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RHETORICAL AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURES IN  
JOHN HERSEY'S *HIROSHIMA*: HOW THEY BREATHE  
LIFE INTO THE TALE OF A DOOMED CITY

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
English Composition:  
English Literature

---

by  
James Richard Smart

June 2004

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June 2004

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores rhetorical and narrative devices author John Hersey used to create *Hiroshima*, one of the foremost non-fiction works of the twentieth century. This thesis argues that Hersey constructed, using rhetorical and narrative techniques, a story designed to engender sympathy for survivors of the bomb, which at the time of publication of the story in 1946 were still considered America's bitter enemies.

The first chapter discusses the historical, social, and rhetorical challenge Hersey faced and includes a biography of the author and notes how his sympathies shaped *Hiroshima*. Chapter 2 discusses the narrative and rhetorical devices applied to the text, including those of Wayne Booth, Kenneth Burke, Seymour Chatman, Wallace Martin, and those found within the canon of New Journalism. Chapter 3 applies those theories. Chapter 4 summarizes the findings and discusses the worthiness of additional research.

The thesis author states he believes *Hiroshima* is an example of successful narrative rhetoric. He finds the text is not "journalism" as commonly defined, but instead

exemplifies New Journalism. He also states his belief that additional research would be valuable because the text dramatizes what happens to the people of a city when a nuclear weapon is dropped in their midst. The thesis writer holds that *Hiroshima* stands as a testimony of what can be done through the art of creating powerful narratives and that it is an example of journalistic writing at its best.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis will explore rhetorical and narrative devices author John Hersey used to create *Hiroshima*, one of the foremost non-fiction works of the twentieth century. The general public had virtually no understanding of what had happened at Hiroshima when an atomic bomb was dropped on the city toward the end of World War II until Hersey published his 31,347-word account of the six survivors he interviewed. His article blasted through, up to what had been at the time of publication of the story in *The New Yorker* in 1946, a government-censored vision of the bomb and its effects on the city's inhabitants. This thesis argues that Hersey artfully constructed, using rhetorical and narrative techniques, a story designed to engender sympathy for survivors of the bomb. He clearly also sought to expand public awareness of atomic weapons. An examination of some of the narrative devices Hersey used should help reveal why his writing is so powerful and compelling.

The first chapter of this thesis discusses the historical, social, and rhetorical challenges Hersey faced;

a brief biography of the author, showing how his sympathies shaped his structure of *Hiroshima*; and a summary of how he assembled his data and organized his text. Chapter 2 will discuss the narrative and rhetorical devices to be applied to his text. Chapter 3 will delineate application of these theories. Chapter 4 will summarize the findings of this thesis and discuss the value, if any, of additional research.

It is fundamental to my purpose to assume narratives are an important way in which we learn and deal with the world around us. As Arthur Berger said: "One of the most important ways we learn about the world, and ourselves as well, is through narratives" (10). Laurel Richardson notes: "Narrative is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes...People 'apprehend' the world narratively and people 'tell' about the world narratively..." (Berger 10). Jerome Bruner teaches, "narrative reasoning is one of the two basic and universal human cognition modes..." (Berger 10). In short, narratives help us shape our thoughts and feelings about others and ourselves. These thoughts and feelings -- our worldview -- in turn determine and shape how we live and treat others. Hersey's *Hiroshima*, nearly



seventy years after it appeared in print, demonstrates how the use of nuclear weapons had a cataclysmic effect on people and our environment. It is also a powerful read and a text that has helped many shape their views about the use of nuclear power for destructive purposes.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND ON HERSEY AND *HIROSHIMA*

David Sanders' book *John Hersey Revisited* provides important biographical information that is necessary to review as I seek clues to determine Hersey's personal rhetorical goals in writing *Hiroshima*. Sanders also provides information that helps us see how events and earlier work helped shape Hersey's narrative style. Hersey was born in Tientsin, China, the youngest son of Roscoe and Grace Baird Hersey, American Protestant missionaries. He graduated in 1936 from Yale University with a B.A. in general studies. He also lettered in football. In 1936-37, Hersey studied eighteenth-century English literature at Clare College, Cambridge University, and then served for a short time as Sinclair Lewis's secretary. He joined the staff of *Time* magazine "a few weeks after Japanese troops had stormed across the Marco Polo Bridge in Peking in July 1937, the incident most commonly marking the beginning of the Sino-Japanese conflict that became subsumed in World War II" (Sanders 2). As a writer for *Time* he worked under

Henry Luce, who also was born and raised in China. Both men shared a love of the country and dislike, if not hatred, for the Japanese, the invaders of China.

In July 1942, Hersey wrote *Men on Bataan*, a book he later disowned because of its flattering assessment of General Douglas MacArthur (Sanders 4). Sanders believes, however, that this work "has in common with *Hiroshima*... Hersey's urgent effort - amounting to a duty - to report what he had not seen by a strenuously sympathetic effort to understand the testimony of those who had" (Sanders 4). Hersey wrote at the beginning of his first chapter that his readers ought "to know them [military personnel he interviewed] for they are like you," (qtd. in Sanders 4). The testimony of others becomes the foundation of the information to be reported in *Hiroshima*, and the admonition that his readers should know "them for they are like you" reflects his view that readers of *Hiroshima* should know the six survivors he tracks in his narrative because they too are "like" us, or more precisely, the readers of *Hiroshima*.

In 1944, Hersey wrote, in three weeks, *A Bell for Adano*. The book was based on real people he had met and interviewed while covering the war in Italy and featured events involving General George Patton (Sanders 8). Hersey

was awarded the 1945 Pulitzer Prize in fiction for this work. The award coincidentally was announced on V - E Day, May 8, 1945, which marked the end of World War II in Europe. In *A Bell for Adano* Hersey successfully experimented with fictionalizing historical events and characters. The work helped Hersey sharpen his narrative skills that soon were employed in his non-fiction work *Hiroshima*.

Before he wrote *A Bell for Adano* while he was covering the war in the Pacific, he joined a Marine combat unit's assault on the island of Guadalcanal and spent some time on the aircraft carrier, *Hornet*. He left the ship five days before it was sunk. While onboard the aircraft carrier he interviewed an airman who was rescued after his plane had crashed into the sea while returning from the April 1942 Doolittle raid on Tokyo (Sanders 5). The Sino American Aviation Heritage Foundation has reported that the Japanese tortured and killed as many as 250,000 Chinese after the Doolittle raid because they "might" have aided the American airmen who flew to China after dropping their bombs. Hersey loved the Chinese people and if he knew of the atrocities, it could hardly have endeared him to the Japanese, the people who had invaded his beloved China. As his text

demonstrates, he managed to set aside any animosity he felt toward Japanese civilians, just as he did when he wrote about Italian civilians in *A Bell for Adano*. It was an amazing feat of sympathy, even identification with enemy civilians that elevated his text to a new level from typical hate-filled war reporting; it would qualify him to take on a greater rhetorical challenge, perhaps his most difficult writing task, namely, to get the American populace to set aside their hatred of the Japanese, long engendered by events and propaganda.

Sanders states that during his reporting Hersey had to deal with two major difficulties he would confront throughout the war: "one, the reporter's task of understanding all he could observe of combat in which his own life was at stake and two, writing accurately and thoroughly within censorship based on the premise that reporting was part of the war effort" (Sanders 6). For years Hersey had to work under the eyes of military censors. After the war, he was freed of government review. This freedom would give him, and the editors of *The New Yorker*, a rhetorical freedom to express a point of view different from that maintained and sustained during the

war. The impact of aerial bombardments could now be considered in light of their impact on civilians.

Sanders further reports that during Hersey's time in the Pacific, he survived two airplane crashes, one that left him hospitalized for two weeks with broken ribs. Sanders also declares, "perhaps more than any other American writer, [Hersey] was given a panoramic view of the full spectacle of World War II" (7):

From the Solomons he was sent to Sicily and subsequently to Russia. He reported land, sea, and air action; he interviewed men from each of the services, as well as civilian victims and returning veterans. He covered occupation, liberation, and rehabilitation. (7)

Perhaps it was this wide-ranging set of experiences which engendered a broader view of combat and the effect of war on civilians and combatants. Certainly, a general reading of *A Bell for Adano* shows that the author displayed a remarkably benign, if not sympathetic, view of the Italians and members of the Italian military. When one contrasts the kind of writing of *Men of Bataan* with *A Bell for Adano*, one can sense Hersey's growing sympathy for America's enemies as "people."

Sanders reports that with the end of the war Hersey was sent to China and Japan on assignments for both *Life* and *Time*. The result was a "torrent" of articles, most of them more discursive and speculative than his previous work, and even a few short stories (Sanders 13). During his travels in China and the Pacific, he encountered some American sailors on an LST that "reveals even more of Hersey's changing state of mind before he began work on *Hiroshima*" (Sanders 14). While aboard the LST he was reminded of the charge leveled against Americans in China during his youth, specifically the metaphor that Americans were "white devil[s]." Sanders notes that "from early childhood, he had been acutely aware of his foreignness [and it served as] a sharp reminder of who he was" (Sanders 14). His own recollections from having been born and raised in China would increase his sensitivity to his recounting the lives of the survivors in *Hiroshima*.

Thomas Kunkel, in his biography of *New Yorker* editor Harold Ross, provides a backdrop for Hersey's involvement in the magazine's project. Kunkel notes that it had been about nine months since the bomb had been dropped (August 6, 1945) when the decision to hire Hersey was made at the

magazine. Kunkel reports that although "thousands of words" had been written about the bombing, "[William] Shawn realized that no one had written a human prospective of the event" (370).

[Shawn] was astonished that in all the millions of words being written about the bomb - how and why the decision was made, how the bomb came to be built, whether it should have been dropped at all - what had actually happened in Hiroshima itself...was being ignored. On March 22, 1946, he cabled Hersey in Shanghai to lobby for the idea.

'The more time that passes, the more convinced we are that piece has wonderful possibilities,'

Shawn said. 'No one has even touched it.' (370)

Harold Ross, the editor of *The New Yorker*, told E.B. White that Shawn "wants to wake people up and [he] says we are the people with a chance to do it" (Kunkel 372).

Hersey was now assigned to write about Hiroshima and the bomb's effect on the city's residents. Shortly before beginning his task, and while traveling aboard a U.S. Navy destroyer in the Pacific, Hersey became ill and sought refuge for reading material in the ship's library. He came upon Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. Wilder's



account of the death of five random people when a bridge collapsed in Peru provides insights into Hersey's ultimate structure of *Hiroshima* and, I believe, shines light on Hersey's thematic and philosophical approach to his assignment. Similarities exist between two texts, but biographical similarities also should be noted because they indicate that both men shared a similar worldview. For example, Sanders reports both Wilder and Hersey attended Yale University and both were raised in China; both had been awarded the Pulitzer for fiction: Wilder for his *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* and Hersey for *A Bell for Adano*. Both also constructed narratives about disaster befalling random, innocent people.

Structural similarities in *Hiroshima* and Wilder's story abound as well. Wilder's work is divided into five parts; Hersey's is segmented into four. Hersey's original text (before he wrote his "Aftermath" in 1985 after he revisited Hiroshima) is 90 pages, Wilder's 117. Wilder launches his story with a "factual reality" for his readers by writing in the straight past tense. He writes, "On Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travelers into the gulf below" (Wilder 15). Hersey copies the same opening

structural approach. *Hiroshima* begins: "At exactly fifteen minutes past eight in the morning, on August 6, 1945, Japanese time, at the moment when the atomic bomb flashed above Hiroshima..." (*Hiroshima* 1).

Wilder's story tracks the lives of the five persons killed when the bridge collapses in an effort to discover what fateful chance brought them to the bridge at the same time and on the same day. Wilder's story becomes a theological search for meaning in life as the author writes:

The moment a Peruvian heard of the accident he signed himself and made a mental calculation as to how recently he had crossed by it [the bridge] and how soon he had intended crossing by it again. People wandered about in a trance-like state, muttering; they had the hallucination of seeing themselves falling into a gulf. (16)

Wilder's third person narrator recounts the attitude of Peruvians to the collapse of the bridge. Hersey will soon ask his readers, as they consider the scenes he depicts, to place themselves imaginatively in Hiroshima at the moment the bomb was dropped. Hersey's writing will create the scene and, if he accomplishes his rhetorical goals,

transport his readers to the devastated city where they should ponder the destruction wrought by use of a nuclear weapon.

But Wilder's text goes on to ask whether things happen for some reason, and if so, can we understand that reason. Are their lessons to be learned from the death of these individuals, lessons about how and why to live? Of course, Hersey, too, would ask his readers, as they pondered his text, did the bombing of Hiroshima hold lessons for the future? What is the impact of a single nuclear weapon on a city and its inhabitants? Does the use of such a weapon serve a military purpose? At what costs would it bring about capitulation of an enemy?

Wilder's narrator proceeds to note that while everyone "was deeply impressed [by the collapse of the bridge]...only one person did anything about it, and that was Brother Juniper":

By a series of coincidences so extraordinary that one almost suspects the presence of some Intention, this little red-haired Franciscan from Northern Italy happened to be in Peru converting the Indians and happened to witness the accident.

(17)

Malcolm Goldstein, in *The Art of Thornton Wilder*, notes that Brother Juniper "does not give a direct interpretation of the event[s], but leaves it to the reader to discover what common concerns of all five have caused them to walk simultaneously over the bridge to death" (53). Wilder's narrator sets the stage for consideration of Wilder's rhetorical goal:

If there were any plan in the universe at all, if there were any pattern in human life, surely it could be discovered mysteriously latent in those lives so suddenly cut off. Either we live by accident and die by accident, or we live by plan and die by plan. And on that instant Brother Juniper made the resolve to inquire into the secret lives of those five persons, that moment falling through the air, and to surprise the reason of their taking off. (19)

Wilder's story sets out to consider the teleological implications of what happened to his characters. There is a major difference, of course, between Wilder's text and Hersey's. Wilder declares that the collapse of the bridge was an act of God; Hersey's event was clearly an act of man. But, as Wilder's narrator reports of Brother Juniper,

a "determination rose within him" to busy himself for "six years, knocking at all the doors in Lima, asking thousands of questions, filling scores of notebooks, in his effort at establishing the fact that each of the five lost lives was a perfect whole" (22). Sanders and Kunkel both report that Hersey would interview thirty people and he would spend months assembling facts and composing his text. Hersey, the author of a now-famous work on Italy and the son of a missionary, acts out the role Wilder assigned to Brother Juniper to accomplish his own rhetorical goals.

There is one final comparative note to be sounded. One can only wonder if the haunting finish of Wilder's novel resonated in Hersey's mind as he began writing *Hiroshima*. When one considers Hersey's rhetorical goals, it seems evident that it did:

'Even now,' she thought, 'almost no one remembers Esteban and Pepita, but myself. Camila alone remembers her Uncle Pio and her son, this woman, her mother. But soon we shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that

made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning. (234-35)

In this last paragraph of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Wilder's narrator relates the musings of one his characters. She tells us that "no one remembers Esteban and Pepita but myself." The irony of Wilder's final paragraph is, of course, that it completes his rhetorical goal. He certainly does not want his readers to forget his characters and the meaning of their lives. Why else should he have written the book? Hersey's narrator certainly has the same goal; his narrator sets out to recount death and destruction that he does not want his readers to forget. To forget the lessons of the past is to set the stage to repeat them. The destruction of an entire city by a single bomb is an event that should be carefully and repeatedly considered. Hersey has his six survivors each recount their own experiences, and in the telling the author repeats an event six times, as if to say, hey, reader, you should take notice of what has occurred here.

Wilder concludes his tale with a consideration of the importance and eternal qualities of love; Hersey's story,

in its opening paragraphs, takes a different tack as the author seeks to provide meaning to the chance that "spared" his six key characters when more than 148,177 people were killed or fatally injured by the blast which destroyed Hiroshima that day (Kanda xiii):

They still wonder why they lived when so many others died. Each of them counts many small items of chance or volition - a step taken in time, a decision to go indoors, catching one streetcar instead of the next - that spared him. And now each knows that in the act of survival he lived a dozen lives and saw more death than he ever thought he would see. At the time, none of them knew anything. (*Hiroshima* 2)

Sanders explicates the final sentence noting that by it Hersey sets up the basic structure for his text: Hersey's narrator will spend the remainder of *Hiroshima* in an attempt to explain to the reader what happened when the bomb was dropped on this city on August 6, 1945 (16). What happened is to be carefully, and repeatedly, considered and reconsidered when one ponders the effect of this new nuclear weapon. That, clearly, is Hersey's personal rhetorical goal.

Hersey had composed the text in four parts assuming it would be published serially. Ross, when he read it, said it was "one of the most remarkable stories I have ever seen" and he decided to publish it in a single issue (Kunkel 371). Ross had more than two hundred questions about elements of the text. Kunkel adds, parenthetically, that Ross was notorious for his attention to detail (371). Hersey later reported that Ross sometimes hovered over a single word: "[he] quibbled with a description of some of the bicycles "near ground zero as 'lopsided'. Asked Ross, "Can something that is two-dimensional be 'lopsided'? It was changed to 'crumpled'" (Kunkel 372).

When published on August 31, 1946, *Hiroshima* appeared in an issue with a typically upbeat cover scene depicting people frolicking in a park. Ross, in a later explanation of why he printed the story, said, "The aim was to publish a story to coincide with the first anniversary of the bombing" (Kunkel 370). The issue was sixty-eight pages, contained only advertisements, the Goings On calendar, and Hersey's story. A note from the editor was included on the first page:

*The New Yorker* this week devotes its entire editorial space to an article on the almost



complete obliteration of a city by one atomic bomb, and what happened to the people of that city. It does so in the conviction that few of us have ever comprehended the all but incredible destructive power of this weapon, and that everyone might well take time to consider the terrible implications of its use." (Kunkel 373)

The rhetorical goals of *The New Yorker* are clearly stated by this editorial declaration. I believe the *New Yorker's* stated goals were the same goals of the author of *Hiroshima*; a close reading of the text should determine if Hersey fulfilled his mission, to show the "incredible destructive power of the weapon...and that everyone might well take time to consider the terrible implications of its use." Following the house style of *The New Yorker* of the period, Hersey's name appeared only at the very end of the article, in small print, almost as an afterthought. Kunkel reports the issue immediately sold out and copies were resold for as much as twenty dollars each. The Ross biographer also reports that when John Hersey died in 1993 *The New Yorker* opined the article was "the most famous magazine article ever published" (qtd. in Kunkel 374).

CHAPTER THREE  
RHETORICAL, NARRATIVE DEVICES  
TO BE APPLIED TO THE TEXT

Hersey's *Hiroshima* is a narrative. It also is a powerful rhetoric designed to persuade the reader to consider the goals of the author and the editors of *The New Yorker*. Kenneth Burke provides a modern view of rhetoric that can move from a presentation of fact to inference, which ultimately leads to or is taken as "proof" (*Terms for Order* 145-173). I will examine how Hersey presents facts about the Japanese, about the city of Hiroshima, and about nuclear forces unleashed by the dropping of the first atomic bomb. I will seek to demonstrate how Hersey mixes these facts with narrative information concerning the characters he tracks in his text. I believe that the sum of his facts, information about the characters and the narrative Hersey fashions, serves, according to Burke's declaration, as the building blocks creating *Hiroshima's* rhetorical proof.

Burke further notes in his discussion of rhetoric that artists bring a set of "strategies" to their writing when

constructing narratives. Burke quotes the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* to define "strategy":

Strategy: Movement of an army or armies in a campaign, art of so moving or disposing troops or ships as to impose upon the enemy the place and time and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself..." (*Literature as Equipment for Living* 257)

Burke adds that most sophisticated art:

arising in complex civilizations, could be considered as designed to organize and command the army of one's thoughts and images, and to so organize them that one 'imposes upon the enemy the time and place and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself.' One seeks to 'direct the larger movements and operations' in one's campaign of living. One 'maneuvers,' and the maneuvering is an art. (257)

I will examine how Hersey's narrative carefully constructs "the larger movements and operations" within his text to accomplish his rhetorical goals. As I will illustrate, he deliberately chooses six specific individuals to quote and follow as they live through and recount their experiences

after the bomb was dropped on the city. This analysis should reveal that Hersey composes his narrative as Burke describes, determining "the time and place and conditions for fighting" he preferred.

I next move to definitions and descriptions of narrative devices that also will be used to study Hersey's text. First, Seymour Chatman teaches that every narrative is:

a structure with a content plane ('called story') and an expression plane (called 'discourse'). The expression plane is the set of narrative statements...[and] narrative statements are of two kinds - process and stasis - corresponding to whether the deep narrative (not the surface linguistic) predicate is in the mode of existence (IS) or action (DOES). (qtd. in Hoffman and Murphy 11)

Chatman's content plane and expression plane defines the broadest definition of "story." I am most concerned with the expression plane, or discourse, rather than a study of plot or "action" plane. By it an author creates the tone, setting, and reveals the thoughts and feelings of his characters, and his judgments through and by them. It is

the stuff that helps the implied reader consider and evaluate the "story" line, and by which a rhetorician can subtly build his case or "proof."

Moving from the general to the specific, Chatman's main concern is with whether an expression or statement is "directly presented to the audience or is it mediated by someone - the someone we call the narrator" (Hoffman and Murphy 11). His views presume:

a kind of overhearing by the audience. Mediated narration, on the other hand, presumes a more or less express communication from narrator to audience. This is essentially Plato's distinction between *mimesis* and *diegesis*, in modern terms between showing and telling. Insofar as there is telling, there must be a teller, a narrating voice. (Hoffman and Murphy 11)

Chatman focuses on narrative voice, especially as that voice serves to help a storyteller convey his/her themes, or rhetorical arguments. While Chatman is most concerned with fiction, Wallace Martin notes the interconnectedness of fiction and other forms of writing. He sees little difference between fiction and nonfiction because the structures underlying fictional narratives are identical to

those that organize history, biography, and newspaper stories (Martin 81). Martin also states that modern theories of narrative fall into "three groups," depending on whether they treat narrative: first, as a sequence of events; second, as discourse produced by a narrator; and finally, as a verbal artifact that is organized and endowed with meaning by its readers (82).

Martin summarizes the difficulty facing an author when considering his/her construction of narrative voice:

Given the division between scene (dramatic, present tense) and summary (narrator, past tense), it would appear that the narrator must shuttle back and forth between the two; and that the contents of consciousness, if not rendered in monologues, must be conveyed by the narrator, summarizing what characters thought and felt in the past tense. (136)

Narrative devices that convey a character's thoughts and feelings become the method whereby a narrator either tells the implied reader a character's worldview, or the character himself or herself reveals it. From a rhetorical point of view, it may not matter. But when considering the effective construction of a story, it may be pivotal in

terms of maintaining reader interest. We will examine these phenomena in Hersey's text.

Martin further describes this distinctive quality that can be brought to narration:

In treating grammatical person and access to consciousness as the defining features of point of view...a third-person narrator can look *into* a character's mind or look *through* it. In the first case, the narrator is the perceiver and the character's mind is perceived. In the second, the character is the perceiver and the world is perceived; the narrator seems to have delegated the function of seeing to the character, as in a first-person story containing phrases such as 'I noticed...then I realized.' (143)

Revelation of a character's perception, either through the character's eyes, or by a more distant narrator, serves as a rhetorical device in that the implied reader now has evaluative material by which to either accept or reject the character's worldview. If an implied narrator is attempting to get the implied reader to co-create with him or her, notably to generate friendly or at least empathetic feelings toward the character, the elements of worldview

become primary. I will examine how Hersey employed such evaluative material to create empathy in the mind of the implied reader so that such a reader would consider the rhetorical goals of the author and the editors of *The New Yorker*.

Wayne Booth adds to the discussion of the novel as a rhetorical vehicle, noting that a novel:

involves communication from an implied author to an audience of readers, and the varied methods it uses to secure effects cannot be understood apart from questions of tone, attitude, implicit evaluation, and variable degrees of attitudinal distance between implied author, narrator, characters, and reader. (qtd. in Martin 22)

Martin credits Booth with removing "some of the order markers that separated fiction as an art from ordinary methods of conveying meaning with language" (Martin 22). This issue will be explored in our considerations of Hersey's text as journalism. A journalist is supposed to restrict himself/herself to the presentation of facts, and the reader is to be allowed to develop his or her own evaluation of those facts. I will examine whether Hersey's use of fictional devices diminished or expanded his role as



a reporter because the use of characters and narrative forms that serve a rhetorical function shifted the purpose of a journalistic text into another realm, the realm of persuasion.

Another narrative tool is the author's ability to create in the mind of the implied reader the sense that he/she is actually "there," at the scene, witnessing events as they unfold. To be effective, it must achieve what Martin terms the "illusion" for some "demonstrable communication" to occur (Hoffman and Murphy 11). Martin notes that one effective way an author can create that illusion is by restricting information:

By what convention does a spectator or reader accept the idea that it is 'as if' he were personally on the scene, though he comes to it by sitting in a chair in a theater or by turning pages and reading words. Authors may make special efforts to preserve the illusion that events 'literally unfold before the reader's eyes,' mostly by restricting the kinds of statements that can occur. (Hoffman and Murphy 11)

Restricting of statements and evaluative expressions, again either through the eyes of a character, or a more

"objective" narrator, becomes an effective means for achieving rhetorical goals. But, it must be done carefully, artfully, to maintain the implied reader's interest. This is the material Burke was referring to when he describes the "general" who is to marshal his "armies" to touch the thoughts and feelings of his/her audience. If the reader stops reading because he/she becomes too aware of a narrative voice, then the narrator has failed and disrupted the presentation of events, or the thoughts and feelings of a character. The narrative and/or rhetorical goals of the implied author may no longer be achievable; the implied reader may lose interest in the character and events. He/she may no longer care about the discourse, and the implied author has lost his/her audience, and therefore, by definition, failed to achieve his rhetorical goal.

Chatman, in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, also provides an overview of narrative structures that further explains and describes narrator intrusion in a story. He provides a fuller list of methods by which a successful author can create a compelling text. He describes narrator styles as ranging from "covert," least intrusive to "overt," or most intrusive (196). The

heterodiegetic narrator tells us what happens. Such a narrator has the freedom to enter the characters' mind(s) and "to comment on the action" (Prince 33). Chatman prefers these terms to the traditional "omniscient" narrator, which he believes often really means 'omnipresent'" (212). He believes it is important to consider the "audibility" of narrators, rather than attempt to classify them by type:

It is less important to categorize types of narrators than to identify the features that mark their degrees of audibility. A quantitative effect applies: the more identifying features, the stronger our sense of narrator's presence...Covert or effaced narration occupies the middle ground between 'nonnarration' and conspicuously audible narration. In covert narration we hear a voice speaking of events, characters, and setting but its owner remains hidden in the discursive shadows... (196-197)

Chatman delineates between the "tagged" and what he calls the indirect free form of narration. Tagged narration is marked by inclusion of "he said," or "he thought." The indirect free form drops the use of such markers, and the audience is simply given narration either within the

character's mind, or presenting his/her worldview. He states that the indirect form in narratives "implies a shade more intervention by a narrator, since we cannot be sure that the words in the ...clause are precisely those spoken by the quoted speaker" (200). The meaning of the indirect free form "is not the simple reminder of indirect tagged form minus the tag. It has a great degree of autonomy, and though ambiguity may persist, the absence of the tag makes it sound more like the character speaking or thinking than a narrator's report" (201). By considering Hersey's use of overt and covert narration, one should be able to measure the "intrusion" into the discourse by Hersey's implied author.

There are other literary theories that may help us examine the rhetorical structure in Hersey's *Hiroshima*. Elements of narratology, including Vladimir Propp's concepts of binary opposites, provide analytical tools that may help show some of the methods Hersey employed to construct his text and build reader support for his six survivors. Propp's concepts show how readers maintain a conceptual universe in their mind created by an author. Readers then "fill in the gap" as they consume a text. The implied author depends upon the implied reader filling-in

during the reading process. The implied author then hopes his implied reader will evaluate, judge, cooperate, and co-create with the author. A persuader, when conceiving and formulating his text, can be presumed to construct it with the assumption that the implied reader co-creates a certain universe. This concept will be explored to determine what, if any, "universe" Hersey hoped his implied readers would bring to the text.

Booth offers further insight into how some authors see this communication challenge by quoting author Saul Bellow:

The intention of the writer, therefore, is to hold the reader to a sense of the weight of each action. The writer cannot be sure that his million [readers] will view the matter as he does. He therefore tries to define an audience. By assuming what it is that all men ought to be able to understand and agree upon, he creates a kind of humanity, a version of it composed of hopes and realities in proportions that vary as his degree of optimism...The writer must find enduring intuitions of what things are real and what things are important. His business is with these enduring intuitions, which have the power

to recognize occasions of suffering or occasions of happiness, in spite of all distortion, and blurring. (qtd. in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* 118)

An author "creates a kind of humanity," or his vision of an implied reader or implied audience. The author next must find the "enduring intuitions of what things are real and what things are important." Such an author is concerned with finding those "enduring intuitions, which have the power to recognize occasions of suffering or occasions of happiness." I will search for "enduring intuitions" that Hersey relied upon in the creation of his text. Burke refers to such conceptual elements of consciousness, calling them, as Aristotle did, enthymemes. It is these "intuitions," or "enthymemes" that, when collected and sorted in the implied reader's mind, make up his or her worldview. They, of course, come from individual experience, and from the culture in which an individual is raised. Understanding the implied reader's worldview is critical for a persuader when considering how he/she will formulate his argument, or, in the case of Hersey, his narrative which was designed to achieve his rhetorical goals.

The French narrative concepts of *fabula*, the actual time-sequence of events in the story, and *sjuzet* (*suzet*), or the presentation of those events, also should help us appreciate how and why Hersey disrupted a temporal presentation of the events. As already has been noted, Hersey repeats the same event six times through the eyes and voice of his six survivors. This repetition, through the disrupted temporal presentation of events, can become a powerful narrative tool, and therefore effective to the rhetorician as well. Martin notes this when he says:

drama is usually tied to the lockstep progression of clock and calendar, whereas narrative can treat the human reality of time, dipping into memory from the past when it is relevant to the present, and imagining the future. Admittedly, narration is thrust into an absolute past, in which everything has already happened, whereas a play or movie can pretend (so long as we accept the pretense) that it is happening in our "now"...the narrator, on the other hand, can take the responsible choice of speaking to us directly. (110)

Temporal condensations, such as summary and ellipsis, are devices that "involve *duration*," according to Martin (125). Another important category is order (flashback and flash forward), the latter occurring when the author leaps ahead to tell what happened later, or when a character imagines the future. Martin cites Gerard Genette, who claims that when we enter a character's memory, the ordering can become complex, since reminiscence about an earlier period may evoke thoughts of still earlier ones, and references to the narrative 'present' will be flash forwards within memory (Martin 125). All of these moves, available to the skilled implied narrator, can become useful "weapons" in the structure of a narrative as a rhetorical tool. I will illustrate Hersey's use of some of these devices in *Hiroshima*.

Martin also cites Genette for delineating a third category, frequency, or the number of times an incident is recounted. Of particular interest is the 'iterative' - one description of an event that occurs repeatedly - because once used, its frequent re-use in narrative becomes noticeable, and it calls attention to a weakness in the demarcation between the traditional categories of scene, summary, description, and exposition (125). It is clear, as



noted above, that Hersey employed iteration in his construction of *Hiroshima*. I will explore the use of this device to determine how it helped the author achieve his rhetorical goal(s).

Finally, Martin describes rhetorical functions that occur through the assembly, in the reader's mind, of character, scene and narrative summaries to form an entire "whole" of a reading experience. He states:

functions are grouped together in sequences, which may themselves form larger units; character is a higher level of organization in that it binds sequences together, as well as being defined by them; and a narrative as a whole can be conceived as a single syuzhet or Action (in [Roland] Barthes' sense) of which sequences and characters are parts." (126)

The implied reader assembles the parts as theme or themes, and if an author achieves his or her rhetorical goal, the reader experiences the understanding or insights the author has sought to achieve. To further appreciate this mixing of character and plot, Martin notes:

most textbooks and treatises on fiction have for the past century discussed it in a series of

sections entitled plot, character, setting, and point of view. Thus they imply that these are the 'parts' of a narrative, in the same sense that engine, chassis, and wheels are parts of a car. In *The Art of Fiction* (1888) Henry James inveighed against this method; 'People often talk of these things as if they had a kind of internecine distinctness, instead of melting into each other at every breath, and being intimately associated parts of one general effort of expression. I cannot imagine composition existing in a series of blocks...what is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? (qtd. in Martin 116)

It is this "melting into each other at every breath" that an implied author hopes to achieve to sustain in the implied reader's mind that he/she is "there" in the incident, experiencing the thoughts, feelings and emotions of the characters. The mixing of facts and characterization become key components as the material by which a reader is influenced and led to concur or, at least, consider underlying the rhetorical arguments.

As previously noted, I also will analyze *Hiroshima* as journalistic prose. It is well established that Hersey's text cannot be codified as "standard" journalism in that it does far more than simply inform an audience the "who, what, where, when, and how." It is, as Christopher Scanlan describes it, an example of "narrative reconstruction" (398). Scanlan considers this form of journalism a risky proposition, from the point of pure reporting (398). Where does the author's worldview intrude into the reporting, which is supposed to be straightforward and unbiased, he asks? Hersey himself, writing in *The Algiers Motel Incident* more than twenty years after he completed *Hiroshima*, said this about persuasion and journalism:

There is no such thing as objective reportage. Human life is far too trembling-swift to be reported in the whole; the moment the reporter chooses nine facts out of ten he colors the information with his views. (27)

Hersey's admission that an author's views reveal themselves in reporting will become important as I consider the choices Hersey's implied narrator executed when constructing *Hiroshima*. Yet we also should remember what Hersey said about the differences between fiction and

journalism when, near the end of his life, he harshly criticized several of the New Journalists who had turned their narrative skills from reporting to fiction, yet maintained that their writings were "true." The problem with this development, to Hersey, was that it blurred truth and fiction, and confused the reading public. As part of his discussion, and for our advantage, he outlined what he believed was a distinguishing characteristic between fiction and journalism:

In fiction, the writer's voice matters; in reporting, the writer's authority matters. We read fiction to fortify our psyches, and in the pleasure that that fortification may give us, temperament holds sway. We read journalism ...to try and learn about the external world in which our psyches have to struggle along, and the quality we most need in our informant is some measure of trustworthiness. (*The Yale Review* 308)

*Hiroshima* has been labeled an example of "New Journalism," a form that became popular in the 1960's with the publication of works by Truman Capote, Hunter Thomas, Norman Mailer, Thomas Wolfe, Joan Didion, and others. No one has ever alleged that Hersey "made up" facts in his

reporting in *Hiroshima*. But he certainly selected and arranged facts, and as I will show, for his own rhetorical purposes.

Finally, Jean Gillingwaters, in her thesis "Joan Didion and the New Journalism," describes New Journalism as a form that "has no canon, but four distinctive characteristics [that] give this literary form its power: immediacy, concrete reality, emotional involvement, and a gripping or absorbing quality" (12). I believe Hersey's text manifest these four "characteristics." *Hiroshima* is, as Wolfe says, a forerunner of the genre. For Hersey's contribution to the form, Wolfe dubbed Hersey the grandfather of New Journalism, in part for the writing style he used in *Hiroshima*. New Journalism clearly employs narrative devices. As noted, this thesis holds that such devices can be used to persuade, and, therefore, speaking journalistically, *Hiroshima*, while adhering to many of the characteristics of journalism, is something else entirely - a "narrative reconstruction" artfully composed to provide us "facts" by which his readers may infer "proofs" and, therefore, be "persuaded" to consider Hersey's rhetorical goals.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### APPLICATION OF THEORIES

The first identified rhetorical goal of Hersey in the writing of *Hiroshima* was clearly identified by *The New Yorker* magazine at the beginning of the article when the editors announced: "few of us have ever comprehended the all but incredible destructive power of this weapon" (Kunkel 373). The implied reader should expect to be shown in the article evidence, or facts, of the "destructive power of the weapon." This evidence, adhering to Burke's structure of literary persuasion, will lead to inferences of "the terrible implications of its use" (Kunkel 373), the second rhetorical goal established by the newsmagazine. Once the "proof" of the "incredible destructive power" of the bomb has been shown, then the implied reader should conclude that somehow this bomb differed in kind from the other aerial forms of bombardment used during World War II, so different that government leaders should consider "its use," which implies that they might conclude "not" to use it in the future, that this weapon was different and had to be controlled, or eliminated, from the arsenals of the world's war machines.

A third rhetorical goal can be presumed, even though it was not clearly stated by the editors, namely that the implied reader should suspend his/her hatred of the Japanese people. The typical American view of the Japanese before, during, and immediately after the war pictured them as the dreaded, hateful enemy as described by Patrick Sharp, in his "From Yellow Peril to Japanese Wasteland: John Hersey's *Hiroshima*." He concluded that there is substantial evidence to establish that hatred of the Japanese had been engendered in the United States years since before World War I:

Since the turn of the century, American authors had been writing future-war stories in which Asian invaders armed with superior technologies attack the United States. The most well known story in this tradition was Jack London's "The Unparalleled Invasion." Published in 1910, London's story was a direct response to the victory of Japan's modernized army over the Russians in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905-06. London's story reinforced a stereotype of Japanese as inhuman, mindless drones who slavishly serve their emperor. (2)

Sharp points to narratives to show how they "became a primary way for the American media to make sense out of the attack on Pearl Harbor" (2). To underscore this theme of the Japanese as "inhuman," Sharp notes that President Harry Truman "set the tone for this revenge narrative with his assertion that 'the Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold'" (qtd. in Sharp 3). According to Sharp, the "US government engaged in a long and protracted battle" to control narratives about the atomic bomb, and that the military hired William Laurence, the *New York Times* Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer, as the official reporter of the Manhattan Project" (3). Rather than detailing what had happened to Japanese civilians, the reports from Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the year following the attacks "emphasized strategic damage to buildings, bridges, and other war-related infrastructure..." However, no mention was made about the effects of the blast on humans. In fact, U. S. "'General Groves even commented that, according to doctors, (radiation sickness) is a very pleasant way to die'" (qtd. in Sharp 3-4).

Hersey knew he was confronted with the challenge to structure his narrative in a fashion to persuade his implied readers to set aside their hatred of the people who



survived the bomb, and to overcome what had become an accepted way to picture the Japanese, and to justify the use of the atomic bomb. This was a rhetorical goal of immense proportions. Burke describes the challenge and risks that face such an author in his "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'" where he declared:

People so dislike the idea of internal division that, where there is a real internal division, their dislike can easily be turned against the man or group who would so much as *name* it, let alone proposing to act upon it. Their natural and justified resentment against internal division itself is turned against the diagnostician who states it as a *fact*. This diagnostician, it is felt, is the *cause* of the disunity he named (176)

There was, when Hersey launched his project, no "real internal division." His text certainly could create one. He knew that his article would be compared to the government-sponsored view of the bomb. He becomes the "diagnostician" who will attempt to state "facts." This was a high-risk action on his part and on the part of Ross and *The New Yorker*. Hersey, therefore, moved quickly, at the opening of his story, to engender a state of "openness"

toward six survivors of the bomb. Hersey reveals that the survivors he will report on were non-combatants:

Miss Toshiko Sasaki, [was] a clerk in the personnel department of East Asia Tin Works...Dr. Masakazu Fujii [was the owner] of his private hospital...Mrs. Hatsuyo Nakamura, [was] a tailor's widow...Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge, a German priest of the Society of Jesus...Dr. Terufumi Sasaki, a young member of the surgical staff of the city's large, modern Red Cross Hospital...the Reverend Mr. Kiyoshi Tanimoto, pastor of the Hiroshima Methodist Church... (*Hiroshima* 1-2)

As I have noted that Hersey interviewed thirty individuals, yet he chose two women, a clerk and a widow; two doctors, including one who worked for an international relief agency. The choice of medical professionals will allow Hersey to reveal, through their eyes, the effect of radiation on those killed and those who survived the blast. Hersey also chose two members of the clergy, one Catholic, one Protestant. We later learn that Mr. Tanimoto, the Protestant, was educated in the United States and wore American clothing, and that he had been under suspicion by the authorities for his ties with America (*Hiroshima* 4).

In the 1940s, the choice of two clergymen clearly fit Hersey's rhetorical purpose: Protestants and Catholics made up a large portion of the American populace. The characters then serve, as Martin summarizes, "a higher level of organization that binds and sequences together" (Martin 126). Henry James' characters "whose main function is to throw light on the meaning or significance of the situations and events narrated" as 'ficelles' (Prince 30). Hersey's six survivors, how he describes them, what they do and say, what the implied reader learns of their worldviews, are designed to "throw light on the meaning or significance" of the narrated events, or, in other words, they serve his rhetorical purpose.

As stated previously, narratology, especially Vladimir Propp's concepts of binary opposites, provide another theoretical basis to show some of the methods Hersey's rhetorical narrator used as he constructed his text. Propp declares that readers maintain a conceptual universe in their mind created by an author. Readers then "fill in the gap" as they consume a text. The implied author depends upon the implied reader filling-in those gaps during the reading process, evaluating, judging, cooperating, and co-creating with the author. Any author, when conceiving and

formulating his text, can be presumed to construct it with the assumption that the implied reader co-creates a shared universe.

This theory can be applied to Hersey's text in two ways. First, while the implied reader reads the text, he/she should experience and respond with his/her own personal reactions to the scenes of destruction and devastation. But, to do so, the implied reader first must sustain an image in his/her mind of a "normal" universe, a major city like any city in the world in a normal condition. This state of normality, then, provides a universe by which the implied reader compares and contrasts the events he/she is exposed to through the reading of the text. Without this "normal universe," the city of Hiroshima, as seen and shown to us through Hersey's six characters and the narrator's viewpoint, would have little meaning. Hersey constructs his narrative so that the implied reader must consider the "destructive power" of the bomb and future use of the weapon.

By this method, Hersey's implied author also employs what Chatman refers to as an "un-dramatized narrator" who serves as a "third person" reflector (153). These narrators can convey scene and summary, commentary, and can be self-

conscious, providing a way to control dramatic irony. In its "simplest form [of] straight description...[can show]... how a character misinterprets another's unspoken thoughts or motives" (Booth 173). No dramatic irony, by definition occurs unless "the author and audience can somehow share knowledge which the characters do not hold" (Booth 175). This is a technique used with great effectiveness by Hersey as his implied narrator, as Sanders has noted, declared of his witnesses that "none of them knew anything." By this narrational technique, Hersey has told the implied reader that he will view events from the privileged position of knowing more than the survivors. This superior state of "knowing" will allow the implied reader to evaluate events differently than the characters; the implied reader can anticipate, evaluate, and consider the actions of the characters with an awareness they do not have. The narrative device becomes a means by which Hersey will seek to persuade his implied readers to consider the effect of the bomb on ordinary citizens.

Booth, echoing Henry James, delineates fictional rhetorical tools that can be used to help an author meet his/her goals.

Stage setting, explanation of meaning of an action, summary of thought processes or of events too insignificant to merit being dramatized, description of physical events and details whenever such description cannot spring naturally from a character - these all occur in many different forms. (169)

They also can be used by a rhetor to help construct an argument based on the presentation of facts. Hersey, with publication of *A Bell for Adano*, had earlier practiced the art of mixing facts with dialogue and physical action to draw characters and demonstrate their values and state of mind. Hersey's implied narrator supplies his readers with many facts associated with his characters, facts that help define and sharply draw their personalities. He begins his reporting in the text with facts and information about Mr. Tanimoto and what he was doing on the morning of August 6, 1945:

The Reverend Mr. Tanimoto got up at five o'clock that morning. He was alone in the parsonage, because for some time his wife had been commuting with their year-old baby to spend nights with a friend in Ushida, a suburb to the north. Of all

the important cities of Japan, only two, Kyoto and Hiroshima, had not been visited in strength by B-san, or Mr. B, as the Japanese, with a mixture of respect and unhappy familiarity, called the B-29; and Mr. Tanimoto, like all his neighbors and friends, was almost sick with anxiety. (*Hiroshima 2*)

In this sample of narrative, Hersey mixes in facts about Hiroshima, the target, and facts pertinent to Mr. Tanimoto, and by so doing informs the reader that it was one of only two major cities that had not been bombed by B-29 raids. Hersey also tells us that the Japanese viewed the bombers with "a mixture of respect and unhappy familiarity." I believe it is important to consider the rhetorical implications of Hersey's choice of the expression: "with a mixture of respect and unhappy familiarity." There is both an ironic and deferential tone in the phrase. The implied reader can almost see Mr. Tanimoto and his neighbors bowing in deference to the U.S. military superiority as the B-29s fly overhead. The description fits a stereotypical view of the obsequious Asian often depicted in films. One can assume that they dreaded the sight and sound of the bombers because they had wrought untold destruction to their

country. It would be easy to assume that the Japanese people, in fact, loathed and feared the bombers.

Hersey later reports that many of the inhabitants expected something "special" had been planned for the city, a premonition that their day of visitation would be especially horrendous:

The frequency of the warnings and the continued abstinence of Mr. B with respect to Hiroshima had made its citizens jittery; a rumor was going around that the Americans were saving something special for the city. (*Hiroshima* 3)

The word "special" chosen by Hersey suggests party or happy event. Hersey continues explaining Mr. Tanimoto's mindset, noting that the minister "had heard uncomfortably detailed accounts of mass raids on Kure, Iwakuni, Tokuyama and other nearby towns; he was sure Hiroshima's turn would come soon" (*Hiroshima* 2). Again, Hersey's choice of words conveys an understated, reserved tone that by use of the expression "uncomfortably detailed accounts" heightens the irony of Mr. Tanimoto's considerations. It is as if Hersey were discussing a bout of bad weather that had befallen other Japanese cities. Understatement and distance create an almost antiseptic objectivity, which helps the implied



author appear to be a very careful, non-emotional, non-judgmental narrator. Whether covert, or audible, the narrator is sparse in his use of adjectives and adverbs so as not to appear to color the implied readers experience. Thus, the implied narrator appears to lay down "facts" that speak for themselves, by which the implied reader is free to form his/her own inferences. Hersey's implied narrator appears to be simply painting pictures. Yet, when we recall Hersey's rhetorical challenge, and realize he is using description rhetorically, I believe it is clear that he is moving carefully, skillfully, to avoid appearing too sentimental, too caring for the Japanese.

Hersey describes more of the objects that have concerned Mr. Tanimoto on the day the bomb fell, objects that further Hersey's implied narrator's rhetorical goals of establishing empathy on the part of the implied reader for this particular survivor. These objects become important as Hersey's implied narrator establishes Mr. Tanimoto himself as a reliable narrator. This reliability is essential to Hersey as his implied readers must trust the Protestant missionary's reports, both about facts and incidents, and his emotional conclusions as well. Hersey's implied narrator tells us that Mr. Tanimoto had been

carrying all the portable things from his church, in the close-packed residential district called Nagaragawa, to a house that belonged to a rayon manufacturer in Koi, two miles from the center of town...a safe distance from the probable target area (*Hiroshima* 3).

Mr. Tanimoto had had no difficulty in moving chairs, hymnals, Bibles, altar gear, and church records by pushcart himself, but the organ console and an upright piano required some aid.

(3)

These are the kinds of objects many of Hersey's implied readers knew and with which they were familiar. The implied narrator's list conveys to the implied reader that here is a person concerned with the same objects that Christian Americans would hold dear and treasure. And, in the process, the narrator has informed us that Mr. Tanimoto had considered what the American military planners surely also had calculated - the proximity of the epicenter of Hiroshima.

Another narrative device described by Martin that Hersey uses that allows the implied narrator to both look "into a character's mind" and "through it," makes the character into the perceiver who reveals his world through

his own perceptions, not the author's (143). The point of view, therefore, when Hersey's implied narrator is narrating the thoughts and feelings of the character, allows us to see and "live" the character's value system. This use of narration helps Hersey "preserve the illusion that events literally unfold before the reader's eyes." We can see this device used in the description that follows where Hersey's implied narrator creates a sense of intimacy with Mrs. Hatsuyo Nakamura, the tailor's widow, yet at the same "distance" from other survivors of the bomb. The device establishes her as a reliable narrator, one the implied reader should trust, even when her thoughts and feelings will be, in fact, supplied by the implied narrator.

Hersey informs the implied reader that she had taken her children to the East Parade Ground (for protection from B-29 raids) the night before the bomb was dropped. Later, the radio announced that two hundred B-29s were approaching. After the planes had passed, Mrs. Nakamura started back with her children when a "fresh" warning was broadcast. "She decided that in spite of the instructions on the radio, she simply could not face starting out all over again" (*Hiroshima* 7). It should be noted that Hersey

does not insert "she said," which she probably must have done when he interviewed her more than nine months after the bombing of the city and would have been a direct "tagging" of her remarks. Yet, a few sentences later, when still another siren "jarred her awake at about seven," she went to a neighbor's house and asked him what she should do.

He said that she should remain at home unless an urgent warning - a series of intermittent blasts of the siren - was sounded...To her relief, the all-clear sounded at eight o'clock. (7)

The implied author's attribution of "he said" to the neighbor's remark distinguishes between the actual narrator of the event and the neighbor. It is a subtle point, but the technique allows Hersey to portray her 'universe' and how she went about determining her course of actions, and therefore her behavior. It also establishes a sense of reality and intimacy with this survivor. We forget about the implied narrator. We also can empathize with her decision because, again, as rhetor, Hersey has imbued her with an authenticity to which any non-combatant can understand: who wouldn't be tired of responding to false alarms?

Hersey's implied narrator again uses dramatic irony, counting on his implied readers to have and use "knowledge which the characters do not hold" (Booth 175). Through Mrs. Nakamura's eyes the implied reader learns that her neighbor has begun to tear down his house for a fire lane, a fire-control effort mandated by authorities. The description of this demolition conveys a sense of irony because the implied reader knows what Mrs. Nakamura and her neighbors do not; fire lanes will prove useless to what is coming. Hersey's implied narrator reports that the neighbor's demolition work is extremely loud, and in the process reveals her thoughts and feelings about the neighbor's work:

At first, she was annoyed with him for making so much noise, but then she was moved almost to tears by pity. Her emotion was specifically directed toward her neighbor, tearing down his home, board by board, at a time when there was so much unavoidable destruction, but undoubtedly she also felt a generalized, community pity, to say nothing of self-pity. (*Hiroshima* 8)

Hersey's covert narrator supplies a summary of Mrs. Nakamura's thoughts and feelings, and a sense of place,

mood, of the impact on civilians that resulted from the relentless B-29 bombings. Hersey's implied narrator is inside her mind and heart, as described by Martin (143), narrating for us her intellectual and emotional state of mind. We are witnessing civilians attempting to cope with the indescribable horror of war. Hersey also has slipped in the fact that there was an all clear sounded at 8 a.m., only fifteen minutes before the atomic bomb fell on the city. The implied reader knows the bomb is coming; the Japanese who live in Hiroshima don't. They go about their lives as best they can in wartime conditions.

Chatman describes this kind of covert, indirect free form of narration as a merging of "two voices" with the implication that it "doesn't matter who says or thinks this; it is appropriate to both character and narrator" and that the ambiguity "may strengthen the bond between the two, make us trust still more the narrator's authority" (*Story and Discourse* 206). Chatman further describes this closeness between the narrator and his character:

A feeling is established that the narrator possesses not only access to but an unusual affinity or 'vibration' with the character's

mind. There is the suggestion of a kind of 'in' group psychology. (207)

It is an important merging to the rhetor Hersey as he seeks to overcome the challenge of his third rhetorical goal - overcoming American hatred of the Japanese.

Yet, there are times when Hersey's implied narrator-persuader is an "audible" narrator. Chatman holds that "sentences in which the thought or sensation is not couched in a that-clause, but in a nominal phrase are examples of such audibility" (*Story and Discourse* 209). Hersey's implied narrator writes: "At first, she was annoyed with him [the neighbor] for making so much noise, but then she was moved almost to tears by pity" (*Hiroshima* 8). Hersey is a very audible narrator here and exemplifies what Chatman describes as performing an "'internal analysis'" or 'narrator's report.'" Chatman believes this is what "critics doubtless mean by a 'limited third person narration" (*Story and Discourse* 209). Applying Scanlan's concept of "narrative reconstruction," Hersey's implied narrator is also functioning according to the code of a New Journalist. When the narrator says, "undoubtedly she also felt a generalized, community pity, to say nothing of self-pity" (*Hiroshima* 8), the implied narrator presumes to report

both a Japanese worldview and her "generalized, community pity." The implied narrator then further invades into the story, by expressing judgment on her mental and emotional state at the time, and describes it as one of "self-pity." Hersey's implied narrator has labeled her emotional state and the implied reader may, or may not, have noticed that no longer is Mrs. Nakamura narrating events, but Hersey's implied narrator has taken over. It's a kind of overt judgment of the character by an external "mind," Hersey's implied narrator, rarely found in the text.

Hersey's implied narrator, functioning as rhetor, mixes facts and intrusions into his character's thoughts and feelings as he narrates. Chatman holds that every writer seeks to create a balance of data and narrative formations that work upon both the thoughts and feelings of the reader, not just one or the other. Chatman refers to these two components as "intellectual interests," and "practical interests," where the reader finds himself/herself concerned with the emotional life of the characters (*Story and Discourse* 125-130). These interests are important to journalists who depend upon the recitation of "facts" to build their stories. It's also important to the fiction writers as a method by which they can create



background, scene and setting in which their characters operate. News reporting is supposed to be the summary of facts presented to the reader for him/her to evaluate and judge. Fiction writers move freely across this boundary, as Hersey's implied author does in this text. The need for the proper balance between intellectual interests and practical interests remains the same in both fiction and journalism. Chatman holds that if there is too much intellectual information, or too much emotional-level material, a story may run awry:

it is clear that no great work is based on only one interest. Whenever a work tends toward an exclusive reliance on intellectual interests, on the contemplation of qualities, or on practical desires we all look for adjectives to whip the offender with; a mere 'novel of ideas,' a mere 'desiccated form,' a mere 'tear-jerker' [that] will offend all. (*Story and Discourse* 133).

Hersey's implied narrator demonstrates his awareness of the need for the careful mixing of intellectual and practical interests as he informs the implied reader of facts about Hiroshima, its inhabitants, and information on his survivors. He shuttles back and forth between scene and

summary. The information provided by a character adds background information that conveys to the implied reader this is indeed not a "tear-jerker," yet the implied reader must know the destruction of a city and its inhabitants is fertile ground for an emotional orgy. We can see evidence of Hersey's skill as the implied narrator reports the thoughts and feelings of Father Kleinsorge when he was viewing survivors in Asano Park:

To Father Kleinsorge, an Occidental, the silence in the grove by the river, where hundreds of gruesomely wounded suffered together, was one of the most dreadful and awesome phenomena of his whole experience. The hurt ones were quiet; no one wept, much less screamed in pain; no one complained; none of the many who died did so noisily; not even the children cried; very few people even spoke...[as he gave water to some of these survivors, some] raised themselves a little and bowed to him, in thanks. (*Hiroshima* 36)

Words such as "gruesomely" and "dreadful and awesome phenomena" are strong, emotional summaries; they also are the summary of Father Kleinsorge, seemingly not Hersey's implied narrator, exemplifying once more Hersey the covert

narrator laying down "facts" the implied reader should consider as possible proofs of the "destructive nature" of the bomb. Hersey's implied narrator is using these "emotional" facts mixed in with descriptive evidence of the bomb's effect.

Hersey's implied narrator does it again a few paragraphs later when we see Mr. Tanimoto walk to a river bank in the park to look for a "boat in which he might carry some of the most severely injured across the river...away from the spreading fire" (37). Mr. Tanimoto found a "good-sized pleasure punt," but in and around it was "an awful tableau - five dead men, nearly naked, badly burned, who must have expired more or less all at once" (37). Mr. Tanimoto lifted them away from the boat, and as he did so, he experienced such horror at disturbing the dead - preventing them, he momentarily felt, from launching their craft and going on their ghostly way -- that he said out loud, "Please forgive me for taking this boat. I must use it for others, who are alive" (37).

We note the mixing of narrational voice. The implied narrator declares that it was "an awful tableau." Or, was it Mr. Tanimoto using that expression when Hersey, the reporter, interviewed him? The implied reader can't be

sure, yet Hersey's implied narrator makes it clear who is speaking when he quotes Mr. Tanimoto moments later: "Please forgive me for taking this boat. I must use it for others, who are alive." Mr. Tanimoto, the Protestant missionary, the actual narrator of events, speaks to the dead reverentially. Hersey's implied narrator is counting on the pathos of the event to move the implied reader to consider this "fact" just as he/she would consider statistical information. This "fact" becomes a haunting reality of what the bomb can do. These were men burned to death as they apparently sought to escape the raging fire that had swept across the city.

Yet, we also note that while Hersey's implied narrator repeatedly distances himself from the events he is reporting, this is not always the case. Chatman teaches that because "the covert narrator has entrée into a character's mind does not mean he constantly exercises it. Abrupt silences can achieve striking effects" (*Story and Discourse* 213). And, these effects can be powerful rhetorical tools. Hersey uses this distancing technique when he speaks of Mrs. Nakamura in a passage already considered:

Her emotion was specifically directed toward her neighbor, tearing down his home...but undoubtedly she also felt a generalized, community pity, to say nothing of self-pity. (*Hiroshima* 8)

Hersey's implied narrator, by the use of the word 'undoubtedly,' signals he is "presuming" her state of mind. This gives credence to the narrator as a "non-assuming" being who is careful to state and distinguish between the thoughts and opinions of the character, and his own surmises. It's bad form to "suppose" and get caught at it, especially for a journalist.

Hersey again uses Father Kleinsorge to describe what Sanders believes is one of the "most horrifying scenes in the book" (Sanders 18). It is a powerful set of "facts" the implied reader should consider. The incident allows Father Kleinsorge to narrate his search for water for the wounded, and at the same time for the implied narrator to specify both intellectual and emotional responses by the survivor to the effect of the bomb blast on the [city's] residents. The implied narrator informs us that the Catholic priest left Asano Park where he found a faucet "that still worked." As he did so, on his first trip to this water

source, he came upon a woman who "seemed to have been burned from head to toe and was red all over" (51).

On his way back with the water, he got lost on a detour around a fallen tree, and as he looked for his way through the woods, he heard a voice ask from the underbrush, "Have you anything to drink?" He saw a uniform. Thinking there was just one soldier, he approached with the water. When he had penetrated the bushes, he saw there were about twenty men, and they were all in exactly the same nightmarish state: their faces were wholly burned, their eye sockets were hollow, the fluid from their melted eyes had run down their cheeks. (They must have had their faces upturned when the bomb went off; perhaps they were antiaircraft personnel.) Their mouths were mere swollen, pus-covered wounds, which they could not bear to stretch enough to admit the spout of the teapot [he used to carry the water.] So [he] got a large piece of grass and drew out the stem so as to make a straw, and gave them all water to drink. (*Hiroshima* 51-52)

In this description, Hersey's covert narrator signals greater audibility, yet at the same time maintains true journalistic distancing, as he uses parenthesis to surmise how the men lost their sight, and how their eyes were burned in their sockets. The parenthetical insertion keeps the actual narrator, Father Kleinsorge, free to describe the event in his own words, and to express his emotional reaction to it. Free, but subject to the editorial choices of Hersey's implied narrator.

Characterization is another key rhetorical tool used by Hersey's implied narrator. By it he establishes the reliability of his six survivors to serve their principal function of telling their story. To work, the implied reader must "believe" them. This is not the place for the deployment of the unreliable narrator. Hersey displays skills of a fiction writer as he describes Mr. Tanimoto, both the physical and mental characteristics:

Mr. Tanimoto was a small man, quick to talk, laugh, and cry. He wore his black hair parted in the middle and rather long; the prominence of the frontal bones just above his eyebrows and the smallness of his mustache, mouth, and chin gave him a strange, old-young look, boyish and yet

wise, weak and yet fiery. He moved nervously and fast, but with a restraint, which suggested that, he was a cautious, thoughtful man. (*Hiroshima* 3)

Mr. Tanimoto is a "thoughtful" man, by which Hersey's implied narrator signals to the implied reader that Mr. Tanimoto is a reliable narrator. He is a man who moves "fast, but with restraint." We therefore can trust Mr. Tanimoto's judgments and reporting. He will restrain himself from overly dramatic commentary. Hersey's implied narrator supports his judgments with an example that demonstrates these very qualities by telling us he has been moving the objects previously noted. Hersey continues a straight temporal presentation as he mixes in facts about the city of Hiroshima with a description of Mr. Tanimoto's morning, and the minister's goal for the day - to reciprocate a friend's help from the day before. The two men were going to move a chest owned by the friend. In the process, we learn:

A few minutes after they started, the air-raid siren went off—a minute-long blast that warned of approaching planes but indicated to the people of Hiroshima only a slight degree of danger, since it sounded every morning at this time, when an



American weather plane came over. The two men pulled and pushed the handcart through the city streets. Hiroshima was a fan-shaped city, lying mostly on six islands formed by the seven estuarial rivers that branch out from the Ota River; its main commercial and residential districts, covering about four square miles in the center of the city, contained three-quarters of its population, which had been reduced by several evacuation programs from a wartime peak of 380,000 to about 245,000. (*Hiroshima* 4)

Hersey's implied narrator builds suspense for what the reader knows is coming, and again, with a detached, non-dramatic fashion, lays down another fact for the reader to consider - the potential number of persons who could be destroyed by the bomb. Hersey's implied narrator heightens an air of suspense as he states: there "was no sound of planes. The morning was still; the place was cool and pleasant" (*Hiroshima* 5).

But, not for long:

Then a tremendous flash of light cut across the sky. Mr. Tanimoto has a distinct recollection that it traveled from east to west, from the city

toward the hills. It seemed a sheet of sun. Both he [and the other man] Mr. Matsuo reacted in terror - and both had time to react (for they were 3,500 yards, or two miles, from the center of the explosion). M. Matsuo dashed up the front steps into the house and dived among the bedrolls and buried himself there. Mr. Tanimoto took four or five steps and threw himself between two big rocks in the garden. He bellied up very hard against one of them...he did not see what happened. He felt a sudden pressure, and then splinters and pieces of board and fragments of tile fell on him. He heard no roar. (Almost no one in Hiroshima recalls hearing any noise of the bomb)...Under what seemed to be a local dust cloud, the day grew darker and darker. (*Hiroshima* 5-6)

Hersey's implied narrator provides Mr. Tanimoto's description of the flash of light that spread across the sky when the bomb was dropped. He soon reports on Mr. Tanimoto's first actions, when he rose from the ground, and in the process recalls to the mind of his implied reader the Christian view of charity, the importance of putting "others" ahead of "self." Hersey's implied narrator tells

us that Mr. Tanimoto felt terror when he got up and started running. He then helped an elderly woman who was injured. It paid immediate dividends, Hersey reports. "By this solicitous behavior, Mr. Tanimoto at once got rid of his terror" (*Hiroshima* 17). Hersey, the rhetor, has selected and reported an incident, as well as an ethic, which his American audience would applaud.

Hersey also deploys aspects of discourse that French critics have termed *fabula* and *sjuzet* to help persuade his implied readers that they should carefully consider the impact of nuclear weapons. *Fabula* describes incidents as they would be listed in chronological order; *sjuzet* considers those same events as actually narrated. The difference between the two demonstrates how artists can structure the presentation of events in a way to accentuate events, and therefore themes and/or rhetorical goals. Hersey's implied narrator essentially repeats the same event six times, stopping the narrative when the flash of light occurs, only to begin narrating again the experience of this fateful moment by reporting the activities of another survivor living through the same time period. The device slows down the presentation of information; by repeating the same incident over and over again, the reader

is forced to consider the event, first from the point of view of one survivor, then through the eyes of another. Used proficiently, repetition of events brings to the mind of the implied reader an incident that assists the author in accomplishing his or her rhetorical goals. Misused, the reader can become bored.

Repetition of the incident of the "flash of light" permits Hersey's implied narrator to present to the implied reader different experiences and reactions to the same terrifying moment and event. Mrs. Nakamura, the tailor's widow, reports her experience when she is reported to have been watching her neighbor tear down his house:

when every thing flashed whiter than any white she had ever seen. She did not notice what happened to the man next door; the reflex of a mother set her in motion toward her children. She had taken a single step (the house was 1,350 yards...from the center of the explosion) when something picked her up and she seemed to fly into the next room...pursued by parts of her house.

*(Hiroshima 8)*

Dr. Masakazu Fujii reports that when he saw the flash, "it seemed a brilliant yellow" (9-10). Hersey's implied

narrator tells us how Dr. Fujii started to stand up and the hospital "leaned behind his rising and, with a terrible ripping noise, toppled into the river" (10-11). Father Kleinsorge's description relates how the German Catholic priest saw the:

terrible flash...[that] reminded him of something he had read as a boy about a large meteor colliding with the earth - he had time (since he was 1,400 yards from the center) for one thought: A bomb had fallen directly on us. Then, for a few minutes or seconds, he went out of his mind.

(12-13)

Hersey reports Father Kleinsorge's metaphor, that the flash reminded him of a science fiction-like event. By its use, Hersey's implied narrator has conveyed that the bomb was of "cataclysmic" proportions, so powerful it resulted in Father Kleinsorge temporarily losing "his mind." Father Kleinsorge then realized that all the buildings around had collapsed except the Jesuit mission house that had been "braced and double-braced by [another priest] who was terrified of earthquakes" (13). Again, Hersey's implied narrator invokes another "natural" destructive force of nature, a second likening of the impact of the bomb to

powerful events over which humans have no control. These metaphors become tools, planting images in the implied reader's mind. The decision to drop the bomb is, however, an act over which man does have control; Hersey and the editors of *The New Yorker* have asked the reader to consider the implications of the future use of the weapon. The choice to use the bomb, or not to use it, remains in human hands, not nature's.

Hersey's implied narrator next reports that Dr. Sasaki, the Red Cross surgeon, was one step from an open window when "the light of the bomb was reflected, like a gigantic photographic flash, in the corridor" of the hospital (15). Hersey's implied narrator quotes the exact words of the doctor at the time of the initial blast: He ducked down on one knee and said to himself, as only a Japanese would,

'Sasaki, gambare! Be brave!' Just then (the building was 1,650 yards from the center) the blast ripped through the hospital [and because of where he happened to be standing, he was untouched]. (14)

The implied narrator reports that Dr. Sasaki's description of the flash was like a photographic flash. Later, the

implied narrator will report that the hospital had an X-ray machine, and that the film for the machine was exposed as a result of the radiation from the blast. The metaphor serves as "condition precedent" to this information. But, as a stage setting device, the implied narrator's report of the doctor's own metaphor has set the stage for one of the first hints to the reader what had actually befallen the city and its people. Hersey's implied narrator reports that, like Father Kleinsorge, Dr. Sasaki thought the hospital had taken a direct hit. It seems that everyone who survived, at least everyone interviewed by Hersey, had the same reaction to the initial explosion, namely that where they were located had taken a "direct hit." Hersey's implied narrator has carefully constructed his presentation of the survivors he selected, creating them as people with whom the implied reader might identify. This transference process is essential. Now experiencing the bomb as if "he were there," the implied reader, in one sense, also takes a "direct hit." Speaking metaphorically, Hersey has created six hits by his successful repetition of the same event as seen by his six witnesses. Hersey the rhetor uses the repetition of the flash as further evidence of the effect of the bomb on civilians.

Narrational shifts in the source of perceptions are another powerful rhetorical device in the hands of Hersey's implied narrator. Chatman holds that at least three senses distinguish point of view in its ordinary use: (a) literal: through someone's eyes (perception); (b) figurative: through someone's worldview (ideology, conceptual system, *Weltanschauung*, etc.); (c) transferred: from someone's interest-vantage (characterizing his general interest, profit, welfare, well-being" (*Story and Discourse* 251-2).

Hersey's implied narrator uses all three aspects of point of view as postulated by Chatman. We have seen several examples of the first point of view, or "through someone's eyes." A sample of "figurative" narration, or Chatman's second category, can be seen where Hersey's implied narrator reports on people from the city that had survived the blast. He describes a vivid scene where they pour into a park on the outskirts of the city seeking refuge and solace:

people poured into Asano Park [a] private estate [that] was far enough away from the explosion so that its bamboos, pines, laurel, and maples were still alive, and the green place invited refugees - partly because they believed that if the



Americans came back, they would bomb only buildings; partly because the foliage seemed a center of coolness and life, and the estate's exquisitely precise rock gardens, with their quiet pools and arching bridges, were very Japanese, normal, secure; and also partly because of an irresistible, atavistic urge to hide under leaves. (*Hiroshima* 35)

The point of view here is what Chatman calls figurative because the implied narrator describes the event through the collective survivors' worldview. The Japanese perceived Asano Park as a place where they thought they could escape further destruction, a place where, because of their cultural heritage, would provide them refuge. Here they could find protection from the horrible destruction that had befallen them. Hersey's implied narrator's use of detail creates a vivid description of the park and its stark contrast to a city flattened by the bomb. The description creates a sense of place that serves as an oasis in the devastated city, a very Japanese "safe place."

Previously we have seen other uses by Hersey's implied narrator of Chatman's figurative point of view. Hersey's implied narrator applied it when he referred to Father

Kleinsorge as "an Occidental" and he used it when he made reference to Dr. Sasaki's use of the Japanese word for "be brave." These conceptual, or worldview, perspectives provide the implied reader "distance" to consider that worldview as different from their own. It is another expression of Hersey's intellectual honesty as he establishes his implied narrator as someone who knows his boundary limits, and will not betray the implied reader's trust. Recognition and adherence to boundary limits is crucial to Hersey as he seeks to maintain and sustain the trust of his implied reader in the artistic choices he has made as author.

Hersey's implied narrator reports on Mrs. Nakamura using the third form of perception noted by Chatman, or transferred, as the implied narrator is concerned with her behalf. We know that things are not as safe as they seem, an unseen destructive force has invaded the water, which the implied reader should realize is dangerous, possibly deadly. The implied narrator describes that Mrs. Nakamura and her children were among the first to arrive:

they settled in the bamboo grove near the river.  
They all felt terribly thirsty, and they drank  
from the river. At once they were nauseated and

began vomiting, and they retched the whole day  
(35).

This description of a physical reaction of the woman and her family is done matter-of-factly, but the reader, aware that the water has been poisoned by radiation, knows what the characters do not know. Chatman notes that this technique, often used in film, is a powerful narrational device that allows the narrator to show the implied reader, or viewer, what is happening from a perspective the character does not and cannot share. This state of "knowing" provides the implied reader superior vantage point for viewing the action:

The subject may be completely unconscious that events work for or against his interests (welfare, success, happiness). The identification of interest point of view may follow the clear specification of the character's perceptual and conceptual points of view. Once they are established, we continue identifying with his[/her] interests, by a process of inertia, even if he[/she] is unaware of something.  
*(Story and Discourse 255)*

All three uses of perceptual choice become vehicles for in creating for the implied reader conditions that increase the chance for identification with a character, as Hersey's implied narrator chooses events to show how they impact the thoughts and feelings of the survivors. These events become opportunities to convey "facts" to consider when the implied reader infers "proofs" from the text.

The event of the bomb, as can be imagined, changed the worldview of some of the survivors, and depiction of such a worldview-making change can be expected to be a powerful proof, especially if the change adheres to or operates within the Christian moral ethic, one most *New Yorker* readers would recognize, if not follow. In Asano Park, Hersey's implied narrator provides an example of such a worldview change. Hersey's implied narrator describes how a theological student carried with him a bundle of clothes in which he had packed two pairs of leather shoes.

When he sat down with the others, he found that the bundle had broken open and a couple of shoes had fallen out and now he had only two lefts. He retraced his steps and found one right. When he rejoined the priests, he said, "It's funny, but things don't matter any more. Yesterday, my

shoes were my most important possessions. Today,

I don't care. One pair is enough. (*Hiroshima* 36)

The narrator tells a story within a story, revealing how the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima has altered one person's worldview. Although we don't know it, we presume that Father Kleinsorge reported this incident to Hersey. The source of the incident is immaterial. What is important is that it serves as further evidence for the implied reader to consider when evaluating the effect of the use of the atomic bomb. The incident also serves as an example, as we saw reported of Mr. Tanimoto, that Christian ethics materialize in this devastated city, springing forth from within a character as he manifests a Christian realization of what is truly important in life - and it isn't his shoes!

As the implied reader further reflects upon this incident, he/she can be expected to measure it by his own worldview, as noted by Propp when he stressed that readers maintain their own worldview as they consume a text. The realization of the unimportance of how many pairs of shoes one possesses is one with which the implied reader can identify. This is a character the implied reader can care about. This character becomes another "fact" that the

implied reader should consider when determining his/her own judgments regarding future use of the bomb.

Finally, as has been stated, *Hiroshima* was composed as a journalistic piece. We have seen, however, that journalism expert Scanlan declares the form of writing actually used by Hersey is better described as "narrative reconstruction," and that narrative reconstruction is difficult to measure as pure journalism because an author's point of view, or worldview, may seep into the text. *Hiroshima* has been described as belonging to the category of New Journalism, and we have seen Gillingwaters declare, New Journalism "has no canon, but four distinctive characteristics [that] give this literary form its power: immediacy, concrete reality, emotional involvement, and a gripping or absorbing quality." Hersey's text certainly evidences all four qualities. But, it incorporates one more, as we have seen by noting how Hersey's implied narrator sorted facts and events to accomplish his rhetorical goals. To Scanlan, this exemplifies the "problem" which can occur with narrative reconstruction. But, if one clearly and honestly has a rhetorical mission, as Hersey did, and states it, as the editors of *The New*

*Yorker* did, then *Hiroshima* can and should be measured as a rhetorical narrative. Ultimately, readers' decisions will determine if Hersey's text provided the narrative "proofs" designed to change public perceptions regarding the use of atomic weapons.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

Sanders reports, "*Hiroshima* would be so praised as journalism that it overshadowed not merely *A Bell for Adano* but, for some critics, all of Hersey's subsequent efforts to write fiction" (1). Roger Angell described Hersey's prose as "stripped of mannerism, sentimentality, and even minimal emphasis...[how] Hersey's style and the atrocity of his subject matter contrive to shift the tone from contemporary war reporting to what feels like ancient tragedy" (66). As narrative, it was successful rhetoric. As rhetoric, it was successful in helping change the way the American public perceived atomic weapons. As I have shown, it is not "journalism" as commonly defined. It does, however, definitely exemplify New Journalism, even before the term "New Journalism" had been coined. It is New Journalism because it is narrative shaped with a point of view, one that raises the text to another level, a narrative constructed to persuade.

I have attempted to demonstrate Hersey's use of narrative as a rhetorical device; it remains each reader's decision to determine whether Hersey accomplished his



rhetorical goals. Certainly, Burke's concept of a narrative structured to provide facts, that lead to inferences, which in turn lead to acceptance of facts as "proofs," provides one basic rhetorical approach with which to consider Hersey's text. Propp's concepts demonstrated how an implied reader must maintain in his or her consciousness a "normalistic" universe when consuming a text. The theories supplied by Chatman, Booth, and Martin have provided bases for explanations of how the implied narrator moved into, around, and through different characters' perceptions. Events were related that give the implied reader further evidence - in Burke's terms, facts -- that Hersey, the actual author, used as proofs. The use of covert and overt narrational techniques shed further light on the presentation of actual facts about the city, the Japanese "worldview," and the thoughts and feelings of the six survivors. The French concepts of *fabula* and *sjuzet* also helped to demonstrate how and why Hersey's shifting of the temporal presentation of events aided the implied narrator as he accomplished his rhetorical goals.

One final question remains: would additional research and/or the use of different theory and other analytical tools provide further insights into Hersey's text? I

believe the answer is certainly yes for two reasons. First, when we realize the insights provided by the theories and strategies applied in this thesis, who can say what discoveries might come from further analysis, or from considering other forms of critical approaches to literature? Would Michael Bakhtin's theories, or the techniques associated with New Historicism, provide new insights into how Hersey captured his reader? For example, would it not be helpful to evaluate Hersey's text to determine its interrelatedness with other writings from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially George Orwell and Aldous Huxley's visions of out-of-control science and police states as studied by Stephen Greenblatt (105-117). Would William Labov's theories, especially as they focus on the use of evaluative language, or other forms of analysis yet to be conceived, provide new perspectives? Certainly so as variable sets of 'terministic screens,' using Burke's concept, can only produce new and different perspectives.

But Hersey's text also offers fertile ground for further study and reflection because it dramatizes what happens to the people of a city when a nuclear weapon is dropped in their midst. It was, to speak with understatement, a cataclysmic event. These were real

people, not statistics, not buildings, not train stations, highways, or military targets featured in government reports on the bombing of the city. Hersey's text in-fleshed the people he interviewed, and drew his readers close to them. The "how and why" an author can accomplish such in-fleshing is always worthy of study and consideration. His writing stands as an example of the power and pathos that can be achieved through the use of language, both as descriptive and rhetorical devices. For those who study and consider the power of writing, Hersey's *Hiroshima*, I believe, stands as a testimony of what can be done through the art of creating powerful narratives. His text remains a dramatic example of journalistic writing at its best. I believe we need to read and study works like *Hiroshima* to help us remember the lessons of this devastated city and the first use of an atomic weapon in mankind's history.

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