America Imagines the Atomic Bomb

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[1] Saratosa Herald-Tribune, Thursday, September 13th 1945, 10, https://newspaperarchive.com/sarasota-herald-tribune-sep-13-1945-p-4/, December 10th, 2018.

Introduction: What is the orthodox view?

I. Literature, Writing.

II. Literary Devices

III. Choice of narrator/author in the context of the Ideology of Diffusion

Conclusion

Introduction

Following the use of the atomic bombs, there was a question that understandably bothered some minds: what is this thing, what happened, and what did it do? People needed a way to understand what had just happened, especially in a time when there was not an abundance of information on the atomic bomb available to the public. Ways to understand the atomic bomb came to people through literature. Since 1945, there has developed 6 main schools of interpretation of why the atomic bombs were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[2] The most influential amongst the American public has been what is called the 'orthodox' school. What is the orthodox view?

This "orthodox" school's argument's most prominent text is Henry L Stimson's article *The Decision to use the Bomb,* published in the *Harper's* magazine in 1947[3]. The main characteristics are these: (1) the atomic bomb is "as legitimate as any other deadly weapon of war." (2) Following the recommendations of the scientists on the scientific panel of the Interim Committee, it was decided that "the atomic bomb was an eminently suitable weapon" for a quickly forced surrender induced by shock to the Japanese people and government, and that it should be used on a "military

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[2] Orthodox, Revisionist, Domestic Politics, Military Dimension, Great Power Conflict, and Cultural Interpretations. This list taken from Professor Pyle's syllabus.

[3] Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Bomb," *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (February 1947), pp. 37-47. This article was actually ghost-written by McGeorge Bundy, James Conant, and others. However, Stimson is the presented author for significant reasons.

installation surrounded by houses and buildings." (3) Alternatives to a "military demonstration" such as a demonstration shot on an uninhabited area were not likely to induce surrender as the U.S. wanted it. (4) The Japanese military was still formidable and unwilling to surrender unconditionally. (5) "The Potsdam ultimatum was offered on July 26, and rejected by the Japanese two days later. Therefore bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Moreover, Nagasaki and Hiroshima fit the criteria for "military target." (6) Japan's prompt surrender after the bombings proves the function of the atomic bomb as a psychological weapon. The firebombing of Tokyo caused "greater damage and more casualties," but ultimately did not have the same effect as the atomic bombing did. (7) War is hell, and use of the atomic bomb was "our least abhorrent choice." Ultimately, the benefits of using the bomb outweighed what terrible things would come if it had not been used. It also put a stop to awful methods of warfare like firebombing.[4]

How this interpretation could have become so widely accepted and believe as it has is a part of the object of this essay. As well as that, I will attempt to shed some light on various ways in general that the American public was offered ways to think about the atomic bombs— I will be doing somewhat of a survey of literary devices. In the end, it is my hope that one may be able to take a look at any event or era, even their own, and use what I am offering so that they may be more aware of in what ways societies have been and are being persuaded to accept the ways of thinking of others that would have them do so.

So why is the orthodox interpretation so common in American culture, and why does it seem to make so much sense? Part of the reason as to why this approach to making sense of what happened in 1945 is so prevalent is because of the dissemination of literature that employed

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[4] This list mostly gathered from Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Michael, *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial* (Avon Books: New York, 1995), pg. 107-108

literary/narrative devices that were tailored for effectiveness in the context of an American audience. These devices were purposely meant to persuade audiences of the orthodox interpretation of the use of the Atomic Bombs.

Literature

Literature does not mean exclusively something like, for example, Harry Potter, or sóme other written work that serves mostly as what would generally be considered "entertainment." Rather, the definition of literature that I will be employing throughout this work is simply anything that contains an idea/information in a variety of possible forms that can be consumed in some way by a recipient. This includes radio broadcasts, television programs, propaganda posters, novels, video games, newspaper/journal articles, airborne leaflets, memoirs, personal letters, public speeches, poetry, a refrigerator instruction manual and even music. Thus, it should be noted that literature in my understanding of the term does not even require letters but is rather simply various forms of any kind of information. Moreover, depending on the era of analysis, the literature one would look at would vary; if the era were today, for example, it might be extremely relevant to take a look at how video games are portraying the world to players.

Road Map

I will be focusing mainly on three texts. Those are (1) Secretary of War Henry L Stimson's *Harper's* Magazine article "the Decision to Use the Bomb" from 1947. (2) Karl T Compton's *Atlantic Monthly* article "If the Atomic Bomb had not been used" from 1946. (3) A frontline Time Magazine article entitled "The Bomb" from August 20th, 1945, only 11 days after the bombing of Nagasaki. Focusing on these three texts, I will provide an analysis of the effective literary devices present in them. As well as these, I will be interspersing analysis of other various literary devices and techniques throughout the essay in order to illustrate concepts.

This will be while and after we discuss writing and the creation of literature, and is for the sake of understanding the terms and way of thinking I am applying.

Writing and the Creation of Literature

We must discuss writing and the creation of literature; in particular the choices one can make as a writer or creator of literature (I will use these terms interchangeably). To put it most abstractly, the literary devices a creator of literature includes in their work have the potential to produce a variety of effects:

> "A literary device is any of several specific methods the creator of a narrative uses to convey what they want—in other words, a strategy used in the making of a narrative to relay information to the audience and particularly, to 'develop' the narrative."[5]

For example, when a writer makes the decision of who will be the speaker or narrator of the content, they are making a decision which will affect how the literature is received by the audience. It is why James Conant, a major political player responsible for publication of the 1947 *Harper's* Magazine article, convinced a reluctant Stimson to pose as the author, although the text was written by others.[6] It also explains why Compton's *Atlantic Monthly* article was not nearly as well-received or influential. To put this into further perspective, the President of the United States of America, for instance, as the featured speaker of a piece of literature carries a different weight than some other lessor narrator. One of a president's characteristics is that they can speak as if they are communicating the American will, or perhaps embodying their spirit somehow—which is really a conception based on what the audience perceives as the role or character of the figure of the

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[5] Orehovec, Barbara (2003). Revisiting the Reading Workshop: A Complete Guide to Organizing and Managing an Effective Reading Workshop That Builds Independent, Strategic Readers (illustrated ed.). Scholastic Inc. p. 89

[6] ibid

statement. President Truman was allowed a style of speech in regards to the atomic bomb that was often metaphorical, and attempted to create understandings of the use of the atomic bomb through such metaphorics. This style might have looked too aesthetic on another narrator such as Stimson, who communicates in a much more objective way in plainer language.

Of course, however, there are other elements at work that are not decided by the creators of literature, but rather what they have to keep in mind when creating in order to produce their wanted effects in an audience. For example, cultural contexts, ideologies, mythologies, and various understandings and dispositions of the audiences are things creators need to be aware of when tailoring their literary devices for effectiveness.

This relevance of context is interestingly seen when a literary device is employed releasing literature about the atomic bomb to the public paired with stories of Japanese war crimes. Presumably, the inclusion of Japanese war crimes is meant to justify the use of the atomic bombs because the bombs were supposedly used to end publicly hated activities such as those that the Japanese were understood to be involved in. Although this method may have been successful in the US among an American audience because of a common abhorrence of Japanese activities, it backfired in Japan. When this literary device was used in Japan with *The Bells of Nagasaki*, citizens, rather than being convinced of the necessity of the bombs, recognized how equally terrible the use of the atomic bombs was to Japanese war crimes.

> This coupling was fairly ironic, for it unwittingly subverted the official U.S. position that the use of the bombs had been necessary and just. Japanese readers, that is, could just as easily see the juxtaposition of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombings and the rape of Manila as suggesting an equivalence between American and Japanese atrocities.[7]

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[7] Hogan, M. (1996). *Hiroshima in history and memory.* Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press. Pg. 130

We see a type of comparison in Richard Frank's Monograph *Downfall* as well. The first chapter provides a visceral description of how savage the firebombing of Tokyo on March 10, 1945 was. Since part of the orthodox school's argument is that the atomic bomb was used to end awful methods of warfare such as firebombing, it makes sense that firebombing should be understood by the audience as something so awful that it needs to be stopped. Frank grants the audience this imaginability with the literary device of description. Descriptions of the atomic bombing take place much later on in the book.

The effect of this decisive literary description and chronological placement of events is that it establishes precedence for the horror of the firebombing over the atomic bombings in that the firebombing gets more immediate attention. Furthermore, before we read the descriptions of the atomic bombings, we already have a lot of the evidence for how the atomic bombing could have stopped many soldiers and civilians from being killed in an invasion; the firebombing is not preceded with this kind of research.

What is interesting is that this comparison is used in an attempt to persuade the partial goodness of the atomic bomb. By including an *imaginable* element with his description of the firebombing, Frank encourages the reader to accept the use of the atomic bomb because it can put a stop to having to reduce to other methods of awful warfare. In truth though, the atomic bomb is as comparably awful to the firebombing that he opened up his monograph with. It is perhaps because of how visibly hellish it is that this argument of Frank's neo-orthodox school might be successful in persuading readers.

Insofar as creators of literature can make decisions which they believe will produce desired effects in an audience, it is not beyond the imagination to say that they can specifically and consciously engineer a piece of writing to produce in an audience effects that they actually want

to happen—suggesting the potential of effective literary contact with the public to serve a creator's personal interests. For example, in texts of the orthodox (and neo-orthodox) argument of the use of the atomic bombs, they sometimes mention Pearl Harbor, although an irrelevant topic in regards to the atomic bomb—as long as the atomic bombs were not to exact revenge. By the simple inclusion of this particular place name, as uncalled for as it is, it has the function of producing anti-Japanese sentiment as well as a sense of moral superiority in an American public because of a common synoptic understanding of the history surrounding the event that took place there.[8] This is a useful effect to produce in a reader for purveyors of the orthodox interpretation, and we see it being done in both Stimson and Compton's articles. It is of particular interest, however, how Stimson does this indirectly: "We have great moral superiority through being a victim of her first sneak attack."[9] Not only is it obvious what Stimson is referring to, the way he describes the attack on Pearl Harbor uses language that guides how readers should interpret the event. In this way, Pearl Harbor functions as a mythic icon. [10]

The literary devices that I will from here on focus more deeply upon are (1) the application of a mythological structure to a modern event. (2) Omission. (3) The use of analogy in effecting an imaginability. And (4), the choice of a narrator/speaker for a work of literature.

Some Literary Devices

Omission and the Application of a Mythological Structure

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[8] Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation : the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America.* Atheneum ; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992. Pg. 5-6. "For an American, allusions to 'the frontier,' or to events like 'Pearl Harbor," 'the Alamo,' or 'Custer's Last Stand' evoke an implicit understanding of the entire historical scenario that belongs to the event and of the complex interpretive tradition that has developed around it."
[9] Stimson, "The Decision to use the Atomic Bomb," pg. 11
[10] Ibid, pg 6.

A Time magazine front line article from the August 20, 1945, publication entitled *The Bomb* barely brings attention to the human suffering of the bomb. Rather, its poetic focus is on the metaphorical and mythological way in which the invention of the atomic bomb, its use on "living creatures" (a euphemism for human), and *greatness* can be thought about:

> All thoughts and things were split. The sudden achievement of victory was a mercy, to the Japanese no less than to the United Nations; but a mercy born of a ruthless force beyond anything in human chronicle. The race had been won, the weapon had been used by those on whom civilization could best hope to depend; but the demonstration of power against living creatures instead of dead matter created a bottomless wound in the living conscience of the race. The rational mind had won the most Promethean of its conquests over nature, and had put into the hands of common man the fire and force of the sun itself.[11]

Essentially calling the atomic bomb merciful to the Japanese, the writing barely proposes a way for the reader to feel empathy for a sufferer of the atomic blast. In comparison, *hibakusha* literature does this much more aptly. Thus, under the guise of understanding the questionability of using the atomic bomb, the writing of this text does not really offer an opportunity for an audience to feel something personal for any victim. Rather, it provides a grandiose way to feign a "bottomless wound" from what happened. Furthermore, we see an instance of the structure of a classical Greek myth being used to make sense of America's mastery over the atom and use of it to kill. It appears, however, that without a visceral glimpse into the suffering of *hibakusha,* the sensation of getting one's liver continuously eaten by birds is only a fantasy.

The use of Analogy to induce formidability and Useful Diction

Analogy can be an effective literary device for a writer. For example, consider what might have transpired if Compton's article had not been published. On the second page Compton wrote,

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[11] Hadden, B., & Luce, Henry Robinson. (1923). *Time (Online).*, August 20th, 1945.

> There was every reason to think that the Japanese would defend their homeland with even greater fanaticism than when they fought to the death on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. No American soldier who survived the bloody struggles on these islands has much sympathy with the view that battle with the Japanese was over as soon as it was clear that their ultimate situation was hopeless.[12]

This technique is similar to Frank's description of the firebombing: Compton uses analogy perhaps because in order for the readers to understand the prospects of an invasion, the kind of expected devastation needed to be *imaginable*. Analogy can make this possible, and Compton provided that for the public. What if no one had?

With the literary use of the analogous battles of Okinawa and Iwo Jima, Compton invokes a seemingly inevitable formidability: the terrible prospects of an invasion of the Japanese homeland. To produce a sense for the actuality of this formidable foe, Compton pairs with the analogies of Okinawa and Iwo Jima the word choice of "great fanaticism" which "possesses" the Japanese in battle. "Fanatic" is a word choice favored by many involved in the orthodox school that carries a negative, arguably racist connotation (Stimson and Frank also use this diction). And it is partly because of this formidability that Compton concludes later on the same page that "On the basis of these facts, I cannot believe that, without the atomic bomb, the surrender would have come without a great deal more of costly struggle and bloodshed."[13] Thus we observe the literary technique of analogy used to invoke a sense of inevitable formidability, and subsequently to persuade audiences of the necessity of the atomic bombs used on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The justification is that they were used in order to avoid calamity promised by that formidability.

A further note on the mentioned negative connotation carried by the diction "fanaticism." It is a word choice I have always felt the need to question because it betrays an intention to construe

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[12] Karl T. Compton, "If the Atomic Bomb had Not Been Used," The Atlantic Monthly, December 1946 Issue. Pg. 55.
[13] Compton, "If the Atomic Bomb had Not Been Used." Pg. 55.

the "fanatical" Japanese as crazy, excessive and war mongering. In one case however, there was an American soldier who chose the word "brave" to describe this spirit. It is even possible that in the Japanese cultural context, the words "devoted" and "patriotic" maybe be as equally fitting as is imagined that "fanatic" is. It is obvious then that while these more positive descriptions would but hinder the arguments of Compton, the diction "fanatic" is useful when attempting to invoke a sense of the formidability of the Japanese. And as a recurrent tactic in literature that is meant to persuade audiences of the necessity of the atomic bombs, the pairing of an analogy inducing an expectation of formidability with diction sporting negative connotations like "fanatic" becomes a potentially effective literary device employed by purveyors of the orthodox school of interpretation. It also shows the willingness of men to choose words that are more useful to their objectives—when there is clearly a broader selection.

Furthermore, this invocation of formidability may not have comparable potency if the audience did not have some personal connection to the risks threatened by an invasion of the Japanese homeland. Therefore inclusion of the American soldier was perhaps crucial for Compton to include in his literature because it speaks to the audience in an intimate way: it appeals to the shared national consciousness of young men at war with people at home, and the reality that far too many people had to experience—which is the death and injury of the men they care about.

A part of the objective of my study is to analyze the literary devices chosen by creators of literature in the effort to be effective in an American cultural context. It is a tender truth that many Americans did die and perhaps would have were the atomic bombs not used. Nevertheless, that is every reason for why this particular literary device can be so effective: the American soldier brings the reader's attention to the relationship between the war and their own personal material reality. By invoking the realistic presence that American soldiers have in the minds of the American public

of 1946, Compton might be able to garner agreement for his arguments. This is especially so because of the personal relationships that many Americans have with some who perhaps would have died if the invasion were carried out.

From here on I intend to discuss the choice of Stimson as the figure for literary contact with the public within the context of the ideology of diffusion. As well as that, I will discuss in what ways the creators of literature are involved in activities that suggest they are creating an American mythology around the atomic bomb.

Diffusion

Definition

Diffusion is the act of disseminating literature to a wide audience from a small point of embarkation. This can be easily imagined in the instance of American officials diffusing the Potsdam Declaration via radio and airborne leaflets to all of Japan: a small group of influential people create a work of literature, and disseminate it to a massive audience for some sort of effect. In this case, the explicit intended effect would be the surrender of Japan. Implicit intentions may also be present, but that is not one of the objectives of this study.

Potential for Influence

Diffusion can be surprisingly influential. What appears in the literature an audience is consuming can cause a large public to begin thinking collectively in whatever way they are being shown how to. If a way of thinking constantly show cases itself through literature, appears to widely be agreed upon, comes from a seemingly reliable and convincing source, proves itself in some material existence, and makes sense in relation to the reader's own personal reality, then the power of diffusion to shape how an audience thinks is tremendous (and unbelievably useful to those who have that power with the mind to use it). It is partly because the orthodox interpretation

of the atomic bomb was diffused and possessed these qualities that it has been so widely adopted and has continued through time to be believed in. This potential to extend influence also acts as an incentive to those who would diffuse.

The Ideal Individual

Within the ideology of diffusion, the reader is idealized:

> The reading citizens will be instructive to their companions [who are perhaps less well read] and *useful to their country*. So powerful is this strand in [Wood's] thinking that he arrives at a virtual apotheosis of the reader, whose socially expansive mind will be able to envision the entire history of the species from a synoptic advantage.[14] (Emphasis added).

This quote implies that readers who are confident in the literature they have read will subsequently serve to continue *as an agent* the spread of literature where it might have otherwise hit a dead end. This would result in reaching an ever widening audience through useful, virtuous citizens.

By continuing the flow of useful information read in literature, a reading citizen can be imagined as serving their country. This individual becomes virtuous within the ideology of diffusion. Acquisition of this kind of useful citizen would be an incentive for those who diffuse an interpretation of the atomic bombs and would have it believed through time. However, as a narrator sharing 'truthfully' organized information that is vital for understanding the reasons why the atomic bomb was used, Stimson is in a sense posing as this virtuous citizen as well as being the diffuser of useful literature. Furthermore, by sharing previously private literature, Stimson in a sense relieves his readers from ignorance of what they need to learn to know 'the truth' of an important social matter.

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[14] Warner, Michael. *The Letters of the Republic : Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*. Harvard University Press, 1990. Pg. 127

The Authoritative Figure

This 'apotheosis' of Wood's suggests that the well-read individual will feel with sureness that they may act as if they are an authority on what they have been reading about. As well as that, an image of being this well-read individual in the eyes of others can be achieved if fabricated correctly—and if done, can become a powerful narrator of information. James Conant, an "outstanding" chemist who was "deeply implicated in the creation and use of the bomb", and "after the war, played a central role as an adviser on nuclear weapons policies and was a consistent advocate of international control",[15] was responsible for choosing Stimson in particular because he believed in "the great importance to have a statement of fact issued by someone who can speak with authority" in the context of worrying counter-narratives of the use of the atomic bombs that threatened the legitimacy of the orthodox school.[16] Stimson as an intentionally chosen character for the author of the influential *Harper's* article is presented as the kind of individual specified by Conant and elaborated on by Warner in the ideology of diffusion. He is informational, employs literature which supports his *useful* argument, provides a synopsis of the important events leading up to the 'rational' use of the atomic bomb, and possesses a position in society which people will generally respect the authority of in relation to the subject on hand:

> It was obvious why Conant would identify Henry Stimson, who had just completed fifty years of public service, as the ideal spokesman for the official narrative. A lifelong Republican who had served two democrats as secretary of war, Stimson was almost universally venerated.[17]

Authoritative Synoptic Evaluation

It is telling that some aspects of the Stimson article were

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[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid (pg. 92)
[17] Ibid. (pg. 98)

> ... Until the mid-1980s... rarely challenged.... This indicates how completely the *Harper's* essay was regarded as authoritative. Stimson himself would offer in 1948 an explanation for why this would be so. 'History,' he wrote, 'is often not what actually happened but what is recorded as such.' [18]

Stimson acts as both the point from which diffusion begins, and a figure who can be trusted as an authority (despite Stimson himself being suspiciously aware of the potential history has for being manipulated without allegiance to 'what actually happened'—a disposition of Stimson's I'd guess is unknown by the general public; would that not create a crisis in trust?).

Moreover, to borrow from Warner's Wood quote's diction, the Stimson article takes on an authoritative synoptic evaluation of the events and history leading up to the use of the atomic bomb. Stimson organizes what he believes are the relevant events in order to show the portrayed way of thinking of officials at the time of the decision. Recall my earlier comments on the diction of Pearl Harbor: "by the simple inclusion of this particular place name, as uncalled for as it is, it has the function of producing anti-Japanese sentiment as well as a sense of moral superiority in an American public because of a common synoptic understanding of the history surrounding the event that took place there." The difference here with the *Harper's* article is that instead of conjuring in the reader a synoptic evaluation of events through a single icon, Stimson is in effect creating the synopsis that will be called to mind when one encounters the words "atomic bomb." This is the basis for the atomic bomb becoming a mythic icon which has the power to "... [Evoke] a complex system of historical associations by a single image or phrase."[19] Furthermore, it acts as raw evidence of Americans being involved in the creation of a myth surrounding the atomic bomb as a mythic icon.

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[18] Ibid, pg. 109.
[19] Slotkin, Gunfighter, pg. 6.

The *Harper's* article, despite its often disinterested tone and economical use of information, also displays efforts to appeal to an American mythology by attempting to define man's relationship to the cosmos, or the universe[20]:

> Both General Marshall and I at this meeting expressed the view that atomic energy could not be considered simply in terms of military weapons but must also be considered in terms of a new relationship of man to the universe.[21]

Without much explication for this enigmatic statement by the narrator, this point in the article seems to ring throughout the whole text because of its inconsistency with Stimson's other, more objective writing style. It also reflects the ways of thinking that were offered to the American public directly after the use of the atomic bombs in literature such as the Time magazine article I analyzed earlier. The writing decisions here suggest then that there is a common knowledge familiar to the reading public of 1947; a common knowledge being appealed to that is perhaps unknown to a reader today— no doubt a useful context for subtle literary devices such as used here by the diffusers of the *Harper's* article.

Conclusion

When disseminating literature, the outcome depends on the effectiveness of the literary devices. Moreover, because of the relevance of context, successful literary devices depend upon both the creator's and their literary device's adaptability to the audiences. However, this does not mean that an audience cannot be molded and convinced of literature that makes use of exploitable

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[20] Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration through Violence : the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860.* 1st ed.]. ed., Wesleyan University Press, 1973. Pg. 6. "The narrative action of the myth-tale recapitulates that people's experience in their land, rehearses their visions of that experience in its relation to their gods and the cosmos, and reduces both experience and vision to a paradigm."

[21] Stimson, The Decision, pg. 7.

aspects of that audience. It is sometimes in the most unexpected ways that a people show how they may be convinced of a questionable belief. And thus it is that in our most secure conceptions of ourselves we must look for what may be the weakest resistance we have to effective literature. This can be aptly put into perspective when a culture that prides itself on rationality and virtue is seen participating in mythological creation and the acceptance of atrocity—behavior specifically characterized by a kind of irrationality.

Because a people's susceptibility to effective literature is dependent upon the conditions of their culture, it is possible for an audience to be moved by a literary device that another society may be understandably averse to. Moreover, depending on the circumstances, an audience may be vulnerable to persuasion of a way of thinking that is not exactly consistent with 'what actually happened' in history, or even careful enough of its own questionable characteristics. But since what the literature says may be consistent with the conditions of one's life, what matters is not if the literature actually tells the 'truth,' but rather that its message makes sense to some individuals and is accepted as reality.

And this is why it is relevant to take a retrospective look at in what ways literary devices have been used to persuade audiences. If we can understand how this has been done in the past, we may be able to look at our present moment and future and have the awareness required to identify hopeful dissemination of literature and question it rather than allowing it to be accepted. In this way societies may be able to partly proof themselves against being persuaded by 'trustworthy' characters and their ways into accepting that great violences can be good and acceptable. Even today, war is often construed as beautiful in photography. [22] Video games,

[22] David Shields, War is Beautiful: The *New York Times* Pictorial Guide to the Glamour of Armed Conflict, Powerhouse Books, 2015

often considered forms of entertainment, make the vicarious experience of fighting in a war and killing people fun. Moreover, they sometimes exhibit narratives that are rooted in the historical memory of a people.

Whether the orthodox narrative truly is justified or not, or if it really does communicate the 'actual truth' was not the objective of this research. Rather, it was an in-depth search for in what subtle and identifiable ways atomic bomb narratives have been constructed in a way that is tailored to the fine elements of cultural contexts, ideologies and even mythologies. Literary devices have been employed which produce desired effects in American readers. This has been done in a hopeful attempt to garner support for an interpretation of the atomic bombs that has even unto the present day lingered on.

Bibliographic Essay

The aim of this essay was to develop my own interpretation of the atomic bomb. I wanted to provide primarily my own analysis of what I found of interest and consequence. However, I needed to create a framework for analysis, which I used several sources for. For this purpose, Slotkin's works were very useful because his monographs always begin with an in depth explanation of mythology in the context of American culture. However, while he applies his ideas on objects such as the Frontier myth, I used a decent amount of his framework on matters relating to the atomic bomb. Similarly, Warner provided an excellent framework for interpreting the atomic bomb in the context of the ideology of diffusion. His research on diffusion also helped me understand how literature is not of little consequence. Moreover, his study helped me to define literature.

Most of the ideas on writing were mine, but the definition of literary device and how they

function in narrative was gathered from Orehovec. However, I applied the idea to literature that is not generally considered the type of literature that would use 'literary devices,' and thus took this definition and way of thinking and applied it to my own objects of interest.

I wanted to keep my objects of interest limited. I know it seems parochial, but if I did not, then I most likely wouldn't have been able to go into as deep of an analysis as I was attempting in this essay. My hope is that readers will take what they've seen me do, and apply it themselves to what they find of interest—seeing as there is too much literature for me to do it all on my own. For my three main objects of analysis, I chose relevant primary sources that offered public distinction, and had a character that could be analyzed. And partly for the sake of relevance, I included a work by one of my creative writing professors, David Shields, to show that the method of my research is not limited to only the past, but can also be used to interpret contemporary literature—which hopefully demonstrates that all literature from anywhere and anytime can be questioned.

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