015).

<sup>19</sup> This was the largest group ever hosted on this tour.

<sup>20</sup> Each study tour visits different sites, and offers different lecturers and *hibakusha* to interact with. In previous years, students have visited the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (formerly the Atomic

with American University was the ability to take advantage of their established relationships with Japanese communities. If I had traveled on my own, I most likely would not have been offered the opportunity to interact with *hibakusha* and their families, or with key individuals such as Ariyuki Fukushima (curator for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum), Takashi Hiraoka (former Mayor of Hiroshima City), or Takayuki Koderu, chief director of the Maruki Gallery, which exhibits the *Hiroshima Panels*. Details about American University's Peace Tour are featured in Chapter 2: Teaching Peace at American University.

While in Japan, I video-recorded 17 panel discussions, lectures, and personal talks presented by various professors and experts from America, Japan, Canada, Australia, and Korea. Among these were talks by six *hibakusha*, including Koko Tanimoto Kondo, who I also interviewed. Additionally, I video-recorded and photographed each of the memorials, museums, ceremonies, and key sites, such as the Aioi Bridge and Shukkeien Garden (Asano Park). Many of the students spoke with me informally about their reactions to the sites and program, and several agreed to short interviews. I also spent a good deal of time speaking with professors, such as Kazuyo Yamane (*Grassroots Museums for Peace in Japan: Unknown Efforts for Peace and Reconciliation*), and Koko about their experiences with educating the public about the bombings.

Throughout my investigation, I questioned what my own approaches might be to educating Americans about what remains a controversial topic. What the peace tour program did not offer me was a model for presenting conflicting information. The

program introduced students to the horrors of war, especially the atomic bombings, without offering equal time to voices that advocated for military force or nuclear proliferation. The program's focus is quite different from mainstream memorials and narratives about the bomb that Americans encounter. Most museums exhibits and memorials that do offer information about the atomic bombs celebrate American scientific achievement and work in order to instill patriotic pride.

In *The Lowell Experiment*, public historian Cathy Stanton positioned her ethnographic research at the intersection of history and anthropology, and reflected upon her role as both observer and participant. In doing so, she was able to confront the social and political positions that informed her research so that she could more transparently “integrate scholarship with citizenship, and theory with participation in public culture.”

To what extent can museums, tourism, and public history act as critical, counterhegemonic sites—that is, as places to question and perhaps challenge the dominant forces in our lives? And if we, as leftist scholars and practitioners believe that there is potential in these social forms to critique and change what we do not like about the society in which we live, how might our own work help to bring about the changes we hope to see?<sup>21</sup>

While I recognize that my own biases lead me to favor values promoted by American University's program, I also understand the importance of acknowledging and empathetically responding to people who have been acculturated by America's more militaristic and patriotic attitudes. For this reason, I wanted to not only offer feasible historical explanations that would show how and why Americans have been led to embrace myths about the atomic bombings, but to also offer sympathetic examples for how they continue to be propagated.

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<sup>21</sup> Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 39.

Americans struggle to present the history of the atomic bombings in a balanced and accurate manner because these defining events are indelibly connected to our national identity. War works to define national identity. In a keynote address, Professor Gareth Evans at The University of Melbourne stated, “It is war, the prospect of war, and the memory of war that has traditionally shaped and defined that collective national sentiment and sense-of-self we think of as being at the core of national identity.”<sup>22</sup>

Identities are created and reinforced through the narratives and materials with which communities engage, such as newspaper articles, petitions, Peace Declarations, song lyrics, and memorials. Cohesive social identities form and are repeatedly reinforced through these readily available material artifacts.

Visual materials such as photographs, murals, relics, and aircraft should also be considered as material artifacts that reinforce community identity because members of particular social groups are able to recognize the represented cultural symbols. In *Image As Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture*, Margaret Miles acknowledged images as the “primary means by which a community of values is created and behavior is conditioned and coordinated in accordance with these values.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, community values are reinforced through the images and symbols that members embrace.

In addition, mythmaking is foundational to social identity formation. In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes illuminated how myth transforms a particular culture’s values into universal or natural values. To illustrate this process, he discussed an image

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<sup>22</sup> Gareth Evans, “War, Peace and National Identity,” <http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech440.html> (accessed February 12, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Margaret R. Miles, *Image As Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 128.

that appeared on the cover of *Paris-Match* magazine. The cover photograph showed a young black French soldier uniformed in military attire saluting, “with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolor.”<sup>24</sup> On one level, Barthes was able to decipher meaning from the photograph because he was familiar with the cultural codes of that particular society: the French military uniform, the salute.<sup>25</sup> But, as a semiotician, Barthes is able to ascertain a second-order signification generated from the signs: “that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors.”<sup>26</sup> Barthes identified this form as myth.<sup>27</sup>

Barthes asserted that myth makes particular signs appear natural or eternal, thereby transforming history into nature (or rather, common sense). Myths remove the need for the reader to construct meanings; only particular cultural knowledge is required.<sup>28</sup> For the unsuspecting reader (or viewer), to consume a myth, then, is to consume images, goals and meanings. Through myth, the original sign, whether relating to a story, photograph, or other physical object, is emptied of its original rich history and covered over with a singular new meaning. But let us not reduce these myths to mere ideology; more than ideas are at play.

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<sup>24</sup> Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972 [1957]), 116.

<sup>25</sup> This first order of meaning, denotation, is what Saussure calls “signification.”

<sup>26</sup> Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies*, 116.

<sup>27</sup> This section on Barthes was adapted from my Religious Studies thesis, “A Cloud of Unknowing: Atomic Thinking with Benjamin and Bataille on the Violence of Representational Enclosures.”

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Robinson, "Roland Barthes's Mythologies: A Critical Theory of Myths," *Ceasefire Magazine* (September 30, 2011). <http://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-barthes-2/> (accessed November 15, 2014).

Yet, what is remembered may not be based on what actually happened; rather, public memory may be based on stories that reflect how communities want to imagine themselves. As such, their histories are not open to dialogue or interpretation, only validation. And, as Tamara Banjeglav explained in her essay, “Memory of War or War over Memory? The Official Politics of Remembering in 1990s Croatia,” those in power may not be concerned about commemorating victims or generating public dialogue about the past. Instead, their goal may be “to assert particular identities in the public sphere that articulate narratives of political legitimation, and these narratives may even be harmful for victims.”<sup>29</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and analyze public memory related to the atomic bombings. My project is spread across a more traditional written thesis and a digital component, which is discussed in the next section. With both, I engage with narratives and commemorations of the atomic bombings in America and Japan as case studies for examining how public memory is created, shaped, and altered.

Chapter 1: Shaping Memories provides historical background for the earliest narratives and commemorations that generated following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Occupation censorship dictated what could be discussed within Japan while at the same time, the U.S. military worked to control what the world would come to know about the devastating after-effects of the bombs’ radiation. John Hersey’s “Hiroshima” and Johannes Siemes’ eyewitness accounts are discussed in light of this history.

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<sup>29</sup> Tamara Banjeglav, "Memory of War or War over Memory? The Official Politics of Remembering in 1990s Croatia," *IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences XXXII*(2012). <http://www.iwm.at/publications/5-junior-visiting-fellows-conferences/vol-xxxii/memory-of-war-or-war-over-memory/> (accessed February 12, 2016).

Chapter 2: Teaching Peace at American University provides insight to American University's unique Nuclear Studies Institute, its history and outreach, and details about the annual summer study tour in Japan.

Chapter 3: The B-29 and the Paper Crane offers two examples of commemoration in America that have very different aims. The first is a study about the Commemoration Air Force, a Texas-based civilian non-profit organization that maintains, exhibits, and performs "warbird" air shows around the country each year. Their reenactments of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima celebrate achievements in U.S. military air power and the ultimate destruction of Japan. The second study focuses on the story of Sadako Sasaki, a 12 year-old Japanese girl who contracted and died from leukemia ten years after the nuclear attack on Hiroshima. Memorials, stories, and commemorations in the U.S. and Japan are discussed.

Epilogue: The Epilogue reflects on the process of producing the two projects (the written thesis and the digital project).

#### The Digital Project: Undoing History

The digital component of my thesis is a website entitled *UndoingHistory.com*. It was conceived and developed simultaneously with, and is meant to be an integral part of (rather than a supplement to) my written thesis. Discovery of relevant online materials during the materials selection phase significantly affected the overall direction of my thesis. In other words, my thesis was shaped by the digital content I was able to collect. Some content was omitted due to copyright protection, and other content was not locatable.



Interacting with these materials in a serendipitous and non-linear fashion helped to shape the ultimate design of the website and my overall interpretation of the materials. In other words, the site's creation process became a tool for me to think about the archive and historic narratives generated by and encapsulated within.

When I began to develop the site, I knew that selected artifacts and commemorations that I experienced during AU's Peace Tour would be central to both parts of my thesis. My goal was to collect representative digitized materials (videos, photos, news and magazine articles, book reviews, and oral history interviews) and then decide how those materials would be presented to the public.

My views of World War II atrocities, which, for this project, focus on the atomic bombings, are deeply affected by two of Alain Resnais' films, *Night and Fog (Nuit et Brouillard)* (1955), which focuses on the ethics of memory related to the Nazi death camps, because it greatly influenced future narratives integrated by Holocaust museums and films, as well as his own succeeding film *Hiroshima mon amour*.<sup>30</sup>

Alain Resnais was commissioned to film *Night and Fog* in 1955 for the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. The title comes from the German Night and Fog Decree, signed by Hitler on December 7, 1941. (It is also the date of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.) The Night and Fog order authorized the Gestapo (secret police) to capture "persons endangering German security" for trial by special courts, thereby circumventing military procedure and various conventions governing the treatment of prisoners. People literally vanished without a trace into the night and fog. At

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<sup>30</sup> Another connection between these films lies in the imagery of clouds (specifically the mushroom cloud) and fog (in relation to the Nazi Night and Fog Decree). Within the fire of the atomic blast and the crematorium ovens, people, and the knowledge of their whereabouts, literally vanished without a trace.

first, Resnais refused to make the documentary because he did not feel that he had the authority to make a statement about the concentration camps because he was not there, but he agreed to the project when Jean Cayrol, who was a first-hand witness, agreed to collaborate on the project. Cayrol wrote the narration for the short documentary, which contrasts black-and-white film documentation from the camps with color film clips of the same camps filmed ten years later that show the overgrowth and deterioration. These juxtapositions suggest acts of remembering and forgetting. Resnais' intention behind switching back and forth between disturbing images of atrocity and the quiet "healing" of the sites where the horrors occurred was to continually remind the viewer that the images do not and cannot capture the truth of the past. In *Night and Fog*, documented evidence is presented not to capture the past, but to create an awareness of present and future dangers as well as to disrupt confidence in our ability to truly capture this reality.

These types of interactions are virtually impossible to successfully reconstruct by way of an analog narrative, such as a written thesis. Therefore, one of the aims of *Undoing History* was to attempt to build a framework that would bracket disparate materials so that visitors might be able to understand connections that otherwise might not recognize. In order to offer such an experience, one of the site's categories, "Reenactments and Commemorations," interweaves artifacts used to reify American versus Japanese memory and culture. Some materials focus upon American commemorations of the atomic bombings at "warbird" air shows that, with a restored B-29 and massive amounts of pyrotechnics, reenact the bombing of Hiroshima, while others center around peace memorial commemorations in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the United States. Although elements of this collection may not generate similar meaning as the

scenes from *Night and Fog*, which alternated between “disturbing images of atrocity and the quiet ‘healing’ of the sites where the horrors occurred,” pairing images of the modern American spectacle of airshows with those of solemn peace services aims to guide viewers to question the truth claims of a particular rendition of the past that has been perpetuated by the U.S. military since the end of the war.

Resnais’ other film, *Hiroshima mon amour*, which also inspired the design of *Undoing History*, explores the ethics of memory, mourning, and witnessing in relation to film and museum representation of traumatic events. The central message of the film, according to Marguerite Duras, is that “[n]othing is ‘given’ at Hiroshima. Every gesture, every word, takes on an aura of meaning that transcends its literal meaning.”<sup>31</sup> Every single conversation, event, and object in the film carries a trace of other conversations, events, and objects. Knowledge is plunged into a state of crisis. The audience is left not knowing what anything means. *Hiroshima mon amour* disrupts not only the possibility of ultimate meaning, but puts into question our ability to know anything. The film, in effect, questions its own visual project.

Duras shared Resnais’ belief that an indirect approach was the only appropriate and ethical strategy in the case of representing the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, writing that it is “[i]mpossible to talk about Hiroshima. All one can do is talk about the impossibility of talking about Hiroshima.”<sup>32</sup> Within this film, Duras and Resnais imply that the traumatic events are not only absent from representation, but remain beyond the

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<sup>31</sup> Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, trans. Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 9.

<sup>32</sup> Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, 9. All references to the film’s text are from Duras’ published screenplay, which was translated into English by Richard Seaver and published in 1961, two years after the film’s release. This translation differs slightly from the film’s English subtitles, but the meaning is essentially the same.

realms of language and representation.<sup>33</sup> *Hiroshima mon amour* is an important film that challenges the reliability of historical narratives as well as subjective remembrance.

Some may argue that *Hiroshima mon amour* speaks only to personal memory. But Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone assert in *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts* that “memory is not only individual but cultural: memory, though we may experience it as private and internal, draws on countless scraps and bits of knowledge and information from the surrounding culture, and is inserted into larger cultural narratives.”<sup>34</sup> *Hiroshima mon amour*’s project is collective.

The background for *Undoing History*’s home page is an edited clip from the opening of *Hiroshima mon amour* that repeatedly loops unless the page is refreshed—then it begins again. The lovers’ scenes have been removed, as has the sound. The remaining sequences shift between artifacts displayed at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and its visitors; footage of survivors in the aftermath of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki; protests and souvenir shops in Hiroshima; the Cenotaph in Hiroshima’s Peace Memorial Park, its message, and visitors; the Children’s Peace Memorial, which is dedicated to Sadako Sasaki; a shot of a human shadow left imprinted on the steps of the Sumitomo Bank, only 250 meters from the bomb’s hypocenter; and a bus tour of Hiroshima that ends with glimpses from inside the Atomic Bomb Dome. Elements of this background are foundational to my thesis. These images not only display some of the human cost of nuclear warfare, but also point to what we are left with to make sense out of a tragedy that has not ended. The footage, artifacts, memorials, commemorations,

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<sup>33</sup> Sarah French, "From History to Memory: Alain Resnais' and Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*," *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*. 3 (2008): 3.

<sup>34</sup> Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 5.

souvenirs, and tourism shown in this clip are not that different from those I experienced in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during American University's Peace Tour.

We visited those same sites, among many others. We spoke with and took pictures of *hibakusha*. We visited and purchased items from souvenir shops and museums. I stood on the Aioi Bridge—the Enola Gay's target. I saw with my own eyes human shadows permanently etched into concrete.

I think that Duras and Resnais were correct in their assessment of these traumatic events, which is one of the reasons why I wanted to approach materials from multiple angles and present them in a non-linear format. If it is my job as a public historian to convey history to the general public in a meaningful way, then I needed to find a way to guide people through selected historical materials without defining the events in an absolute manner.

In "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," William G. Thomas III explains that digital history scholarship encourages the general public to investigate and form interpretive associations of their own, rather than relying on professional historians to do the work for them. He explains that enabling people to interpret evidence for themselves might be the defining characteristic of the genre.

Readers are not presented with an exhibit, or an article with appendices, or any other analog form simply reprocessed into the Web format. (For a glossary of the technical terms that appear in boldface, see appendix.) Instead, they are presented with a suite of interpretive elements, ways to gain leverage on the problem under investigation.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Daniel J. Cohen and others, "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," *The Journal of American History* 95, no. 2 (2008).

The goal of digital history might be to build environments that allow readers an “experience of total immersion and the curiosity to build connections.”<sup>36</sup>

*Undoing History* has been designed to help visitors engage in new ways with materials related to atomic bomb history. A primary objective of the site is to encourage people to recognize that their cultural identity and worldview is strongly influenced by the (invisible power of the) material culture with which they engage. Thomas claimed that the goal of digital history might be to build environments that allow readers an experience of total immersion and the curiosity to build new connections. *Undoing History* aims to achieve these goals.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

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## CHAPTER 1: SHAPING MEMORIES

### Hiroshima Becomes a City of Peace

Following the atomic bombings, absolute censorship suppressed photographic evidence of human suffering within Japan and around the world during the American military Occupation of Japan (1945-1952) (and much longer for classified materials). During the first seven years following the bombing, the U.S. government unconditionally controlled what Japan and the rest of world (including America) would come to know about the events. U.S. censorship in postwar Japan applied to all aspects of cultural production, including films, children's books, and music.<sup>37</sup> Censorship not only curtailed Japanese publications, but also restricted incoming information as well. For example, John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, which was published worldwide in 1946, the U.S. government did not permit its translation into Japanese and distribution in Japan until 1949.<sup>38</sup> This was the same year that travel restrictions began to be lifted for Japanese people, for no travel out of the country, with few exceptions, was permitted between the beginning of the Occupation in 1945 and 1949.<sup>39</sup> To complicate matters further, the strict censorship

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<sup>37</sup> Occupation censorship forbade criticism of the United States as well as other Allied nations. Even the mention of censorship itself was forbidden. Robert Karl Manoff, "The Media: Nuclear Secrecy vs. Democracy," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 40, no. 1 (1984): 28. All publishable materials fell under strict censorship, including films, children's books, and musical recordings. This meant that "Occupation censorship was even more exasperating than Japanese military censorship had been because it insisted that all traces of censorship be concealed." David M. Rosenfeld, *Dawn to the West* (New York: Henry Holt, 1984), 967, quoting from Donald Keene in *Unhappy Soldier: Hino Ashihei and Japanese World War II Literature*, 86.

<sup>38</sup> Steve Rothman, "The Publication of "Hiroshima" in *The New Yorker*," (accessed April 19, 2015).

<sup>39</sup> William P. Woodard, *The Allied Occupation of Japan 1945-1952 and Japanese Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 231.

measures curtailed public discussion and forbade even the mention of censorship. In other words, no one but Allied officials knew that censorship was in force.

Censorship within the Hiroshima and Nagasaki communities was not always obvious, nor was it solely administered by the American government. Peace Preservation Laws had been in effect throughout Japan since 1925. Laws were enacted by the Japanese government to censor and control political dissent. More subtle forms of social censoring occurred within Japanese society as well. To be a *hibakusha* was (and still is) a source of shame to many and a secret to be closely held. Even generations later, grandchildren have feared telling others of their grandparents' experience. Many Japanese will not marry someone who may have been affected by atomic radiation. *Hibakusha* felt ashamed for surviving when so many others perished. Those who witnessed the devastation were traumatized by their experience. Many felt defiled by keloid scars and/or radiation contamination. Family and friends hushed open discussion. Poets and artists were discouraged from translating their experiences into works.<sup>40</sup> Stories and testimonies were not published or widely shared for years. Little value was placed on developing a collective narrative or in publically remembering the bombings.

Two additional dictates commenced immediately upon the U.S. Occupation to break down, then crucially reshape, Japanese culture and thought. First, the state religion of Shinto was dismantled through three edicts: The Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shinto (1945), The Imperial Rescript Renouncing Divinity (1946), and the postwar Constitution. Emperor Hirohito, who Americans believed to be a living deity by his subjects, was forced to proclaim that he was not a living god in an attempt to shatter the

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<sup>40</sup> *Tanka* poet Shione Shoda was threatened with the death penalty if she published her collection of poems. Kyo Maclear, *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art of Witness* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 42.

primary Japanese cultural belief system. And second, Japanese history was rewritten by the victors and academics were purged from institutions.<sup>41</sup> As Sebastian Conrad explained in his essay, “Entangled Memories: Versions of the Past in Germany and Japan, 1945-2001,”

While the bulk of American measures was prohibitive in character, there were instances of prescription as well. In Japan, an American version of the Pacific War was serialized in all national newspapers in autumn 1945. It used ‘unimpeachable sources’ to present the ‘truth’ about the recent past ‘until the story of Japanese war guilt has been fully bared in all its details’. In addition, a radio documentary with the title ‘This is the truth!’ ( *shinsô wa kô da* ) was broadcast between December 1945 and February 1946, to inculcate the American version of the Japanese past into the minds of the Japanese people.<sup>42</sup>

The dire effects of the atomic bombs reached further than the physical destruction of buildings and families, or the bodily injury and disease from nuclear contamination. Following Japan’s quite literal baptism by fire, the Japanese people were forcibly converted to America’s unique brand of capitalism and democracy.

Throughout the year following the bombings, American journalists, under the guiding hand of censors, increasingly portrayed Hiroshima and Nagasaki as “symbols of the birth of a new Japan dedicated to rehabilitation, peace, progress, and reconciliation.”<sup>43</sup> The underlying message was that Japanese society was progressing steadily under America’s cultivating touch, moving towards a new pacifist outlook that ensured a peaceful future.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Hiroshima rapidly became the focus of anti-war and anti-

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<sup>41</sup> Sebastian Conrad, "What Time Is Japan? Problems of Comparative (Intercultural) Historiography," *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1999): 70.

<sup>42</sup> Sebastian Conrad, "Entangled Memories: Versions of the Past in Germany and Japan, 1945-2001," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 1 (2003): 89.

<sup>43</sup> Michael J. Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of 'Hiroshima'," *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (1974): 31.

<sup>44</sup> Japan’s “peaceful future” was instilled through U.S. mandates that forced all military forces to disband. Japan’s postwar Constitution, whose writing was directed by General Douglas MacArthur states:  
Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling

nuclear campaigns and a place of pilgrimage for Japanese and international peace activists.

Interestingly, even though the Allied Occupation banned public discussion of the atom-bombings, historical records show that Occupation authorities supported the creation of peace memorials in the bombed cities.<sup>45</sup> As Lisa Yoneyama explained,

Occupation authorities and U.S. officials determined that their interests would be furthered by connecting the atomic bomb with the idea of peace and, more important, displaying that linkage to the world. . . Remembering a link between the bomb and peace fostered the conviction that without the use of the atomic weapon, peace in the Pacific could not have been achieved in a timely manner. . . At the same time, the identification of peace with the bomb also filled an important gap in the doctrine of U.S. nuclear deterrence. It provided a narrative to rationalize the buildup of offensive military force, which could then be argued, would effectively contribute to peace and progress.<sup>46</sup>

At the end of the Occupation in 1952, when images and stories of the human cost of nuclear warfare could finally be published for the world to see, tourism flourished. Memorials for the bomb victims were raised during the city's initial reconstruction efforts. As early as 1949, tourists were drawn to the Atom Bomb Dome and Peace Memorial Park.<sup>47</sup> Additional memorials soon followed: the Memorial Cenotaph for A-Bomb Victims in 1952, Peace Memorial Hall and Atomic Bomb Memorial Exhibition Hall in 1955, and the Children's Atomic Bomb Monument in 1958.<sup>48</sup>

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international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

Article 9, The Constitution of Japan (1947).

<sup>45</sup> Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, 20. Yonehama cites Hiroshima-shi, *Hiroshima shinshi:toshi bunkahen*, 19-57, esp. 39-40, 56.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Peter Siegenthaler, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japanese Guidebooks," *Annals of Tourism Research* 29, no. 4 (2002): 112.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

Beginning in 1946, Hiroshima and Nagasaki began sponsoring annual memorial ceremonies.<sup>49</sup> The first Peace Festival in 1947 presented the first Peace Declaration that has been delivered by Hiroshima mayors ever since. Each declaration has reflected historical changes and social conditions of the times, and has conveyed Hiroshima's call for nuclear disarmament and the realization of world peace.<sup>50</sup>

The three-day festival started on August 5th, 1947. On August 6th, a ceremony was held in the area that was to eventually become the Peace Memorial Park. The first Peace Declaration was read by Mayor Shinzo Hamai.<sup>51</sup> Calls to abolish nuclear weapons began to be included in the Peace Declaration in 1954 following the Bikini Atoll incident in which 23 Japanese fishermen aboard the *Lucky Dragon No. 5* were sickened or killed by the fallout from a miscalculated American hydrogen bomb test. International protesters joined the ceremonies, which quickly became increasingly political in nature.<sup>52</sup>

The following year, the "ban-the-bomb" movement gained momentum with the first World Conference Against A- and H- Bombs in Hiroshima. And in 1958, the Peace Declaration called for the establishment of an international agreement that would completely ban the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>50</sup> Junji Akechi, "Peace Declarations for A-bomb Anniversaries Reflect the Times," *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, July 24, 2010, [http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20100723155429435\\_en](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20100723155429435_en) (accessed March 29, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> "This horrible weapon brought about a "Revolution of Thought," which has convinced us of the necessity and the value of lasting peace. That is to say, because of this atomic bomb, the people of the world have become aware that a global war in which atomic energy would be used would lead to the end of our civilization and extinction of mankind. This revolution in thinking ought to be the basis for an absolute peace, and imply the birth of new life and a new world... What we have to do at this moment is to strive with all our might towards peace, becoming forerunners of a new civilization. Let us join to sweep away from this earth the horror of war, and to build a true peace... Here, under this peace tower, we thus make a declaration of peace." "About the Peace Declaration," The City of Hiroshima. <http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/contents/1318310843806/index.html> (accessed January 15, 2016 2016).

<sup>52</sup> Siegenthaler, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japanese Guidebooks," 114.

For over 50 years, each Peace Declaration has called for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Because the number of people who are able to speak about their experiences of the bombing continues to decrease (due to aging and dying), Mayor Kazumi Matsui decided in 2011 to include *hibakusha* testimonies in the Peace Declaration. Hiroshima continues to plead for the removal of nuclear weapons from the world and the establishment of lasting world peace.

The popularity of Hiroshima as a tourist site has steadily grown over the years. According to Peter Siegenthaler's study of Japanese guidebooks, by 1965, an estimated 2 million Japanese and 70,000 foreign tourists visited Hiroshima each year. That total increased to 8.6 million in 1991-1992, and by 1996, that number had increased to nearly 9.5 million.<sup>53</sup>

Many people come to visit Hiroshima after reading John Hersey's "Hiroshima," which is still considered the definitive account of the bomb, even after almost 70 years. "Hiroshima" has remained in print continuously since its initial publication and has been required reading for generations of American high school and college students.<sup>54</sup>

CNN reported that almost seventy years after the U.S. military dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, it remains one of the most popular tourist attractions in Japan. About 363,000 foreign tourists visited Hiroshima City during 2012, with Americans comprising the largest number, followed by Australians and Chinese.<sup>55</sup> The concept of "peace" is Hiroshima's biggest attraction for tourists from around the globe.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 1115.

<sup>54</sup> Nancy L. Huse, *The Survival Tales of John Hersey* (Troy: Whitston, 1983), 35-36.; Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of 'Hiroshima'," 24-25.

<sup>55</sup> Richard S. Ehrlich, "Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Attraction More Popular than Ever," *CNN*, June 1, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/01/travel/hiroshima-peace-museum/> (accessed March 30, 2015). A brief overview of each year's Peace Declaration message can be found at <http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/contents/1318311255060/index.html>. An archive with copies of

The rest of this chapter examines “Hiroshima” and the first internationally published eyewitness testimony that ineluctably inspired Hersey’s work. One of the primary concerns of this section is to understand military influences on one of the most important and influential pieces of atomic bomb literature ever written.

### Hersey’s “Hiroshima”

On August 31, 1946, *The New Yorker* dedicated its entire issue to eyewitness accounts of the Hiroshima bombing one year earlier.<sup>56</sup> John Hersey, a Pulitzer Prize-winning American writer and journalist, spent several weeks in Japan interviewing survivors. From the start, his intention was to convey his findings through personal accounts written in an objective manner. He did not want to narrate; rather he wanted the stories to speak for themselves.<sup>57</sup> “Hiroshima” was originally written to be published in four installments, but after reading the draft, the editors decided to devote the entire issue to Hersey’s text.<sup>58</sup>

“Hiroshima” revolves around the experiences of six survivors over the course of the first year following the atomic bombing. The only non-Japanese individual of the sextet, a Jesuit priest (Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge), was German. The five Japanese

every Peace Declaration can be found at <http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/genre/1001000004101/index.html> and <http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/contents/1425124386160/index.html>.

<sup>56</sup> The entire issue of *The New Yorker*, including original advertisements, can be accessed online: John Hersey, “Hiroshima,” *The New Yorker*, August 31, 1946. <http://archives.newyorker.com/?i=1946-08-31#folio=CV1> (accessed February 7, 2013).; Portions of this sections were included in

<sup>57</sup> Years later in an interview, Hersey said, “The flat style was deliberate, and I still think I was right to adopt it. A high literary manner, or a show of passion, would have brought me into the story as a mediator; I wanted to avoid such mediation, so the reader’s experience would be as direct as possible.” Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 208.; Hersey’s claim to provide an account of the bombing without mediation suggests that historical events exist outside representation.

<sup>58</sup> A 36-member panel from New York University’s journalism department judged “Hiroshima” to be the finest piece of journalism of the 20th century. Felicity Barringer, “Journalism’s Greatest Hits,” *The New York Times*, March 1, 1999. [http://www.nyu.edu/classes/stephens/Top 100 N Y Times page.htm](http://www.nyu.edu/classes/stephens/Top%20100%20NY%20Times%20page.htm) (accessed March 20, 2013).

protagonists consisted of a young Red Cross hospital surgeon (Dr. Terufumi Sasaki), a doctor with a private practice (Dr. Masakazu Fujii), a female clerk (Toshiko Sasaki), a Methodist clergyman (Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto), and a tailor's widow (Mrs. Hatsuyo Nakamura).

Hersey carefully selected the eyewitness accounts that he felt would best affect his target American audience. It is no accident that the chosen six survivors enjoyed higher economic status and were better educated than many other Hiroshima residents. Following many years of American anti-Japanese propaganda, in which cartoons, posters, and advertisements presented Japanese men as sinister, bloodthirsty villains (even going so far as to portray Japanese soldiers as worms, snakes, and rats), Hersey assigned himself the crucial task of humanizing the victims by developing characters with which the average American could identify. For example, Reverend Tanimoto, who “had studied theology at Emory College, in Atlanta, Georgia,” speaks “excellent English,” and dresses “in American clothes.”<sup>59</sup> Moreover, a white Jesuit priest and an American-educated Methodist minister would appeal to a predominantly white middle-class Christian readership. Hersey's selection of two overtly Christian characters (one Catholic, one Protestant) out of six may seem excessive to anyone unaware that Hersey's own parents had been Protestant missionaries for the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in China.<sup>60</sup>

“Hiroshima” was structurally built around two Christian eyewitness accounts that were readily available to Hersey in 1946. The primary account that Hersey relied upon was written in September 1945 by a German Jesuit priest, Johannes Siemes, who lived

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<sup>59</sup> John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1985 [1946]), 3-4.

<sup>60</sup> James Guimond, *American Photography and the American Dream* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 30.



several miles from the epicenter when the atomic bomb exploded in Hiroshima.<sup>61</sup> Siemes' account was approved and legitimized by the U.S. military shortly thereafter. Siemes' story appeared in multiple military reports, propaganda films, and news stories that were written by military approved sources. Considering the military's prejudiced opinions of the Japanese at this critical juncture in history, it is worth exploring possible reasons why the military invested in Siemes' account in the next chapter.

The second eyewitness account that Hersey incorporated into his story was written by Methodist minister Kiyoshi Tanimoto, "Hiroshima"'s main protagonist. Tanimoto was an acquaintance of the Jesuit priests and also played a role in Siemes' story. When Hersey arrived in Japan to research his story, he went to the Jesuit mission and interviewed Wilhelm Kleinsorge, who, in turn, suggested that Hersey interview Tanimoto. Unfortunately, Tanimoto was not home when Hersey came to call, so Hersey left a written message that he would return the next day. But Tanimoto had another appointment scheduled the next day. Feeling bad for inconveniencing Hersey, he wrote a nine-page account of his experience by hand, which Hersey included in his book.<sup>62</sup>

Numerous authors and historians have written about Hersey and "Hiroshima." Many have reiterated Hersey's claim that his major influence was *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Thornton Wilder.

"The book is about five people who were killed when a rope suspension bridge over a canyon in Peru gave way, and how they had happened to find their way to that moment of fate together. That seemed to me to be a possible way of dealing with this very complex story of Hiroshima; to take a number of people—half a

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<sup>61</sup> Siemes was part of the same Jesuit mission as Wilhelm Kleinsorge, who Hersey wrote about.

<sup>62</sup> Information was gathered from a private discussion with Koko Tanimoto Kondo in August 2015; Yuka Hayashi, "Hiroshima: 70 Years After the Atomic Bomb," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/hiroshima-70-years-after-the-atomic-bomb-1438725242> (accessed October 15, 2015).

dozen, as it turned out in the end—whose paths crossed each other and came to this moment of shared disaster.”<sup>63</sup>

Some authors, such as Michael Yavenditti, acknowledge that Siemes’ account was published before Hersey’s “Hiroshima,” although, his discussion stops with this revelation.<sup>64</sup> And Averill Liebow, a member of the Joint Commission for the Investigation of the Effects of the Atomic Bomb in Japan and author of *Encounter with Disaster: A Medical Diary of Hiroshima, 1945*, who translated Siemes’ account from German to English, noted in his diary that Siemes’ account “became a major source of material for John Hersey’s masterful *Hiroshima* years later.”<sup>65</sup> But no one seems to have analyzed Siemes’ eyewitness account or evaluated its influence on Hersey’s masterpiece. What might such an analysis mean for those who view “Hiroshima” as a piece of witness literature and how have American memories of the nuclear attacks been swayed?

Even today, people view “Hiroshima” as an unbiased secular account of how the residents of Hiroshima experienced the atomic bombs.<sup>66</sup> Hersey was an experienced and well-known war correspondent during the 1940s, having numerous articles published by *Time*, *Life*, and the *New Yorker*. He also published several successful books based on his war experiences and field interviews during WWII: *Men on Bataan* (1942), *Into the*

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<sup>63</sup> Jonathan Dee, "John Hersey, The Art of Fiction No. 92," *The Paris Review*, Summer-Fall 1986. <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2756/the-art-of-fiction-no-92-john-hersey> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>64</sup> Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of 'Hiroshima'," 33.

<sup>65</sup> Averill A. Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster: A Medical Diary of Hiroshima, 1945* (New York: Norton, 1971), 122.; Hersey’s book was written and published less than a year after Siemes’ account.

<sup>66</sup> “In a calm, matter-of-fact tone, free of embellishment, Hersey described the terrible scenes that unfolded in Hiroshima. He allowed the facts to speak for themselves.” Eric Schlosser, "Why Hiroshima Now Matters More than Ever," *The Telegraph*, August 2 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/11773305/Eric-Schlosser-why-Hiroshima-now-matters-more-than-ever.html> (accessed November 15, 2015).

*Valley* (1943), and his Pulitzer Prize winning *A Bell for Adano* (1944). No one (at the time) questioned his sources or interviewing skills.<sup>67</sup>

Many years after “Hiroshima” was published, Hersey acknowledged that “these six people were by no means representative of a cross section of Hiroshima’s population.”<sup>68</sup> He fictionalized aspects of character testimony to tell a story that he hoped would enlighten people to the human cost of using atomic bombs. But “Hiroshima” is not considered historical fiction; it is considered a nonfictional rendering of eyewitness testimony gathered through professional interviews and written by a Pulitzer Prize winning war correspondent and author.

“Hiroshima” was written mere weeks after the U.S. military began nuclear testing in Bikini Atoll.<sup>69</sup> Although “Hiroshima” was, and still is, touted for its truthfulness, the content and mechanics of the story act to contain “what really happened” by appealing to mainstream American sensibilities. Even so, “Hiroshima” became particularly important for raising American awareness of the after-effects of the bomb, especially in light of abounding censorship. Michael Yavendetti wrote:

More vividly than all previous publications combined, “Hiroshima” suggested for Americans what a surprise atomic attack could do to an American city and its inhabitants. . . . The numerous post-bombing photographs and newsreels of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made them look like any other war devastated city. Americans could comprehend that one bomb had caused the damage, but the

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<sup>67</sup> All six of his characters were real people, who later were interviewed by numerous other media over the years after “Hiroshima” was first published. Hersey has been accused of being a “compulsive plagiarist.” He publicly apologized for including paragraphs from the James Agee biography by Laurence Bergreen in his own *New Yorker* essay about Agee. William H. Honan, “Hersey Apologizes to a Writer Over an Article on Agee,” *The New York Times*, July 22, 1988, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/07/22/nyregion/hersey-apologizes-to-a-writer-over-an-article-on-agee.html> (accessed October 15, 2015). Half of his book, *Men on Bataan* came from work filed for *Time* magazine by two of Hersey’s fellow war correspondents Melville and Annalee Jacoby. Anne Fadiman, *Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 107-109.

<sup>68</sup> Dee, “John Hersey, The Art of Fiction No. 92.”

<sup>69</sup> Operation Crossroads, Test Able was detonated on July 1, 1946 and Test Baker was detonated on July 23, 1946. “Gallery of U.S. Nuclear Tests,” Nuclear Weapon Archive. <http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Usa/Tests/> (accessed November 1, 2015).

media did not fully demonstrate that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were qualitatively different from other kinds of wartime catastrophes.<sup>70</sup>

Yavendetti suggests that people did not understand how people were affected by nuclear radiation until they read Hersey's work. "Hiroshima" was published several years before America allowed photographic images to be published showing any evidence of physical suffering, making it the primary means for the American public to envision Hiroshima's horrors.

Publishing "Hiroshima" in *The New Yorker* elicited a corresponding response from Truman's Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson. "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb" was published in *Harper's Magazine* in February 1947 as a likely rebuttal to mitigate any sympathies for the Japanese victims the American public had generated since the publication of "Hiroshima."<sup>71</sup> Whereas Hersey infused human qualities in the narratives of the victims, our former enemies, Stimson attempted to humanize the decision-makers behind the bomb in order to shift sympathetic attention back to American leaders. His assertions for the decision to drop the bomb remain in the collective narrative even today: "In order to end the war in the shortest possible time and to avoid the enormous losses of human life which otherwise confronted us," no other decision could ethically be made.<sup>72</sup>

Hersey mentioned several symptoms of "radiation sickness" (nausea, headache, diarrhea, malaise, and fever) and explained that the "drop in the number of white blood corpuscles reduced the patient's capacity to resist infection."<sup>73</sup> Yet, in the same paragraph, he suggested that symptoms were temporary: "Some victims recovered in a

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<sup>70</sup> Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience: The Reception of 'Hiroshima'," 37, 46-47.

<sup>71</sup> Rothman, "The Publication of "Hiroshima" in *The New Yorker*".

<sup>72</sup> Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Harpers Magazine* (February 1947): 106.

<sup>73</sup> Hersey, "Hiroshima."

week; with others the disease dragged on for months.”<sup>74</sup> Neither article directly engaged with what made the atom bomb unique (radiation) or what it meant for the U.S.

government to knowingly use such a weapon on large civilian populations.

The rest of the chapter examines official reactions to the first international news report of an “atomic plague” in Hiroshima and a plausible response by U.S. officials to try to contain that information.

#### America’s First Official Witness

Among the earliest officially approved eyewitness testimonies of the atomic bombings is the testimony of a German Jesuit priest, Johannes Siemes, who lived several miles from the atomic bomb’s epicenter in Hiroshima on that fateful August day. Siemes was not hurt from the blast, except for suffering a few glass splinters; however, his testimony included observations of Hiroshima’s horrors during a rescue mission into the heart of the destruction several hours after the attack.<sup>75</sup> Along with Siemes, several of his fellow Jesuit priests were quickly hailed as heroes and survivors of the atomic attack in international newspapers. Their stories appeared not only in newspapers, but in magazine and journal articles, and several significant military reports and propaganda films.

Furthermore, these accounts were incorporated into two international bestsellers written by Pulitzer Prize winning authors: *Dawn over Zero* by William L. Laurence and

*Hiroshima* by John Hersey, both of whom enjoyed unprecedented access to classified military materials.<sup>76</sup> Even today, these narratives influence American perceptions of the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Johannes Siemes, "Hiroshima's Destruction is Described," *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, September 18, 1945, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=qUUyAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=-OQFAAAAIBAJ&pg=1055%2C1346218> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>76</sup> I visited the National Archives in College Park, Maryland following the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings during the summer of 2015 in order to research eyewitness testimonies, only to find that the solitary English-language video account was a recording of Father Siemes. Further research helped me

atomic bombings. A recently published monograph that was written for a military audience cites Hersey's book, with specific mention of the German Jesuit narratives, as critical reading for understanding the Japanese experience of the atomic bombs.<sup>77</sup>

Abundant historical resources and interpretations of *hibakusha* stories exist.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, decades of scholarship has addressed issues of censorship, atomic cover-ups, and nuclear propaganda, but these works seem to have overlooked how American officials used/mis-used survivor testimony to further their agendas. In particular, Siemes' account of what happened in Hiroshima provided a desired counterbalance to the first internationally published eyewitness account of the bomb's lingering radiation, which the American government needed to contain: Wilfred Burchett's damaging account of the "atomic plague" that continued to kill the residents of Hiroshima weeks after the United States detonated the atomic bomb over their city. My research shows how Siemes' testimony embodied the atomic bomb narrative that American officials supported and how the U.S. military propagated selected portions of his testimony for their own ends. Surprisingly, the same research shows that critics of the bomb published different

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to locate his testimony in a wide range of media, all of which were published within a little over a year following the atomic bombings. At first, I just found it odd that an unscathed white English-speaking Christian male authority figure (Siemes was not only a priest, but a professor of modern philosophy at the only Catholic university in Japan) had become a key eyewitness to Hiroshima's horrors. But the more I searched for answers, the more the situation appeared to have been orchestrated. Most alarming is that Siemes' testimony (in various truncated forms) continues to be included in high school and college history textbooks. See Priscilla Roberts, "Father Johannes Siemes Recalls The Atomic Attack on Hiroshima of August 6, 1945," in *Voices of World War II : Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012); Sylvia Engdahl, "Tending the Injured in the Aftermath of the Atomic Bombing," in *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2011); George F. Jewsbury, "An Eyewitness to Hiroshima," in *Selections from Longman World History: Primary Sources and Case Studies* (New York: Longman, 2003).

<sup>77</sup> W. Maria Bochat, Command Army, and General Staff Coll Fort Leavenworth Kansas School Of Advanced Military Studies, *Atomic Bomb: Memory and its Power on Japanese Pacifism* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2008), 38-39.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Robert Jay Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (New York: Random House, 1968); Gaynor Sekimori and Naomi Shono, *Hibakusha: Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1986); Kyoko Iriye Selden and Mark Selden, *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989).

portions of the same testimony in what appears to be an attempt to educate the general public about the devastating effects of nuclear warfare.

Soon after occupation forces arrived in Japan, a team of U.S. military medical scientists began investigating the human effects of the atomic bomb. Colonel Stafford Warren, who led the Manhattan Project's team, obtained a copy of Siemes' testimony. Portions of this account repeatedly appeared in military and civilian media over the course of the following year. Publications repeated the earliest death toll statistics and omitted critical discussion about the effects of radiation, which facilitated the military's containment strategy. However, near the inauguration of atomic testing in Bikini Atoll, two periodicals that were dedicated to educating the public about nuclear dangers published Siemes' complete testimony, including observations about the effects of radiation and the morality of atomic warfare.

#### A Fortunate Rebuttal to Wilfred Burchett's "Atomic Plague"

Soon after Allied forces arrived in Japan following Emperor Hirohito's surrender, strict censorship measures were enacted and lasted throughout the occupation (1945-1952).<sup>79</sup> Two primary goals drove American censorship mandates. First, officials wanted a peaceful occupation, so any discourse that might stimulate discord was strictly forbidden. Occupation censorship prohibited criticism of the United States or other Allied nations. And second, officials feared that if the truth about radiation effects came to light, the atomic bomb might be categorized with internationally banned inhumane forms of

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<sup>79</sup> Imagine how the events of 9/11 would be understood today if no one had been allowed to discuss or publish information about the event for seven years.

warfare, such as chemical, gas, and biological weapons.<sup>80</sup> Such a finding would have limited America's ability to further test the weapon, as well as have led to criticism of those who had designed, built, and authorized the use of the atomic bomb against Japan in the first place.<sup>81</sup> Unfortunately for those in charge, Wilfred Burchett, an Australian journalist, published an article about an "atomic plague" before MacArthur implemented the censorship Press Code in Japan on September 19, 1945.

Burchett's Morse code dispatch, which was printed in London's *Daily Express* newspaper on September 5, 1945, under the title "The Atomic Plague," was the first international report to describe the effects of radiation and nuclear fallout.<sup>82</sup> He described people who suffered absolutely no injuries, but later died due to the effects of the bomb: "They lost appetite. Their hair fell out. Bluish spots appeared on their bodies. And the bleeding began from the ears, nose and mouth." Doctors and scientists who came into the city to help victims suffered from dizziness and headaches and "minor insect bites developed into great swellings which would not heal. Their health steadily deteriorated."

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<sup>80</sup> According to Melinda F. Podgor, "Radiologists were fully aware of the dangers of radiation exposure as early as 1924. Moreover, the government was already conscious of radiation-induced harm to its Manhattan Project researchers by July of 1945, the same month it tested the first atomic bomb." Melinda F. Podgor, "The Inability of World War II Atomic Veterans to Obtain Disability Benefits: Time Is Running Out on Our Chance to Fix the System," *Elderlaw Journal* 13, no. 2 (2006): 526-527.; John Dower also argued that the American government censored discussion of the atomic bombs because they feared that the Japanese would campaign against the bombs in retaliation for upcoming war crimes trials. Censorship began to be lifted in 1948 right around the time that the war crime trials ended. John W. Dower, "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 116-117, 135.

<sup>81</sup> Sean L. Malloy, "'A Very Pleasant Way to Die': Radiation Effects and the Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb against Japan," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 3 (2012): 518.

<sup>82</sup> A *Nisei* (second generation Japanese American) was the first outside journalist to report from Hiroshima after the blast. On August 22, Leslie Nakashima, who was a foreign correspondent with the United Press stationed in Tokyo, entered Hiroshima to look for his mother. His news story, "1st INSIDE STORY OF HIROSHIMA Reporter Tells How City Vanished in Atom Blast," appeared in the *Chicago Daily Press* on August 30. The same story appeared the next day in *The New York Times* under the heading, "Newsman finds all of Hiroshima gone after atom blow." Nakashima described the physical destruction and that many people were dying from the burns. He successfully located his mother unharmed, who was two miles away from the blast when it occurred.



Burchett stated that Japanese doctors reported that illness and death were caused by “radio-activity released by the atomic bomb’s explosion of the uranium atom.”<sup>83</sup>

Burchett later explained that back in Tokyo “the American nuclear big shots were furious.”<sup>84</sup> The *Daily Express* headlined the story and freely released it to international presses. Burchett arrived back in Tokyo on September 7 to find that senior U.S. officials had called a press conference specifically to refute his article.<sup>85</sup> He reached the press conference in time to hear and confront Brigadier General Thomas Farrell’s claims that no ‘residual radiation’ existed.<sup>86</sup> The military then accused Burchett of falling victim to Japanese propaganda.

U.S. censors suppressed a supporting story submitted by George Weller of the *Chicago Daily News* and, in line with Farrell’s accusation, claimed that Burchett was influenced by Japanese propaganda. Under General MacArthur’s orders, Burchett was barred from entering Japan (the order was later rescinded) and his camera with photos of Hiroshima mysteriously vanished while he was in the hospital.<sup>87</sup> Manhattan Engineer District (MED) officials publicly attacked Burchett’s claim of continuing radiation illness and residual radiation several times.<sup>88</sup> American officials continued to suppress the truth

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<sup>83</sup> Japanese doctors and scientists were not allowed to publish any of their *hibakusha*-related research until February 1952, two months before the occupation ended. Dower, “The Bombed,” in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, 127.

<sup>84</sup> Wilfred G. Burchett, *Shadows of Hiroshima* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 1983), 22.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Amy and David Goodman, “The Hiroshima Cover-Up,” *The Baltimore Sun*, 5 August 2005, <http://www.commondreams.org/views/05/0805-20.htm> (accessed March 10, 2013); Burchett, *Shadows of Hiroshima*. At the hospital, Burchett was told that his low white cell count was due to an infection from a knee injury. He found out years later that if he did have an infection, his white cell count should have increased.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Tanter, “Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War: Wilfred Burchett and Hiroshima,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (August 11, 2005). <http://japanfocus.org/-Richard-Tanter/2066/article.html> (accessed November 15, 2015).; The Manhattan Engineer District is the more formal title of the Manhattan Project.

by attacking claims of radiation illness and by denying authority to Japanese-sourced accounts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>89</sup>

Following Burchett's pronouncement, American officials needed a witness who would help them employ damage control to meet their objectives. A reputable witness would need to corroborate the official story (that the bomb was the most powerful bomb ever made, no effects from lingering radiation existed, the bomb wiped out military facilities, and the Japanese were incapable of running a civilized society without America's help). Miraculously, within two weeks of arriving in Japan to study the human effects of the bomb, a copy of Siemes' testimony was in the hands of members of the MED.

On September 27, 1945, Colonel Stafford Warren, who led a survey team from the MED to assess the effects of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, asked Averill Liebow, who was a member of the same team, to translate a German-language document into English.<sup>90</sup> This document turned out to be Siemes' original eyewitness report.<sup>91</sup> Liebow was a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and a

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.; Burchett discusses the U.S.'s premeditated cover-up policy that continues to shield the government from legal action by American troops and citizens exposed to fallout from the bombs and later nuclear tests. Burchett, *Shadows of Hiroshima*, 11-17.

<sup>90</sup> In September 1945, the U.S. Army, the Navy, and the Manhattan District sent teams to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to study the medical effects of the atomic bombs. These were headed by Col. Ashley W. Oughterson for the Army, Capt. Shields Warren for the Navy, and Col. Stafford L. Warren for the Manhattan District. On October 12, MacArthur ordered that these groups merge to form the Joint Commission for the Investigation of the Effects of the Atomic Bombs. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), which took over where the Manhattan Engineer District left off, funded the studies. Frank W. Putnam, "The Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Retrospect," (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, May 1998).

<sup>91</sup> Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 121-122.; Liebow returned to the United States in January 1946 and helped to draft the Joint Commission's 1,300-page report, which was completed on Sept. 6, 1946. Portions of Siemes' testimony are included. A.W. Oughterson, G.V. LeRoy, and Averill Liebow, *Medical Effects of Atomic Bombs: The Report of the Joint Commission for the Investigation of the Effects of the Atomic Bomb in Japan*, vol. 1 (United States: 1951), 69, 77.; The Joint Commission was rebranded as the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) in 1947, and was later succeeded by the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF), which continues today.;

professor of pathology at Yale's School of Medicine. He meticulously chronicled in shorthand his experiences in a diary that was published in 1965 by the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* under the title *Encounter with Disaster: A Medical Diary of Hiroshima, 1945*. He wrote:

Was asked to translate a remarkable document at the request of Col. Stafford Warren. This was an eye-witness account of the explosion and of the city and people in the days immediately following, written in German by a Father Siemes who had been a Jesuit priest living in the hills of Nagatstuka, some three miles from Hiroshima. It told in detail of the rescue of four of his brethren who had been injured in the city during the explosion. I read the story spellbound and horrified. By late afternoon most of the translating had been done. It was dictated to a remarkably skillful sergeant of General Farrell's Manhattan District Group who typed the translation directly as it was spoken.<sup>92</sup>

Liebow noted, "Father Siemes' account became a major source of material for John Hersey's masterful *Hiroshima*, and it was published in full in my impromptu translation, in the *Saturday Review of Literature* several years later."<sup>93</sup> Liebow seems to have been unaware that multiple versions of the same translation appeared in books, magazines, and journals over the next year.<sup>94</sup>

Liebow's nine-page translated document illustrated the bomb's devastation without excessively focusing on human suffering (like Burchett had done). At its core, the account was a Christian tale of heroism and mercy that relayed what Siemes had seen and thought as he and his Jesuit companions rescued four fellow priests from

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<sup>92</sup> Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 121.; Liebow did not explain in his diary how Colonel Warren had come to own a copy of Siemes' account; Note that one of Farrell's subordinates typed the account; John A. Siemes, "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki : Chapter 25 - Eyewitness Account," The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy. Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/mp25.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/mp25.asp) (accessed November 4, 2015).

<sup>93</sup> Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 122. Liebow's original diary entry was dated September 27 [1945], but clearly he (or someone else) added this note after Hersey first published his article in August 1946.; Liebow was mistaken about the publication date, which was May 11, 1946. John A. Siemes, "Hiroshima: Eye-witness," *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 11, 1946.

<sup>94</sup> This may be an oversight by Liebow's editors. The diary is not printed verbatim as events happened, which is clear from remarks added throughout the text as in the case explained in the previous email.

Hiroshima's ruins. Along with reporting the physical destruction of the city, his testament recounted dying and maimed soldiers, and suggested that the Japanese were incapable of taking care of themselves during a crisis without the aid of merciful Christians.

#### Siemes' Eyewitness Testimony: Major Points

Hiroshima housed two Jesuit missions associated with Sophia University in Tokyo. The first was in Natgatsuka on the outskirts of Hiroshima, which was about three miles from the bomb's epicenter. Father Siemes lived in the novitiate with other priests (eight of whom are named in his official report). Four additional priests lived in a building within Hiroshima that was located a little over a half mile (one kilometer) from the epicenter. Two of Hiroshima's priests were critically injured and needed to be rescued. The rescue team left Nagatsuka at 4 p.m., and by 7 p.m., arrived at Asano Park, where the injured priests (and hundreds of other Hiroshima residents) had taken refuge.<sup>95</sup>

Siemes' earliest report recounted his experience of the disaster in a United Press (UP) interview, "Hiroshima's Destruction is Described," that appeared on page two of the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* on September 18, 1945, nine days *before* Averill Liebow was asked to translate the Jesuit's eyewitness testimony.<sup>96</sup> The UP newspaper account differed significantly from the nine-page "official" account that was later reproduced in

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<sup>95</sup> The original garden was commissioned in 1620 by Asano Nagakira, the newly appointed ruler of the Aki province (as Hiroshima was then known). During the Meiji Period (1868-1912), it was the villa of Asano family. The Asano family donated the garden to Hiroshima Prefecture and was open to the public in 1940. Shukkeien Garden Brochure, <http://shukkeien.jp/pdf/EnglishBrochure.pdf> (accessed May 3, 2016). The park was devastated by the atomic attack, but refugees poured into the area due to its proximity to water. This site was a central focus in Hersey's "Hiroshima." Asano Park is now known as Shukkeien Garden.

<sup>96</sup> Siemes' interview most likely was published by many newspapers that had access to UP reports. I have not yet found any earlier news reports about Siemes.

military reports and films. Many of the facts that were first provided transformed as Siemes expanded and dramatized his account.<sup>97</sup>

Siemes' newspaper interview was around 500 words long, whereas his translated testimony exceeded 6,000 words. The core story still conveyed the priests' rescue mission into Asano Park, but the longer version disclosed that one priest (Kleinsorge) was left behind and retrieved the next day because he was too weak to travel. Many detailed observations, thoughts, and opinions were added to Siemes' account, some of which led the military to classify the account.

Many of the preliminary details seem unremarkable. Siemes saw a flash of light, then noticed that he was bleeding. All of the priests in the novitiate checked for damage to their building and themselves. Everyone appeared unharmed except for a few scrapes and cuts.

Ever-increasing numbers of people evacuated Hiroshima, and within a half hour, began passing the novitiate on their way. The priests tended the wounded as best they could, but quickly ran out of medical supplies. Siemes dispassionately explained that residents' houses collapsed and buried many people. People in the open suffered instantaneous burns and fire quickly consumed the entire district.

Two priests took several of the wounded to a temporary aid station at a nearby school. Siemes wrote:

There iodine is applied to the wounds but they are left uncleaned. Neither ointments nor other therapeutic agents are available. Those that have been brought in are laid on the floor and no one can give them any further care. What could one do when all means are lacking? Under those circumstances, it is almost useless to bring them in. Among the passersby, there are many who are uninjured. In a

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<sup>97</sup> Some variation may be attributed to the first account being written by a news reporter, while the next version is claimed to be an English translation of a German-language eyewitness account. Siemes spoke English and there is no mention in the original news article that his words were translated.

purposeless, insensate manner, distraught by the magnitude of the disaster most of them rush by and none conceives the thought of organizing help on his own initiative. They are concerned only with the welfare of their own families. *It became clear to us during these days that the Japanese displayed little initiative, preparedness, and organizational skill in preparation for catastrophes. They failed to carry out any rescue work when something could have been saved by a cooperative effort, and fatalistically let the catastrophe take its course. When we urged them to take part in the rescue work, they did everything willingly, but on their own initiative they did very little.*<sup>98</sup>

Clearly, Siemes had not yet comprehended the degree of trauma people suffered. He discerned that victims were “distraught by the magnitude of the disaster,” but then accused them of not being prepared or taking initiative to help others in the situation. This passage implies that the Japanese would not have performed any rescue work without the priests’ guidance. Siemes did not take into consideration that he and his fellow priests were positioned far enough from the blast to not only escape serious injury, but also the initial shock of the devastation. Unfortunately, the italicized portion of the text would eventually be used in news and military reports to further denigrate the Japanese.

Around four o’clock, Siemes was informed that fellow priests were critically injured and needed to be rescued. Eight priests headed into Hiroshima. The four that needed to be rescued were located in Asano Park—two were in very bad shape and were difficult to move due to their injuries. A Japanese Protestant minister, whom Siemes referred to as their “rescuing angel,” came by in a boat and offered to ferry them to the opposite shore. (The minister would later be identified as Kiyoshi Tanimoto, John Hersey’s main character in “Hiroshima.”) Kleinsorge was too weak to travel by foot, so they left him and returned for him the next day.

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<sup>98</sup> Emphasis added by me in order to later discuss highlighted text.

The final eight paragraphs of Siemes' testimony recounted and assessed the bombing experience as a whole. Some of the text reads as though it was written by a journalist or a scientific observer. For example, he listed a number of important people who died: "There died the Mayor, the President of the central Japan district, the Commander of the city, a Korean prince who had been stationed in Hiroshima in the capacity of an officer, and many other high ranking officers." Siemes discussed the numerous soldiers who were killed and implied that the military barracks were the intended target: "Especially hard hit were the soldiers. The Pioneer Regiment was almost entirely wiped out. The barracks were near the center of the explosion."

Two aspects of the final paragraphs are quite controversial and will be discussed later in this chapter. First, Siemes discussed the effects of radiation, but then discounted them. This part of the dialogue very well could have incited the military to classify his testimony. Second, he pondered the morality of the bomb and total war in his final paragraph.

Siemes' testimony was classified information at least through mid-year 1949 according to a bibliography of classified documents issued by the AEC.<sup>99</sup> However, the Library of Congress possesses a copy dated April 15, 1946. These facts raise questions about aspects of his testimony deemed worthy of a classified status, and how this classified narrative could be printed in so many publications during this time and retained publically at the Library of Congress. My research has not led to answers as to whether his story was leaked or why, but his commentary about the human effects of radiation caused by the bomb certainly would have led to the classified status.

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<sup>99</sup> *Bibliography of Classified Documents: Health Physics Education Training*, (United States Atomic Energy Commission, July 20, 1949), 30, <http://web.ornl.gov/info/reports/1949/3445605703959.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2015).

Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge, who was one of the four priests rescued from Asano Park, was hospitalized for *leucopenia* (abnormally low white blood cell count) when Siemes wrote his report. He wrote:

*We thought at first that this was the result of inhalation of the substance of the bomb. Later, a commission established the thesis that gamma rays had been given out at the time of the explosion, following which the internal organs had been injured in a manner resembling that consequent upon Roentgen irradiation. This produces a diminution in the numbers of the white corpuscles. . . The attending physician diagnosed it as leucopenia.*<sup>100</sup> There thus seems to be some truth in the statement that the radiation had some effect on the blood. I am of the opinion, however, that their generally undernourished and weakened condition was partly responsible for these findings. It was noised about that the ruins of the city emitted deadly rays and that workers who went there to aid in the clearing died, and that the central district would be uninhabitable for some time to come. I have my doubts as to whether such talk is true and myself and others who worked in the ruined area for some hours shortly after the explosion suffered no such ill effects.<sup>101</sup>

The text that is not italicized works to contain the earlier statements in two ways. First, Siemes, who was not a doctor, offered malnutrition as an alternate explanation for the low white cell count.<sup>102</sup> Second, by declaring that he and other rescuers had not suffered any ill effects, Siemes' statements act to discount Burchett's observation that lingering radiation had affected people who were not in Hiroshima at the time of the blast.

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<sup>100</sup> Kleinsorge was first hospitalized for three months in 1945, and then suffered from the effects of radiation the rest of his life, like many other *hibakusha*. John Hersey, "Hiroshima: The Aftermath," *The New Yorker*, July 15, 1985. <http://archives.newyorker.com/?i=1985-07-15#folio=036> (accessed November 1, 2015).; A recent news article in the *Washington Times* claimed that none of the priests were hurt or suffered ill effects from radiation, attributing their good fortune to a miracle of the rosary, which is not true. "A miracle at Hiroshima — four Jesuits survived the atomic bomb thanks to the rosary," *The Washington Times*, August 9 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/aug/9/the-miracle-of-hiroshima-jesuits-survived-the-atom/> (accessed November 1, 2015).; Emphasis added by me in order to later discuss highlighted text.

<sup>101</sup> Emphasis added by me in order to later discuss highlighted text.

<sup>102</sup> A study by Harold Knapp, a former Atomic Energy Commission scientist concluded that thousands of sheep were killed by radiation from two nuclear tests in Nevada in 1953. Sheep farmers had originally lost their suit against the government when AEC witnesses claimed that the sheep died from malnutrition. "Sheep Killed by Nuclear Tests," *Kingman Daily Miner*, June 19, 1979, 2.; The military also blamed the unsightly keloid scarring on malnutrition. "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by The Manhattan Engineer District, June 29, 1946," [atomicarchive.com](http://www.atomicarchive.com). <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/MED/> (accessed October 1 2015).



Siemes read these statements during a filmed interview, which was later incorporated into atomic bomb propaganda (discussed in a later section). These statements in particular seem dubious considering that his fellow priest, Kleinsorge, was presently being treated for *leucopenia*, a fact of which Siemes, Liebow, and other MED officials were well aware.

On September 28, 1945, the day after Siemes' testimony was translated, Liebow and other members of the Joint Commission stopped by the hospital to meet with Father Kleinsorge, who became the first atomic bomb victim visited by American government officials.<sup>103</sup> Kleinsorge had been taken to the Seibo Boyin International Catholic Hospital in Tokyo four weeks after the bombing because he was severely weakened and his wounds had not healed, conditions that were caused by exposure to radiation. Liebow and Kleinsorge had a long conversation in German, although Liebow commented on how well Kleinsorge spoke English.<sup>104</sup> Within days of Liebow's visit, numerous news reports about Kleinsorge appeared in international newspapers.<sup>105</sup> These news reports claimed that Kleinsorge was recuperating from the effects of radiation, he was expected to fully recover, and all that he needed was good food and rest. However, the reports also mentioned that other people who exhibited similar symptoms died, so Kleinsorge was considered a "medical curiosity." These news reports heralded Kleinsorge as "medical science's number one guinea pig" for years to come.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Liebow, *Encounter with Disaster*, 123-124.; The hospital was in Tokyo, not Hiroshima.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>105</sup> All of these news reports were written by the same reporter. Massey Stanley, "He Lived Through the Atom Horror: Hiroshima's Unique Man," *Sunday Times (Perth, W Australia)*, October 14, 1945; Massey Stanley, "Man Who Survived the First Atom Bomb," *News (Adelaide, S Australia)*, October 11, 1945; Massey Stanley, "In Midst of Atomic Bomb Explosion: And Lived," *Advocate (Burnie, Tasmania)*, October 2, 1945; Massey Stanley, "Priest Survives Atomic Bomb," *Catholic Weekly (Sydney, NSW)*, October 4, 1945.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

Kleinsorge's condition was dire. According to these news reports, his white cell count was so low that doctors could not risk a transfusion. Earlier patients with similar symptoms bled to death from a simple needle puncture.<sup>107</sup> By stating that all that Kleinsorge needed was good food and rest in order to fully recover, the articles suggested to readers that radiation exposure wasn't so bad and that lack of food and rest probably contributed to the problem, assessments that supported the military's public stance.<sup>108</sup> Kleinsorge's testimony appeared in Hersey's story, but was not included within any known military documents.

### A Siemes PR Blitz

Less than two weeks after Liebow translated Siemes' testimony, a barrage of publications began to bear witness to his testimony. The MED staged a filmed interview with Siemes on October 10<sup>th</sup> (less than two weeks after the report was translated) where Siemes repeated portions of his testimony before the camera. By the end of the year, the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> The story that Kleinsorge shared with the press equally supported and contested Siemes' account. Siemes' version of events near the blast summarized what Kleinsorge and the priests in Hiroshima had shared with him. (Siemes was several miles away from the epicenter; whereas, the four rescued priests were about 500 yards from the blast.) Kleinsorge attested that he saw "fewer than 200 living people, all terribly burned. Their faces were just one large blister." Ibid.; In contrast, Siemes had noted numerous uninjured residents fleeing the city and not assisting rescue efforts. Siemes had estimated the number of dead at 100,000, but Kleinsorge stated that the Japanese military had already cremated 200,000 bodies. These facts, of course, do not suggest that Siemes' account was less true than Kleinsorge's. Each witness was in a different proximity to the blast. Also, other factors, such as individual personalities, would have affected which details they paid attention to and repeated. Both priests mentioned the deaths of Japanese soldiers and claimed that many residents died due to the lack of medical attention and medicines. However, Siemes seemed to suggest that Japanese ineptitude played a role, while Kleinsorge attributed the results to all of the hospitals having been obliterated by the bomb. These comparisons show that Kleinsorge's testimony should have been a valuable resource for military officials who were studying the effects of the atomic bomb; yet, these details were not included in military reports or published as widely as (or along with) Siemes' account. It should be noted that John Hersey included details in "Hiroshima" that were provided by both Siemes and Kleinsorge even though Hersey fictionalized witness testimony to dramatize his story.; Kleinsorge was invited to spend several days on the USS *Prairie* in Tokyo Bay in January, 1946. He offered mass and received gifts of clothing, including a coat of an officer's best blues excluding the gold braid. "Priest Feted Who Survived Atomic Bomb," *Arkansas Catholic Guardian*, January 11, 1946, 5. Then in 1947, three teams of CBS foreign correspondents toured postwar Europe and Japan to film a documentary called "We Went Back," in which Kleinsorge was featured. The show aired on August 14<sup>th</sup>, for the anniversary of V-J Day.

first of two propaganda films that incorporated Siemes' testimony was released: *The Atom Strikes!*, a U.S. Signal Corps film that documented a MED report on the destruction caused by the atomic bombs.<sup>109</sup> Also, the first of several military reports that incorporated Siemes' account was issued on December 15.<sup>110</sup>

In January 1946, William L. Laurence's international bestseller *Dawn Over Zero*, was published. Siemes' testimony was the focus of chapter eighteen. In February, a selectively edited version of the account was published in *Time* magazine.<sup>111</sup> In March, two Jesuit magazines published edited versions of Liebow's translation: *Jesuit Missions* and *The Irish Monthly*.<sup>112</sup> In May, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and the *Saturday Review of Literature* published Siemes full account.<sup>113</sup> By the end of the year, Siemes' account had been incorporated into a second propaganda film (*A Tale of Two Cities*), two

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<sup>109</sup> The U.S. Signal Corp was a communications division of the War Department. It played a key role in producing training films for army and civilian personnel, and documenting combat missions. They also played a crucial role in documenting evidence of Nazi atrocities and the Holocaust. "US Army Signal Corps," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10006175> (accessed December 1, 2015).

<sup>110</sup> U.S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, *Miscellaneous Targets: Atomic Bombs, Hiroshima and Nagasaki- Article 1 Medical Effects*, 1945. 8-15. <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/u/?p4013coll8,2309> (accessed November 4, 2015). This report covers the medical effects of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and analyzes the physical damage as related to death and injury of personnel, the organization of relief activities by the Japanese, and their methods of treatment, which were inadequate to a startling degree. Topics include effects of the radiations on the human body, residual radioactivity, various aspects of the atomic bomb, and organization of research in nuclear physics in Japan.

<sup>111</sup> "International: From Hiroshima: A Report and a Question," *Time*, February 11, 1946, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,854114,00.html> (accessed November 1, 2015).

<sup>112</sup> *Jesuit Missions* was an American magazine published in New York by Jesuit Mission Press during 1927-1967. The audience for this magazine would have consisted mostly of American readers interested in Jesuit or Catholic missionary issues.

<sup>113</sup> This claim cannot be true. The version that was printed in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* is exactly the same as the official military report "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by The Manhattan Engineer District, June 29, 1946" and the article from the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Whereas, the *Jesuit Missions* article omits text related to the effects of radiation.; It is unclear why Johannes Siemes' name appears incorrectly in connection with so many publications that were printed within months of each other. One explanation might be that someone other than Siemes submitted various articles for publication. John B. Siemes, "Report from Hiroshima," *Jesuit Missions* 20, no. 2 (1946); P. T. Siemes, "The Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima-An Eye-witness Account," *Irish Monthly* 74, no. 873/874 (1946); John A. Siemes, "Hiroshima-August 6, 1945," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 1, no. 11 (1946).

other military reports, and John Hersey's monumental "Hiroshima." All of these renditions stem from the one translated account.<sup>114</sup>

I contend that Siemes did not play a role in writing any of the revisions or in distributing his testimony for publication. Siemes wrote his original testimony in German, which was translated into English by Liebow. All of the selectively edited articles and news reports used text from the Liebow translation verbatim although each one identified the *Jesuit Missions* article as the original. However, the *Jesuit Missions* article was the only text that was not only worded differently from all of the others, but it also came to a very different conclusion than Siemes' original testimony. In addition, each publication included a variation of Siemes' name, Johannes Siemes: John A. Siemes, John B. Siemes, P.T. Siemes, and P. Siemes. (It is difficult to believe that Siemes, a university professor, would deliberately change his name for each publication.) The more likely scenario is that Siemes was asked by someone in the MED to provide an eyewitness account, and then they, or some related official, crafted different versions for various publications.

The first of the military reports was the "Target Report - Atomic Bombs, Nagasaki and Hiroshima." The authors prefaced Siemes' testimony with: "The account of Father Siemes is so accurate and graphic that it is given verbatim and *will be the only lay*

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<sup>114</sup> In addition, Siemes personally distributed copies to American servicemen stationed in Hiroshima throughout the Occupation. Rusty Pray, "50 Years Later, Army Sergeant Is Still Haunted By Hiroshima He Witnessed The Devastation A Single Bomb Wrought," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 07, 1995, [http://articles.philly.com/1995-08-07/news/25711015\\_1\\_atom-bomb-hiroshima-explosion-al-purdy](http://articles.philly.com/1995-08-07/news/25711015_1_atom-bomb-hiroshima-explosion-al-purdy) (accessed October 15, 2015).; A copy of Siemes' account is held in George L Eastman Collection, Xavier University of Louisiana, William J. Schull, PhD Papers 1945-2014, Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, Houston, Texas, and the National Archives in the United Kingdom, which was given to Richard AB Phillimore, who visited Hiroshima in 1946. A number of the copies list "P. Siemes" as the author, which could have been a typo introduced from retyping the manuscript, although Siemes' testimony was published in the *Irish Monthly* with the author listed as "P. T. Siemes."

*account presented for this city.*”<sup>115</sup> The military did not recognize the need to interview any other survivors of Hiroshima’s atomic blast for their report. Curiously, Siemes’ entire account was reproduced in this report except for the final paragraph where Siemes had reflected on the morality of the bomb and total war. Because it was a military report, there was no need to censor any of the remarks commenting on the effects of radiation.

Six months later, two additional military reports were released. Siemes’ entire testimony was included in the appendix of “The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by The Manhattan Engineer District, June 29, 1946.”<sup>116</sup> And his observations were quoted as evidence on page 7 of the “U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, June 19, 1946,” where the authors conveyed Siemes’ assessments of medical aid to the victims.<sup>117</sup> Siemes revealed the desperate situation faced by the residents of Hiroshima. Medicines had run out. No one could do anything further for the wounded. Up to half of the victims died. “Everything was lacking: doctors, assistants, dressings, drugs, etc.” This selection of text suggested that the severity of deaths in Hiroshima was not caused by the bomb, but rather, was due to the Japanese being ill-equipped to handle the disaster.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>116</sup> “The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by The Manhattan Engineer District, June 29, 1946”.

<sup>117</sup> *United States Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, (Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, President’s Secretary’s File, Truman Papers, June 19, 1946),

[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-06-19&documentid=65&studycollectionid=abomb&pagenumber=1](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-06-19&documentid=65&studycollectionid=abomb&pagenumber=1) (accessed November 15, 2015).; Alexander H. Leighton, who wrote “That Day at Hiroshima,” was part of the team that researched and wrote this report.

<sup>118</sup> Siemes was not a doctor nor was he in Hiroshima at the time of the blast. His observations about the aid stations were acquired from his location several miles away from Hiroshima’s epicenter. This report was submitted almost a year after the bombing, so military officials had plenty of opportunities to interview surviving doctors and nurses that were in Hiroshima had they had wanted to do so.

In addition to written reports, the military created propaganda films for members of the armed forces using Siemes' testimony. Members of the MED performed an official interview with Siemes, which was video-recorded in Tokyo on October 10, 1945, less than two weeks after Liebow translated Siemes' written account. The only English-language video-recorded eyewitness testimony of the atomic bombings of Japan that is held at the National Archives in College Park is this eleven-minute video of Johannes Siemes.<sup>119</sup>

The first half of the video shows Siemes reading a few specifically selected paragraphs from the testimony that Liebow translated. Flashbulbs can be seen intermittently flashing light on him during his reading, but the viewer never sees or hears

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<sup>119</sup> There appears to be a discrepancy in the date of the video. Archive records list October 3, 1945 as the date of the recording, but the director's clapboard that is shown in the video displays October 10. Video Recording No. 111-ADC-5391; "Eye Witness to Atomic Bomb Explosion, Tokyo, Japan," October 3, 1945; Record Group 111: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860 - 1985; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.; Before the end of 1945, the United States Strategic Bombing Survey team conducted a series of interviews with bombing eyewitnesses across Japan. All of these recordings, 366 in total, are housed at the National Archives in College Park. Of these 366 interviews, only one concerned the atomic bomb and that interview was conducted in English with a 23-year-old Russian immigrant, Kaleria Palchikoff Drago, who worked as a typist for the U.S. military. 243.4.3 Records of the Morale Division; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.; A newspaper report that was published October 31, 1945 states that Kaleria Palchikoff was a typist for the American military. Like Siemes, she was miles away from the epicenter when the bomb detonated. Russell Brines, "Atom Victims Shredded, Roasted Black, Says Eyewitness to Hiroshima Bombing," *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, October 31, 1945.; The only English-language eyewitness audio account, and the only audio account of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, (recorded in October 1945), came from Kaleria Palchikoff Drago, a 23-year-old Russian immigrant, whose parents had moved to Japan twenty-four years earlier. Her English-language sound recording is available on the National Archives blog: Audrey Amidon, "Witness to Destruction: Photographs and Sound Recordings Documenting the Hiroshima Bombing," Entry posted August 6, 2015, *The National Archives: Unwritten Record Blog*. <http://unwritten-record.blogs.archives.gov/2015/08/06/witness-to-destruction-photographs-and-sound-recordings-documenting-the-hiroshima-bombing/#comments> (accessed November 6, 2015); Melissa Block, "Seeing the Horror of Hiroshima: Interview with Kaleria Palchikoff Drago," NPR. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4787714> (accessed November 16, 2015). The NPR piece ends with the following note: "Kaleria Palchikoff Drago is now 84 years old. After the war she married an American soldier, moved to the US and raised three children. Her eyewitness account of the Hiroshima bombing was aired once before in Japan, but according to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, it has never before been broadcast in the US.;" So the only English-language audio and video accounts of the atomic bombings preserved by the National Archives are those given by a German Jesuit priest and a Russian immigrant who worked for the U.S. military. None of the Japanese-language recordings have been translated to English as far as evidence shows.

any of the other people in the room while Siemes reads the selected paragraphs. During the second half of the recording, a man who is off-screen questions Siemes; however, Siemes' responses perfectly echo the text from the translated testimony. In the video, he appears animated and his answers look spontaneous. In other words, the MED seems to have staged the filmed interview so that Siemes' responses would appear voluntary and impromptu in order to generate footage for atomic bomb propaganda: *The Atom Strikes!* and *Tale of Two Cities*.<sup>120</sup>

In addition to materials that were generated for the military, numerous books, magazines, and journals were published for the masses. Although no direct connection exists between the military and these civilian publications, evidence suggests that they were part of the same public relations campaign. Additionally, it appears as though some effort was put into covering over where the information came from.

The original text for all of these publications was Liebow's translation of Siemes' testimony (a classified military document). But, each of the magazine articles and book chapters that reproduced Siemes' testimony attributed their source as an article in *Jesuit Missions* magazine (an article that most readers would not be able to locate to verify the source). There was, in fact, an article that was written for *Jesuit Missions* magazine, which offered a truncated and selectively edited version of Siemes' testimony.

I contend that the *Jesuit Missions* article was a ruse that was meant to satisfy anyone who researched any of the published accounts. Authors, such as William Laurence, stated that they read Siemes' testimony in *Jesuit Missions* months before the article had been published. In addition, many important details from Siemes' testimony

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<sup>120</sup> In order to assist the narrative flow of this chapter, details about the propaganda films were moved into the Appendix under the title "Propaganda Films".

were altered or removed. By looking at the various publications comparatively, patterns emerge. The reader will see ways in which publications were complicit in helping the government silence some accounts (such as Burchett's and Kleinsorge's) while privileging Siemes' (or some version of it). To assist the readability of this section, details about the *Jesuit Missions* article and some of the other publications have been moved to the Appendix. This decision is one of many dilemmas I faced while constructing my written thesis.

In order to present a readable narrative, I had to make decisions related to structure and content. Copious amounts of data impede cohesion and comprehension. According to Roland Barthes, intelligibility, linearity, and structural coherence form the earmarks of a narrative's readability. These "classic" narratives operate within a limited semantic range that works to predetermine meaning for easier consumption. However, one of the primary objectives of this thesis is to resist and put into question the types of narrative and history that tend to stipulate meaning for the reader.

In Thesis VIII of "On the Concept of History," Walter Benjamin warned:

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "emergency situation" in which we live is the rule. We must arrive at a concept of history which corresponds to this. Then it will become clear that the task before us is the introduction of a real state of emergency; and our position in the struggle against Fascism will thereby improve. Not the least reason that the latter has a chance is that its opponents, in the name of progress, greet it as a historical norm. – The astonishment that the things we are experiencing in the 20th century are "still" possible is by no means philosophical. It is not the beginning of knowledge, unless it would be the knowledge that the conception of history on which it rests is untenable.<sup>121</sup>

Our narratives and history frame our thinking and our worldviews, which accept as the norm our current historical conditions. Benjamin urges us to recognize that "the

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<sup>121</sup> Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," Marxists Internet Archive. <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm> (accessed January 12, 2015).



‘emergency situation’ in which we live” is directly connected to historical narratives that we consume (that silence the oppressed), and do something to correct it.

One way that might assist readers to reach their own conclusions about the evidence was to provide original information in an appendix, but remove it from the main flow of the narrative. (There was too much text to place in a footnote.) However, I do recognize that because the information is already contained in this thesis and can be associated with discussions where I do assign meaning, some significance has already been predetermined.

William L. Laurence’s *Dawn Over Zero* was released the first week of January 1946, which means that Laurence must have received a copy of Siemes’ testimony from the MED soon after it was transcribed.<sup>122</sup> Laurence worked for *The New York Times* and the War Department as an embedded reporter during the war, which allotted him unprecedented access to the Trinity Test. He was on Tinian Island for the departure and return of the *Enola Gay*, and flew on *The Great Artiste*, the instrument plane that accompanied *Bockscar* on its mission to attack Nagasaki. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in 1946. In 2004, journalists Amy Goodman and David Goodman called for the Pulitzer Board to strip Laurence of his Pulitzer, claiming that his reporting was crucial to the government’s cover-up about the deadly lingering effects of the bomb.<sup>123</sup> They specifically cited Laurence’s news reports as government responses to Burchett’s eyewitness account.

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<sup>122</sup> "William L. Laurence," Atomic Heritage Foundation. <http://www.atomicheritage.org/profile/william-l-laurence> (accessed November 1, 2015).; William L. Laurence, "Chapter Eighteen," in *Dawn Over Zero: The Story of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1946), 244-252.; Tanter, "Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War: Wilfred Burchett and Hiroshima".

<sup>123</sup> Amy Goodman and David Goodman, "Hiroshima Cover-up: How the War Department's Timesman Won a Pulitzer," *Common Dreams*, August 10, 2004, <http://www.commondreams.org/views/2004/08/10/hiroshima-cover-how-war-departments-timesman-won-pulitzer> (accessed November 2, 2015).

In Chapter 18 of his book, Laurence seemingly relayed what Siemes had written for *Jesuit Missions*, but “Report from Hiroshima” would not be published for several months.<sup>124</sup> Most of the text in *Dawn Over Zero* came directly from the classified report.

The following month, *Time* magazine published Siemes’ testimony in much the same manner as Laurence had, even claiming to have reprinted the *Jesuit Missions* account.<sup>125</sup> The first few paragraphs of the *Time* article faithfully relayed Siemes’ first impressions and how he and his fellow priests offered aid to the wounded. However, much of the details were taken directly from the original report.<sup>126</sup>

*Dawn Over Zero*, *Jesuit Missions*, and *Time* magazine reconfirmed the initial official death figures of 70,000 from September 1, 1945 and then appended those figures with the updated February 1946 statistics of 78,150, which led the reader to surmise that the numbers had not and would not significantly increase. These official numbers helped to counter any notion that many people were dying from radiation.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Laurence wrote, “[Siemes] tells what he saw in *Jesuit Missions*.” Laurence, “Dawn Over Zero,” in *Dawn Over Zero: The Story of the Atomic Bomb*, 245.; Laurence listed the author’s name as “John B. Siemes,” which is consistent with author byline in the published *Jesuit Missions* article.; It was a safe bet that most Americans reading *Dawn Over Zero* would not be familiar with a Jesuit magazine or try to access the original article, but it is not clear who fed Laurence this information months in advance. Maybe a military official had worked with Siemes to publish a revised version of his testimony in an American Jesuit magazine, or, perhaps someone submitted Siemes’ account for publication without his knowledge. Either way, Laurence took liberties with Siemes’ testimony in relaying the information to the public.

<sup>125</sup> The *Jesuit Missions* article would not be published for another month.

<sup>126</sup> Henry R. Luce, *Time*’s publisher, played an imminent role in deciding what and how information was conveyed. He used his position to influence Americans to form a new postwar order dominated by the United States, which he called the “American Century.” His call for the United States to use its power to shape and lead international affairs had an enduring influence during the Cold War and beyond. “Henry Luce and 20th Century U.S. Internationalism,” U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/internationalism> (accessed December 12 2015).; Luce was born in China to Protestant missionary parents. He was a very religious man and a staunch anti-Communist. He viewed Asia as an opportunity for America to influence the underdeveloped regions and for the many souls that could be won for Christianity. Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-3.

<sup>127</sup> In 2015, most American newspapers that I have encountered still list 78,150 as the official death toll for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

The *Saturday Review of Literature* (SR) and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* both published Siemes' original and unabridged translated testimony on May 11<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> respectively. Each included the classified descriptions of the human effects of the atomic bomb, as well as Siemes' morality ponderings. And both publications claimed to have received permission from *Jesuit Mission*[sic] to reprint the article. The articles' appearance coincided with the originally scheduled date of May 15 for the first Operation Crossroads nuclear tests in Bikini Atoll.<sup>128</sup> Unlike the previous publications, *SR* and the *Bulletin* published Siemes' unadulterated narrative, perhaps in an attempt to disrupt the aims of the government to conceal the truth about the effects of radiation.

The *Bulletin* was founded in 1945 by Manhattan Project scientists who "could not remain aloof to the consequences of their work."<sup>129</sup> National interest in nuclear warfare inspired contributors to keep the public informed about the dangers and destruction of atomic war.<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Norman Cousins, who was *SR*'s editor, worked tirelessly for nuclear disarmament and world peace, which he promoted through his writings.<sup>131</sup> He

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<sup>128</sup> Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, was concerned that further displays of the bomb could antagonize the Soviets into not accepting the Acheson-Lilienthal Plan, which discussed possible methods for international control of nuclear weapons and avoidance of future nuclear warfare. Byrnes convinced Truman to postpone the tests by six weeks, stating, "from the standpoint of international relations it would be very helpful if the test could be postponed or never held at all." Jonathan M. Weisgall, *Operation Crossroads: The Atomic Tests at Bikini Atoll* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 90.

<sup>129</sup> "Background and Mission: 1945-2015," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. <http://thebulletin.org/background-and-mission-1945-2015> (accessed December 1, 2015).; The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* originally was the membership magazine of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) but became a separate magazine many years ago. "FAS was founded as the Federation of Atomic Scientists in November 1945 (and was rebranded as the Federation of American Scientists in February 1946) by many of the Manhattan Project scientists who wanted to prevent nuclear war, and it is one of the longest serving organizations in the world dedicated to reducing nuclear and other catastrophic threats and informing the public debate by providing technically-based research and analysis on these issues." "About FAS," Federation of American Scientists. <https://fas.org/about-fas/> (accessed December 10 2015).

<sup>130</sup> Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, 70.

<sup>131</sup> Cousins wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor* a couple of years after the *Saturday Review* ended, "My hope, from my earliest days at the *Saturday Review*, was that the magazine would help to develop a language that transcends force. That was why *Saturday Review* was one of the first journals to call attention to the implications of nuclear weapons." Norman Cousins, "Saturday Review: Why it Failed -- and Succeeded," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 31, , 1982.

was also a consultant to MacArthur during the American occupation and played an important role in shaping MacArthur's recommendations to Japan.<sup>132</sup> The people behind both of these publications wanted to keep the American public informed about nuclear issues. It is quite interesting that the *Bulletin* and *SR* took the same materials that the government had used for propaganda to try to enlighten the public by publishing Siemes' uncensored account.

Siemes' most widespread influence transpired via John Hersey's "Hiroshima," which was published in the *New Yorker* near the first anniversary of the atomic bombings. Arriving at newsstands on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 300,000 issues sold out in just one hour and another 200,000 copies were sent to subscribers.<sup>133</sup> Albert Einstein ordered 1,000 copies of a small overseas edition, which he sent to scientists around the world.<sup>134</sup> By October 23, 1946, the original article had been reprinted in its entirety in at least 78 U.S. newspapers and portions of the article had been reprinted in hundreds more.<sup>135</sup> Newspapers around the world carried the story.

By November 1<sup>st</sup>, only two months after "Hiroshima" appeared in the *New Yorker*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. published the book and the Book-of-the-Month Club, the largest book distributor in America, struck a deal with Hersey and his publisher to

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<http://www.csmonitor.com/1982/0831/083124.html> (accessed December 1, 2015).; He later worked with Kiyoshi Tanimoto (Siemes' "rescuing angel") and John Hersey as part of the Peace Center Foundation of Hiroshima, as well as on the "Hiroshima Maidens" project, which funded plastic surgery in America in 1955 for twenty-five female *hibakusha*. Various Peace Center Foundation of Hiroshima documents, Box 37, Folder 10, JHP.; Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945-1960*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 119.

<sup>132</sup> "Rethinking a Rearmed Japan," *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1987, [http://articles.latimes.com/1987-10-18/opinion/op-15214\\_1\\_japan-norman-cousins-yen](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-10-18/opinion/op-15214_1_japan-norman-cousins-yen) (accessed January 15, 2016).

<sup>133</sup> K.R. Forde, "Profit and Public Interest: A Publication History of John Hersey's 'Hiroshima'," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (2011): 567.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 569.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 570.

distribute close to a million free copies of *Hiroshima* to its members.<sup>136</sup> The American Broadcast Company (ABC) aired four thirty-minute dramatic readings of the story with Hersey approving each edit. Within a year, the book had been translated into eleven languages and Braille.<sup>137</sup>

Two of Hersey's six main characters came from Siemes' account: Protestant pastor Kiyoshi Tanimoto (Siemes' "rescuing angel") and Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge. Hersey also blended numerous details from Siemes' account into "Hiroshima." One example is Siemes' encounter on the Misasi Bridge where he saw severely burned soldiers and abandoned horses with "sunken heads."<sup>138</sup> Additionally, Hersey identified Siemes by name and incorporated his morality questions verbatim.<sup>139</sup> To his credit, Hersey weaved discussions about the human effects of radiation throughout the final chapter of his book. But much of the horror of the "atomic plague" that Burchett had reported was absent from Hersey's interpretation. A softer, gentler "radiation sickness" was presented to the world. Near the end of the story, Hersey wrote that Kleinsorge had been released from the hospital, sent back to Hiroshima, and told to get plenty of rest. Nonetheless, Hersey noted that a year later, he was back in the hospital.

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<sup>136</sup> A note dated September 16, 1946 stated that Book-of-the-Month Club planned to distribute 950,000 copies. Book-of-the-Month Club to John Hersey, September 16, 1946, Box 37, Folder 6, John Hersey Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (hereafter JHP).; Laurence's *Dawn Over Zero* was also published by Knopf.

<sup>137</sup> Forde, "Profit and Public Interest," 572.

<sup>138</sup> Hersey wrote, "At Misasa Bridge, they encountered a long line of soldiers making a bizarre forced march away from the Chugoku Regional Army Headquarters in the center of the town. All were grotesquely burned, and they supported themselves with staves or leaned on one another. Sick, burned horses, hanging their heads, stood on the bridge." Hersey, "Hiroshima."

<sup>139</sup> In this section of the story, Hersey claimed to have read a report that Siemes wrote to the Holy See, which is highly suspect. Siemes was outranked by both the rector, Pedro Arrupe, and Father Superior, Hugo LaSalle, either of whom would have been a more likely candidate to write a report to Pope Pius XII. Hersey's suggestion of religious intent behind the report might be connected in some way to the various publications that claimed to have received permission from *Jesuit Missions* to republish their articles. A particular type of authority can be gained from such an assertion, plus attention can be diverted away from the actual source: a classified military report.

## The New Religious War for the Soul of America

As an initial English-language testament to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima that inspired many other works, Siemes' testimony continues to influence how we understand those events. Throughout this chapter, I attempted to illuminate some of the politics that led the MED to select Johannes Siemes as their primary eyewitness and to uncover how parts of his testimony were repeated in the media to reinforce one particular view that the military favored.

The political climate was extremely tense for American military officials during the first year following the atomic bombings of Japan. At home, the U.S. military soon faced opposition to their attempted control of information about nuclear development from atomic scientists who wanted to freely share information after the war was over.<sup>140</sup> In Japan, the U.S. military wanted a peaceful occupation in order to swiftly implement MacArthur's mandated changes. In both cases, the military feared that news about the effects of lingering radiation would create public backlash that would impede their ability to meet their objectives. They wanted to control the flow of information in order to shape how the world would perceive the results of the atomic bombings and the American Occupation of Japan.

The military used portions of Siemes' testimony to help them achieve their goals. By repeatedly printing the same death totals that were established less than a month after the bombing and censoring accounts of "lingering radiation," suspicions about people

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<sup>140</sup> "Civilian Control of Atomic Energy," The Manhattan Project: An Interactive History. [https://www.osti.gov/opennet/manhattan-project-history/Events/1945-present/civilian\\_control.htm](https://www.osti.gov/opennet/manhattan-project-history/Events/1945-present/civilian_control.htm) (accessed December 1, 2015).

dying from residual radiation could be discounted.<sup>141</sup> Reiterating Siemes' remarks that the Japanese showed little initiative to deal with the disaster and emphasizing Christian aid to the wounded helped to lay the foundation for the world to perceive Americans, being part of a Christian nation, as gracious heroes for rebuilding Hiroshima.<sup>142</sup>

Even so, evidence to support a just end to the war was never as clear cut as some people would like others to believe. Much literature exists about America's decision to use atomic bombs, and it is out of the scope of this thesis to discuss those arguments. However, it is important to note that numerous top-ranking military and government officials did not support the use of the bombs and did not agree that they were needed to win the war with Japan. For example, the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey group, assigned by President Truman to study the air attacks on Japan, produced a report in July of 1946 that concluded:

Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the Survey's opinion that certainly prior to 31 December 1945 and in all probability prior to 1 November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated.<sup>143</sup>

And Norman Cousins, in his book *Pathology of Power*, explained that MacArthur was not even consulted about the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

When Cousins asked him what his advice would have been, MacArthur replied that "he

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<sup>141</sup> Official calculations are not definitive, although the Department of Energy estimates that 200,000 people died in Hiroshima within the first five years. "Using the Atomic Bomb - 1945," Atomic Heritage Foundation. <http://www.atomicheritage.org/history/using-atomic-bomb-1945> (accessed December 1, 2015).

<sup>142</sup> Paul Boyer began his chapter "Atomic Weapons and Judeo-Christian Ethics," "The atomic age was opened with prayer." Following a chaplain's invocation of divine blessing on the crew of the *Enola Gay*, President Truman added: "We thank God that it has come to us, instead of to our enemies; and we pray that He may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purposes." Paul S. Boyer, "Atomic Weapons and Judeo-Christian Ethics: The Discourse Begins," in *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 211.

<sup>143</sup> *United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War)*, July 1, 1946. 52-56. <http://www.anesi.com/ussbs01.htm> (accessed February 5, 2016).

saw no military justification for the dropping of the bomb. The war might have ended weeks earlier if the United States had agreed, as it later did anyway, to the retention of the institution of the emperor.”<sup>144</sup> In addition, after the war had ended, Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to President Truman wrote: “The use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender. . . I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children.”<sup>145</sup>

Many of these facts and related dissenting views about how the war was ended were published in newspapers at home and abroad. The public openly debated the use of the bombs and what they meant for the world, especially as the Soviets entered the arms race and nuclear testing escalated. The Cold War, which began simultaneously with the atomic bombings, provided a new enemy against which Americans would come to define themselves.

Roger Launius, Associate Director of Collections and Curatorial Affairs at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum explained that the climate of the Cold War reinforced a consensus view of the American past as “exceptionalistic, nationalistic, and triumphant.”<sup>146</sup> Historians during this time “celebrated the long tradition of shared American ideals and values while de-emphasizing conflict, and that made the United States and the people that made it up somehow better.”<sup>147</sup>

Changing political climates contributed to radical changes in the positioning of official historical narratives. Although Vietnam may seem quite removed from the atomic

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<sup>144</sup> Norman Cousins, *The Pathology of Power* (New York: Norton, 1987), 71.

<sup>145</sup> Gar Alperovitz, "More on Atomic Diplomacy," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (December 1985): 36.

<sup>146</sup> Roger D. Launius, "American Memory, Culture Wars, and the Challenge of Presenting Science and Technology in a National Museum," *The Public Historian* 29, no. 1 (2007): 15.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*



bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, these separate American invasions are irrevocably entangled. Over and above the obvious racial bigotries that contributed to the unrepentant acts of aggression and violence overseas and at home on American soil, it was not until the 1970s, when America's military suffered world-wide humiliation in the wake of the Vietnam War, that strong revisionist rhetoric became a vocal part of American politics. In other words, the official American narrative about Hiroshima began to change following our defeat in Vietnam.

America's seemingly cohesive past began to crumble with the rise of the new social history of the 1960s.<sup>148</sup> Peter C. Hoffer of Harvard University stated:

Outraged by the Viet Nam War and inspired by the civil rights movement, this new generation of professional historians set themselves the task of dismantling consensus history. Some of them were political radicals, and they gave renewed life to the progressive critique of consensus. Others were more concerned with black history and women's history and were determined to move the story of these groups to center stage.<sup>149</sup>

By the 1980s American historians had come to understand United States history much differently than the broader public who desired a "collective memory of the American past that was largely comforting and emphasized the idea of one people, one nation."<sup>150</sup> A public and political battle for control of national memory ensued between conservative and liberal communities. "Would [the resulting history] be one that is unified—one people, one nation—or one that was fragmented and personal?"<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.; Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud—American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 63.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

The battle for national memory took center stage in the 1990s in what Pat Buchanan described as “a new religious war for the soul of America.”<sup>152</sup> “Attacks on the ‘new social history’ abounded in the 1990s, such as the conflict over the National History Standards.”<sup>153</sup> Lynne Cheney, former director of the National Endowment of the Humanities, led the attack in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed “The End of History,” published October 20, 1994, where she maligned the National History Standards as a “grim and gloomy” monument to political correctness. She proclaimed the standards project a disaster for providing too little attention to figures such as Robert E. Lee and far too much to people like Harriet Tubman, or politically embarrassing episodes, such as the Ku Klux Klan and McCarthyism. In addition, conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer argued: “The [National History Standards] strain to promote the achievements and highlight the victimization of the country’s preferred minorities, while straining equally to degrade the achievements and highlight the flaws of the white males who ran the country for its first two centuries.”<sup>154</sup>

Roger Launius determined that in the end, “the conservative assault succeeded in forcing a major revision of the standards and the wholesale jettisoning of the teaching examples that had engendered the most serious criticism.”<sup>155</sup> It was in this hostile climate

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<sup>152</sup> “There is a religious war going on in this country. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as was the Cold War itself, for this war is for the soul of America.” Patrick Joseph Buchanan, “Culture War Speech: Address to the Republican National Convention, August 17, 1992,” <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/buchanan-culture-war-speech-speech-text/> (accessed May 5, 2014).

<sup>153</sup> Launius, “American Memory, Culture Wars,” 17.

<sup>154</sup> Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 189–90.; In 2006, the *Financial Times* named Krauthammer the most influential commentator in America. Barber, Lionel (May 20, 2006). “Views of the world”. *Financial Times*. He also coined and developed ‘The Reagan Doctrine’ in 1985 and defined the U.S. role as sole superpower in his essay “The Unipolar Moment.” Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment,” *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1991). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1991-02-01/unipolar-moment>.

<sup>155</sup> Launius, “American Memory, Culture Wars,” 17.

that the National Air and Space Museum's (NASM) proposed Enola Gay exhibit experienced its devastating failure.<sup>156</sup>

Public memory is a form of power that controls social settings, according to Paul Shackel, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Maryland.

Competing groups ceaselessly battle to create and control the collective national memory of revered sacred sites and objects. Different group agendas often clash, causing the established collective memories to be continuously in flux. Some subordinate groups can subvert the dominant memory, other groups compromise and become part of a multivocal history, while others fail to have their story remembered by the wider society. The tensions between and within groups who struggle for the control over the collective public memory are often situational and ongoing since the political stakes are high. Those who control the past have the ability to command the present and the future.<sup>157</sup>

NASM became "Ground Zero" in the next battle for America's past.

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<sup>156</sup> History's culture wars did not end in the twentieth century. Launius presented more current examples of the battle for national memory, including Florida Governor Jeb Bush's "A++" law that aimed to reform K12 education in his state (signed in June 2006). Among other things, the legislation mandated that "American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence." It also directed a "character development curriculum [that] shall stress the qualities of patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property, honesty, charity, self-control, racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance, and cooperation." Finally, it directed an emphasis on "the nature and importance of free enterprise to the United States economy." *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>157</sup> Paul A. Shackel, "Public Memory and the Search for Power in American Historical Archaeology," *American Anthropologist* *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 3 (2001): 665.

## CHAPTER 2: TEACHING PEACE AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The curators at the National Air and Space Museum understood better than most that historical commemorations are socially constructed and often contested events. At stake in such commemorations is nothing less than the control of history itself, or at least the process by which historical representation gives voice to the past. . . Whose voice will be heard?<sup>158</sup>

In 1995, the director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum (NASM), Dr. Martin Harwit, resigned due to the "continuing controversy and divisiveness" over the exhibit of the Enola Gay, the B-29 bomber that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945.<sup>159</sup> The original exhibit, timed for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, aimed to encourage visitors to re-examine their thinking about the use of atomic weapons at the end World War II. The hope was that visitors would reconsider the events in the context of the human tragedy and of the arms race that followed. But members of veterans groups (which included the pilot of the Enola Gay, Paul W. Tibbets) were joined by the Air Force Association, a military lobbying group that focuses on the

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<sup>158</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *Hiroshima in History and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 202.; Abundant literature exists on the the Enola Gay controversy. Some American books include Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Owl Books, 1996); Martin Harwit, *An Exhibit Denied: Lobbying the History of Enola Gay* (New York: Copernicus Books, 1996); Bird, Kai, and Lawrence Lifschultz, eds. *Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History and the Smithsonian Controversy*. Stony Creek: Pamphleteers Pr, 1998.; Steven C. Dubin, *Displays of Power: Controversy in the American Museum from the Enola Gay to Sensation* (Buffalo: New York University Press, 2000); Robert P. Newman, *Enola Gay and the Court of History* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Charles T. O'Reilly and William A. Rooney, *Enola Gay and the Smithsonian Institution* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2005).

<sup>159</sup> "Official Resigns Over Exhibit of Enola Gay," *The New York Times*, May 3, 1995, <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/03/us/official-resigns-over-exhibit-of-enola-gay.html> (accessed October 10, 2015).; Many books and articles have been written about this failed exhibit. See, for example, Edward Tabor Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996); Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz, eds., *Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History and the Smithsonian Controversy* (Stony Creek, CT: Pamphleteer's Press, 1998); Richard H. Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995).

glories of American air power, in denouncing the planned exhibit as “anti-American.”<sup>160</sup> Some members of Congress criticized the exhibit’s scripts, arguing that they were too sympathetic to the Japanese and were ultimately an insult to the American troops who had fought and died in the Pacific War.<sup>161</sup> The resulting exhibit was little more than the Enola Gay fuselage.

Richard Kohn, a longtime chief of air force history for the United States Air Force, a former president of the Society for Military History, and Professor Emeritus (History and Peace, War, and Defense) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, described NASM’s cancellation of the Enola Gay exhibition as perhaps “the worst tragedy to befall the public presentation of history in the United States in this generation.”<sup>162</sup>

In displaying the Enola Gay without analysis of the event that gave the B-29 airplane its significance, the Smithsonian Institution forfeited an opportunity to educate a worldwide audience in the millions about one of this century's defining experiences. An exhibition that explored the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan—an event historians view as significant in itself and symbolic of the end of World War II, the beginning of the Cold War, and the dawn of the nuclear age—might have been the most important museum presentation of the decade and perhaps of the era.<sup>163</sup>

In 1993, just as the controversy over the exhibit began, curator Tom D. Crouch presented a fundamental question to his colleagues in a memorandum: “Do you want to do an exhibition intended to make veterans feel good, or do you want an exhibition that

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<sup>160</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner, "The Enola Gay, the Atomic Bomb and American War Memory," *The Asia-Pacific Journal | Japan Focus* (2005). <http://apjif.org/-Lawrence-S.-Wittner/1777/article.html> (accessed September 2, 2015).; In 2003, the Enola Gay opened as a permanent exhibit at the new Udvar-Hazy Center in suburban Virginia. Retired General Jack Dailey, the director of the Center, told the press that the museum would be “displaying the Enola Gay in all its glory as a magnificent technological achievement.” The exhibit states that the plane dropped the atomic bomb, but no mention is made about nuclear weapons or their consequences, past or present. Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> "Official Resigns Over Exhibit of Enola Gay."

<sup>162</sup> Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars," 1036.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

will lead our visitors to talk about the consequences of the atomic bombing of Japan. Frankly, I don't think we can do both."<sup>164</sup> Crouch recognized the impossibility of venerating World War II veterans and a nationalistic myth that selectively recounted the glories of American air power between December 7, 1941 and September 2, 1945—a tale surgically removed from actual historical events—while at the same time analyzing and interpreting those and broader historical events.<sup>165</sup>

Kohn presented a stern warning about the precedent NASM's decisions established for other cultural institutions that attempted to engage the public about politically charged issues in a climate increasingly overrun with powerful and vocal ultraconservative voices:

American museums and other publicly-and perhaps privately-funded organizations may find it intimidating to offer anything controversial for public consumption, no matter how significant or sensitively portrayed. If the idea that everything is politics now colors American cultural life, civic discourse could succumb to the suppression characteristic of the totalitarian regimes Americans have fought and died to defeat. Unable to explore their past openly or critically, Americans might endanger their political system and damage the liberty on which that system is based, and which it is designed to preserve. George Orwell's warning—that those who control the past control the future and those who control the present control the past—could come to pass.<sup>166</sup>

In other words, the conservative propensity to try to freeze and manipulate American perceptions of the nation's past had put one of the most cherished American values, free speech, at risk. Fortunately, not everyone was swayed by NASM's defeat.

That same year, Peter Kuznick, a professor at American University (AU) in Washington D.C., founded the school's Nuclear Studies Institute in order to educate

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<sup>164</sup> Launius, "American Memory, Culture Wars," 19.

<sup>165</sup> America's national myth concerning Pearl Harbor through the atomic bombings and Japan's surrender does not include any events that led to Japan's attack, or any of the effects of nuclear warfare.

<sup>166</sup> Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars," 1037.

university students and the general public about the key points of nuclear history, nuclear culture in the United States, and the threats still posed by nuclear weapons in the modern world. The founding was inspired by a recent AU graduate, Akiko Naono, whose grandfather was killed in Hiroshima and whose mother and grandmother survived.<sup>167</sup> Kuznick and Naono planned to do something special to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic bombings. Two on-campus classes were taught as part of the summer institute and together they brought students on a study-abroad class to Kyoto and Hiroshima.

Several months after the Smithsonian debacle, the Institute, in cooperation with the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, coordinated an exhibit at American University of many of the same artifacts that would have been included in the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit. Every summer since 1995, the Institute has escorted students to study abroad in Kyoto, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki to experience first-hand historical sites related to the atomic bombings and learn about their history.<sup>168</sup>

Kuznick explained in a 2010 interview how the Institute's project took an unexpected twist:

Akiko was in Hiroshima meeting with city officials to plan our visit shortly after the American Legion and Air Force Association, backed by Congressional conservatives, succeeded in scuttling the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. It was a sad moment for the country and a terrible setback for those of us who believed that our country would benefit from an honest accounting of what the *Newseum's* panel of experts would vote the most important news event of the twentieth century. In consultations with officials from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we decided to bring some of the artifacts that were supposed to go to the Smithsonian to American University for what turned out to

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<sup>167</sup> Dave Lieberman, "Oliver Stone's Secret History: An Interview with Peter Kuznick " *HNN: History News Network*, March 3, 2010, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/124005> (accessed March 3, 2016).

<sup>168</sup> "Peter Kuznick," American University. <http://www.american.edu/cas/faculty/kuznick.cfm> (accessed January 15, 2016).; The Institute was named the most creative and innovative summer program in North America by the North American Association of Summer Sessions.

be Hiroshima and Nagasaki's only exhibit outside Japan during the fiftieth anniversary.<sup>169</sup>

AU's exhibit, "Constructing a Peaceful World: Beyond Hiroshima and Nagasaki," revealed a horrific portrait of war that pleaded for continued efforts for nuclear disarmament. Several cases of artifacts were loaned from peace museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which included "a disintegrated child's school uniform, fused coins, a melted lunch box and a pocket watch stopped at 8:15, the moment the first bomb exploded over Hiroshima on the morning of Aug. 6, 1945."<sup>170</sup>

Additionally, two *hibakusha* shared their stories with the public as part of exhibition programming. Hiromu Morishita of Hiroshima, who was fourteen at the time of the bombing, said: "I felt as if the skin of my body was quickly being pulled. I looked at my friend, and the skin on his face was peeled, hanging like pieces of rag." Morishita remembered how, years later when was a school teacher, he took some students to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. "The girls were frightened by the pictures and could not look at them. There I was, even more ugly."<sup>171</sup>

Seiko Ikeda, also of Hiroshima, was twelve at the time of the atomic attack. "The bodies looked like charred fish. People were laid down like in a fish market, all burned black. They could hardly be recognized as male or female." She said that her father did not recognize her at the hospital. "My skin had hardened like stone, my lip was pulled up,

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<sup>169</sup> Lieberon, "Oliver Stone's Secret History: An Interview with Peter Kuznick".

<sup>170</sup> "Hiroshima Exhibit Opens Quietly at a University," *The New York Times*, July 10, 1995, <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/10/us/hiroshima-exhibit-opens-quietly-at-a-university.html> (accessed December 15, 2015).

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*



my chin was adhered to my neck.” She said that she was still haunted by the thought that many of the unidentifiable, charred bodies that she saw were her friends.<sup>172</sup>

Surprisingly, with all of controversy the Smithsonian faced, veterans groups did not protest American University’s exhibit. Phil Budahn, a spokesman for the American Legion stated that “[American University] is not the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian is a Federal agency supported by taxpayer money, and rightly or wrongly, what it portrays is seen as the United States version of history. At American University, those constraints don’t apply.”<sup>173</sup>

Twenty years later, American University again co-hosted an exhibit with Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings. “Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Exhibition” featured atomic bomb relics from Japan’s peace museums and six of the *Hiroshima Panels* that were painted by Iri and Toshi Maruki. American University was the first stop of a three-city tour of the famous murals, which ran from June 13-August 16, 2015. From September 11-October 18, the exhibition, “A Call for Peace,” was displayed at the Boston University Art Gallery, and finally the murals were exhibited in New York City at Pioneer Works from November 13-December 20.<sup>174</sup> At Pioneer Works, the exhibition was at the center of a series of programs that explored the discourse between art and trauma.<sup>175</sup> Additionally, *Peace Boat US* and *Hibakusha Stories*, two organizations that frequently work together toward a nuclear-free world, welcomed delegates from the United Nations and organizations working on

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Claire Voon, "The Historic Painted Panels That Exposed the Hell of Hiroshima," *hyperallergic.com*, November 30 2015, <http://hyperallergic.com/255344/the-historic-painted-panels-that-exposed-the-hell-of-hiroshima/> (accessed March 1, 2015).

<sup>175</sup> <http://pioneerworks.org/exhibitions/the-hiroshima-panels/>

disarmament issues to a reception in New York that gave attendees a chance to view the extraordinary *Hiroshima Panels* just days before the historic pieces of art returned to Japan.<sup>176</sup>

The heart of the exhibition was six folding screens, known as the *Hiroshima Panels*, painted by Iri Maruki (1901-1995) and his wife, Toshi (1912-2000). Each screen is approximately 6 feet tall and 24 feet long. They have been displayed in more than 20 nations around the world and vividly show what Hiroshima looked like after the atomic bombing.

The Maruki's were living in Tokyo when Hiroshima was bombed. Days after the bombings, the couple went to Hiroshima to help to care for the injured and cremate the dead. The husband and wife team were professional painters with complementary styles. For years, they wrestled with the horror of what they had seen in Hiroshima: piles of dead bodies, dismembered limbs, survivors burned beyond recognition. By 1948, they felt compelled to commemorate the bombings, but due to Occupation censorship, there was no visual documentation for what occurred. As they explained:

We began to paint our own nude bodies to bring back the images of that time, and others came to pose for us because we were painting the Atomic Bomb. We thought about a 17-year-old girl having had a 17-year life span, and 3-year-old child having had a life of three years. Nine hundred sketches were merged together to create the first paintings. We thought we had painted a tremendous number of people, but there were 260,000 people who died in Hiroshima. As we prayed for the blessing of the dead with a fervent hope that it never happen again, we realized that even if we sketched and painted all of our lives, we could never paint them all. One Atomic Bomb in one instant caused the deaths of more people than we could ever portray. Long-lasting radioactivity and radiation sickness are causing people to suffer and die even now. This was not a natural disaster. As we

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<sup>176</sup> "UN Delegates Gather to Appreciate the Historic *Hiroshima Panels* in New York," <http://www.peaceboat-us.org/un-delegates-gather-to-appreciate-the-historic-hiroshima-panels-in-new-york/> (accessed March 5, 2016).

painted, through our paintings, these thoughts came to run through and through our mind.<sup>177</sup>

This exhibit was the first time in 45 years that a major exhibition of works by the Marukis was held in the United States. It was made possible by 12 million yen (\$97,000) in donations from the public.<sup>178</sup>

In addition to the exhibited artifacts and images, *hibakusha* shared their testimony at several public lectures. Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor Yoshitoshi Fukahori spoke about gathering debris in the demolished city in order to start a fire to cremate his sister. He remembered how a woman grabbed his leg while saying, “I want water.” He described how when he brushed aside her arm, he was startled to find her charred skin fell off.<sup>179</sup>

The other speaker, Sadao Yamamoto, 83, was a 14-year-old junior high school student when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Aug. 6, 1945. He described going to the NASM and seeing the Enola Gay on display. “That exhibition does not help to understand what occurred on the ground,” Yamamoto said. “It gave me new resolve to continue speaking about the wretchedness of the atomic bomb.”<sup>180</sup> Yamamoto stressed his resolve to share his experience about what happened *on the ground in Hiroshima* after seeing how the Enola Gay was commemorated at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

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<sup>177</sup> Iri and Toshi Maruki, "Message from Iri and Toshi Maruki,"

<http://www.aya.or.jp/~marukimsn/english/message.html> (accessed November 13, 2013).

<sup>178</sup> Ryo Kiyomiya and Shoko Rikimaru, "Hibakusha elicit tears from American audience as they tell of atomic bombings," *Asahi Shinbun*, June 15, 2015,

[http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/social\\_affairs/AJ201506150082](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201506150082) (accessed October 10, 2015).

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

Paul A. Shackel explained that public memory more often reflects present political and social relations than it presents a true reconstruction of the past. The collective memory of the past will change as present conditions change socially, politically, and ideologically. Shackel noted, “The control of a group’s memory is often a question of power. Individuals and groups often struggle over the meaning of memory as the official memory is imposed by the power elite.”<sup>181</sup> Shackel argued that public memory can be manipulated through material culture in several ways: first, by forgetting about or excluding an alternative past, second, through creating and reinforcing patriotism, and, finally, from developing a sense of nostalgia to legitimize a particular heritage.<sup>182</sup>

The Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution is an excellent example of how the government suppressed an alternative view on the grounds that it was not patriotic. The original plans for the exhibit ran counter to the collective memory of powerful lobbying groups. The revised exhibit conformed to the traditional patriotic view that claimed that it was necessary to drop the bomb to save American lives. The exhibit portrayed the flight crew as patriots and heroes.<sup>183</sup>

General Paul W. Tibbets, who piloted the Enola Gay, stated that the planned exhibit of the Enola Gay was “a damn big insult.” He and other veterans demanded that the bomber be displayed “proudly and patriotically.”<sup>184</sup> The censored exhibit supported the story that Americans have been told about the atomic bombings ever since President Truman’s radio address on August 6, 1945. Official military statements have varied little over the years: We gave Japan every opportunity to surrender and they refused. . . The bomb had to be dropped in order to bring a speedy end to the war, saving hundreds of thousands of

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<sup>181</sup> Shackel, "Public Memory and the Search for Power in American Historical Archaeology," 656.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 657.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 659-660.

<sup>184</sup> Wittner, "The Enola Gay, the Atomic Bomb and American War Memory".

lives. . . Japan would not have surrendered so quickly if Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not been bombed with atomic weapons.<sup>185</sup> The military and government groups that lobbied against the original Enola Gay exhibit scripts did not want their cherished national myth challenged.

Unfortunately, many Americans continue to view the atomic bombs as “just more powerful” bombs without realizing what atomic bomb radiation did to the people on the ground, which included American POWs, American servicemen and women who participated in cleaning up Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the hundreds of thousands of military personnel who participated in over 1,000 atomic tests.<sup>186</sup> The government continues to cover up facts about nuclear bombs, even those related to the health of America’s servicemen. It is estimated that out of the 400,000 original atomic veterans, fewer than 20,000 are still alive.<sup>187</sup> As of October 2004, over 18,000 had filed for compensation for radiation-related illnesses, while only 12% had received any. For example, one report notes,

When Charles Clark was thirty-seven, his teeth started to fall out and his jaw began to lose its structure. Now, at the age of seventy-seven, he has had over 150 cancerous growths removed from his face, many lodged inside his ears and nasal passage. In 1995, Clark filed a claim for disability compensation with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The agency denied his request, stating that

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<sup>185</sup> Modern scholarship has successfully challenged these narratives, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the details of the refutations. However, I will state that the official findings of the U.S. Strategic Bomb Survey Report that was published less than a year following the attack stated that Japan would have surrendered even without the bomb:

Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the Survey’s opinion that certainly prior to 31 December 1945, and in all probability prior to 1 November 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated.

United States Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War).

<sup>186</sup> Mark Reuter, "Ill veterans who had radiation exposure now caught in bureaucratic web," *Illinois News Bureau*, April 3, 2006, <https://news.illinois.edu/blog/view/6367/207001> (accessed March 3, 2016).

<sup>187</sup> Podgor, "The Inability of World War II Atomic Veterans to Obtain Disability Benefits," 520-521.

reports from Nagasaki show that radiation levels were safe when he was in Nagasaki.<sup>188</sup>

As a society, Americans are not discussing the devastating effects of nuclear weapons even though so many Americans, including military personnel, have been affected.

*Hibakusha* voices, along with educational outreach and programming, such as the American University peace tour, offer a powerful means for enlightening Americans about the history and ongoing dangers of nuclear bombs. Survivors who share their stories at the sites of devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki do more than just recollect their experiences of the bomb. Each testament is a reenactment.<sup>189</sup> Placing witnesses and the students at the sites of nuclear devastation transforms the stories, its tellers, and its listeners.

Kuznick lauds *hibakusha* as teachers and role models who are trying to awaken America's "moral responsibility to act."<sup>190</sup> In 2010, 100 *hibakusha* visited the United States to attend the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations.

They came as ambassadors of peace and reached many thousands of people during their stay. They spoke at conferences like the one that I helped organize that brought Hibakusha together with victims of the 9/11. They met with community and peace groups. They addressed delegates at the United Nations, where they created an exhibit and met with UN officials and government representatives. They enlightened children of all ages at schools and colleges. They marched alongside thousands of others demanding the eradication of nuclear weapons. Throughout this time, they were followed everywhere by a large contingent of Japanese media. But the Hibakusha were almost completely ignored

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 62.

<sup>190</sup> Peter J. Kuznick, "Hiroshima and the World: Awakening America's "Moral Responsibility to Act", "*Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, June 28, 2010, [http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20100623170452389\\_en](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20100623170452389_en) (accessed January 15, 2015).

by the major U.S. corporate media, who must have believed that Americans were still not ready to confront what their country did 65 years ago.<sup>191</sup>

Kuznick also recognizes the task of educating Americans as being “essential but challenging.”

Meeting with Mayor Akiba and Japanese experts is always inspiring, but hearing directly from the Hibakusha is an experience my students never forget. Many examples stand out, but I will only tell about one—a woman in her thirties whose grandfather was on board the U.S.S. Indianapolis, which was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine after having delivered the first atomic bomb to Tinian in July 1945. Most of the crew went down with the ship or fell victim to shark attacks or drowning while awaiting rescue. The student had grown up hearing her grandfather’s stories about this incident and his anger at the submarine captain for not rescuing the victims. In our discussions, she strongly defended the atomic bombings. Within days of arriving in Japan, she began expressing doubts. By the end of the 2008 Peace Tour, she was a passionate critic of the bombings and is writing her doctoral thesis on aspects of the Hibakusha experience. She will be returning for her third Peace Tour this summer.<sup>192</sup>

A number of internationally famous *hibakusha* have interacted with AU’s peace tour during the past 20 years, including Shigeko Sasamori, Setsuko Thurlow, Akihiro Takahashi, and Sumiteru Taniguchi. However, Koko Tanimoto Kondo, who in addition to being a *hibakusha*, is an American University alumna. She has traveled and participated with the peace tour every year since 1997.

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

### Koko Tanimoto Kondo



FIGURE 1: Koko tells her life story to university students.<sup>193</sup>

Koko Tanimoto Kondo has dedicated her life to teaching peace. At seventy-years-old, Koko is one of the youngest survivors, having been only eight-months-old when the atomic bomb annihilated her home and neighborhood. Koko's father (pictured behind her) was John Hersey's main protagonist in "Hiroshima," Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto. Hersey's narrative launched Reverend Tanimoto into the world spotlight, which enabled the Methodist minister to spread a message of peace. During the summer of 2015, I participated in a study abroad program to Hiroshima and Nagasaki offered through American University (AU). Koko Tanimoto Kondo traveled and interacted with students throughout the ten-day seminar. She is a 1969 alumna of AU.<sup>194</sup>

In her formal talks and personal interactions, Koko shares the humiliation she felt as an adolescent visiting the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) building,

<sup>193</sup> Mike Unger, "After the Flash: The painful past and peaceful rebirth of Hiroshima," November 23, 2015, <http://www.american.edu/americanmagazine/hiroshima-atomic-bomb-japan-kuznick.cfm>.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.



where she had to stand naked on a stage while doctors and scientists scrutinized her body for signs of radiation's long-term effects. She recalls when her American fiancé abandoned her days before their wedding because his relatives thought radiation exposure made her unsuitable for marriage. Many victims of the bombings have never officially registered as *hibakusha*, which confers special status, compensation, and medical costs, because many Japanese view victims of the nuclear holocaust as being biologically polluted by the radiation. For many, being labeled as *hibakusha* is shameful.

“[Koko] brings the survivor's perspective, and a personal perspective, to the trip,” Kuznick, stated. “She brings the emotion of what it means to be a survivor.” Kuznick met Koko in 1996, a year after founding the Nuclear Studies Institute. Koko approached Kuznick and said she was “excited that AU was sending students to Japan to study Hiroshima,” Kuznick recalled.<sup>195</sup>

Her stories and educational objectives primarily revolve around two American media events that have directly affected her outlook on life: John Hersey's “Hiroshima” and an episode of Ralph Edward's *This is Your Life* that featured her father, which aired on television May 11, 1955.

### Kiyoshi Tanimoto

Kiyoshi Tanimoto was born in western Japan into a Buddhist family in 1909. He became a Christian Methodist when he was about 17. After becoming a Christian, his father disowned him.<sup>196</sup> He earned a theology degree in 1940 from Emory University in

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<sup>195</sup> Angela Modany, "Atom Bomb Survivor on Mission of Peace," American University. <http://www.american.edu/cas/news/hiroshima-bombing-survivor-at-au.cfm> (accessed October 15, 201).

<sup>196</sup> "Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto," Tanimoto Peace Foundation. <http://www.tanimotopeacefoundation.com/reverend-kiyoshi-tanimoto/> (accessed January 5, 2016).

Atlanta and served in churches in California, Okinawa and then Hiroshima.<sup>197</sup> His first child, Koko, was born on November 20, 1944.

Tanimoto and his family were living in Hiroshima the day Americans dropped an atomic bomb over the city. His wife and daughter were at home, while he was about two miles away helping a friend move. The following account of Tanimoto's experience is from Hersey's "Hiroshima."

Following the explosion, Tanimoto was amazed at the damage. He and his friend had not been hurt. He thought that many bombs must have exploded. After a short time, he thought of "his wife and baby, his church, his home, his parishioners" and began running towards the city.<sup>198</sup> But he discovered that he was the only person making his way into the city. He passed hundreds who were fleeing, and every one of them seemed to be hurt in some way. "The eyebrows of some were burned off and skin hung from their faces and hands. Others, because of pain, held their arms up as if carrying something in both hands. Some were vomiting as they walked. Many were naked or in shreds of clothing."<sup>199</sup>

As he approached the center, Tanimoto saw all the crushed homes and many were on fire. From under many homes, *people screamed for help, but no one helped; in general, survivors that day assisted only their relatives or immediate neighbors, for they could not comprehend or tolerate a wider circle of misery*, according to Hersey.<sup>200</sup> "As a Christian he was filled with compassion for those who were trapped, and as a Japanese he was overwhelmed by the shame of being unhurt, and he prayed as he ran, 'God help them

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<sup>197</sup> Rodney Barker, *The Hiroshima Maidens: A Story of Courage, Compassion, and Survival* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1985), 7-8.

<sup>198</sup> Hersey, "Hiroshima."

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Emphasis added. This phrasing can be found in Siemes' report.

and take them out of the fire.”<sup>201</sup> After running through the wreckage for some time, Tanimoto encountered his wife and child.

Mr. Tanimoto climbed up the bank and ran along it until, near a large Shinto shrine, he came to more fire, and as he turned left to get around it, he met, by incredible luck, his wife. She was carrying their infant *son*.<sup>202</sup> Mr. Tanimoto was now so emotionally worn out that nothing could surprise him. He did not embrace his wife; he simply said, “Oh, you are safe.” She told him that she had got home from her night in Ushida just in time for the explosion; she had been buried under the parsonage with the baby in her arms. She told how the wreckage had pressed down on her, how the baby had cried. She saw a chink of light, and by reaching up with a hand, she worked the hole bigger, bit by bit. After about half an hour, she heard the crackling noise of wood burning. At last the opening was big enough for her to push the baby out, and afterward she crawled out herself. She said she was now going out to Ushida again. Mr. Tanimoto said he wanted to see his church and take care of the people of his Neighborhood Association. They parted as casually—as bewildered—as they had met.<sup>203</sup>

Tanimoto continued to make his way to the water in Asano Park, where so many people were dead and dying. Having been burned, many people fled to the water for relief.

“Those who were burned moaned, “Mizu, mizu! Water, water!”

Finding a boat, he navigated across the water to meet up with some friends:

Father Kleinsorge and the other Catholics. But he did not see Fukai, who had been a close friend. “Where is Fukai-san?” he asked. “He didn’t want to come with us, Father Kleinsorge said. “He ran back.”<sup>204</sup> Tanimoto and Kleinsorge worked together to help others.

Tanimoto’s story continues throughout Hersey’s book. However, the details that I have included in this section offer the foundational events that Koko recounts from Hersey’s tale when she shares her testimony with others. They will be revisited in the

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<sup>201</sup> Hersey, “Hiroshima.”

<sup>202</sup> Koko shared a story with us on the peace tour. How when she met John Hersey after she had read his book, she went up to him and told him that she liked the story, but she was not a boy. “I am a girl!” The mistake was corrected in a later reprint.

<sup>203</sup> Hersey, “Hiroshima.”

<sup>204</sup> This is also from the Siemes’ account.

next section. For now, I would like to touch upon Reverend Tanimoto's experiences after Hersey's "Hiroshima."

Following the publication of Hersey's "Hiroshima," the American Methodist Church invited Tanimoto to speak about his experiences of the Hiroshima bombing. At a time during the American Occupation when so few Japanese were allowed to leave the country, Tanimoto received permission. He gave 582 lectures before returning to Japan in 1950.<sup>205</sup> Norman Cousins, editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, befriended Tanimoto and worked together to organize and raised funds to bring 25 *Hiroshima Maidens* to the United States to receive free reconstructive surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.<sup>206</sup>

Cousins arranged for Tanimoto to appear on Ralph Edwards' *This Is Your Life*, a popular daytime television show.<sup>207</sup> Tanimoto was flown to Hollywood from New York for what he thought would be an interview about his work with the Hiroshima Maidens' project to help him raise money. He brought two of the young women with him to the theater.

The show arranged for several surprise guests, including Tanimoto's wife and children, who were flown in from Japan. But the biggest surprise was Captain Robert Lewis, co-pilot of the Enola Gay. The meeting was awkward for both men. Edwards asked Lewis to describe what happened on the fateful day for the television audience.

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<sup>205</sup> "Kiyoshi Tanimoto Dies; Led Hiroshima Victims," *The New York Times*, September 29, 1986, <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/29/obituaries/kiyoshi-tanimoto-dies-led-hiroshima-victims.html> (accessed March 10, 2015).

<sup>206</sup> Paul Ham, *Hiroshima Nagasaki: The Real Story of the Atomic Bombings and Their Aftermath* (2014), 448-449.; *The Saturday Review of Literature* published Siemes' full eyewitness testimony in 1946 in order to raise public awareness of the after-effects of the bomb.

<sup>207</sup> "Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto".

“As I said before, Mr. Edwards...I wrote down later...” Choking on his words, Lewis put his hand to his forehead and repeated his earlier line, “My God, what have we done?”<sup>208</sup>

The final guests that were revealed were Tanimoto’s family (which included 10-year-old Koko) and two of the Hiroshima Maidens, who were shown only in silhouette “to avoid causing them any embarrassment.”

Following a final Helen Bishop cosmetics commercial, Edwards asked the audience for donations for the continued medical care of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims. Robert Lewis presented a check to the host saying: “Mr. Edwards, on behalf of the entire crew that participated in that mission, my company and my lovely family, I’d like to make the first contribution.” Edwards thanked Lewis as the audience applauded the gift. Tanimoto, who was seated, turned around and offered Lewis another handshake.

The episode helped to raised \$55,000. However, following the broadcast, the studio’s switchboard was jammed with calls “exclusively from members of the military and they were all outraged by Robert Lewis’ appearance. These callers believed that the co-pilot had disgraced himself and the armed forces by questioning—ever so slightly—the morality of the Enola Gay mission.”<sup>209</sup> When Robert Lewis died of a heart attack at the age of 65 on June 18, 1983, his obituary noted that he had become an advocate for a freeze on nuclear weapons.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Ralph Edwards, May 11, 1955. "This is Your Life: Rev. Kiyoshi Tanimoto," [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xl3jx5\\_this-is-your-life-1955\\_shortfilms#.UR1eCmfAGSo](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xl3jx5_this-is-your-life-1955_shortfilms#.UR1eCmfAGSo) (accessed February 21, 2015).

<sup>209</sup> "Too Soon? The Hiroshima Reenactment Incident," Conelrad Adjacent. <http://conelrad.blogspot.com/2010/08/too-soon-hiroshima-reenactment-incident.html> (accessed October 10, 2015).

<sup>210</sup> "Maj. Robert A. Lewis Enola Gay co-pilot is dead at age 65," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, June 20, 1983, 10.

## Koko on the Peace Tour

Koko was first introduced to peace tour students on August 3 at the Kyoto Museum of World Peace at Ritsumeikan University shortly before she began to share her life story.<sup>211</sup> Projected behind her was an image of her father on the set of *This is Your Life*. She began by stating that she was just eight months old when Hiroshima was bombed. Her mother had a visitor that August morning from a member of her father's church. That is why she was in her mother's arms and not crawling on the floor as usual, when at 8:15 exactly, the Enola Gay dropped its atomic bomb just 1.5 kilometers away. Koko held up the baby dress that she was wearing that morning so that we could all see how tiny she was.

Koko was in her mother's arms when their house collapsed, trapping them in the rubble until a baby's cries stirred her mother back to consciousness. At first she thought, "Ah, a baby is crying somewhere." And then suddenly the crying cut off completely and then with her mother's instinct she realized that it was her baby, that's me she recalled. At first her mother cried for help, but no help came. She knew she had to do something or her baby would die. Her mother moved little by little and finally she was able to make a little hole above her head and she took me out of the house. When she was outside she saw fires all over the place.

They had to escape the fires that were taking over the city. Koko said that her mother always said that it was because of Koko that they survived. Where there were many people, the people saw that her mother had a baby and told her to go ahead of them.

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<sup>211</sup> Koko spoke to the students for well over an hour. My discussion of her testimony is only a portion of her account. Because the student body was split between English and Japanese speaking participants, Koko would spend several minutes telling her story in English and then switch to Japanese before proceeding. All of the sessions in the peace tour were conducted this way.

Koko remembered that when she was 2 or 3, many young girls, maybe 10 or 12 years old, would come to the church. “They were so nice to me. But their faces...their faces were so scary to me. Some of them. . .their eyes could not close, or the mouth could not close because the lips were together with the chin. Their faces had been melted.” She explained that she couldn’t understand why they were all so ugly. “I found out later that they were burnt by the fire, from the atomic bomb. I said to myself when I grow up I am really going to find whoever did this and give them a big punch or a kick.” Koko made a fist and scrunched her face up when she said this, making the students smile.

She said that she got her shot at revenge when she was 10-years-old. (Again everyone laughed.) Her family was invited to the United States to be on a television show, *This is Your Life*. Waiting offstage before her entrance, Koko just stared at Lewis, she said. “I had always dreamed of what it would be like to ‘punch those bad guys.’” But something happened. She saw tears well up in his eyes when the show’s host asked him how he felt after dropping the bomb. Lewis told the host, that he wrote in his flight log: “My god, what have we done?”<sup>212</sup> “That was the moment I changed,” she said. “I said to myself, ‘God, please forgive me for hating this guy. If I hate, I should hate the war, not the man.’”

Koko joined us for the rest of the trip, to Hiroshima and then to Nagasaki. Students took turns sitting and talking with her on the trains, during meals, and in-between sessions.

On August 5, we visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and many of the memorials in the Peace Park. Within the Peace Museum is a large diorama of the city as

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<sup>212</sup> The *This is Your Life: Kiyoshi Tanimoto* episode was shown to the students. It is available at [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xl3jx5\\_this-is-your-life-1955\\_shortfilms](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xl3jx5_this-is-your-life-1955_shortfilms).

it appeared following the blast. Koko stood in front of the model and gathered us all around to tell her story. She began by asking everyone if they had already read Hersey's "Hiroshima." (Everyone had.) She pointed to a location in the city, "Here is where my father was when the bomb detonated." "Here is where me and my mother were." "Do you remember in the story that they met along the way? Here is where they met." "That over there was Asano Park."

Behind where we stood, was a mannequin display used to recreate a scene of injured people fleeing the destroyed city following the atomic bombing. Koko pointed to the display and talked about how Hersey described the people fleeing the city. "The eyebrows of some were burned off and skin hung from their faces and hands. Others, because of pain, held their arms up as if carrying something in both hands."<sup>213</sup>

Outside the museum and into the Peace Park, we visited the Children's Peace Memorial, which is dedicated to the memory of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl in Hiroshima who died from leukemia at the age of twelve, ten years after the atomic bomb detonated. Koko had gone to the same elementary school as Sadako, who was a year older than her. The monument is a bronze likeness of Sadako with outstretched arms holding a folded paper crane rising above her. She believed that if she folded 1,000 paper cranes she would be cured. Built with contributions from over 3,000 schools in Japan and nine countries, the monument was unveiled in 1958. To this day, visitors fold cranes and place them near the statue.

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<sup>213</sup> Hersey, "Hiroshima."; The museum plans to remove the display. Deputy Director Masuda said, "I hope to display more personal belongings and photos to accurately convey the reality of the atomic bombing." He added that, along with the facts, an emphasis will also be on conveying the grief of victims and their families. Part of this effort will be an area for displaying victims' personal belongings, photographs, and explanations of how they were exposed to the atomic bomb. Michiko Tanaka, "Debate over removal of Peace Museum's mannequins," *Hiroshima Peace Media*, June 10, 2013, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=20465> (accessed November 12, 2015).



We visited the memorial the day before and the day of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony. On the day before, Koko introduced us to the memorial and its history. She described how when she (Koko) was in the seventh or eighth grade, she and her friends at school decided that they wanted to help build a memorial for Sadako. So they asked all of the other schools in Japan for donations. They even stood on the street and asked for donations. Their money helped build a monument for children because they did not want any other children to go through the same type of suffering.<sup>214</sup>

Following the early morning Peace Memorial Ceremony, the final site that we visited that is significant to Koko's testimony was Shukkeien Garden (Asano Park in Hersey's "Hiroshima"). Travel website GoJapanGo.com offers the garden's history:

Construction of Shukkeien began in 1620, the year following Asanu Nagaakira's installation as Daimyo (feudal lord) of Hiroshima. It was built by his principal retainer, Ueda Soko, a famous master of the Japanese tea ceremony, as the garden of Nagaakira's villa. Shukkeien's name literally means 'shrink-scenery garden', which expresses the idea of collecting and miniaturizing many scenic views. As is tradition, the miniaturized landscape is modelled on a real life landscape, in the case of Shukkeien, Xihu (West Lake) in Hangzhou, China.<sup>215</sup>

Shukkeien was only 1.2km from the epicenter of the Hiroshima atomic attack. All the buildings were destroyed and all the vegetation was burnt or killed with the exception one tree. That one tree still stands in the park with a plaque explaining what happened in the garden when the bomb exploded. As Hersey described in his book, uncountable numbers

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<sup>214</sup> The bell that's a part of Sadako's statue is a popular gathering spot on the evening of the anniversary in contrast to the morning's somber tone. Following the Peace Memorial Service the morning of August 6, we all went to Shukkeien Garden and then everyone went sightseeing. But we all met back at the Children's Peace Memorial in early evening to gather for the lantern ceremony (*Toro nagashi*), an informal ceremony in which thousands of lanterns carry messages of peace to the spirits of victims. The evening felt more hopeful as kids continually rang the bell. A group of Japanese girls held signs offering hugs for peace (similar to the Free Hugs campaign).

<sup>215</sup> Shukkeien Garden Brochure, <http://shukkeien.jp/pdf/EnglishBrochure.pdf>. (accessed May3, 2016).

of people who were injured by the bomb took refuge on the grounds. Many died in the garden of their wounds. Their remains were interred within the garden.<sup>216</sup>

By the edge of the water, we gathered around Koko as she recounted the story Hersey told about Asano Park. But first, she told a story about how her father and Hersey first came to know one another. Kiyoshi Tanimoto was not home the day Hersey first came to call, but said that he would come back. Tanimoto wrote down his experience for Hersey who used the account as the framework for his book.

Koko told the students to think about what a small cut on a finger feels like. Then she explained that the ocean fed into the river and asked students to think about what it must have felt like for the burn victims to cross the water, the only way to get to the other side. Her father had come to the river and found a small boat near the edge. But there was a dead body. Her father had to move the body out of the boat. He apologized as he did it.

He encountered many people calling out for water. He found a broken cup and gave water to everyone. When the sun came up the next day, most of the people were dead. Vincent Intondi, author of *From Harlem to Hiroshima: The African American Response to the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, and one of the professors on the peace tour, asked students to consider what people experienced during the day of the bombing. We had attended the Peace Memorial Ceremony at 8:15am, the time when the bomb had detonated in 1945. It was now around 10:30am.

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<sup>216</sup> "Shukkeien Garden," GoJapanGo.com.  
[http://www.gojapango.com/travel/hiroshima\\_shukkeien\\_garden.htm](http://www.gojapango.com/travel/hiroshima_shukkeien_garden.htm) (accessed October 1, 2015).

## Reflections

Koko's testimony is unique to her experience as it also connects to all of the other *hibakusha* stories. Her story identifies what she was doing at the time of the blast, how she and her family were affected, and the milestones in her life following the disaster. She reaches out emotionally to others with the hope that one day the threat of nuclear weapons is eradicated.

A coherence that was not available at the time of the blast (or even early in her life) has emerged through time and repetition. Due to her special circumstances, Koko was able to anchor her narrative to that of her father's mission for peace and Hersey's infamous story. This connection is beneficial to her and her audience because it offers a point of commonality from which to start. This connection also provides a form of two-way legitimization for Hersey's story and Koko's. Koko's life story is a testament that Hersey's story really happened. The popularity of Hersey's story contributes to audience perception of the importance of her story.

Her testimony is a type of living history reenactment that brings to life stories from history and the physical memorials that her audiences can learn from, engage with, and connect with emotionally. Aligning her testimony with the sites that students visit during American University's annual Peace Tour offers a unique and personal connection with aspects of history on which few Americans are well-versed. The fact that she is a *hibakusha* adds a level of authenticity that few historical reenactments can provide. Koko's living history performance provides her audience with an experience that will enable them to understand artifacts and stories in a new way.

People are acculturated through habit. As Marea Teski and Jacob Climo discuss in *The Labyrinth of Memory*, “Culture may be seen as memory in action as we live and enact our version of the real living world. Habitual ways of doing things are almost automatic, for we act as we have acted before, and ultimately as we have been taught to act.”<sup>217</sup> We understand things to be common sense if they are part of our culture and often do not question them. They are part of our *habitus*, according to Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>218</sup> As Paul Shackel explained it,

Habitus is the interaction between the unconscious and physical world that is learned and reinforced through interaction. Symbols play an important role in structuring relations of hierarchy and classification systems. Using past experience and the ability to read the meanings of objects allows one to accept or reject the use and meaning of the object and the creation of a particular past.<sup>219</sup>

People tend to continually reinforce their worldview by engaging primarily with their own cultural symbols. New and unique experiences are needed to expand one’s habitus, which will allow a person to make informed decisions about issues outside the scope of his or her typical familiarity. Someone with no experience with the atomic bombings can’t be expected to understand what the objects and stories mean for *hibakusha*. Koko’s interactions with students at the sites of the bombing offer them the ability to read the meanings of objects in a new way.

Yet, many Americans will never have the opportunity to engage with *hibakusha* directly. There are other more readily available means for Americans to engage with the history of the atomic bombings outside traditional forms of media and education (e.g., films, books, newspaper articles, academic courses, etc.). Two examples are examined in

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<sup>217</sup> Marea Teski and Jacob Climo, *The Labyrinth of Memory: Ethnographic Journeys* (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 2.

<sup>218</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>219</sup> Shackel, "Public Memory and the Search for Power in American Historical Archaeology," 665.

the following chapter. The first explores the world of Commemorative Air Force “warbird” air shows, which are a type of historical reenactment that focuses on American displays of power in the air that occurred between the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The second example explores the life and memory of Sadako Sasaki who died of leukemia ten years after the Hiroshima attack as a result of residual radiation from the bomb. The commemorative practice of folding paper cranes as a wish for peace generated from her story.

### CHAPTER 3: THE B-29 AND THE PAPER CRANE

This chapter looks at two case studies of public history in America that engage with histories of the atomic bombings. The first case study focuses on “warbirds” that perform in air shows throughout the United States each year before hundreds of thousands of spectators who come to relive the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the rise in American air power, and the ultimate destruction of Japan (atom bombs included). The second case study centers on the story of Sadako Sasaki and the thousand paper cranes. Both studies incorporate iconic images of flight into their rituals that reach audiences in the millions. And both incorporate rituals that work to build communities around a monumental event with the intention of maintaining a particular way of remembering: winning World War II by dropping atomic bombs on Japan and venerating the American soldiers who brought the war to an end, on one hand, and, the death of an innocent child that was caused by atomic bomb radiation exposure and praying that no more children will have such an experience, on the other.

#### Warbirds and Spectacle

The United States officially apologized to Japan on October 14, 1976, as a result of events at a Confederate Air Force (CAF) air show that took place October 10-11, 1976, in Harlingen, Texas.<sup>220</sup> During the show, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima with a simulated mushroom cloud was reenacted by the original pilot of the “Enola Gay”

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<sup>220</sup> "Pilot of Enola Gay Had No Regrets for Hiroshima," NPR. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=15858203> (accessed January 15, 2016).; Footage of the demonstration can be seen online at [http://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675041101\\_Air-show\\_Skydivers-descending\\_fighter-plane\\_B-29-Superfortress](http://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675041101_Air-show_Skydivers-descending_fighter-plane_B-29-Superfortress). Forward to around the 1:50 mark.

(retired U.S. Air Force General Paul Tibbets) who was at the controls of “FIFI”, a B-29 replica of the infamous plane.<sup>221</sup> As the plane came into view of the crowd of 40,000, a U.S. Army demolition team on the ground detonated a barrel full of explosives which sent a mushroom-shaped cloud billowing skyward.<sup>222</sup> Even though the CAF is a civilian organization, the United States military was implicated in the event by supplying a demolitions team and through Tibbets’ involvement in the reenactment. Tibbets was quoted as telling newsmen at the event: “I never lost a night’s sleep over the fact that I commanded the bombing.”<sup>223</sup> The reenactment was performed three times over the weekend for an estimated crowd of 80,000 people.<sup>224</sup>

The Mayor of Hiroshima, Takeshi Araki, who addressed a solemn crowd of 40,000 at the 30th Anniversary Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, called the reenactment “a blasphemy” and “grotesque.” “What you have done insults the Japanese people who suffered from the bomb. I feel real rage and we shall protest to the U.S. government and all concerned.”<sup>225</sup> Hisako Tanaka, a 28-year-old woman in Tokyo, told the *Washington Post*: “I’m really angry. It’s ridiculous, racist and discriminatory. I’m really surprised that people like that still exist in the states.”<sup>226</sup> Juro Ikeyama, an official of the Japanese Congress Against Atom and Hydrogen Bombs, told the *Washington Post* that he “trembled” when heard about the air show. “Our effort to make the world aware

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<sup>221</sup> "Japanese Complaint Brings 'Regrets' For Hiroshima Blast Re-Enactment," *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, October 15, 1976; Miller H. Bonner, Jr., "Japanese protest re-creation of Hiroshima bombing," *The Daily Leader*, October 14, 1976.

<sup>222</sup> Bonner, "Japanese protest re-creation of Hiroshima bombing."

<sup>223</sup> "Japanese Complaint Brings 'Regrets' For Hiroshima Blast Re-Enactment."

<sup>224</sup> A film copy of the 1976 Harlingen Airshow is available at the National Archives in College Park. The atomic bomb reenactment is contained in Record Group 342: Records of the U.S. Air Force Commands, Activities, and Organizations, 1900-2003. ARC Identifier 72219. Local Identifier 342-USAF-50329. Reel 4: 275' B-29 making simulated drop of A-Bomb, charge explodes forming mushroom cloud.

<sup>225</sup> "Japanese Angered by 'Atomic Bombing'," *The Times-Picayune (New Orleans, Louisiana)*, October 14, 1976.

<sup>226</sup> "Too Soon? The Hiroshima Reenactment Incident".

of the consequences of atomic warfare have plainly been inadequate. We must do more. The American people have no guilty conscience. If you knew the consequences of what you have done, this demonstration would have been impossible.”<sup>227</sup>

Japan officials lodged a formal complaint with the U.S. Embassy about the show.<sup>228</sup> The Confederate Air Force (CAF), known today as the Commemorative Air Force, still hosts and performs numerous air shows each year to raise money to help maintain a museum of World War II vintage planes that are housed across twenty-seven states in the U.S.<sup>229</sup> The atomic bomb reenactment continues to be a staple of their performance. Their history, expansion, and continued glorification of the Hiroshima bombing in public commemorations before hundreds of thousands of Americans each year will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

U.S. Embassy First Secretary Nicholas Platt was summoned to the foreign ministry on October 14, 1976, and questioned about the incident. “The Japanese reminded him of the sensitivity of the Japanese people to nuclear weapons,” a government spokesperson told the UPI.<sup>230</sup> In Harlingen, Colonel Glenn Bercot, who was the official spokesman for the Confederate Air Force, said no bad taste was intended.<sup>231</sup> “All we’re doing here is recreating the historic air battles of World War II with the aircraft that we have. We are not trying to glamorize it in any way, but to show it was something solemn. I think our feelings are like theirs — that we don’t want to see another

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> "Japanese Complaint Brings 'Regrets' For Hiroshima Blast Re-Enactment."

<sup>229</sup> Edward Linenthal mistakenly reported that the CAF discontinued performing the atomic bombing reenactment in his book *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*. Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 186.

<sup>230</sup> "Japanese Complaint Brings 'Regrets' For Hiroshima Blast Re-Enactment."

<sup>231</sup> Glenn Bercot is not a military colonel. Members of the CAF address one another as “Colonel.” Len Morgan, "The Battle of Harlingen," *Flying* February 1978, 48.



conflict like this.”<sup>232</sup> Yet, despite Bercot’s reasoning, the exhibition displayed the aircraft and pyrotechnics without offering explanations for any human suffering or death caused by the blast, or for the residual effects of the radiation that continue to torment, disable, and kill *hibakusha*.

Many newspaper accounts of the CAF reenactment included discussion of bomb casualties, but kept the numbers artificially low, a tradition that has remained in line with official U.S. narratives since the end of the war. Statements, such as the following, persist: “According to official U.S. estimates shortly after the war, 78,150 persons were killed outright at Hiroshima or died of radiation poisoning later.”<sup>233</sup> These numbers mirrored initial figures published within *weeks* of the Hiroshima bombing and did not take into consideration the death toll from Nagasaki or deaths attributed to radiation contamination up through 1976, when the reenactments took place.<sup>234</sup> Current scholarship estimates that between 90,000 and 166,000 people are believed to have died from the bomb in the four-month period following the explosion. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that “after five years there were perhaps 200,000 or more fatalities as a result of the bombing, while the city of Hiroshima has estimated that 237,000 people were killed directly or indirectly by the bomb’s effects, including burns, radiation sickness, and cancer.”<sup>235</sup> These numbers do not account for deaths in Nagasaki; for deaths of U.S.

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<sup>232</sup> "Japanese Complaint Brings 'Regrets' For Hiroshima Blast Re-Enactment."

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. These are the same statistics published in 1946 in the various newspaper and magazine articles, and books that reported Johannes Siemes’ eyewitness account.

<sup>234</sup> The United States government published the initial death toll of 70,000 on September 1, 1945. In February 1946, those numbers were increased to only 78,150 and have remained the official, most repeated statistics for the past 70 years. The U.S. Department of Energy Manhattan Project website states that by the end of 1945, the numbers would have exceeded 100,000, and within the first five years following the bombing, the numbers most likely exceeded 200,000. <https://www.osti.gov/opennet/manhattan-project-history/Events/1945/hiroshima.htm> (accessed March 27, 2016).

<sup>235</sup> "Using the Atomic Bomb - 1945".

servicemen and women who were sent to clean up the disaster, or who participated in nuclear tests; for American or foreign civilians who were exposed to radiation during America's 1,054 atomic tests; or for the countless others sickened while mining uranium, or through working with bomb materials.

In one news report, a spokesman for the CAF stated that they would not apologize for re-enacting the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima. "I go along with the Japanese in that we're against the A-bomb and the H-bomb also, but I think it's been blown out of proportion and meaning," said CAF executive director Jim Hill.<sup>236</sup>

Our re-enactment was a sober, sincere presentation of American history," he said. "I don't apologize for doing it and doing it this way. Did they (Japanese) find fault with our re-enactment of Pearl Harbor? No, they didn't. We start off with the attack on Pearl Harbor and carry through with the War in the Pacific and end up with the missing-man (formation) and the atom bomb."<sup>237</sup>

The rationale behind this line of thinking is that as long as the CAF includes demonstrations of air battles where Japanese soldiers held the advantage then it is okay to reenact the atomic bombing, because they are being true to history. Members of the CAF believe that they are presenting the true, unadulterated events of history.

Hill stated that the estimated 80,000 persons who saw the four-day air show viewed the spectacle in a historical perspective. "We start off our show with the Pearl Harbor attack and end it with the simulated atom bomb," he said. "It's the story of World War II presented with the aircraft and set within the particular battles we're displaying

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<sup>236</sup> Miller H. Bonner, Jr., "Apology Demand Spurned By Show Official," *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, October 15, 1976.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

and we don't apologize in the least for history."<sup>238</sup> In other words, they are telling history as *it really was*.

As Edward Linenthal noted in his book *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, the CAF flatly stated, "We of the Confederate Air Force are going to do our best to see that the American people do not forget Pearl Harbor—and that the Japanese and others do not forget what made it necessary to drop that bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki."<sup>239</sup> There is no indication that the CAF ever stopped reenacting the atomic bombing of Hiroshima even though the U.S. government had to apologize to Japan for the 1976 event. Articles printed in *Flying* magazine since 1977 have glorified the CAF for their patriotic efforts and have reported on the continuing ritual in subsequent years.<sup>240</sup>

Before delving further into CAF history and their continued influence today, it is important to consider what it means to tell history as *it really was*. Leopold von Ranke is a historian whose writings have presented a defining influence on how we think about history.<sup>241</sup> He famously stated: "You have reckoned that history ought to judge the past and to instruct the contemporary world as to the future. The present attempt does not yield to that high office. It will merely tell *how it really was*."<sup>242</sup> It is important to look at our assumptions about historical facts and accuracy in order to comprehend modern critiques of how history is compiled.

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields*, 186.

<sup>240</sup> Nigel Moll, "Ghost Story: Celebrating warbirds saved from the swelter," *Flying*, February, 1989, 71; Len Morgan, "The Battle of Harlingen," February 1978.

<sup>241</sup> He is known as the father of modern history. Edward Muir, "Leopold von Ranke, His Library, and the Shaping of Historical Evidence," *The Courier* 22, no. 1 (1987): 3.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 4. Emphasis added.

Ranke challenged the prevailing humanist view of history of his time, preferring for facts to speak for themselves through the use of primary sources.<sup>243</sup> He is famous for refocusing historical study towards a more documentary approach that incorporates eye-witness narratives and other authentic documents. His historical enterprise was founded on visual perception and an exclusive scientific paradigm.<sup>244</sup> This approach, of course, omits that which cannot be seen.<sup>245</sup>

Additionally, Ranke viewed political power as the most important agent in history. He emphasized a political history which concentrates its focus on kings and leaders (in other words, on the oppressor). Religion was identified in the literature on Ranke as one of the principal motives of his historical writings.<sup>246</sup> He created a universal view of history based on a nationalistic and conservative religious viewpoint which strongly supported the monarchy.<sup>247</sup>

Although Ranke's method of incorporating firsthand documentation remains influential in the praxis of history, his other ideas have been successfully challenged by more recent historians such as E. H. Carr who rejected the empirical view of the historian's work being a heap of "facts" that he or she has at his or her disposal.<sup>248</sup> Carr exclaimed: "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one

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<sup>243</sup> However, many primary sources are interpretations as well.

<sup>244</sup> J.D. Braw, "Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History," *History and Theory* 4 (2007): 48.

<sup>245</sup> Airshows, as visual demonstrations, rely on what is seen.

<sup>246</sup> Braw, "Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern History," 54.

<sup>247</sup> See, for example, *History of the Popes During the 16th and 17th Centuries (1834-36)*, *History of the Reformation in Germany (1839-47)*, *Civil Wars and Monarchy in France in the 16th and 17th Centuries (1852)*.

<sup>248</sup> Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers On History* (London: Routledge, 2000), 26. This image of a heap of facts is reminiscent of the heap of rubble witnessed by Benjamin's Angel of History, the "single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet."

which it is very hard to eradicate.”<sup>249</sup> Even Walter Benjamin disdainfully wrote that Ranke’s insistence on historical writings presenting events “as they really were” represented “the strongest narcotic of the century.”<sup>250</sup>

The warning posted here is to beware of historical truth-claims. The bare facts of events, once compiled and narrated, are always framed a particular way by the historian. Just as all individual photographs are framed from a photographer’s point-of-view, written historical narratives, as well as airshow exhibitions, are framed from the historians’. The origin and ending to each narrative are the limits of each frame that help to shape meaning. History is political and is always tied to power and agendas.

#### The Confederate Air Force

According to the Commemorative Air Force website, Lloyd Nolen and a small group of ex-service pilots from Texas pooled their money to purchase a P-51 Mustang in 1957.<sup>251</sup> Originally known as the Confederate Air Force (CAF), the group was first chartered as a nonprofit in 1961 at which time they owned nine planes.<sup>252</sup> Their purpose was to restore and preserve “warbirds,” or vintage military aircraft. By 1968, there were 325 members.<sup>253</sup> In 2016, the CAF claims to rank as one of the largest air forces in the world, even though they are a civilian non-profit organization.<sup>254</sup> Today the CAF has approximately 13,000 members and a fleet of more than 165 aircraft representing more

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<sup>249</sup> Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 12.

<sup>250</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland, Kevin MacLaughlin, and Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 463.

<sup>251</sup> "Commemorative Air Force History & Mission," Commemorative Air Force. <http://commemorativeairforce.org/aboutus> (accessed March 10, 2016).

<sup>252</sup> Diane Jennings, "Commemorative Air Force weighs move from West Texas, maybe to Dallas area," *Dallas Morning News*, September 29, 2013, <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/local-news/20130929-commemorative-air-force-may-move-its-headquarters-from-w.-texas.ece> (accessed March 25, 2016).

<sup>253</sup> John Covington, "The Confederate Air Force," *The Junior Historian* 28, no. 4 (January 1968). <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph391403/> (accessed March 27, 2016).

<sup>254</sup> "Commemorative Air Force History & Mission".

than 60 different types—including planes from several foreign countries and other military conflicts since World War II.<sup>255</sup> Its fleet is distributed to 73 units located in 24 states for care and operation. These units, comprised of CAF members and volunteers, restore and operate the planes which are viewed by more than 10 million spectators annually.

The original name spawned from one of the CAF members painting “Confederate Air Force” on the original P-51 Mustang. They commissioned themselves as colonels and purchased gray uniforms.<sup>256</sup>

The Confederacy, which dissolved a half century before the airplane was invented, didn’t have an Air Force, of course. The name was tongue-in-cheek, derived from the legend someone long ago painted on the fuselage of a P-51 as a joke. It stayed a joke (the patches on their flight jackets read “This is a CAF aviator. If found lost or unconscious, please hide him from Yankees, revive him with mint julep and assist him in returning to friendly territory.”) until the organization decided that neither the public nor potential donors appreciated the joke.<sup>257</sup>

In 2000, they voted to change their name to Commemorative Air Force in order to attract more potential donors. As one news source reported, “A hundred and thirty-five years after the Civil War, a West Texas air museum has figured out that big companies don’t rally behind lost causes.”<sup>258</sup> Marketing/communications director Tina Corbett stated, “We have no ties to the confederacy.”<sup>259</sup> However, the name change was deemed by some supporters to be a move of political correctness.

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Morgan, “The Battle of Harlingen,” 48.

<sup>257</sup> Eric Nicholson, “Dallas Executive Airport Woos the Former “Confederate Air Force” to Southern Dallas,” *Dallas Observer*, April 29, 2014, <http://www.dallasobserver.com/news/dallas-executive-airport-woos-the-former-confederate-air-force-to-southern-dallas-7142239> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>258</sup> “LAST CALL: Air Force grounds Confederate link,” *PR Week*, December 4, 2000, <http://www.prweek.com/article/1238851/last-call-air-force-grounds-confederate-link> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

## Air Shows and the CAF

According to the International Council of Air Shows, approximately 325-350 air shows occur each year in U.S. and Canada. The estimated total attendance is 10-12 million spectators per year, with a total industry revenue of approximately \$110 million.<sup>260</sup>

CAF aircraft appear in numerous air shows around the county each year as part of its AirPower History Tour. As of March 2016, 27 shows which run four days each were posted on their website along with a notice that more shows would be added.<sup>261</sup> The B-29 FIFI is scheduled to appear at all tour stops.

FIFI is the star of CAF shows. The B-29 Superfortress is the same type of aircraft that dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima (Enola Gay) and Nagasaki (Bockscar). It was built in 1945, but did not participate in World War II, and despite seeing service in Korea, was not involved in that conflict either. FIFI was retired in 1960.<sup>262</sup>

Visitors may purchase tickets to fly on FIFI, which range in price from \$570 to sit in the gunner's seat to \$1595 to fly in the bombardier's seat.<sup>263</sup> The following is promoted on the AirPower History Tour website:

You can relive history and ride on one of the rarest World War II bombers in existence by taking a "Living History" BOMBER RIDE. This unique in-the-air

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<sup>260</sup> "Air Show Facts," International Council of Air Shows. <https://www.airshows.aero/Page/AboutAS-Facts> (accessed March 12, 2016).

<sup>261</sup> "CAF AirPower History Tour," Commemorative Air Force. <http://www.airpowersquadron.org/#!b29-schedule/c1yws> (accessed March 20, 2016).

<sup>262</sup> Darren Boyle, "The magnificent moment the last flying WWII Boeing B-29 Superfortress startles drivers by swooping over LA highway," *DailyMail*, March 17, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2998917/The-magnificent-moment-flying-WWII-Boeing-B-29-Superfortress-startles-drivers-swooping-LA-highway.html> (accessed March 3, 2016).

<sup>263</sup> "B-29 Superfortress FIFI," Commemorative Air Force. <http://www.airpowersquadron.org/#!b-29-superfortress/c11zx> (accessed March 20, 2016).

experience allows you to sit in the seats our veteran's sat in and see and feel what they encountered . . . minus the bullets and flak.<sup>264</sup>

The bombardier seat is advertised as the “best-seat-in-the-house.” “It is easy to imagine the view of the target through the actual Norden bombsight or catch a glimpse of a Zero fighter swooping down toward you with guns blazing.”<sup>265</sup>

In 2014, three U.S. veterans took a flight on FIFI and recounted their memories of war. Flying from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, Karnig Thomasian, David Fisher, and Charles Chauncey hopped on FIFI to attend World War II AirPower Expo in New Orleans with thousands of other veterans. Chauncey “flew 22 firebomb raids, including three on Tokyo in what he called the ‘blitz’ of March 1945.”<sup>266</sup> Official estimates put the death toll at 125,000 from the fire bombings, but Chauncey believed many more died.<sup>267</sup> As with the atomic bombings, the firebomb raids were widely criticized, but Fisher and Chauncey said they had no qualms about the civilian death toll nearly 70 years later. “I don’t care if you ran a hamburger stand feeding factory workers,” Chauncey said. “They’re as much a part of the war effort as anybody else.”<sup>268</sup>

FIFI offers more than nostalgia for some American veterans’ families. Dave Howe, 71, purchased a ride to bring him closer to his father, pictured in an aging photograph that was taken August 6, 1945. In the photo, Howe’s shirtless 25-year-old father cocks his head and squints into the sun, with the Enola Gay behind him. “The plane had just landed from the Hiroshima [atomic bombing] mission when this picture was taken,” Howe said. His dad was a radio operator for a crew of another B-29 on

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Janet McConnaughey, “World War II airmen fly again in storied B-29,” *Washington Times*, October 24, 2014, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/oct/24/world-war-ii-airmen-fly-again-in-storied-b-29/>.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.



Tinian Island, but couldn't resist getting a photo to mark the historic moment. The back of the frame tells the rest of the story: "8-6-45. Tinian Island, Pacific Ocean. Staff Sergeant Clarence M. Howe Jr. The engines were still warm."<sup>269</sup>

Kim Pardon, who is one of 150 volunteers for CAF, explained that FIFI has a soul and that is why volunteers want to help share its story.<sup>270</sup> Many of FIFI's visitors knew that their fathers or grandfathers flew in World War II, but little else since the men never talked about the war. These families believe that a visit to FIFI is the closest they will ever come to understanding what their fathers went through. They look to FIFI's crew and volunteers for answers to questions they never got the chance to ask.<sup>271</sup>

Steve Brown, CEO of CAF, announced in 2015 a five-year plan to raise \$45 million in order to develop the CAF National Airbase – “a mecca that boasts a living history of WWII aircraft with the most dramatic presentations and cutting edge flight simulations.”<sup>272</sup> The proposed CAF National Airbase will be home to an ever-changing rotation of flight-capable aircraft from the organization's expansive collection. Although the CAF hosts air shows across the country, “the marquee annual event in Dallas will feature ‘Tora Tora Tora,’ a choreographed, 12-plane re-enactment of the bombing at Pearl Harbor, along with FIFI.”<sup>273</sup> The inaugural edition of the event will be in October of 2016.

The re-enactment of the bombing of Hiroshima has traditionally followed the “Tora Tora Tora” ritual in CAF air shows that date back to the 1976 performance by

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<sup>269</sup> Tara Copp, "Warbirds help vets get 'rid of a few ghosts'," *Washington Examiner*, May 4, 2015, <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/warbirds-help-vets-get-rid-of-a-few-ghosts/article/2563856>.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Todd Short, "Commemorative Air Force - Preserving History," YTexas. <http://ytexas.com/2015/11/commemorative-air-force-preserving-history/> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>273</sup> Website dedicate to the Tora! Tora! Tora! reenactment: <http://www.toratoratora.com/home.html>

Tibbets.<sup>274</sup> FIFI has always been the star of the show. In 2013, Dayton Air Show spokeswoman Brenda Kerfoot announced that the Vectren Dayton Air Show would keep a planned “Great Wall of Fire” pyrotechnic show, but not as an event meant to re-enact the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. FIFI remained in the show.<sup>275</sup> An online petition on Change.org brought attention to the matter. Critics called the reenactment inappropriate for a family event, so the air show decided to separate the B-29 from the pyrotechnic show.

Gabriela Pickett, who started the online petition against the “glamorization of destruction” stated, “I’m very pleased to hear that they are going to have two different events, and not the re-enacting. It would have been pretty much a celebration of dropping the bomb that killed hundreds of thousands of people.”<sup>276</sup> Pickett noted that Dayton has an immigrant-friendly “Welcome Dayton” initiative, and is known for its peace efforts. “We are a city of peace,” she said.<sup>277</sup> Yet, Dayton is only one of numerous air shows where CAF aircraft perform. Searches on YouTube reveal recent videos of the CAF Hiroshima reenactments being performed at the 2015 Oshkosh Air Show in Wisconsin and the 2014 Midland Air Show in Texas, among others.<sup>278</sup>

Repeating the same information from 1976 until 2015, spokespersons for the CAF and air show representatives have stated that these shows serve to educate the public

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<sup>274</sup> Ray B. Browne, *Rituals and Ceremonies in Popular Culture* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980), 263-264; John Saar, "Japan Angered by Mock A-bombing of Hiroshima," *St. Petersburg Times via Washington Post*, October 15, 1976, 12A.

<sup>275</sup> "Dayton Air Show cutting Hiroshima atomic bomb re-enactment from its lineup," *Daily News*, April 19, 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/dayton-air-show-cancels-atomic-bomb-re-enactment-article-1.1321864>.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> 2015 Oshkosh Air Show - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojHb-EGilbo>. 2014 Midland Air Show - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqrFwamTono>. 2004 Southern California CAF Show - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhSGxEX7APg> (29:30 mark)

about the war. “The show is intended to be a ‘living history lesson’ which serves as a memorial ‘to all the soldiers on both sides who gave their lives for their countries’.”<sup>279</sup>

An opinion piece written by Russell Munson in *Flying* magazine’s February 1978 issue said it best:

It seems as though they (CAF) want to recreate World War II for a grandstand so the crowd can vicariously experience all the action. After witnessing two hours of strafing and bombing runs while explosives on the field belched smoke and flame, simulating everything from Pearl Harbor up to Hiroshima, and seeing ground troops running around in fake uniforms, I began to wonder just what kind of education about war the kids in the crowd were receiving.<sup>280</sup>

## Reflections

Dora Apel, in her book *War Culture and the Contest of Images*, argued that one trend in historical war reenactments aims to “recapture an imagined nostalgic past that focuses on individual experience while affirming dominant historical assumptions.”<sup>281</sup>

She explained that reenactments became popular following World War II because the last Civil War veterans were dying off, which created “a nostalgia for a past that would no longer remain in living memory.”<sup>282</sup>

Heritage and nostalgia play important roles in building communities with shared public memories. “Nostalgia is about nurturance and stewardship. Beleaguered by loss and change, Americans remember a bygone day of economic power. They have angst about the loss of community. In a throwaway society, people are looking for something

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<sup>279</sup> Ross Logan, "Watch spectacular re-enactment of Pearl Harbor bombing during US air show," *UK Mirror*, October 18, 2015, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/watch-spectacular-re-enactment-pearl-6656631>.

<sup>280</sup> Russell Munson, "Two Sides to Glory: Another Point of View," *Flying*, February, 1978, 52.

<sup>281</sup> Dora Apel, *War Culture and the Contest of Images* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

more lasting.”<sup>283</sup> Apel asserted that the rise in Civil War reenactments appears to be a reaction to the social conditions of the 1960s. “The rise of Civil War reenactments may be seen as a form of symbolic defiance against the era of affirmative action and the challenge to the white patriarchy. Many reenacting groups were on the right-wing fringe and shared a white supremacist agenda.”<sup>284</sup> This suggests that Civil War reenactments are a manifestation of the same conservative backlash Roger Launius connected to the Enola Gay exhibit controversy.

CAF air shows are a unique form of historical reenactment. Just like Civil War reenactors, warbird enthusiasts come together to recreate American air battles in order to educate interested onlookers and to honor the service men and women who have served this country. The performer’s rationale is in line with Apel’s assessment of reenactors, which follows:

Because reenactors are aware that historians often see their hobby as trivializing history or that others scoff at reenacting as obsessively militaristic, many reenactors justify their hobby as educating the public and keeping history alive while honoring the sacrifices and memory of past soldiers. They often scorn Americans for being ignorant about and dismissive of military history.<sup>285</sup>

Apel also offered intriguing insights about the large number of reenactors (over 80 percent) who have relatives who served in the wars they reenact. She attributed these high numbers to community-affected war trauma, claiming that the trauma veterans incurred during the war is passed on to their communities. The act of participating in a battle reenactment provides a way for the participant to connect to the experience or to the memory of their relative who are unable or unwilling to discuss their trauma.

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<sup>283</sup> Shackel, "Public Memory and the Search for Power in American Historical Archaeology," 662.

<sup>284</sup> Apel, *War Culture and the Contest of Images*, 49.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

It might be older brothers, uncles, or the father of a friend, because the trauma ripples outward through the families, neighborhoods, and communities in which the veterans live. Their efforts to bury the past tend to fail no matter how hard they try or, perhaps, precisely because they try. Reenacting, then, also becomes a way of trying to understand the past in order to better understand the effects of war on veteran families.<sup>286</sup>

The CAF experience, which does not wholly reflect the image of a traditional Civil War battle reenactment, goes one step further than what Apel discussed by including the audience. As was discussed earlier, veterans' family members, who are part of the audience, tour the planes as a way to (re)connect to family members.

Even so, CAF air shows work only to sustain a selected portion of our national mythology. Another type of reenactment that Apel discussed works to produce "counter-memory," which challenges "entrenched hegemonic narratives" by evoking new ways of understanding the past, by keeping alive moments of resistance, or by again making visible what has been publicly forgotten.<sup>287</sup>

Apel provided several excellent case studies, including one by Iraq Veterans against the War (IVAW) who perform "radical reenactments of the American presence in Iraq through its guerrilla theater squads that swoop into public spaces and perform the kinds of brutal raids and arrests that American soldiers perpetrated against Iraqi civilians," and another about community members that annually reenact the quadruple lynching that occurred in Moore's Ford, Georgia in 1946. Both of these reenactments are brutally honest about the violence they portray and act to help people question the events they represent (by inflicting trauma on the participants and viewers).

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 51-52.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 47.

## Sadako Sasaki

Masahiro Sasaki was four years old when the *Enola Gay* dropped its atomic bomb on Hiroshima, wiping out the heart of the city on that sunny August 6, 1945, morning.<sup>288</sup> His little sister, Sadako, was only two. Their home was about a mile from ground zero. “Together, they ran with their mother and grandmother to a nearby river to escape the fire and together they huddled as the “black rain” poured down on them. Without knowing it at the time, they were all exposed to a massive amount of radiation.”<sup>289</sup> Sadako was diagnosed with leukemia and died in 1955 when she was 12. She has become an international symbol of all the innocent lives that were lost during the war.

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum hosts a virtual exhibit of Sadako’s life.<sup>290</sup> A photo of Sadako in the 6th grade shows her with her classmates at Nobori-cho Elementary School in October 1954. She was the fastest runner in her school. “She could run 50 meters in 7.5 seconds, so she never lost a race. Chosen to be one of the relay race runners for Fall Sports Day, she turned in a fine performance. Her dream was to become a physical education teacher in junior high school.”<sup>291</sup> Soon after, she developed cold symptoms and then some lumps.

In February 1955, the doctors told Sadako’s father that she only had a year to live, and so she was admitted to the hospital. In August, multi-colored paper cranes were sent to the hospital as a gift from people in Nagoya to encourage the patients. Many patients,

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<sup>288</sup> Masamiito, "Brother keeps Sadako memory alive," *The Japan Times*, August 24 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/08/24/national/brother-keeps-sadako-memory-alive/#.VwgKHvkrJ1s> (accessed February 10, 2015).

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> "A Young Girl's Death from the A-bomb---Sadako Sasaki, 12 Years of Age," Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. [http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum\\_e/exhibit\\_e/exh0107\\_e/exh01071\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_e/exhibit_e/exh0107_e/exh01071_e.html) (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

including Sadako, began folding cranes.<sup>292</sup> There is a Japanese legend that if one folds 1,000 cranes, his or her wish will come true. “Paper at that time wasn’t cheap and Sadako made the origami cranes with whatever scraps she could find, including wrapping paper from her medicine and gifts.”<sup>293</sup>

Sadako strung thread through lines of cranes that she folded and hung them from the ceiling of her room in the hospital. By the end of August—less than a month after she started—Sadako had 1,000 paper cranes, but she continued to fold. Toward the end of September, Sadako's white blood cells began to increase for the third time since being hospitalized. Her condition gradually deteriorated until she could no longer walk unassisted. On the morning of October 25, surrounded by her family, Sadako passed away.<sup>294</sup>

Sadako’s family and friends helped her fold the cranes.<sup>295</sup>

She never let her family know that she knew she was dying. After her death, her family found notes that she had written which led them to realize that Sadako knew that she was dying.<sup>296</sup> Her brother Masahiro shared that he thought “folding the cranes helped distract her mind from the sadness, the suffering and the pain. . . . Those cranes are not just any paper cranes—they are filled with Sadako’s emotions.”<sup>297</sup>

Saddened by Sadako’s death, her classmates started a movement to collect money to build a monument in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Her story was eventually picked up by the media and donations poured in from all over Japan. Over 3000 schools raised money to help build the memorial.<sup>298</sup> On May 5, 1958, the Children’s Peace

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Masamiito, "Brother keeps Sadako memory alive."

<sup>294</sup> "A Young Girl's Death from the A-bomb---Sadako Sasaki, 12 Years of Age".

<sup>295</sup> Masamiito, "Brother keeps Sadako memory alive."

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> "Sadako and the Atomic Bombing," Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

[http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/kids/KPSH\\_E/hiroshima\\_e/sadako\\_e/sadako\\_a\\_1\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/kids/KPSH_E/hiroshima_e/sadako_e/sadako_a_1_e.html) (accessed October 15, 2015).

Monument was built.<sup>299</sup> It features a statue of a little girl holding up a crane. On the monument are the words: “This is our cry. This is our prayer. For building peace in the world.”

Through books and movies that have been translated into many languages, the story of Sadako and her 1,000 cranes has become famous throughout the world and has inspired the ritual of folding paper cranes for peace. But Sadako’s father became concerned that her memory had become commercialized and some of the stories being told about her weren’t true.<sup>300</sup> Her brother, Masahiro, confided, “We had originally been reluctant to talk about her. . . . But we realized that as the Sasaki family, we had the responsibility to tell her story to the world, to tell about what really happened and the pain she endured.”<sup>301</sup>

*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, a children’s book that was written by Eleanor Coerr and published in 1977, seems to be at the heart of the misinformation.<sup>302</sup> Coerr was fascinated with Japan and with Sadako’s story. She fictionalized Sadako’s life story in her book, but many readers have accepted her story as fact.

### *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

In 1949, Coerr, who was born in Canada, was married to a demobilized U.S. Air Force officer. She worked as a reporter for the *Ottawa Journal*, which sent her to Japan

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<sup>299</sup> The figures on the Children's Peace Monument were designed by Kazuo Kikuchi, former professor at the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music. The stand was designed by Kiyoshi Ikebe, former professor of the University of Tokyo. Underneath the arch sometimes hangs a bell donated by nuclear physicist Hideki Yukawa, PhD. Ibid.; The 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month is a national holiday in Japan known as “Children’s Day.”

<sup>300</sup> Masamiito, "Brother keeps Sadako memory alive."

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Coerr also earned a degree in English from American University. The University of Southern Mississippi -- de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, Eleanor Coerr Papers. [http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/degrum/public\\_html/html/research/findaids/DG0201.html](http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/degrum/public_html/html/research/findaids/DG0201.html)



as a foreign correspondent to describe conditions after the war. According to her unpublished autobiography, *Flying With Cranes*, “she booked passage on a Dutch freighter carrying military supplies to Yokohama (no civilian ships or planes went to Japan at that time), and ended up boarding with a Japanese family on a farm in the middle of nowhere.”<sup>303</sup> She was unprepared for the scale of the devastation in Hiroshima or for the stories she heard from people who had been there at the time. She was deeply affected by this experience.<sup>304</sup>

Coerr returned to Hiroshima in 1963 and visited Sadako’s statue in the Peace Park.<sup>305</sup> She had heard about a booklet that contained Sadako’s letters, but was unable to locate a copy.<sup>306</sup> Years later, she mentioned the booklet to a missionary friend who lent her a copy that was stored in the attic.<sup>307</sup>

According to Coerr’s story, Sadako managed to fold only 644 cranes before she became too weak to fold any more. Her friends and family helped finish her dream by folding the rest of the cranes, which were buried with Sadako. But her brother Masahiro claims that Sadako exceeded her goal of 1,000 before she died.<sup>308</sup> Perhaps Coerr was afraid that children who read her book might lose hope if they saw that Sadako had folded the thousand cranes, but died anyway.

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<sup>303</sup> Chris Ewing-Weisz, "Visits to Hiroshima prompted Coerr's book promoting peace," *The Globe and Mail*, October 30, 2011, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/visits-to-hiroshima-prompted-coerrs-book-promoting-peace/article559743/> (accessed January 5, 2016).

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> The Children’s Memorial had only been built five years earlier.

<sup>306</sup> Ewing-Weisz, "Visits to Hiroshima prompted Coerr's book promoting peace."; The book, *Kokeshi*, was collected and published by Sadako’s classmates a year after her death. Masamoto Nasu, *Children of the Paper Crane: The Story of Sadako Sasaki and Her Struggle with the A-bomb Disease* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 172.

<sup>307</sup> Ewing-Weisz, "Visits to Hiroshima prompted Coerr's book promoting peace."

<sup>308</sup> Masamiito, "Brother keeps Sadako memory alive."

*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* has produced a small educational industry with multi-language translations, websites, lesson plans, and origami instructions, as well as inspired works of music and theater. In addition, Seattle, Washington, has a Peace Park that houses the *Sadako and the Thousand Cranes* sculpture, which was created in 1990 by artist Daryl Smith. This Peace Park was dedicated on August 6, 1990, on the 45th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. The park was made possible by a gift from Floyd Schmoie, who donated a \$5,000 monetary prize after winning the Hiroshima Peace Prize in 1998.<sup>309</sup> “From a pile of wrecked cars, garbage, and brush, he worked with community volunteers to build the beautiful Peace Park.”<sup>310</sup>

#### Sadako’s Cranes Today

At her funeral, mourners were presented with some of the paper cranes Sadako had folded.<sup>311</sup> Some of her paper cranes have recently been shared with people and

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<sup>309</sup> Schmoie was a Quaker and a pacifist. He built twenty-one homes and assembly facilities called “Houses for Hiroshima” between 1949 and 1953, financed by charity funds from the United States. Funds were also given to Nagasaki, where city housing was built. The only such home in Hiroshima still standing opened as an exhibition facility attached to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum for remembering the atomic bombing. “Hiroshima fetes peace activist,” [http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/11/01/national/hiroshima-fetes-peace-activist/#.Vwrjt\\_krJ1s](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/11/01/national/hiroshima-fetes-peace-activist/#.Vwrjt_krJ1s) (accessed February 12, 2016).

<sup>310</sup> “Seattle Peace Park,” [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=4029](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=4029) (accessed October 15, 2015).; During World War I, he risked his life as a Red Cross ambulance driver, rescuing the wounded on battlefields in France. During World War II, he helped Jews flee Nazi Germany. Back home, he stood up for Japanese Americans sent to U.S. internment camps. And when the atomic dust settled, he went to Hiroshima, where he built houses for survivors of the devastating bomb attack. In the 1950s he helped rebuild South Korea after the war there. He repaired water wells damaged by conflagrations in the Middle East. And he built orphanages and hospitals in Kenya and Tanzania. For his work, he received Japan’s highest civilian honor and three nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize. Elaine Woo, “Floyd Schmoie; Activist for Peace for Nearly a Century,” *The Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/apr/29/local/me-57286> (accessed February 15, 2016).

<sup>311</sup> Vera Mackie, “Radical Objects: Origami and the Anti-Nuclear Movement,” History Workshop Online. <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/radical-objects-origami-and-the-anti-nuclear-movement/> (accessed March 15, 2016).

organizations here in America, including the World Trade Center, Pearl Harbor, and the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum.

In addition to Sadako's original paper cranes, small chains of cranes were left on and near a fence at Broadway and Liberty Street near Ground Zero in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. These chains are now on permanent display at the Tribute WTC Visitor's Center alongside one of Sadako's own cranes from 1955 which was donated by her brother, Masahiro in 2009.<sup>312</sup> "I thought if Sadako's crane is placed at Ground Zero, it will be very meaningful. Commonly, in Japan, the crane is regarded as a symbol of peace. But for us, in the Sasaki family, it is the embodiment of Sadako's life, and it is filled with her wish and hope."<sup>313</sup> Tribute WTC Visitor's Center staffers were speechless when Sasaki presented the gift<sup>314</sup>

In 2013, Masahiro Sasaki donated another crane to be displayed at Pearl Harbor with the hope that Americans and Japanese will overcome events of the past that still have the potential to divide the two nations.<sup>315</sup> "If we are going to pave the way to peace for the children of the future, we can't pass on the grudges of the past," said Yuji Sasaki (Masahiro's son), who helps run *Sadako Legacy*, a nonprofit organization that promotes peace and Sadako's story.<sup>316</sup>

Lauren Bruner, who was a 21-year-old sailor on the *Arizona* on December 7, 1941, welcomed the gift of peace. "There's always somebody that will never forgive or

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<sup>312</sup> Wayne Drash, "From Hiroshima to 9/11, a girl's origami lives on," *CNN*, December 17, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/12/17/origami.gift/>; "Sadako And The 1,000 Cranes," Japan Society NY. <http://japansocietyny.blogspot.com/2010/08/sadako-1000-cranes.html> (accessed November 15 2016).

<sup>313</sup> Drash, "From Hiroshima to 9/11, a girl's origami lives on."

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> "Hiroshima girl's paper crane comes to Pearl Harbor," *KHON2.com*, September 19, 2013, <http://khon2.com/2013/09/19/hiroshima-girls-paper-crane-comes-to-pearl-harbor/> (accessed March 2, 2016).

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

forget, but I think [the paper crane] is a nice gesture,” said Bruner, who suffered burns over 70 percent of his body and lost his best friend in the bombing. Bruner, who was 92 at the time of the new crane exhibit, spoke at the opening ceremony.<sup>317</sup>

Then, on November 19, 2015, Masahiro and Yuji donated one of Sadako’s cranes to the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum.<sup>318</sup> President Truman’s grandson and Honorary Chair of the Truman Library’s Board of Directors, Clifton Truman Daniel, had asked for the donation.

“My grandfather never talked to me about the bombs,” Daniel said. Daniel first learned about Sadako in 1999 when his own son, Wesley, brought home the children’s book, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. “It was the first human story I had ever seen out of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, and I remember telling Wesley that I thought it was important for him to know both sides, both his great-grandfather’s decision and what that decision cost the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” Daniel remarked.<sup>319</sup>

The crane will eventually be placed at the end of the library’s atomic bomb exhibit, where visitors can learn about the atomic bomb creation and the reasons for using it, then see what that decision cost the Japanese. “The crane is a symbol; it’s a gesture,” Daniel stated. “It’s a gesture of peace and reconciliation and also a wish from Masahiro that we don’t ever use nuclear weapons again. Every survivor has that same wish, that same hope.”<sup>320</sup>

Daniel reflected on the first time he held one of Sadako’s cranes five years earlier:

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Kelsey Cipolla, "Truman Library to Accept Donation from Hiroshima Victim's Family," ThisisKC.com. <http://www.thisiskc.com/2015/11/truman-library-accept-donation-hiroshima-victims-family/> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

Yuji then opened a small plastic box that held five paper cranes and placed one in my palm. It looked completely unremarkable, made from a long-faded medicine label or scrap of wrapping paper, tiny because the raw material had been so meager. It was the last crane Sadako folded before she died. In that same hand, I have held the hands of aging American veterans, some of them with tears in their eyes, who want to thank me because my grandfather's decision spared their lives. For that reason, primarily, my grandfather made his decision and stuck by it. Yet when asked from time to time if it ever bothered him that he'd ordered the use of such weapons, he said that of course it did. How, he asked, could it not. The tears of the aging veterans and Sadako Sasaki's last crane have great emotional power. I choose to honor both.<sup>321</sup>

Both Daniel and Sasaki are happy to work together to overcome the tragedies of the past. More than 10 years after their initial contact, Sasaki succeeded in convincing Daniel to attend the peace ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombings. "When someone from Japan says 'no more Hiroshimas,' someone else from the U.S. says 'never again Pearl Harbor.' These two sides always clash. But (Daniel and I) were able to share the hope of overcoming" the past, Sasaki said.<sup>322</sup>

## Reflections

Tracing Sadako's legacy, we can see how her story has evolved into a message of peace around the world. She has become a symbol for innocent lives lost during the war and for *hibakusha* who have struggled with the effects of the atomic bombs. Sadako and paper cranes have become synonymous. Approximately 10 million cranes are offered

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<sup>321</sup> Clifton Truman Daniel, "Sadako Sasaki's cranes and Hiroshima's 65th anniversary," *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 2010, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-08-06/news/ct-oped-0806-war-20100806\\_1\\_thousand-paper-cranes-sadako-sasaki-yuji](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-08-06/news/ct-oped-0806-war-20100806_1_thousand-paper-cranes-sadako-sasaki-yuji) (accessed December 12, 2015).

<sup>322</sup> Masamiito, "Brother keeps Sadako memory alive."

each year before the Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima.<sup>323</sup> Many more are folded and offered elsewhere in Japan and around the world.<sup>324</sup>

Eleanor Coerr wanted to share Sadako's story with children in America. So she wrote *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, which inspired educational initiatives, theater, film, and the peace memorial in Seattle. In response to Coerr's fictionalization of her story, Sadako's family became active in the international community in order to share her *real* story and her cranes as gifts of peace for the World Trade Center, Pearl Harbor, and the Truman Library. Sadako's legacy interweaves Japanese and American influences to tell the story of what happened after the bomb was dropped.

Inspired by Sadako's story, children and adults alike fold paper cranes as a message of peace, especially related to war and nuclear weapons. Vera Mackie, Director of the Centre for Critical Human Rights Research at the University of Wollongong explained that because the practice of folding origami can be taught through observation and mimicry, it provides an opportunity for "intercultural communication without linguistic competence."

Generations of Japanese travellers have presented origami to their hosts in other countries, or have taught their hosts how to fold their own. Schoolchildren around the world have been taught this practice, particularly in Japanese language classrooms or Asian Studies classes. The practice of folding origami cranes, presenting them to others or displaying them at significant sites provides a tangible connection between groups and individuals who might otherwise have difficulty communicating across language barriers. While it only takes a few minutes to fold one crane, it requires a certain amount of concentration and practice to achieve the precise folds required. In order to produce a string of 1,000

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<sup>323</sup> "Paper Cranes and the Children's Peace Monument,"

<http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/shimin/heiwa/crane.html> (accessed November 1, 2015).

<sup>324</sup> When I was in Japan last summer, colorful paper cranes were everywhere in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Strings of cranes were draped over various memorials (not just Sadako's). Peace activists on the streets stopped people and handed them folded cranes. We even bonded during the Peace Tour folding cranes into the wee hours of the morning.

cranes, a significant time commitment is needed on the part of an individual or a group.<sup>325</sup>

Sadako's paper crane provides a ritual of remembrance that has reached millions either through folding the cranes or just admiring them.

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<sup>325</sup> Mackie, "Radical Objects: Origami and the Anti-Nuclear Movement".

## EPILOGUE

Walter Benjamin contemplated how meaning (and knowledge) is generated through metaphors of constellations, collections, and city streets. He pointed out that all students, a category, which in our case would include historians, collect knowledge.<sup>326</sup> For Benjamin, the Collector represented a certain agency to issue forth new meaning rather than being constrained by the values allotted by society. Within collections, meaning changes as objects are rearranged or put into relation with different objects. Meaning lies in the gaps between, not in the items themselves. This understanding has been foundational to the development of my thesis and expressly for the digital project: *Undoing History*.

My thesis advanced through stages of collecting, observing, and selecting fragments of history. After identifying the general topic of studying historical changes in the stories and commemoration practices that had been generated in response to the atomic bombings, I traveled to Japan to collect first-hand experiences, observations, and documentation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those experiences led me to collect documentation from and my own observations about the National Archives in College Park, Maryland and the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University. From the resulting collection of collections (my archive), I drafted an idea for the framework of *Undoing History* and developed the site structure.

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<sup>326</sup> Walter Benjamin, "H: The Collector," in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland, Kevin MacLaughlin, and Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 210.



The process of creating the digital project became a tool for thinking about the various artifacts and observations that I had collected and how they contribute to history construction. I began with a general concept of presenting artifacts and collections, but soon found that the data I had collected woefully underrepresented the American memory side of my project. I gathered plenty of interesting information related to the Peace Tour and *hibakusha*, resources, and news stories, but when I began thinking about the memorials and peace ceremonies I had visited in Japan, I realized that I had collected nothing comparable from the United States to evaluate.

I began searching for museums, memorials, and commemoration ceremonies that dealt with the atomic bombings here in America. I found that all of the public institutions that offered any long-term consideration of the atomic bombings tended to celebrate American scientific and military achievements that have been disconnected from any evaluation of the lingering radiation and resulting human devastation.<sup>327</sup> I was unable to locate any public institution that was committed to telling the human side of the atomic bombings. Few museums in America, such as the Dayton International Peace Museum, are dedicated to peace initiatives. However, Military.com lists hundreds of military themed memorials and museums across the United States.<sup>328</sup> And when I researched annual commemorations of the atomic bombings here in America, I was able to locate several in New York and Boston, and Seattle's "From Hiroshima to Hope", although none attracted the magnitude of participants as those in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

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<sup>327</sup> Although not an exhaustive list, the museums include: The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History, Children's Museum Of Oak Ridge: Manhattan Project, White Sands Missile Range Museum, New Mexico Museum Of Space History, Bradbury Science Museum, The National Atomic Testing Museum, The Manhattan Project National Historical Park, National Museum Of The Pacific War, and The Experimental Breeder Reactor No. 1 (EBR-I) Atomic Museum.

<sup>328</sup> [http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourceSubmittedFileView?file=museums\\_museum\\_guide.htm](http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourceSubmittedFileView?file=museums_museum_guide.htm)

As I added these examples to my archive, I began to question how the materials and practices in my culture generated and reinforced the obvious pro-military/pro nuclear mindset. If tens of thousands of people participate in peace ceremonies in Japan, in what comparable activity do Americans engage? The criteria that I used for this investigation centered on locating an event that both commemorated the atomic bombings and involved tens of thousands of people. The results led me to interviews, news stories, and videos about the Commemorative Air Force and their warbird air shows, which I added to my collection.

Using my digital project as a tool for imagining my archive of information helped me to identify gaps in content related to what I was trying to understand. The resulting archive, of course, is not (and never will be) complete, but the archived elements have helped me to create a coherent narrative about how we remember the atomic bombings and how memories and rituals have changed over time. My archive, which also includes the content and resources within my written thesis, may be understood as a personal archive. I have generated meaning from its elements, but there is no guarantee that anyone else will. Whereas, the National Archives or a museum, such as the National Air and Space Museum, are examples of public archives—institutions that work to frame and mold collective memory. Susan Sontag explained:

All memory is individual, unreproducible—it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important. And this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds. Ideologies create substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 85-86.

Public archives reinforce a sense of identity stipulated by those who manage collective memory. The research from this thesis has shown that once historical narratives have been endorsed, they are slow to change.

On August 6, 1945, sixteen hours after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, President Truman officially proclaimed the event to the world. From the earliest announcement, with one exception, the official narrative of the bombing has been deliberately mystified through language, censorship, and misinformation. The one exception revealed that the President pointedly acknowledged the bombing as an act of vengeance rather than an honorable act to bring the war to a timely end: “The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold.”<sup>330</sup>

Truman also tied American progress to our immense monetary investment: “We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history—and won.” The atomic bomb, as “the greatest achievement of organized science in history,” was to be a source of great pride for the American people. Truman, however, failed to inform his audience of the atomic bomb’s radiation and its adverse effects. Truman stipulated how the atomic bombing would be remembered. His narrative framed the collective memory of the event.<sup>331</sup> Histories and mythologies that breathe in and out of our daily lives are virtually invisible to us, yet our individual memories and worldviews are constructed from these archival building materials.

These same narratives continue to permeate American consciousness. They are repeated and reinforced in our museums and archives, and continue to be reenacted in

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<sup>330</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President, August 6, 1945." [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/bomb/large/documents/pdfs/59.pdf](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/pdfs/59.pdf) (accessed March 10, 2013).

<sup>331</sup> Truman’s narrative continues to frame the event only because America remains the victor. Had the Japanese won the war, Hiroshima and Pearl Harbor would be remembered differently.

warbird air shows for hundreds of thousands of Americans each year. Traces of the official silencing of the bombs' adverse effects can be found in the early discrediting of Wilfred Burchett's "atomic plague" report and in the related censoring of Siemes' testimony. These traces strengthened the mindset of conservative and veteran protesters who successfully shut down the Enola Gay exhibit in 1995, and can be found today within legal documents of "Atomic Veterans" who are fighting to receive compensation for their atomic radiation-related diseases.

But, as Walter Benjamin knew, "universal history" can be challenged and "arrested" in order to make room for the voice of the Other (or as he put it, "a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past.")<sup>332</sup> For Benjamin, the common sense view of history (which he referred to as "universal history") is a closed progression of events leading to those who rule today, while what failed in history is left unsaid (what must be denied) so that "what really happened" can establish itself.<sup>333</sup> The idea that "what really happened" could actually establish itself is a common thread in Benjamin's works. His writings are seeded with notions of hope for the redemption of humankind, which he connected to the reclamation of our past in all of its fullness. Benjamin was well aware of the political dynamics involved in the construction of collective narratives and history. Writing during a moment of history when Nazi Germany was coming into power, he recognized the dangerous politics of public memory at play.

History, as we know, is not static. As "what really happened" comes to light, the established narrative may be adjusted, which can be seen in examples where previously

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<sup>332</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 265.

<sup>333</sup> Benjamin connected this idea of a "closed progression of events" to "telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary," which evokes an image of religious devotion to reciting history a particular way.

classified materials are released to the public or when works of art or literature powerfully affects a population. The results depend on the manner in which the new or the initially unassimilable is integrated into this universal history. Benjamin wrote:

Materialistic historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes into a monad. A historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past.<sup>334</sup>

Relating history to thought (both involving narrative), Benjamin explained that thinking and the production of history comprise both the flow and the arrest of thoughts.

Several examples that relate to these observations are sprinkled throughout my thesis. One example shows how Johannes Siemes' full testimony was handled. U.S. military personnel promoted their agenda by pulling his words out of context and including them in official reports and propaganda videos. They also influenced public perceptions of the bombing by releasing selected information to government insiders, such as William Laurence and Henry Luce. But John Hersey was able to counter some of the deliberate misinformation through his international bestseller, "Hiroshima." His narrative incorporated many of the same details and the framework of the earlier narrative, but then humanized the accounts in a way that Americans could relate to.

Today, *hibakusha* build relationships with and educate the public about the devastating effects of the bomb. Koko Tanimoto Kondo goes one step further and combines her *hibakusha* experience with Hersey's revelations to offer visitors a unique opportunity to understand the atomic bombing at the sites of destruction.

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<sup>334</sup> Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, 265.

Relatedly, Sadako Sasaki's life story has reached millions around the world. Her story inspired Eleanor Coerr, an American author, to share it in a children's book that has touched readers around the globe.<sup>335</sup> That same book inspired Sadako's brother, Masahiro, to embark on a mission of his own to share Sadako's wish for peace and to clear up some misinformation that Coerr introduced by fictionalizing Sadako's story. This mission has led him to build relationships with the World Trade Center, Pearl Harbor, and the Harry Truman Library through donating some of Sadako's cranes. These small movements have helped to "arrest" some aspects of America's national myth about the atomic bombings and have worked to heal some of the wounds received on both sides of the equation.

In Thesis XVIII, Benjamin called into question the historicist's objective retelling of events that support a view of "universal history" when he writes:

Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one. Thus he establishes a conception of the present as the "time of the now" which is shot through with chips of Messianic time.<sup>336</sup>

Benjamin advocated for a new constellation of meaning (as opposed to a universal history). Rather than mindlessly reciting a chain of events like "the beads of a rosary," the historian is to establish a new connection between the present era and the events of the past in the hope to redeem various moments in history. Relatedly, Benjamin's Angel

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<sup>335</sup> Although Coerr was born in Canada, she became an American through marriage and is referred to as an American in most reviews of her book.

<sup>336</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 2007 [1968]), 263.

of History (Thesis IX) exists outside of time and sees the catastrophe of history where we can only see a chain of events: “Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet.”<sup>337</sup> Looking at these theses together, Benjamin seems to be calling upon us to break the chains that enslave us to habitual recitation in order to dig out from under the piles of rubble. In summary, singular historical narratives cannot convey historical “truth.” What counts as the knowledge we continually build upon is not only inadequate, but dangerous.

Through this thesis, I have tried to highlight examples where chains of events have been read like “the beads of a rosary.” Actually, most of my examples revealed this approach to telling history. The origin or the finale of each story was the atomic bombing. The events and their causes changed according to each storyteller and the meaning he or she wanted to convey. But Benjamin urges that we, as historians, find ways to circumvent our propensity to build historical narratives in this manner.

Unlike Benjamin’s Angel of History, we are incapable of standing outside of time, which would allow us to see the “unceasingly piles rubble.” So we must find other methods to analyze and produce history. The format and content of my thesis have been shaped with this directive in mind.

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<sup>337</sup> Benjamin, “On the Concept of History”.; This points back to E. H. Carr’s rejection of the historian’s work being a heap of “facts” that he or she has at his or her disposal.

## APPENDIX

“Report from Hiroshima” (*Jesuit Missions* article)

“Report from Hiroshima,” was the article title in the March 1946 issue of *Jesuit Missions*. The article had been completely rewritten to make the language less stiff than the original translation. In one case, the original “Down in the valley, perhaps one kilometer toward the city from us, several peasant homes are on fire and the woods on the opposite side of the valley are aflame” was changed to “Down in the valley a half mile away, several peasant homes caught fire.” The latter is far easier to read. In addition to the stylistic changes, “Report from Hiroshima” is highly abridged, including and excluding surprising choices.<sup>338</sup>

The first few paragraphs faithfully relayed Siemes’ first impressions in the aftermath of the blast and how he and his fellow priests offered aid to the wounded. However, some details have been embellished. For example, Siemes originally wrote, “a procession of people begins to stream up the valley from the city. . . . A few display horrible wounds of the extremities and back.” Whereas, the *Jesuit Missions* article stated: “a long file of desperate people began to stream up the valley from the city. Some came to our house, their steps heavy and dragging, their faces blackened, all of them bleeding or suffering from burns, some with horrible wounds of the extremities and back.”<sup>339</sup> This increased dramatization of the account would have enhanced readers’ emotions and increased readers’ opinions of the priests’ heroic and compassionate aid to the victims. The article also emphasized that uninjured Japanese did not help with the rescue without

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<sup>338</sup> For example, this variation correctly identifies Pedro Arrupe as the rector, but his name is spelled incorrectly (Arupe) and only the first instance of “Father Rector” is replaced by his name, making this version appear as though the author was either careless or was not familiar with Arrupe.

<sup>339</sup> Siemes, “Report from Hiroshima,” 30.



prodding by the priests, which further exemplified the superiority of the Western Christian mindset.

Next, the article recounted the priests venturing into Hiroshima to save their friends. But many of Siemes' original observations were left out, such as the dying soldiers and horses, and the numerous dead and dying along the way. Many seemingly inconsequential details, such as Kleinsorge trying to save the distraught Mr. Fukai and the story about the Japanese Protestant pastor's boat, were included; yet, Siemes' tale about leaving Kleinsorge behind and going back to rescue him the next day was omitted. One explanation for this omission could be that the author wanted to show Christians in the best light, so avoided tales of weakness. Another explanation might be that whoever wrote this article did not want to suggest that the effects of the bomb had weakened Kleinsorge.

A section of text in "Report from Hiroshima" was altered where Siemes had originally discussed the number of dead. Siemes had written:

How many people were a sacrifice to this bomb? Those who had lived through the catastrophe placed the number of dead at least 100,000. Hiroshima had a population of 400,000. Official statistics place the number who had died at 70,000 up to September 1st, not counting the missing ... and 130,000 wounded, among them 43,500 severely wounded. Estimates made by ourselves on the basis of groups known to us show that the number of 100,000 dead is not too high.

The *Jesuit Missions* article opted to change "were a sacrifice" to "fell" and removed the succeeding line where Siemes had established the number of dead at 100,000. Official statistics from September 1 (one month after the explosion) were included, which kept the numbers artificially low. These editorial choices reinforce the notion that a military official had a hand in crafting this article.

Most surprising, though, is that Siemes' final paragraph, where he had contemplated the ethics of the atomic bomb and total war (a topic of intense discussion among Christians during this time), was replaced with quite a different ending. "Report from Hiroshima" ended with the following text:

It was an incredible catastrophe, and yet almost strangest of all, the Japanese people here showed no bitterness towards America. Great good can yet be brought out of all this tragedy and of all the nations on earth today. America is in the best position to help us lead these people to the knowledge, love, and service of the one true God.

This contrived ending endorsed America as a world leader, as well as its mission to Christianize Japan. That message is a far cry from Siemes' final words:

We have discussed among ourselves the ethics of the use of the bomb. Some consider it in the same category as poison gas and were against its use on a civil population. Others were of the view that in total war, as carried on in Japan, there was no difference between civilians and soldiers, and that the bomb itself was an effective force tending to end the bloodshed, warning Japan to surrender and thus to avoid total destruction. It seems logical to me that he who supports total war in principle cannot complain of war against civilians. The crux of the matter is whether total war in its present form is justifiable, even when it serves a just purpose. Does it not have material and spiritual evil as its consequences which far exceed whatever good that might result? When will our moralists give us a clear answer to this question?

This missing paragraph had expressed Siemes' concerns about the morality of the atomic bomb and total war. The implications of his contemplation could be directed at either the Japanese or United States governments, which perhaps, the editors of this article recognized. Interestingly, this same quote is included verbatim in Hersey's "Hiroshima" and is the only place in Hersey's text where Siemes is mentioned by name.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Hersey, "Hiroshima."

## Propaganda Films

*The Atom Strikes!* was the first of these films to include Siemes' interview. It opens with the blast from the Trinity test in Los Alamos, New Mexico, and then covers the sites where the atomic bombs were built in secrecy: Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, and Hanford. A map of Japan shows Hiroshima, while the narrator tells the audience that Hiroshima built the finest weapons in Japan and that Hiroshima was never bombed during the war (which is not true), but that it had been warned repeatedly. Images of Japanese troops and ships are shown as the narrator explains that they "will feel the weight of the atom's destructive power." A plane is shown flying as the narrator tells the story of the bombing: "At 8:15 in the morning, Japanese time. . ." An aerial map of Hiroshima is shown, but the center point of the target, which should be the T-shaped Aioi bridge, is presented off-center, giving the viewer the impression that the munitions factories were the targets.<sup>341</sup> The narrator explains that the bomb was intentionally exploded far above the city to dissipate any radioactive material, which is a fabrication of the truth. The bomb was designed to explode at a specific height to enact maximum damage.<sup>342</sup> The next several minutes of the film surveys structural damage to the city, but there is no mention of human casualties. Half-way through the film, the novitiate in Natgatsuka where Siemes and his fellow priests lived is shown as the narrator explains that even four miles away, the effects of the blast were felt. An edited version of Siemes' interview, which includes about seven minutes of his testimony, emphasizes that early

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<sup>341</sup> "Bombardier Thomas Ferebee's aiming point was the distinctive T-shaped Aioi bridge in the heart of the city; he missed by only a few hundred feet." Bruce Cameron Reed, *The History and Science of the Manhattan Project* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2014), 389.

<sup>342</sup> Alex Wellerstein, "The Height of the Bomb," Entry posted August 8th, 2012, *Nuclear Secrecy Blog*. <http://blog.nuclearsecrecy.com/2012/08/08/the-height-of-the-bomb/> (accessed November 1, 2015).

rescue efforts failed because most of the important people connected with the city were killed. Siemes asserts that talk about residual radiation is just rumor.

The rest of the film focuses on the destruction of Nagasaki. The narrator claims that Tokyo was warned: "Surrender or face complete destruction. The Japanese ignored the ultimatum." He further explains that the target within Nagasaki was chosen to take out a torpedo plant, and a steel and arms works. The target was chosen so that civilians would be protected by the hills and the arms facilities would receive the most damage. The narrator stresses that, due to the height of the explosion, most of the radiation was dissipated; therefore, rescue workers suffered no ill effects or injury due to radioactivity. Structural damage is shown, but there is no evidence of human casualties.

At a mere twelve minutes, *Tale of Two Cities* is less than half the running time of *The Atom Strikes!* Much of the same information is relayed, only in shortened form. Only two minutes of Siemes' edited testimony is shown before the film refocuses its attention on Nagasaki. Like the other film, structural damage is shown, but there is no evidence of human casualties.

#### *Dawn Over Zero*

In describing the rescue operation, Laurence interspersed numerous excerpts from Siemes' testimony that were not included in the highly abridged *Jesuit Missions* article (which supports the notion that his mention of the article was a ruse). Along with details that did appear in the *Jesuit Missions* article, such as the story about Mr. Fukai, Laurence presented many facts omitted from the article, such as the priests' journey into the city,

that people were “frightfully burned,” many were dead and dying, and that they passed a procession of burned soldiers and horses abandoned on the Misasi Bridge.<sup>343</sup>

Siemes had originally posed a question asking how many people were *sacrificed* to the bomb, then asserted the number of dead to be 100,000. Neither Laurence nor *Jesuit Missions* included these remarks.<sup>344</sup> Both reconfirmed the initial official figures of 70,000 from September 1. However, Laurence appended those figures with the updated February 1946 statistics of 78,150, which led the reader to surmise that the numbers had not and would not significantly increase.<sup>345</sup>

Both publications selectively edited Siemes’ statements to promote the idea that many people died due to the lack of medical attention and their weakened physical state caused by “undernourishment.” They included Siemes’ observations that the bomb’s radiation had “some effect” on the blood, but added his countering remarks that claimed that he and many others had not suffered any ill effects. Laurence then added several pages of supporting evidence after Siemes’ text that reinforced the power of the bomb.

#### *Time Magazine*

The first few paragraphs of the *Time* article faithfully relayed Siemes’ first impressions and how he and his fellow priests offered aid to the wounded. However, the article included the following text without any of the supporting context: “Among the passersby, there are many who are uninjured. Distraught by the magnitude of the disaster,

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<sup>343</sup> Some of the same particulars were included in “Hiroshima” even though Kleinsorge had to be left behind and rescued the next day. These details suggest that Hersey relied heavily on Siemes’ account without giving him credit.

<sup>344</sup> The *Jesuit Missions* article reworded “were a sacrifice” to be “fell.”

<sup>345</sup> Laurence’s book was published the first week of January 1946 and would have gone to press even earlier, so his statistics could not have been based on published evidence.; Current scholarship estimates that between 90,000 and 166,000 people are believed to have died from the bomb in the four-month period following the explosion. "Using the Atomic Bomb - 1945".

most of them rush by and none conceives the thought of organizing help on his own initiative. During these days the Japanese displayed little initiative, preparedness, and organizational skill to meet a catastrophe.” This version reinforced American views of the Japanese as uncivilized and uncaring, for how could uninjured persons fail to assist their neighbors?

*Time* revised Siemes’ wording about the morality of the bomb and total war by removing any connections between the atomic bomb and outlawed forms of warfare. Originally, Siemes stated, “Some consider [the atomic bomb] in the same category as poison gas and were against its use on a civil population.” *Time* reduced this to, “Some condemn its use on a civil population.” The *Time* article ended with the same statistics that Laurence cited, which suggests that Laurence and *Time* magazine editors shared the same source.

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