

# Imaginative mislocation

## Hiroshima's Genbaku Dome, ground zero of the twentieth century

**Matthew Charles**

The average Westerner ... was wont to regard Japan as barbarous while she indulged in the gentle arts of peace: he calls her civilized since she began to commit wholesale slaughter on Manchurian battlefields.

Kakuzo Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, 1906

The controversy that erupted in March over the publication of Charles Pellegrino's account of the atomic bombings of Japan, *The Last Train from Hiroshima*, suggests that the historical legacy of the first military use of atomic weaponry is still fiercely contested in the USA.<sup>1</sup> The spat is merely the latest conflict in a long war over the significance of the bombings, which resurfaces with each new book, exhibition or programme that appears. When the ruins of the *Genbaku* (Atomic Bomb) Dome – formerly the Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall – were nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995, the United States objected on the basis of concerns over a 'lack of historical perspective', arguing that the 'events antecedent to the United States' use of atomic weapons to end World War II are key to understanding the tragedy of Hiroshima'.<sup>2</sup> The appeal to historical facts by both US diplomats and, more recently, military veterans contrasts with the dehistoricized emphasis of other Western cultural responses to Hiroshima. But what both kinds of reception share is an occlusion of the prehistory of capitalist liberalism, colonialism and imperialism which produces Japanese modernity, a prehistory which is itself built into the Genbaku Dome's concrete structure, and an afterlife of nuclear pacification which produces the global context of terrorism as the continuation of war by other means.

### The dome

The Aioi Bridge spans the point where the Kyu Ota and the Motayasu rivers converge in downtown Hiroshima, resulting in its distinctive T-shape where it connects three abutting sections of land. This feature

marked it out as the visual target for the bombing raid on 6 August 1945. Because of its proximity to the bridge, and because the atomic bomb was slightly off-target, what was then the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotions Hall was almost directly beneath the atomic blast when the bomb exploded in the air above the city. The 120 governmental and related staff working inside the building were all killed instantly, but the shell of its central structure remained largely intact, in part because of its location beneath this downward (rather than sideways) blast of the explosion, but also because of its Western-style design, utilizing steel and concrete reinforcing. Flames blew from the dome which crowned the central section of the Hall, melting the copper plating to leave only a skeletal steel skull.

As the ruined Hall was one of the few buildings left standing directly beneath the immediate area of the explosion – later termed 'ground zero' by American investigators – the frame of its dome could be seen from some distance within the shattered city.<sup>3</sup> The first recorded instance of its new name, the Genbaku or A-Bomb Dome, occurs in newspaper articles from 1951, suggesting that it had become common parlance by the end of the 1940s.<sup>4</sup> By this point it had already become a tourist site for visiting Japanese Americans, Allied troops stationed in Japan, and local school excursions, looming over the land designated for a Peace Memorial Park on the opposite side of the river. Despite censorship of public discussion of the atomic explosion by Occupation authorities after the war, the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces enthusiastically supported the construction of the park as a site which promoted the association of the bomb with peace.<sup>5</sup>

For UNESCO, which placed the Dome on the UNESCO World Heritage List in December 1996, its 'mute remains symbolize on the one hand the ultimate in human destruction but on the other ... a message of hope'.<sup>6</sup> The justification for the inclusion of the Dome



centred on three aspects relating to the uniqueness of the ruined structure. First, the report states, it 'stands as a permanent witness' to the first military use in history of an atomic weapon, suggesting it confers a physical permanence and timelessness to a singular and passing moment that would otherwise slip from our comprehension. Second, the Dome 'is the only building in existence that can convey directly a physical image of the tragic situation immediately after the bombing'. The survival of the semi-ruined building amid such utter destruction provides a tangible, aesthetic representation of the otherwise unintelligible physical devastation and human misery of such an attack. Third – and as a consequence of these conditions – it is said to stand as a 'universal monument for all mankind, symbolizing the hope for perpetual peace'.<sup>7</sup>

Other experiences of the Dome's historical significance are possible: in a 1956 article on his visit to Hiroshima, Hugh M. Gloster recalls being guided towards 'the towering skeleton of a shattered steel and concrete structure which was once the proud Industrial Exhibition Hall of Hiroshima' and feeling that its 'ghastly' ruins signify nothing more than humanity's capacity for war, destruction and hate, whilst an unnamed Japanese history professor in Robert Lifton's *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* suggests that the memorial fails to symbolize accurately the true sig-

nificance of the bomb because when atomic weaponry has 'the power to make everything into nothing' this should be symbolized by nothingness itself.<sup>8</sup>

But these alternative experiences tend to be occluded by the dominance of that testified to in the UNESCO statement, which enacts a series of transitions from the ephemeral and particular to the eternal and universal, from the inexperienceable and supposedly unrepeatable magnitude of destruction and suffering to its aesthetic exhibition, and from war to peace. This article focuses on one particular consequence of this view: the conceptual tendency to elide war and peace through an ideology of progress, which works to silence cultural critique. In order to resist the continuing reception of Hiroshima according to an idealist philosophy of historical progress, the following seeks to juxtapose this pre- and after-history to construct an image of the Dome as the ground zero of our current 'war on terror'. This serves to supplement some broader reflections on the ideological function of what will be termed the 'historical sublime', which codes the aesthetic reception of the Genbaku Dome in the West and underpins the idealist philosophy of history.

### Prehistory

The origin of the Genbaku Dome lies in the period of intense modernization in Japan associated with the Meiji Restoration. The extreme isolationist foreign policy known as *Sakoku*, which had been imposed in the seventeenth century as a response to ongoing European colonialism in the Far East, came to an end in the mid-nineteenth century when Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States navy secured trading relations with Japan through a literal act of 'gunboat diplomacy'. The commercial treaties of 1854 and 1858 'opened the door' to the forces of Western, capitalist modernity, to which some within responded by seeking to re-establish the sovereignty of the imperial line. For over five centuries the dynasty had been excluded from any political role, but on 3 January 1868 samurai from a number of southwestern *han* or feudal domains seized control of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto and restored the emperor to power.<sup>9</sup>

Whilst the *han* of Hiroshima remained on the periphery of this *coup d'état*, the sweeping political and economic reforms that followed in the wake of the restoration contributed to dramatic changes in the outlook and landscape of the region.<sup>10</sup> In 1870, as part of a broader attempt to achieve economic and military parity with the dominant European and American powers, the autonomy of the *han* was abolished and the land taken back and restructured into centralized *ken*

or prefectures, with Hiroshima prefecture becoming one of the 305 newly established politico-geographical regions.<sup>11</sup>

Initially, the Japanese economy remained primarily agrarian and the light industry that began to develop in the larger cities was fuelled by capital generated from the newly imposed land tax.<sup>12</sup> When initial attempts to revise the Western-imposed treaties which granted foreign nations extraterritorial rights and tariff autonomy failed, the newly established government imposed an ambitiously intense process of modernization.<sup>13</sup> Production was increased through land-tax reforms and investment in manufacturing industry, and supplemented by a process of *bunmei kaika* ('civilization and enlightenment') pursued through the revision of legal codes and the introduction of a European-style education system. This shift from agriculture to light industry eventually contributed to a mass migration away from the countryside and to the rapidly expanding cities. Hiroshima was one of the first to be granted city status, and a government-sponsored cotton mill was established during the 1870s which would have most likely have employed low-wage agricultural workers from the surrounding countryside.<sup>14</sup> Soon, 'the entire apparatus of Western material civilization seemed to find some reproduction, some kind of echo, in Japan', to the extent that desirable Western objects were recited to the bounce of a ball in a popular children's song of 1878 ('gas lamps, steam engines, horse-carriage, cameras, telegrams, lightning conductors, newspapers, schools, letter-post, and steam-boats').<sup>15</sup>

Industrialization and colonization were regarded as the parallel tracks for Japan's entry as a significant power onto the world stage; each fuelled the other and intensified the development of Japanese 'modernity', the index of its standing with the West. During the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95, Hiroshima city's geographical location secured its central importance as Japan's 'military capital'. Tokutomi Soho, a journalist who travelled with Emperor Meiji to the new headquarters in Hiroshima on 13 September 1894, exhorted his readers: 'We must remember that we are fighting before the whole world ... we are fighting to determine once and for all Japan's position in the world.'<sup>16</sup> But to pursue its military ventures against China and Russia, Western capital was required and soon began pouring into Japan.<sup>17</sup> Subsequent victories boosted Japan's status as a military and economic power, encouraging further foreign investment. Simultaneously, increased spending on armaments and war-related industry shifted the economic focus of the country towards heavy manufacturing.<sup>18</sup>

A suggestion for the construction of a commercial exhibition hall – in which the newly produced commodities manufactured in the city and its surrounding areas could be displayed and sold – was first put forward after the end of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, but postponed due to inadequate funding.<sup>19</sup> In 1910 a joint proposal to finance the construction of the hall on land owned by the city using funding provided by the prefecture was agreed, and over the next few years the General Affairs Division of the Hiroshima City Hall set about purchasing, acquiring and exchanging land for the site on the banks of the Motayasu river. Preparation work began on 1 April 1911 and proceeded at a steady pace for the next two years.

The arrival of the new prefectural governor, Sukeyuki Terada, in spring 1913 was significant for the architectural design and building material of the completed exhibition hall, a factor which – along with its location – explains its ability to withstand the initial blast of the atomic bomb and the subsequent firestorm that incinerated the rest of the city. Terada had previously been mayor of the Miyagi prefecture, where he had commissioned the Czech architect Jan Letzel to design the Matsushima Park Hotel.<sup>20</sup> Whilst the Matsushima Park Hotel was being completed in the summer of 1913, Sukeyuki invited Letzel to visit Hiroshima and start work on designs for the exhibition hall.<sup>21</sup>

Despite Japan's rapid growth, prior to 1913 its industries were unable to compete with developed capitalist nations in the world market and the expense of the Russo-Japanese war was taking its toll on the economy.<sup>22</sup> The outbreak of World War I and Japan's subsequent entry into the Allied coalition rescued the country from fiscal collapse.<sup>23</sup> More importantly, since Japan played little part in other wartime activities, it could supply much-needed munitions, shipping and manufactured goods to Allied forces, developing its large-scale heavy industry to take advantage of British, German and French inability to meet demands in the domestic and Southeast Asian markets.<sup>24</sup> Three days after the declaration of war against Germany, Britain drew on the cordial relations established by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to request Japan's intervention to destroy the German fleet based at the naval base of Tsingtao (now Qingdao), at that time a colony leased by China to Germany.<sup>25</sup> In line with its imperial ambitions, Japan not only attacked the fleet, but seized the colony, placing Tsingtao under military rule.<sup>26</sup>

On 5 April 1915, construction was completed on the Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall, a three-storey brick building, with exterior walls partially reinforced by stone and cement plaster.<sup>27</sup> The

central, steel-framed core consisted of an atrium which extended to five storeys, housing an oval staircase which led to a steel-framed, copper-clad elliptical dome. The building was surrounded by a Western-style garden with a pond and fountain, as well as a more traditional Japanese garden.<sup>28</sup> After the inauguration ceremony the site housed part of the first Hiroshima Prefecture Promotion Fair, before a more permanent display – the Prefectural Products Exhibition Hall on the second floor – was opened on 15 August 1915. At the opening ceremony of the Hall, Terada declared that ‘the building will serve to further promote and improve the prefecture’s products and contribute to the development of related industries’.<sup>29</sup> In the first eleven months of the exhibition 157,000 people visited the hall and commissioned sales totalling 9.79 million yen.<sup>30</sup>

By the 1920s, chemical and heavy industry led economic development, whilst ‘the construction of hydroelectric power stations and the facilities for high-powered transmission of electricity provided the driving-growth’ for related electrical industries, and the motorization of weaving, tea refining and lumber firms (two such lumber corporations were operating from offices in the Hiroshima Exhibition Hall in the year before its destruction).<sup>31</sup> The global depression of the late 1920s spurred on Japan’s colonial ambitions, as the Chinese continent promised access to new export markets, material resources and cheap labour.<sup>32</sup> During the 1930s, as military expansion and trading opportunity continued to grow, the Hiroshima Prefectural Hall joined the network of representative offices that stretched from Kobe in Japan, across north-east China to Shanghai, with the aim of promoting the Prefecture across the empire.<sup>33</sup> The ‘incident’ in Mukden – when the Japanese military attacked Chinese troops on the pretext of an alleged attempted sabotage on the South Manchurian Railway – was followed by the expansion of military power across Manchuria, even whilst those in government were giving international assurances to the contrary.<sup>34</sup>

In 1932, as fighting broke out in Shanghai between the Chinese 19th Route Army and the Japanese naval landing party stationed in the city, the Exhibition Hall was the site for a second Japan–Manchuria Trade Exhibition. With the deepening of Japan’s military involvement in the East, it was decided in 1933 to rename the building the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall to reflect the shift in its activities and function away from commercial exhibition. Regular art exhibitions had been held since its opening (including a very popular exhibition of ‘Dolls from America’ in 1927); in 1937, as the fighting that

had broken out in Shanghai that August intensified, the Promotion Hall held an exhibition of ‘Holy War Art’, a reflection of increasing nationalism which was to find its most extreme expression in the atrocities carried out against the Chinese inhabitants of Nanjing during the capture of the city in December of that year.<sup>35</sup>

This nationalism of the 1930s can be traced, in part, to the uneven economic and socio-political development of Japan in the preceding bouts of industrial and capitalist development. The tensions buried in the original policy of sacrificing the countryside for the city – evident in the story that the initial resentment of the outlying towns and villages over the allocation of prefectural funding to the Hall had to be appeased by the promise of ‘two stud horses and two bulls’ to each county – began to re-emerge in the discourses on modernity in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>36</sup>

This took the form of ‘refiguring the folk and resuscitating their beliefs, customs, and practices in order to preserve the last but lingering traces of a prior existence and to reactivate in the present the kernel of community life needed to negotiate the troubling presence of modernity’.<sup>37</sup>

In 1940, with the agreement of the Vichy government of France, Japan occupied French-controlled Vietnam, joining forces with the German–Italian Axis. Japan’s advance into Southeast Asia had been justified under the rubric of the ‘Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’: the object of the war, as described by Prime Minister Tojo Hideki, was to establish ‘an order of co-existence and co-prosperity based on ethical principles with Japan serving as its nucleus’.<sup>38</sup> Such talk was buoyed by the unanticipated swiftness of Japan’s military successes, with troops sweeping across Southeast Asia – where they were tentatively regarded at first as deliverers from colonialism – and occupying most of the islands of the western Pacific.<sup>39</sup> It also helped paint over the inherent tensions between the ‘new’ Western-style modernity and ‘old’ Japanese traditionalism: Japanese intervention could be seen as the reinvigoration of ‘East Asian’ cultural and economic dominance over Western colonialism. In practice, the ‘Co-Prosperity Sphere’ sought the exploitation of raw materials abroad to aid Japan’s war effort. This deepening military involvement led to the closures of the Hiroshima Prefecture’s outlying representative offices from May 1941. With the tide of war beginning to turn, by 31 March 1944 all commercial activity was halted and the Prefectural Hall was taken over by government offices and associated agencies, including the Ministry of the Interior’s Public Works Office and

the Hiroshima District Lumber and Japan Lumber Control corporations.<sup>40</sup>

Most of the smaller, wooden traditional Japanese-style structures that surrounded the Hall when the atomic bomb was dropped were either instantly destroyed by the thermal blast or in the subsequent fire-storm that razed the city (90 per cent of Hiroshima's houses were tightly clustered wooden dwellings).<sup>41</sup> In her excellent book *Hiroshima Traces*, Lisa Yoneyama records that of the 142 major public buildings within 5 kilometres of the central blast area, around 80 survived the bombing. In the aftermath of the war, there were calls to halt postwar development and leave the ruins of Hiroshima completely untouched, but commercial interests ensured that redevelopment of the city commenced.<sup>42</sup> The prefecture had allocated financial resources for the reconstruction of the building in the 1950s, but concerns that it was dangerously close to collapse meant the funds were returned and in 1953 the ruins were donated to the city. *Hibakusha* (A-Bomb survivor) groups were initially divided over whether to remove or preserve such reminders, although many did later petition for the Dome's preservation.<sup>43</sup> As the preservation movement grew stronger a wire fence was erected to seal off the building, and, after architectural surveys and a budgeting of funds, Hiroshima City Council finally passed a resolution for the preservation of the structure on 11 July 1966.

### **Mythologizing Hiroshima: Kant and the historical sublime**

How the skeletal shell of the devastated ruin might serve as any kind of universal monument for UNESCO, let alone one capable of symbolizing perpetual peace, becomes comprehensible if the series of transitions enacted in its description are understood in relation to a concept of the historical sign coded by a Kantian aesthetics of the historical sublime. Kant insists that it is not the object that should be classed as sublime but the rational Idea evoked within us, which the object is merely suitable for exhibiting.<sup>44</sup> In the mathematical sublime, it is our incapacity to estimate aesthetic magnitudes beyond the limits of sensible intuition that provokes the imagination to turn to the numerical concepts of the understanding, capable of successively advancing to infinity. Reason, however, 'seeks to approximate the unity that is possible empirically', and demands 'a multiplicity in a unity (of intuition rather than thought)'.<sup>45</sup> This felt compulsion to collapse the temporal condition of the infinite into the simultaneity of an instant nonetheless indicates a supersensible power within us, Kant argues, which points to the non-

empirical and ideal ground of magnitude: the absolute and unconditioned whole of nature (*CJ* 255).

Similarly, the suitability of the Dome for exhibiting the magnitude of the devastation and suffering is conceptually conditioned by the very impossibility of such representation. Paul Tibbets, pilot of the *Enola Gay* B-29, which deployed the bomb, recalls the explosion in terms which anticipate the wider context of a nuclear warfare: 'What I saw was of a magnitude and carried with it a connotation of destruction bigger than I had really imagined.'<sup>46</sup> Recalling the Dome's 'architecture of remembrance' in a more recent article, Robert Ginsberg focuses on 'the terrible dynamism' of the explosion still 'pressed into the stone', which forces itself upon 'the human heart'.<sup>47</sup> Kant's description of the dynamic sublime evokes our physical impotence before the destructive power of nature precisely in order to recover our supersensible superiority over it. The mathematical conflict between the sensible and the rational is reduplicated here between the spectator's imagined fear, associated with empirical self-preservation, and an excited fearlessness which reveals our practical vocation: a higher human dignity, connected to the Idea of freedom, that endures above our empirical concerns with 'property, health, and life' (*CJ* 261–2).

There is, however, a problem with the antinomy on which Kant's argument hinges: there is nothing contradictory in being able to imagine a freedom from the danger of nature when – from the perspective of a safe distance necessary for the experience of the sublime – the individual *is* 'free' from such danger. In other words, the higher practical freedom Kant seeks to rescue with his appeal to the sublime is the result of an imaginative mislocation.<sup>48</sup> Kant's anticipation of such an objection compounds the error by turning the fallacy into a virtue: the 'liking concerns only our ability's *vocation*, revealed in such cases, insofar as the predisposition to this ability is part of our nature', he responds, 'whereas it remains up to us, as our obligation, to develop and exercise this ability' (*CJ* 242).

This problem repeats itself in Kant's discussion of the 'historical sign'. Indeed, to properly understand the elisions involved in the reception of the Dome it is necessary to understand how this aesthetics of the sublime, with its flight from empirical destruction to the Idea of freedom, implicitly structures an idealist conception of history. In the 'Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View', Kant utilizes a teleological argument to the effect that since humanity as a species possesses a unique capacity for practical reasoning, we must assume the species is

to develop in accordance with this rational purpose and its political organization, becoming increasingly autonomous.<sup>49</sup> If the historian is unable to find any evidence of such regularity and lawfulness in collective human action, we must therefore attribute this to our cognitive limitations and look for indirect signs of such purposiveness in nature itself (*IUH* 42). Kant discovers this in the principle of ‘unsocial sociability’, which is responsible for the competitive drive through which individuals and nations seek to develop their talents and progress in culture, taste and enlightenment (*IUH* 45). War is the international expression of this ‘*pathologically* enforced social union’, and therefore the necessary precondition for the eventual cooperation of nations in a great, cosmopolitan federation of states (*IUH* 47–8).

The second part of the *Conflict of the Faculties* develops this account by drawing on Kant’s attitude towards the revolution in France and his account of the sublime to theorize the further existence of a ‘historical sign’ itself. This would demonstrate a purposive tendency in the human race as it is currently divided into nations and states, one ‘undetermined with regard to time, and which would allow progress toward the better to be concluded as an inevitable consequence’.<sup>50</sup> It is not the revolution in France that is itself progressive, however, although we might say it is suitable for exhibiting the moral character in the mind of the spectator who enthusiastically follows the events from a distance. It is the excitement of the spectator, with its universal but disinterested sympathy for the actors, which for Kant indicates its innate, moral character.

Any factors that might limit the rational autonomy and universal humanity of the events (such as, Kant suggests, violence and suffering so severe that no one would willingly repeat the actions) are explained by the compression of the successive character of historical progress to the simultaneity of an instant. Like the conceptual structure of the sublime, ephemerality, particularity, destructiveness and empirical limitation point beyond themselves to an infinite, universal, serene Idea of cosmopolitan humanity. The treatise concludes with Kant’s assertion that the economic and moral ill consequences of war will eventually provide a salutary lesson to nations, such that a cooperative and peaceful international order will be established, paving the way for what Kant elsewhere calls a ‘perpetual peace’.<sup>51</sup> The problem of imaginative mislocation threatens to repeat itself here in the distancing from any analysis of the empirical, material and historical conditions of conflict and struggle, which permits claims of progres-

siveness to be indiscriminately attributed to all sorts of historical events.

The ideological complicity between the history of the sublime and the sublimity of history apparent in Kant’s aesthetics of history is also manifested in the way the reception of the ruined structure of the Dome enables a flight from the real into its ideal opposite, from the violent destruction of war to the serene hope of peace. This kind of sublime logic is prevalent not only in the UNESCO nomination of the Dome, but serves as a metonym for much of the cultural reception of the events. The notion of transforming Hiroshima into a historical symbol of peace appears to have been raised first by Kiyoshi Tanimoto, a survivor of the bomb, whose experience is dramatized in John Hersey’s famous *New Yorker* article from 1946. On the back of his fame, Tanimoto toured American churches lecturing on ‘The Faith that Grew Out of the Ashes’. He advocated the idea for a peace memorial that was ‘enthusiastically endorsed’ in an editorial by the *Saturday Review of Literature* in March 1949.<sup>52</sup> Asked to open the prayer for a session of the US Senate in 1951, Tanimoto thanked God for ‘the great blessing Thou hast granted American in enabling her to build in this last decade the greatest civilization in history’ and that ‘Japan has been permitted to be one of the fortunate recipients of American generosity. We thank Thee that our people have been given the gift of freedom, enabling them to rise from the ashes of ruin and be reborn’.<sup>53</sup>

Something akin to the ‘unsocial sociability’ driving Kant’s concept of history also seems to function in the Allied response to the bombings. Initial American reactions to the attack on Hiroshima tended to reinforce the technological accomplishment of the Manhattan Project that developed the bomb as a triumph of social progress and a harbinger of international peace.<sup>54</sup> In his biography Tibbets recalls how on the homeward journey back from Hiroshima he had

reflected on the wonders of science and rejoiced that the new weapon had surely made future war unthinkable.... Each technological advance in weaponry had made war more hideous but so far had not persuaded mankind to abandon this means of settling quarrels between peoples. Now certainly we had developed the ultimate argument for keeping the peace.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, the Truman administration promoted the bombings of the largely civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as helping *save* a million American lives, an idea that is often expanded to include also the Japanese lives ‘saved’ by the avoidance

of invasion.<sup>56</sup> An imaginative mislocation is again involved here, and whilst the development of the bomb is justified as necessary against an imagined atomic attack by Germany, its deployment is justified against an imagined invasion of the Japanese mainland by America.

Two significant factors are at stake in such a response to the bomb. Robert Jay Lifton has argued that for the Japanese there is a psychological comfort enacted in the equation of destruction and peace: ‘the general tendency to use “Atomic Bomb” and “Peace” almost interchangeably in naming these monuments suggests the psychological effort to equate the two in the sense of the latter springing from the ashes of the former’.<sup>57</sup> This comfort is problematic since it has a tendency to pass over issues of Japanese nationalism and imperialism, particularly relevant given Hiroshima’s status as a military capital during the imperial expansion into Asia. At the same time, this Japanese response to the events has certainly been encouraged by the Allied countries, for whom this equation of war and peace serves as a moral justification for the use of indiscriminate atomic weaponry against a civilian population and the basis for a rhetoric of pacification. This obscures both the West’s involvement in what Kakuzo Okakura’s epigraph sardonically calls the

‘civilizing’ of Japan and the Far East and its continuing involvement in such projects in the Middle East.

Identifying the sublime logic implicit in the idealist reactions to the Dome, and Hiroshima more generally, is valuable in drawing out the problematic character of such a response, which continues to operate in more recent appropriations. It also relies on a practice of preserving decaying ruins that is less prevalent in Japan than the West, a practice itself reinforced by the Western tradition of writing on the sublime.<sup>58</sup> Three theoretical implications of such a response will be discussed here, and justified in the context of the cultural reception of the bombing:

1. The ‘universalizing’ of such responses, which encourages both the homeward movement of suffering in the American imagination and, consequently, its expansion to a ‘globalized humanity’, which works to conceal ongoing political divisions.
2. The ‘naturalizing’ of the response, which posits a ‘timelessness’ that prioritizes the mythical over the historical and induces a fatalism into the concept of progress, which reverberates in the myth of pacification.
3. The ‘idealism’ of such arguments, which involves a problematic concept of freedom derived from



the dualism between 'nature' and 'history'. This dualism posits the bombing as historically and technologically unique and obscures the continuity of violence inherent to such pacification.

### Shikata ga nai

John Hersey's 1946 article in the *New Yorker* that dramatized the stories of the six survivors of Hiroshima quickly became a paradigmatic text in the American reception of the atomic bombing.<sup>59</sup> Whilst Hersey sometimes depicts humane acts of compassion as occurring *despite*, not *because* of, the devastation, one notable exception involves a German priest, Father Kleinsorge. In the aftermath of the bombing, he encounters a Japanese woman who hands him tea-leaves to quench his thirst, a gesture which made him 'a little hysterical', Hersey reports, because 'for weeks, he had been feeling oppressed by the hatred of foreigners that the Japanese seemed increasingly to show'.<sup>60</sup> This little act of care is supposed to suggest that the suffering wrought by the bomb enables a kind of universal humanity to emerge amid the devastation.

This pattern is repeated in the more recent and overtly psychological works on Hiroshima, which have a tendency to universalize the suffering through the deployment of Jungian archetypes. Here, the Kantian sublime and its cosmopolitan humanity are rejuvenated via the Jungian theory of the collective unconscious. Michael Perlman's *Imaginal Memory and the Place of Hiroshima* is indicative of such a response, arguing as it does that

images associated with the place of Hiroshima embody unsuspected psychological values beyond their role as reminders of the concrete horror of nuclear war. The remembering of these values is crucial to a deeper-going commitment to peace and to contemporary psychological life in general.<sup>61</sup>

What is troubling about Perlman's efforts to find what he calls a 'home' for the mnemonic images of the dead is the way in which the memories of the Japanese victims are 're-housed' primarily within the paradigms of Western culture: the mythical landscape of ancient Greek legend.<sup>62</sup> For example, the wounds of Father Kleinsorge that repeatedly reopen are connected with the pain and suffering of Dionysus, whilst Kiyoshi Tanimoto becomes the ferryman piloting the vessel of the dead.<sup>63</sup> Perlman concludes by evoking the 'timeless' theogonic time of Hesiod's Muses, arguing that commemorating Hiroshima in this way encourages a 'universality' which becomes utterly inclusive only by its obliteration of boundaries and forgetting of nationalism.<sup>64</sup> In Perlman's version the particular

is transformed into the universal, nationalism turns into cosmopolitanism, and because we all become the 'victims' of Hiroshima, war – to use one of Perlman's favoured images from Jung – alchemically transmutes into the stimulus for peace.

Robert Jay Lifton's *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* and *The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat* (with Eric Markusen) are more precise about recording the experiences of those affected in their own words. However, they share with Perlman a preoccupation with the universal value of the atomic experience, hijacking the concept of 'species consciousness' in the treatment of Hiroshima.<sup>65</sup> Lifton argues that the scale and the destruction and the kind of weapon involved in the bombing involve 'the dimension of totality, a sense of ultimate annihilation – of cities, nations, the world', which transcends geographical and national boundaries and prompts us to think of humanity as a totality.<sup>66</sup> For example, he quotes a Japanese philosopher and atom bomb survivor who argues that as a result 'peace [would be seen as] no single country's problem [but] a matter of life and death for mankind [requiring] a movement which could be said to be spiritual ... not tied to politics ... [but] connected only with humanism'.<sup>67</sup>

One of the problems with Kant's account of the dynamic sublime is that the humanity and immortality evoked by destruction depend upon a conflict between empirical self-interest and a higher disinterest, which, because it is merely imagined, may have an existence that is merely imaginary. Despite the author's intentions, Perlman's 'imaginal memory' or Lifton's 'species consciousness' threaten to reassert national self-interest at a global level under the guise of international humanitarianism. Thus, for Lifton, species consciousness is 'not just a distant ideal but a practical and realizable state of mind', which is manifested in the 'principle of 'common security' – of no nation being secure unless all are'.<sup>68</sup> The humanity imagined in Kant's sublime arises out of a violent act of reduction. In Hersey's *Hiroshima*, the points of identification dramatized are small acts of generosity, heroic exploits of bravery, merciful gestures of compassion, and the calmly described horror of individuals reduced to bodies stripped of skin, clothing, property, language and other such distinguishing marks: aggression, nationalism and politics are beaten out of its victims. This produces a mythological concept of humanity, a pacified humanity that arises as a consequence of imperial warfare and not one that posits, even if it must be through violent struggle, any genuine alternative to it.

This risk is exacerbated by the fatalism attached to the naturalizing of historical events. Expressions of such fatalism by the victims is frequently reported in the American literature, encapsulated in the Japanese phrase *Shikata ga nai*: 'It can't be helped'.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the novelistic form of Hersey's *Hiroshima* article, which interweaves the different perspectives of six survivors, induces a kind of temporal repetition whose moment of simultaneity is centred on the millisecond of the explosion like an inevitable catastrophe. But it is also implicit in the more recent responses to the suffering. Perlman describes his 'devotional' practice of memory as involving a painful masochism reminiscent of the medieval submission to the powers of Fate.<sup>70</sup> Just as in the mathematical sublime Kantian reason demands a simultaneity which steps outside the additive temporal progression into infinity, so in the historical sublime the past is brought into simultaneity with the present in a way which does not pragmatically emphasize the contingency of the present, but eternalizes the present in its empathetic rehousing of what has occurred.

The mythological concept of fate tacitly utilized in such responses to the bomb facilitates the recasting of the city and its people as the sacrificial victims of a higher progress: the inevitable cause of peace. However, the peace brought about by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a silence enforced by an act of violence designed to be so brutal it would shock the government, its people and the wider world into submission. Those who take up the memory of the victims as a universal stimulus to continued global cooperation and security seem to possess a peculiarly mythological understanding of pacification, one shared with those who insist on the necessity of the bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the end of the Second World War. Their peace is the present conclusion of history as it is narrated by the victors, one that smooths over the legacy of imperialist violence and economic liberalism.

It is only at a superficial level that the remembered or imagined threat of atomic or nuclear annihilation might provoke an appeal to human dignity, because the humanity it hopes to evoke is undermined by the very technological and hence human-made status of the destruction it reflects upon. In the Kantian sublime it is the common response to a *natural* threat that engenders a sense of indestructibility by distinguishing us from empirical nature. Consequently, because the Kantian concepts of freedom and history depend upon a dualism that has a tendency to exclude the technological, contemporary reflection upon destructive technology necessitates the introduction of a further

dualism at the level of the rational and historical, if the affirmative flight into idealist progress be retained.

This is figured in the cultural reception of Hiroshima through the sublime image of a historical-technological break or rupture. It can be observed in accounts that become scientifically obsessed with the precise details of the moment of the attack:

The bomb's detonator activated 1,890 feet above ground. At exactly 8.16 am, forty-five seconds after falling from the *Enola Gay*, having travelled a distance of nearly six miles, the atomic bomb missed the Aioi Bridge by 800 feet, and exploded directly over Dr. Shima's clinic ... In the first milli-second after 8.16 am – a time-fraction too small for any watch in Hiroshima to measure – a pinprick of purplish red-light expanded to a glowing fireball hundreds of feet wide. The temperature at its core was 50,000,000 degrees.<sup>71</sup>

The value of the word 'exactly' is significant here. It encapsulates the triumph of technology, from the Manhattan Project scientists that developed the first atomic bomb, the refitted B-29 bombers that carried it, the watches that timed the explosion, and the photographic equipment that captured the mushroom cloud.

Whilst the suffering and devastation wrought on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by nuclear technology is to be acknowledged, there are two problematic ideas that arise in this focus on the singularity of the technological. First, it disguises precisely the areas of continuity and overlap with other moments of wartime violence preceding and following 6 August 1945, including the second attack on Nagasaki three days later. Whilst the devastation wrought by the single atomic bomb was massive, initial Japanese reports mistook the destruction for that caused by a squadron of B-29s. In Hersey's account, one of the doctors assumes it must have been a "*Molotoffano hanakago*" – a Molotov flower basket, the delicate Japanese name for the "bread basket", or self-scattering cluster of bombs'.<sup>72</sup> American military strategy had deployed relentless squadrons of low-flying bombers using incendiary bombs designed to cause maximum devastation upon the wooden factories and houses of Tokyo and other cities.<sup>73</sup> The fire-bombing of Tokyo in March 1945 was, Richard Storry points out, 'probably the most appalling air-attacks, in terms of loss of life, of the whole war'.<sup>74</sup>

The experience of technological sublimity evoked in such responses to the event of Hiroshima therefore works to conceal rather than expose the historical continuity of atrocities carried out on all sides during the last world war. Robert McNamara, at the time a captain in the Army Air Forces's Office of Statistical

Control, has suggested that the efficiency of the fire-bombing of major Japanese cities had already rendered the necessity of atomic weaponry redundant, and that the subsequent devastation caused by the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki may have been disproportionate enough to justify General LeMay's prosecution as a war criminal.<sup>75</sup> The sublimity attached to Hiroshima is in this sense an act of reassurance: the bombing becoming an abnormality whose conditions may be pored over in scholarly detail, whilst those implicated as responsible remain comfortably small in number.

The dramatic and traumatic sublimity of such responses to nuclear destruction also work to efface what *was* exceptional about nuclear weaponry: the lingering effects of radiation. In *Ruin from the Air*, Thomas and Morgan-Witt, describing the actions of a fighter pilot who attempting to pursue the *Enola Gay* in a plane damaged 'as if ... warped by some supernatural power', comment that: 'Yasuzawa was now flying in and out of the pall, unaware of the risk to which he was subjecting himself and his passenger.'<sup>76</sup> The repression of the word 'radioactivity' here, and its excision from the book except a brief sentence in the penultimate chapter, indicates the extent to which nuclear weaponry has a tendency to be characterized by the power and scale of its explosive effect, rather than consideration of its unique radioactive legacy.<sup>77</sup> Any consideration of the human cost of the attack must also include the lingering radioactive legacy that continues to claim many of those who survived the initial effects of the bombing.<sup>78</sup>

## Afterlife

Hiroshima was spared the intensive fire-bombing campaigns that devastated other Japanese cities in the first six months of 1945 because the city had already been nominated as a possible target for an atomic attack. Among the factors contributing to the selection of Hiroshima were its importance as a military and industrial base, the absence of any significant number of Allied prisoners of war, the absence of surrounding hills which may contribute to containing the effects of the blast (and therefore limit the quantifiable extent of the devastation), and the presence of a large number of homes and buildings useful for measuring the magnitude and strength of the explosion (and which had been intentionally spared from conventional bombing for this purpose).

It is generally agreed that the Truman administration's primary purpose in the deployment of the

bomb was to help demoralize Japan into unconditional surrender, preventing the future requirement of full-scale invasion of the Japanese mainland, although controversy still surrounds the perceived necessity of the atomic bombings for hastening such surrender and over the projected military cost of any such invasion.<sup>79</sup> The timing of the Allied bombing, days before the Soviet invasion of Manchuria on 9 August 1945 and whilst Japan was engaged in tentative peace negotiations via Russia, was also significant in this respect: a demonstration of America's new military capability would also have significant political benefits for post-war negotiations with Russia, a factor which many argue had an important influence on the decision to utilize atomic weapons to end the Pacific war.<sup>80</sup>

It is worth considering Peter Schwenger's suggestion that America must confront the fact that the 'apparently innocent virtues' of 'Yankee ingenuity and Yankee Doodle patriotism' resulted in 'an act of overwhelming terror, a terrorism that from then on will hold hostage the world, including America itself'.<sup>81</sup> Schwenger's words, written in 1994, were intended to recall the destructive act that was initiated with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, but that subsequently cast a shadow over the whole world, reaching the height of its terror during the Cold War. But the nuclear physicist and Nobel peace laureate Professor Joseph Rotblat draws out what might be taken as a more recent connotation for Schwenger's claim, arguing that the terror attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 had 'not appeared out of the blue', for 'its seeds were planted at the very beginning of the nuclear age'.<sup>82</sup>

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the pre-emptive first strike of the Cold War. The concept of nuclear diplomacy might therefore be extended to those strategic military gains in the twentieth century achieved through the same 'gunboat diplomacy' by which Japan was opened to liberalism and capitalism in the nineteenth. The attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been influential on the development of a war that may be thought of as 'nuclear' to the extent that it defies the possibility of the nuclear. The nuclear war that 'never was' not only produced the 'many nests of terrorism', the 'numerous schools of terrorism [that] were spread around the world', but also established the strategies of conflict that such combatants would deploy.<sup>83</sup>

Hannah Segal suggests that 'the 11th September bombing was highly symbolic' because it served as a counterexample to the notion that because of America's

technological sophistication, its ability to wage war from a distance, from the sky and not the ground, it could remain invulnerable.<sup>84</sup> Despite the sophisticated levels of information, planning and communication required to carry out attacks such as those on New York, Madrid or London, the attacks themselves were technologically crude in their method. The lack of technological sophistication is in turn a reflection of the geopolitical situation out of which terrorism is waged. For, regardless of the extent to which terrorism can be traced back to supposedly 'external' ideologies and foreign countries, the capacity to wage terrorist attacks effectively relies on the ability to threaten its target internally, from within.

Moreover, this disruption of the geographical supremacy of nuclear totalization effects the very 'uselessness' of nuclear technology. Nuclear warfare cannot be *actually* used against an enemy within, nor – outside of the context of a world war which nuclear weaponry has supposedly rendered impossible – at an enemy scattered within another population. The problematic legacy of its radioactive uniqueness means it has a limited effectiveness for a warfare that requires intervention or occupation. In this way, nuclear weaponry enforces a technological retrogression not only on those who fight against nations that possess it, but also on those states that possess the capacity for nuclear warfare. None of this has prevented the repeated threats of nuclear attack against its political enemies, which, as Joseph Gerson's *Empire and the Bomb* lays out in detailed historical analysis, has underwritten the USA's diplomatic and military foreign policy on at least forty occasions since 1945.<sup>85</sup>

The political essayist Dwight Macdonald, editor of the Marxist journal *Politics*, lambasted the early glorifications of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a series of articles published between August 1945 and November 1946 which suggested that atomic power had rendered the very concept of 'progress' obsolete.<sup>86</sup> Both socialist and conservative responses to atomic power, Macdonald argued, rested on a platitude about atomic fission 'based on a faith in Science and Progress', a belief which 'blunts our reaction to the present horror by reducing it to an episode in an historical schema which will "come out all right" in the end'.<sup>87</sup> Against the utopianism of progress, he admonishes that 'we do not dream of a world in which atomic fission will be "harnessed to constructive ends"', for the 'new energy will be at the service of the rulers; it will change their strength but not their aims'.

## Notes

1. Concerns about its veracity were raised, among others, by the Veterans of the 509th Composite Group, who flew the bombers involved in the raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ([www.enolagay509th.com/Veterans509th.pdf](http://www.enolagay509th.com/Veterans509th.pdf)). Publication was halted, forcing Hollywood director James Cameron, who had optioned the book in preparation for a forthcoming film on Hiroshima (clearly recognizing the potential for another sentimentalized techno-hubristic romance), to speak out in defence of the author, whom he had previously employed as 'scientific' consultant on *Titanic* and *Avatar*. 'Avatar Director James Cameron Defends Hiroshima Author', BBC News, 4 March 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/8549036.stm>.
2. Annex V, 20th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 1996, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/rep-co96x.htm>.
3. The term 'ground zero', which resurfaced in the aftermath of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, originated as a military term to describe the hypocentre of the explosion used by the scientists of the Manhattan Project.
4. Shinobu Amano Kikuraku, 'From A-bomb damage to repair': 'History of the A-Bomb Dome', <http://ww2.enjoy.ne.jp/~kikuraku/files/history4.htm>.
5. Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 1999, p. 20.
6. UNESCO World Heritage List No. 775, Hiroshima: Nomination of Hiroshima Peace Memorial, 28 September 1995, [www2.unitar.org/hiroshima/programmes/whs07/materials/Utaka-%20ABD\\_and\\_Itsukushima.pdf](http://www2.unitar.org/hiroshima/programmes/whs07/materials/Utaka-%20ABD_and_Itsukushima.pdf), p. 3.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
8. Hugh M. Gloster, 'Hiroshima in Retrospect', *Phylon*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1956, pp. 272, 278; Robert Jay Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1991, p. 278.
9. Richard Sims, *Japanese Political History since the Meiji Restoration: 1868–2000*, Hurst, London, 2001, p. 1.
10. Cf. W.G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan: Political, Economic and Social Change since 1850*, 2nd edn, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1995, pp. 51–2.
11. Chushici Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan: 1825–1995*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 63.
12. Jean-Pierre Lehman, *The Roots of Modern Japan*, Macmillan, London, 1992, p. 174; Richard Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, Penguin, London, 1990, p. 122; Lehman, *The Roots of Modern Japan*, p. 174.
13. Christine M.E. Gruth, 'Japan 1868–1945: Art, Architecture, and National Identity', *Art Journal*, vol. 55, no. 3, Autumn 1996, p. 17; Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 107.
14. Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, p. 72. A similar mill in Osaka sought farm girls, who were housed in company dormitories and worked up to twelve hours a day in conditions where tuberculosis was rife (*ibid.*, p. 147).
15. Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 107; G.B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, Cresset Press, London, 1950, p. 401, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 107–8.
16. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan*, p. 173, cited in Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, p. 37.

17. Lehman, *The Roots of Modern Japan*, p. 174.
18. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, p. 111.
19. Shinobu Amano Kikuraku, 'Making of the Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall', *History of the A-Bomb Dome*, <http://ww2.enjoy.ne.jp/~kikuraku/files/history1.htm>.
20. Shinobu Amano Kikuraku, 'Commercial Exhibition Hall and Jan Letzel': 'History of the A-Bomb Dome', <http://ww2.enjoy.ne.jp/~kikuraku/files/history2.htm>.
21. Zdenek Lukes, cited in Jan Velinger, 'A Look at the Czech Architect Who Built Hiroshima's Industrial Promotion Hall', Radio Praha website, [www.radio.cz/en/article/69210](http://www.radio.cz/en/article/69210).
22. In the period 1870–1914, among the major industrial powers – the UK, Germany, France, the USA and Japan – Japan's annual rate of growth was second only to that of the United States (Lehman, *The Roots of Modern Japan*, p. 181).
23. Cf. Crawcour, 'Industrialization and Technological Change, 1985–1920', *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p. 436.
24. Between 1914 and 1918, Japan's real gross national product rose by 40 per cent (Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, pp. 193–4). Between 1915–1919 manufacturing output related to heavy industry and machinery increased by 72 per cent, with labour employment increasing by 42 per cent. Between 1909 and 1929 manufacturing relating to textiles almost quadrupled, to metals and machinery grew about the same, to chemicals and ceramics increasing around eight-fold, and to electricity and gas around twenty-four-fold (Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, p. 111).
25. Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, p. 188.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
27. UNESCO World Heritage List No. 775.
28. *Ibid.*; cf. also Kikuraku, 'Commercial Exhibition Hall and Jan Letzel'.
29. Shinobu Amano Kikuraku, 'Transformation of the Hall', *History of the A-Bomb Dome*, <http://ww2.enjoy.ne.jp/~kikuraku/files/history3.htm>.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, p. 233.
32. Joseph Gerson, *Empire and the Bomb*, Pluto Press, London and Ann Arbor MI, 2007, p. 44.
33. Kikuraku, 'Transformation of the Hall'.
34. Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 188.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
36. Kikuraku, 'Making of the Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall'.
37. Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 2000, p. 293.
38. Lebra, *Japan's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere*, pp. 78–81; quoted in Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, p. 204.
39. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, p. 34.
40. Liaison Conference, May 1943, quoted in Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, p. 323; 'Virtual Museum: A-Bomb Building', Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum official homepage, [www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/).
41. Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Witts, *Ruin from the Air: The Atomic Mission to Hiroshima*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1977, p. 323.
42. Kyo Maclear, *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima–Nagasaki and the Art of Witness*, SUNY Press, Albany NY, 1999, p. 51.
43. Although Yoneyama notes that during the late 1960s 'survivors were known to be generally less supportive of retaining this painful visual reminder of destroyed buildings' (Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces*, p. 70).
44. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1987, Ak. 245 (hereafter, *CJ*).
45. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1996, Ak. A567/B595; *CJ* 258.
46. Quoted in Thomas and Morgan-Witts, *Ruin from the Air*, p. 432.
47. Robert Ginsberg, 'Aesthetics in Hiroshima: The Architecture of Remembrance', in Michael H. Mitias, ed., *Philosophy and Architecture*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1994, p. 223.
48. Cf. Frances Ferguson, 'The Nuclear Sublime', 'Nuclear Criticism', *Diacritics*, vol. 14, no. 2, Summer, 1984, p. 7.
49. Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', in *Kant: Political Writings*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 42 (hereafter IUH); Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 148.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 171; cf. Kant, 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch', in *Kant: Political Writings*, pp. 93–130.
52. Norman Cousins, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 5 March 1949, quoted in John Hersey, in *Hiroshima* (1946), 2nd edn, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986, pp. 176–7.
53. Hersey, *Hiroshima*, p. 181.
54. Cf. Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1994, pp. 111–14.
55. Paul W. Tibbets, with Clair Stebbins and Harry Franken, *The Tibbets Story*, Stein & Day, New York, 1978, p. 230.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2. Former secretary of war Henry L. Stimson published an article in *Harper's* magazine early in 1947, in which the claim is made that the atomic attacks had prevented the one million American casualties anticipated in the invasion of Japan, repeating a claim made by Churchill (Joseph Gerson, *Empire and the Bomb*, Pluto Press, London and Ann Arbor MI, 2007, p. 47). Truman later drew upon Stimson's explanation, but halved the figure. Paul Tibbets repeats these figures in his biography, observing that, 'Depending on whose estimates you accept, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki saved a half-million or possibly a million lives, both American and Japanese.' Historical research now shows that the pre-surrender estimates never exceeded 20,000, and the worst-case prediction estimated a loss of no more than 46,000 lives (J. Samuel Walker, 'The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update', in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 11).
57. Lifton, *Death in Life*, p. 271.

58. Yoneyama notes how *hibakusha* invoked this argument of inappropriateness during the first stage of preservation during the late 1960s, cf. Yoneyama, p. 70; and Hibaku Kenzobutsu o Kangaeru Kai, ed., *Hiroshima no hibaku kenzobutsu: hibaku 45shunen chosa hokokusho*, Asahi Shinbun Hiroshima Shikyoku, Hiroshima, 1990, pp. 121–2.
59. ‘Hersey’s essay had an immediate and profound impact. The book version became a runaway best-seller. The Book-of-the-Month Club distributed free copies to many of its 848,000 members. A reading of the entire work, in four half-hour segments, over the ABC radio network won the Peabody Award for the outstanding educational broadcast of 1946’ (Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, p. 204).
60. Hersey, *Hiroshima*, p. 70.
61. Michael Perlman, *Imaginal Memory and the Place of Hiroshima*, SUNY, Albany NY, 1988, p. viii.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 87 and 118.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
65. Cf. the preface to Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima*, as well as the concluding chapter of Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen, *The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat*, Macmillan, London, 1990.
66. Lifton, *Death in Life*, p. 14.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
68. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
69. ‘As for the use of the bomb, [Mrs Nakamura] would say, “It was war and we had to expect it.” And then she would add, “*Shikata ga nai*”, ... “It can’t be helped. Oh, well. Too bad.” Dr. Fujii said approximately the same thing about the use of the bomb to Father Kleinsorge one evening, in German: “*Da ist nichts zu machen*. There’s nothing to be done about it”.’ (Hersey, *Hiroshima*, p. 117); ‘Perhaps the best example of this difficulty is the attitude of resignation (*akimare*) and of “it can’t be helped” (*shikataganai* or *shogonai*) expressed to me by large numbers of *hibakusha*’ (Lifton, *Death in Life*, pp. 186–7); ‘One one occasion a gentleman acquaintance, while talking about the use of the A-Bomb and the outcome of the war, fatalistically declared, “*Shi-Kata ga nai*” (“It can’t be helped”)’ (Gloster, ‘Hiroshima in Retrospect’, p. 274).
70. Perlman, *Imaginal Memory and the Place of Hiroshima*, p. 144.
71. Thomas and Max-Witts, *Ruin from the Air*, pp. 423, 427.
72. Hersey, *Hiroshima*, p. 32.
73. In Errol Morris’s documentary, *The Fog of War*, the US secretary of defence Robert McNamara, then serving as a captain in the Office of Statistical Control, describes how Air Force General LeMay ‘focused on only one thing: target destruction ... [in a] single night, we burned to death 100,000 Japanese civilians in Tokyo: men, women, and children ... 50 square miles of Tokyo were burned. Tokyo was a wooden city, and when we dropped these firebombs, it just burned it ... And he went on from Tokyo to firebomb other cities. 58% of Yokohama. Yokohama is roughly the size of Cleveland. 58% of Cleveland destroyed. Tokyo is roughly the size of New York. 51% percent of New York destroyed. 99% of the equivalent of Chattanooga, which was Toyama. 40% of the equivalent of Los Angeles, which was Nagoya. This was all done before the dropping of the nuclear bomb, which by the way was dropped by LeMay’s command.’ (Errol Morris, director, *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara* (Sony Pictures, 2004), transcript available at [www.errolmorris.com/film/fow\\_transcript.html](http://www.errolmorris.com/film/fow_transcript.html)). My thanks to Peter Kapos for drawing my attention to this.
74. Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 122; Lehman, *The Roots of Modern Japan*, p. 228.
75. ‘Why was it necessary to drop the nuclear bomb if LeMay was burning up Japan? ... Proportionality should be a guideline in war. Killing 50% to 90% of the people of 67 Japanese cities and then bombing them with two nuclear bombs is not proportional, in the minds of some people, to the objectives we were trying to achieve. I don’t fault Truman for dropping the nuclear bomb. The U.S.–Japanese War was one of the most brutal wars in all of human history ... Was there a rule then that said you shouldn’t bomb, shouldn’t kill, shouldn’t burn to death 100,000 civilians in one night? LeMay said, “If we’d lost the war, we’d all have been prosecuted as war criminals.” And I think he’s right. He, and I’d say I, were behaving as war criminals. LeMay recognized that what he was doing would be thought immoral if his side had lost. But what makes it immoral if you lose and not immoral if you win?’ (Morris, *The Fog of War*).
76. Thomas and Morgan-Witts, *Ruin from the Air*, pp. 433, 435.
77. Hersey’s additional chapter corrects this omission, detailing the psychological and physiological effects of ‘A-Bomb Disease’. Apart from a discussion of the archetypal images of ‘unhealing wounds’, where he includes the ‘disintegrative processes in the body resulting from radiation sickness’, Perlman chooses not to dwell on the effects of radiation (Perlman, *Imaginal Memory and the Place of Hiroshima*, p. 88).
78. Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan*, p. 317.
79. Gar Alperovitz’s 1965 *Atomic Diplomacy* put forward the ‘revisionist’ position that the primary motivation was not military but rather political: ‘dropped to impress the Soviets rather than defeat the Japanese’ (Walker, ‘The Decision to Use the Bomb’, p. 13).
80. Cf. Gerson, *Empire and the Bomb*, p. 13.
81. Peter Schwenger and John Whittier Treat, ‘America’s Hiroshima, Hiroshima’s America’, *Boundary 2*, vol. 21, no. 1, Spring 1994, p. 248.
82. Hanna Segal, ‘From Hiroshima to 11th September 11 2001’, in *Psychodynamic Practice*, vol. 9, no. 3, August 2003, p. 257.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
85. Cf. Joseph Gerson’s *Empire and the Bomb*; see also Joseph Gerson, *With Hiroshima Eyes: Atomic War, Nuclear Extortion and Moral Imagination*, New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, 1995.
86. Dwight Macdonald, *Politics* (August 1945), republished in *The Responsibility of Peoples*, Gollancz, London, 1957, p. 103.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 106.