EDUCOMICS

I SAW IT

THE ATOMIC BOMBING of HIROSHIMA

A SURVIVOR'S TRUE STORY

by Keiji Nakazawa

Introduction...

Keiji Nakazawa, a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing, wrote and drew this comic book about his own life. I SAW IT is an English translation of ORE WA MITA. It was originally published in black and white in a special issue of the popular Japanese comic book Shonen Jumpu in September, 1972.

Nakazawa's editor urged him to create a longer work based on I SAW IT. With this encouragement, Nakazawa began writing what became the immensely popular BAREFOOT GEN series, a historical fiction based on his own experiences.

In I SAW IT, and especially in BAREFOOT GEN, Nakazawa rages not only against the bomb but also at the militarists who led Japan into war. In addition to his comics about Hiroshima, Nakazawa has also drawn a series about atrocities Japan committed in Manchuria.

However one chooses to apportion the blame, the decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima is now history. It would be sad and dangerous if Americans allowed defensiveness about that decision to prevent us from learning what the survivors of that holocaust are trying to tell us.

In 1945 the most devastating bomb that had been dropped from the air was the "grand slam" blockbuster. Then the atomic age was born over Hiroshima in a fission blast. 1300 times more powerful. Now fusion bombs are used as the triggers in thermonuclear bombs with 2000 times more explosive power than the Hiroshima bomb. Today the superpowers have stockpiled a million "Hiroshimas."

Nakazawa's story about one Hiroshima reveals a part of what is buried behind these statistics, and inspires our urgent efforts to eliminate the threat of nuclear war.

Some of the people whose help made this edition possible have been the members of Project Gen, especially Alan Gleason, Yuko Kitaura and Fred Schodt; Mizue Fujiwara, Rebecca Wilson, Guy Colwell, and Tom Orzechowski.

Leonard Rifas
Editor/Publisher


LAND SAKES! SO THIS IS THE IMPERIAL PALACE!
YES, MAMA. THE EMPEROR LIVES HERE.


TOURISTS FROM THE COUNTRY, EH...
PRAISE TO AMIDA BUDDHA, PRAISE TO AMIDA BUDDHA...


I PROMISED MY MOTHER I'D SHOW HER TOKYO...
— BUT I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE. LIKE THEY ALWAYS SAY—


"WHEN YOU WANT TO REPAY YOUR PARENTS, IT'S TOO LATE."


SEEMS MY MA WAS BORN IN THIS WORLD TO SUFFER—
...AND SHE SUFFERED RIGHT UP TILL THE DAY SHE DIED.


BUT SHE WOULD HAVE SUFFERED A LOT LESS IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE WAR.
I CAN'T REMEMBER A DAY THAT WASN'T HARD FOR HER.
PLUSH
I AM KEIJI NAKAZAWA... BORN IN HIROSHIMA CITY, MARCH 1939... THIRD SON OUT OF FIVE KIDS.
THE EARLIEST DAYS I CAN REMEMBER WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WAR THAT STARTED IN 1941.
SKREEEEE
AIR RAID !!
AIR RAID !!

LIKE A MILLION FLASHBULBS EXPLODING AT ONCE, A TERRIBLE YELLOW-ORANGE LIGHT, WHITE-HOT AT THE CENTER, RUSHED TOWARDS ME. I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS — FOR HOW LONG, I HAVE NO IDEA.

I WAS IN SUCH SHOCK THAT I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE THE NAIL THAT HAD STUCK IN MY CHEEK, OR THE BLOOD POURING FROM THE WOUND.

WH-WHAT HAPPENED? IT'S PITCH DARK!


IT'S THE LADY--HER SKIN'S ALL BLACK AND F-FALLING OFF!
AAAARK! MAMAAA!
THE SCHOOLYARD WALL HAD BLOCKED THE BLAST'S HEAT. I WAS SPARED WITH JUST LIGHT BURNS ON MY HEAD AND NECK.
PUFF GASP
WHA--?!
WHA-WHAT HAPPENED?! ALL THE HOUSES HAVE BEEN SMOKED FLAT--!

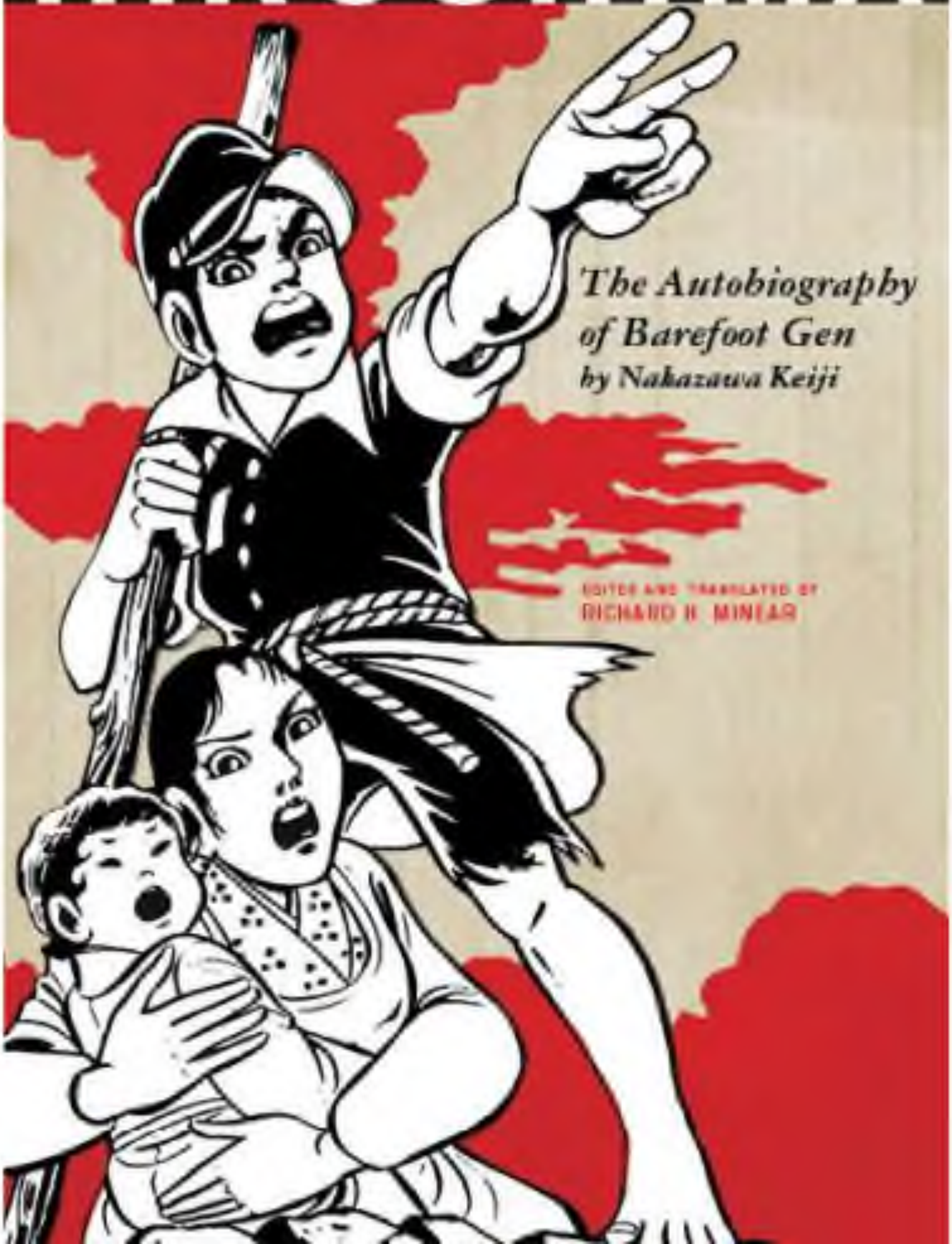

AROUND THIS TIME, PEOPLE WHO HAD COME INTO HIROSHIMA AFTER THE BOMB FELL WERE LOSING THEIR HAIR, GETTING SEVERE DIARRHEA, AND DYING
THEY WERE BEING POISONED BY THE RADIATION LINGERING IN THE CITY.
WE'RE HERE, KEIJI. THIS IS OUR HOUSE.
YEAH.
LOOK, YASUTO! PAPA'S PALETTE GOT ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE!
IT'S BECAUSE OF THE HEAT. LET'S START DIGGING.
PUFF PUFF
PUFF PUFF
KEIJI— WE FOUND 'EM.
THIS ONE IS PAPA.
PAPA


WHEN I SAW HIS BONES, IT FINALLY SANK IN THAT MY FATHER WAS REALLY DEAD.
SO I CAN'T EVER LEARN PAINTING FROM PAPA...
KEIJI... EIKO AND SUSUMU ARE HERE TOO...
EIKO AND SUSUMU...
OKAY, LET'S GO.
YEAH.
WHEN I HEARD THE BONES OF MY FATHER, SISTER AND BROTHER RATTLING IN THE BUCKET, I FELT REAL GRIEF FOR THE FIRST TIME.
YASUTO
HOLD ON TO 'EM TIGHT, KEIJI. I'M GONNA GO FASTER NOW.
OKAY.
THE CREMATION FIRES AT THE ARMY RIFLE RANGE IN EBA BURNED FOR NEARLY A MONTH.
HEY, WITH THE ELECTRIC LIGHTS OUT IT'S A GOOD THING THEY'VE GOT THESE FIRES BURNING, HUH, YASUTO ?


YOU MAY TAKE THE ASHES NOW.
IS THERE NO BONES !!
IS THIS WHITE POWDER ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THEM?
DAMMIT, I SAW ENOUGH BODIES CREMATED AFTER THE BOMBING TO KNOW WHAT THEY SHOULD LOOK LIKE...!!
AFTER A CREMATION THE BONES STILL RETAIN THEIR SHAPE... BUT THERE ARE NO BONES IN MY MOTHER'S ASHES...


DAMN THE BOMB! DAMN THE RADIATION THAT CONSUMED MY MOTHER'S VERY BONES! EVEN AFTER SHE DIED, IT WENT ON EATING AWAY AT HER....
THAT DAMNED BOMB... THERE'S NO END TO IT....
GIVE THEM BACK! GIVE ME BACK MY MOTHER'S BONES!!
I'LL DRAW CARTOONS ABOUT THE ATOMIC BOMB, DAMN IT! I'LL FIGHT IT AND DESTROY IT THROUGH CARTOONS!!
AND I'LL SHOW THE ONES WHO STARTED THE WAR. THE ONES WHO USED US AS THEIR PLAYTHINGS!
HOW CAN I FORGIVE THEM. HOW CAN I LEAVE THEM BE?... THOSE MURDERERS... THAT BOMB...

HIROSHIMA



The Autobiography of Barefoot Gen

by Nakazawa Keiji

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
RICHARD H. MINEAR

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Dropping of the Atomic Bomb, "Gen," and I

Nakazawa Keiji

You all know the graphic work, *Barefoot Gen*, don't you? It's in libraries and on school bookshelves. You may even have a copy at home.

Barefoot Gen is read not only by Japanese, but also by people around the world. It's been translated into English, French, German, Swedish, Tagalog, and Esperanto, and there are plans for translations into Spanish, Russian, and Chinese. So *Barefoot Gen* is literally the Gen who raced around the world.

I haven't told you yet, but I'm the author of *Barefoot Gen*.

Barefoot Gen depicts a boy (Gen), who on August 6, 1945 witnesses a this-worldly hell when the atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, overcomes the ravages of war, and goes on living life at full speed.

I get letters from lots of people. And when I give speeches—for example, in schools—I'm often asked, "Is Gen's story true?" "Who served as the model for Gen?" Well, who do you think?

Hiroshima's atomic bomb dome stands at right about the center of Hiroshima. Just less than a mile from that dome, there's a place called Funairi Hommachi.* That's where I was born and brought up. Ours was a family of seven. A baby due in August (August 1945!) was in my mother's womb, so perhaps you can say we were a family of eight.

August 6, 1945. I was a first grader. That morning I was at the wall that enclosed the school, talking with the mother of a classmate who had stopped me when the atomic bomb fell. She died instantly. I was pinned beneath the wall and survived miraculously.

*See map 3.

Of my family, Dad, older sister Eiko, and younger brother Susumu died that day. Of my other two brothers, the oldest—Kōji—had gone to Kure as a student-soldier, and the next brother—Akira—had been evacuated with his class to the countryside and was unharmed.

Mom, too, survived, but from then on, her health was fragile from the aftereffects of the bomb. The baby was born into that horror right after the bombing and died soon after birth of malnutrition.

I lost Dad, Eiko, Susumu, and the baby in the atomic bombing and went to live with relatives, where I was treated as an "outsider."

It's true. It's the same life as in *Barefoot Gen*. I'm the model for Gen. *Barefoot Gen* is based on fact. That's why I've given this book the title, *The Autobiography of Barefoot Gen*.

tervals along the sidewalk on the right side of the trolley street. Uninjured people hurried to those pumps, twisted the cocks, and scooped up water. People clustered suddenly about the pumps. The women with innumerable glass splinters in them took the pump's water with both hands and poured it all over themselves. Washing their blackened bodies covered with blood and dust, they exposed the glass fragments that stuck into their bodies and silently pulled them out.

I felt like vomiting, and I had no appetite; I merely stared at the rice balls. "They've gone bad," Mom said, but for the baby's sake, she went on stuffing herself with the gooey rice balls. The baby slept on. When I got thirsty, I went into the fields and sucked the flesh and juice of sweet squash.

About then, soldiers began coming with fire hooks to clear away the corpses lying in the fields and on the trolley street. Hooking the corpses at neck and waist, they pulled them to the road, lining them up. They lined

blood in my body stopped flowing; the hair on my head stood on end, and I trembled. Susumu had been burned alive, pinned by the entryway's thick beams and crying, "Mommy! Ouch! Ouch!" and as that thought came to me, I put myself in his place—"How hot it must have been"—and the hair on my whole body stood on end. And I remembered my last sight of Susumu, as I left the entryway to go to school. He was sitting on the step,

TEN MINUTES AFTER THE BLAST YOSHITO MATSUSHIGE SNAPPED HIROSHIMA'S "WALKING DEAD," LATER WASHED THIS DEVELOPED FILM IN CREEK NEAR CITY

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WHEN ATOM BOMB STRUCK—UNCENSORED

A collection of scratched and dusty photographs, retrieved from half-forgotten files, has just struck Japan with the impact of a delayed fuse bomb. For the first time Japan has seen—and been shocked by—visual evidence of what happened to the people of atom-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And the collection, published here for the first time in the U.S., has the immediacy of today's news pictures for any people who live in the not illogical fear of being caught themselves in an atomic blast or in the terrible work of tending those who are.

Like the rest of the world the Japanese knew only the physical facts of atomic destruction, the statistics of death, the stories of what happened under the mushroom cloud. But, with one or two exceptions, pictures taken by five Japanese photographers in the first hours of terror after the blasts had been suppressed by jittery U.S. military censors through seven years of the Occupation. In that time many negatives were damaged or lost. Some, processed in inferior wartime chemicals, deteriorated beyond use. Nonetheless, early this year, even before the Occupation formally ended, enterprising Japanese publishers began rounding up those photographs still left. Last month, with U.S. censorship abolished by the peace treaty, the publishers rushed into print with three books and a 26-page newspaper supplement. They sold out almost overnight and publishers ordered fresh editions.

HIROSHIMA'S VIEW OF CLOUD

In Japan it had been feared the stark record would touch off new waves of anti-Americanism. But the lesson of the pictures went much deeper than that on the people who had started the war which led to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Almost with one voice those who saw the long-suppressed photographs renewed a heartfelt cry—nearly forgotten since the Korean war and the threat of Russian aggression—for pacifism, neutrality and peace at any price. In Nagasaki, at a memorial to those who died there, a teen-aged survivor voiced the common fear: "With all my might, as I once cried out for water out of thirst while crawling among the charred bodies on that fateful day, I should now like to cry 'peace, peace.' "

WITH TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINE a Hiroshima policeman disregards his own hastily bandaged wounds to set up an open air office beside his bicycle and, shortly after the explosion, begins certifying victims for emergency rations. Home guardsmen and city's garrison soldiers carried out bulk of rescue work.

HURT AND HOMELESS, child, masked in dressings, and dazed girl are carted to suburbs by home guardsman.

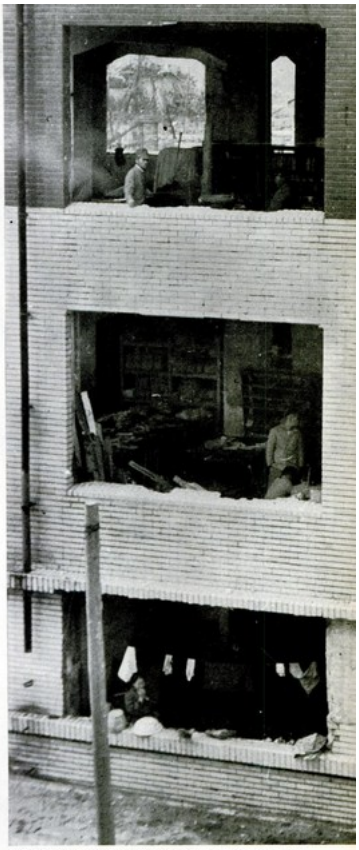
HIROSHIMA

After the first shattering blast, thirst and pity

The photographers at Hiroshima saw more than they could force themselves to photograph. At emergency aid stations they caught the numbed bewilderment of burned children. In the few buildings still standing they moved warily across floors filled with dead and dying. But the worst scenes went unrecorded. "Many times I tried to trip the shutter release but the victim would ask for pity," one photographer explained. "It was too cruel, too inhuman, to ignore their pleadings. . . . If I had known it was an atom bomb, I don't think I would have ever tried taking pictures."

Japanese authorities reduced what the photographers saw to statistics: 260,000 dead, 163,263 wounded and missing, 3,267 acres destroyed, 63,431 buildings demolished. They were figures that could be comprehended, despite their enormity. What was almost impossible to grasp was that this was the product of one terrible fraction of a second. One of last month's books on Hiroshima, *Atom Bomb No. 1*, tries to explain it. "Suddenly over the heart of the city a weird light flashed. . . . Simultaneously people stuck their fingers in their ears, closed their eyes and dropped to the ground . . . a huge explosion vibrated heaven and earth and it seemed as if the world had been blown to smithereens. The heat was a thousand times stronger than the sun. . . . Steel telephone poles were twisted like taffy. . . . From 10 to 2 in the afternoon the entire city was in flames. The wounded begged for water but there was none."

DOOMED CHILD, sprawled grotesquely in a make-shift first aid station, lies dying of severe burns and can never again be cooled by fan on mat beside him.



STRIPPED HOSPITAL, even window frames blown out, was soon put to use again to shelter its surviving patients on lower floor as army took over above.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MOTHER SUCKLES BABY AS BOTH AWAIT DOCTOR

NAGASAKI

Quick death, with no suffering, or a lingering one, with terror

The people of Nagasaki, a military seaport, heard almost immediately about the destruction of Hiroshima, but the Tokyo government radio told them only that a "new type of bomb" had been used. Three days later a bomb even more powerful than Hiroshima's burst above their city. For approximately 1,600 feet in every direction from ground zero, almost no thing or being remained whole or alive. There, and in the less completely destroyed areas just beyond, 73,884 persons were blown to pieces, burned to death and died of wounds; 74,904 were injured or missing.

"The dead, those who died with the bomb," reports Yosuke Yamahata, a Japanese army photographer, in the book *Atom Bombed Nagasaki*, "... [had] no suffering written on their faces. They had died instantaneously and many resembled shop window mannequins." It was in the Dantesque half light of the next smoke-filled dawn that Yamahata stumbled past still raging fires and through debris where "people walked aimlessly, some with flesh gone from their legs," to take the pictures on these and the next two pages.

Jun Higashi, a reporter who was with Yamahata, recalls that he "stepped on something black in the early light. It moved and I was frightened when it said, 'Save me. Save me.'"

IN THE DAWN LIGHT A LONE TREE STANDS—AS IF IN A JAPANESE PRINT—OVER RUBBLE AND RESCUERS

BELOW: SURVIVORS LOOK FOR DEAD IN SMOKING RUINS A MILE FROM BLAST

DAZED BOY, face cut by glass, stands clutching a rice ball. Some food supplies were brought to victims by searchers coming into blast area from suburbs.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SINGLE PICTURE tells full story of an incident—twisted tracks, the blast-crushed trolley, riders hurled into the ditch, their shirts blown from their backs.

AFTER THE MOURNING, A WARNING

In the first hours after the blast, Nagasaki's reaction was simple: prayers for the dead and dying, for deliverance of the few who escaped. In seven years the reaction in the two cities has grown more complex. Some now prefer simply to forget the whole thing. Others make their living out of the disaster. They trade in heat-fused souvenirs of glass or stone, conduct sightseers through the ruins, sell pamphlets which detail what happened. Here and there is resentment against the U.S., but, curiously, it is not because the A bombs were used; rather it is because, as the wife of much-scarred Kiyoshi Kikkawa put it, "If you Americans atom bombed us, and some of us survived, don't you think . . . you should help us regain our health?" This group claims that the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, whose primary task is the study of the long-range effect of atomic bombing, has treated survivors as "guinea pigs." Even the Communists do not directly make anti-American capital out of the pictures.

On only one issue is there no disagreement. To a world building up its stock of atomic bombs, the people of the two cities warn that the long suppressed photographs, terrible as they are, still fall far short of depicting the horror which only those who lived under the blast can know.

PRAYER FOR PEACE after the holocaust unites Catholic friars (two of the 12 in Nagasaki were killed) with other surviving Christians in improvised church.

LAST DRINK—and her first since the bomb fell—is sucked hungrily by girl the morning after. Shortly she and other victims sprawled here awaiting aid died.

LUCKY GIRL, who had gone into shelter after earlier warning and not come out after all clear, emerges amid ruins unhurt and wearing an incongruous smile. →

Figure: *I Saw It* and Yōsuke Yamahata's *Atomized Nagasaki*

Figure: *Ore wa mita* and *I Saw It*

Figure : *I Saw It* (above) and *Ore wa mita* (above right)

Figure: *Hadashi no Gen: Jiden* [*Hiroshima: The Autobiography of Barefoot Gen*], 1987

Figure: *I Saw It*, *Barefoot Gen* (vol. 2), and *The Autobiography*

Figure: *Ore wa mita* (left) and *I Saw It*

Avisuality of Atomic Violence: A Study of Keiji Nakazawa's *I Saw It* (1972)

Madhurima Nargis

> There were no bones left in my mother's ashes, as there normally are after a cremation. Radioactive cesium from the bomb had eaten away all her bones to the point that they disintegrated. The bomb had deprived me of my mother's bones.
> —Keiji Nakazawa
> The lack of detailed visual evidence of the bomb's effects reinforced this initial positive response. US occupation authorities censored reports from the city and suppressed the more horrifying films and photographs of corpses and maimed survivors. Americans initially saw only images of the awesome mushroom cloud.
> —Paul Boyer
> I'm going to show their faces to the bastards who started the war . . . and the bastards who dropped the bomb . . . I'm going to make this my final masterpiece! Dammit all! Dammit all!
> —Keiji Nakazawa

What does it mean to be human?

The ghastly horrors of the nuclear blasts and their unacceptable effects on human beings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki question the human cost of atomic weapons. Unfortunately, the 1945 massacre of Japanese people remains one of the most brutal scars perpetually etched in human history. It was equally challenging to archive in any medium after most of the living witnesses disintegrated with the dropping of the a-bombs. Peace was restored at the cost of dismantled human bodies. Keiji's Nakazawa's firsthand witness, a 48-page graphic memoir *I Saw It (*1972), responds to the mechanical objectivity of photographs in the twenty-first century. It is also one of the first spectacles of a graphic reaction against the injustice faced by a Japanese artist-writer to speak about the unspeakable through his comic book. This paper intends to discuss the relevance of hand-drawn imprints to represent violence in an era of technologically advanced photographic accuracy. This paper aims to bring forth the politics of hibakusha, silencing the survivors from sharing their side of the story on the cataclysmic event of 1945. The research paper will also discuss the possibilities and scopes of the medium of comics as a counter-discourse resisting the invisible culture of hiding the truth of Japan beneath the infamous mushroom cloud. Finally, the paper also wishes to address the motif behind a defamiliarized representation of the banality

of violence through the beautifully colored panels of the text.

Violence Etched on the Human Body

The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a sudden action taken by the US government. During the 1940s and 1950s, the culture of photography gradually formed toward becoming one of the most trustworthy mediums of delivering real news to the people against the backdrop of World War II. Without satellite facilities or advanced cameras, archiving the atomic blasts solely depended on first-hand experiences and witnesses. There was a famous photograph taken from above right after dropping the bomb. Still, there was no evidence of what happened beneath it as the atomic explosion destroyed everything.

Akira Mizuta Lippit, in her book *Atomic Light* (2005), talks about the need for a new mode of inscriptions to record the aftermath of the blasts in Japan. The blasts left their brutal mark by almost entirely destroying a nation. The graphic projection of such a horrific incident was carried by every living human being through various marks. The atomic bomb was printed on their body like a graphic design. Lippit writes, "Atomic irradiation can be seen as having created a type of violent photography directly onto the surfaces of the human body" (Lippit 2005, 92).

The atomic blasts took the lives of more than 250000 people (about half the population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki). In the following years, the impact of the radiation kept haunting the survivors with cancer, leukemia, and perpetual disability as its side effects. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), one of the leading non-governmental organizations in one of their archives, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombings" describes, "The uranium bomb detonated over Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 had an explosive yield equal to 15,000 tonnes of TNT. It razed and burnt around 70 per cent of all buildings and caused an estimated 140,000 deaths by the end of 1945, along with increased rates of cancer and chronic disease among the survivors" (ICAN, web page). They also have given a detail how of a "slightly larger plutonium bomb exploded over Nagasaki three days later levelled 6.7 sq km. of the city and killed 74,000 people by the end of 1945. Ground temperatures reached 4,000°C and radioactive rain poured down" (ibid).

Within a few seconds, Hiroshima and Nagasaki faced the terror of being entirely wiped out from the world map as everything turned pitch black. The horror was unimaginable and unseen ever before. Lippit calls this "avisuality," "a visuality without images, an unimaginable visuality, and images without visuality" (Lippit 2005, 109). There cannot be any "authentic photography" of the atomic war because "the bombings themselves were

a form of total photography, testing the very visibility of the visual" (ibid). This avisuality, both as a concept and a construct, dragged on even after years of people returning to normalcy. The survivors still are living embodiments of the terrors forcibly imposed on them. Keiji Nakazawa's nonfictional autobiography *I Saw It* acts as a "counterinscription" to give materiality to "avisuality" that Lippit discussed in her book. These books function as a resistance towards the avisuality caused by the atomic bomb.

Writer's Responsibility

Yōtarō Konaka in her essay "Japanese Atomic-Bomb Literature" (1988) while discussing the emergence of atomic-bomb literature writes that the Holocaust was an infamous event where Jews were victimized. But in case of the dropping of the bombs, Japan was taught a lesson for starting the war. It was more of an attempt to end the war by punishing the Japanese people. The people of Japan were not victims, they were the ones initiating World War II. Therefore, it was the right decision to punish them for their deeds by experimenting the nuclear bombs on their people. Konaka pens down, "the two bombs that were dropped in August of 1945 not only ended the world war but also sounded a tragic alarm for mankind, ringing in the nuclear age" (Konaka 1988, 424). She also mentioned why it was so important to talk about the atomic blast to the world. While

reading Naruhiko Itō's first-hand witness in *Shikabane no machi/City of Corpses*) (1948) where the author shares her experiences, the challenges she faced while writing the book. The book shares an interesting anecdote as Konaka also writes,

> And corpses were lying all over, left and right, and in the middle of the road. Some were lying face upward and others face down, all of them had been headed toward the hospital. With their bulging eyes, swollen and battered lips, and bloated limbs, they were like hideous big rubber dolls. Weeping copiously, I recorded the image of those people on my heart. (ibid)

Itō records what she sees. It was a difficult task to write about people who have lost their forms but are somehow still alive like deadly huge plastic dolls. They were running towards the hospital without having any idea whether such a place existed anymore or not. This event was extremely difficult to write what Itō witnessed, the shedding of human fleshes while they frantically marched towards getting medical attention. The question that naturally occurs to the mind of the reader is: How can someone write about such things? Why was it necessary to pass down such horror to the next generation? Itō answers **"Having seen these things, I must write about them at some time. It is a writer's responsibility"** (ibid). The writer must have the responsibility of explaining what he/she has witnessed to pass it on to the future generation. More importantly, to remember how

the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were left to die.

Similar to Naruhiko Itō, Nakazawa Keiji, used the back of the then movie posters to draw cartoons. Amidst poverty, malnutrition, losing close ones, Keiji nourished his passion for drawing what he has seen as it is always the author's responsibility to write about the horror that people of Japan faced during the blasts. Keiji's descriptions of people after the blast are also like Itō. Also, there is one more writer, Masuji Ibuse whose novel *Koroi ame/Black Rain* (1989) is in a way an inspiration for Nakazawa to continue his "Black" series consisting of: "The Black River Flows," "Beyond Black Silence," "A Flock of Black Pigeons," and "Black Flies." The "black" series presented presents the truth of the violent attacks in Japan.

Hibakusha, Censorship and the Politics of Silencing

In an interview, Asai Montofumi, the President of Hiroshima Peace Institute, asked Nakazawa about the discrimination he faced and how his experience when he was forced to live a painful life for eternity. In his book *Hiroshima: Autobiography of Barefoot Gen* (2010), Nakazawa responded that he had vehemently faced discrimination mainly because he was not allowed to discuss it. The atomic bomb survivors could not talk about their victimization openly. He also mentioned how people committed suicide while facing discrimination daily. Na-

kazawa also explained how people used to get agitated even if he was sad for other reasons and told him openly, "Don't put on your bomb-victim face!" (Nakazawa, 2010, 275). Nakazawa feels that people looked down upon the victims of the atomic bomb in a threatening manner. People were not even ready to hear what the people of Japan had to say to them. Only after the World Convention to remove nuclear weapons in 1955 did the victims come out and start sharing their stories. However, Nakazawa still received questions like, "Did such things really happen?" (177). These remarks highlight people's indifference toward knowing the truth of Japan.

ICAN, in one of their archives, titled, "The Hibakusha's Decades Long Journey to Ban Nuclear Weapons," painfully writes about Hiroshima that people are not ready to face, "Grotesquely wounded people, they were bleeding, burnt, blackened and swollen. Parts of their bodies were missing. Flesh and skin hung from their bones. Some with their eyeballs hanging in their hands. Some with their bellies burst open, their intestines hanging out. The foul stench of burnt human flesh filled the air" (ICAN, web page). This incident took place within 1.8 kilometers of the epicenter in Hiroshima.

This discrimination is known as *hibakusha* or the bomb affected people, or the survivors of the a-bomb in Japan. *Hibakusha* are the survivors who didn't die instantaneously but carried forward the post-traumatic stress

disorder for years and eventually died of either cancer or leukemia. Elaine Natalie and Katie Yoon in their article, "Hibakusha: The Human Cost of Nuclear Weapons" (2021), discusses the negative sides of the coinage of the term. They write, "Fears of transmitting genetic illnesses further heightened the stigma associated with the hibakusha and their families, especially amid a leukemia wave during the aftermath of the bombings. Hibakusha were forcibly displaced and settled in "atomic slums" (genbaku suramu), experiencing years of deprivation and isolation" (Natalie and Yoon, 2021, web page). The last generation worked ceaselessly as advocates for the abolition of nuclear bomb and peace. Sadly, Japan did not sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Events, which came into force on January 22, 2021.

In her book *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (2016), Hillary Chute discusses that there was a censorship imposed in Japan by the U.S. government not to share the aftermath of the blasts. Christian Hong in her essay, "Flashforward Democracy: American Exceptionalism and the Atomic Bomb in *Barefoot Gen*" (2009) writes, "If not with unconcern then with a spirit of triumph, the US public, shielded in the early post-war years from graphic images of human ruin, hailed the atomic decimation of Japan" (Hong 2009, 126). The American response to the discrimination and the loss shows their apathy towards this small country whose life did matter less to their cause of posing as a

superior country in front of others. Quite surprisingly, it was put into effect by both the countries as the people of Japan too wanted to hide their tales of suffering as well as exposure to the atomic blasts. Therefore, the picture of the famous mushroom cloud after the blasts was symptomatic of the form of abstraction to promote the prowess of the United States government and their policies regarding the Cold War. Hong writes, how against "this image's inadequacy as a representative the document, there have been countervailing attempts to privilege narration from a different deictic position, the "here" of the explosion versus the "there," so as to present the neglected human dimension of the atomic bombings (ibid). Unlike Joe Sacco's *Palestine* (1993) and Art Spigelman's *Maus*, Nakazawa's story did not spread worldwide because the world policies and politics prevented the nation to raise its voice and point out their suffering to the world outside.

Perhaps for this reason as Chute discusses, there was a culture of silence being practiced by both the USA and Japan. Nakazawa had to go through a series of rejections before his graphic memoir got published in book form. He also had to publish them in erotic magazines to avoid censorship. His first graphic depiction of the atomic blast is "Pelted by Black Rain" (1988) which was published first in *Manga Punch*, a famous magazine for youngsters. This graphic account was a fictional one. Similar to the underground comix culture Nakazawa embraced the

subculture of manga in Japan to make his stories heard in front of the readers. Chute writes, "An angry, hard-boiled genre story about a young bomb victim, "Pelted by Black Rain" was completed in 1966 and rejected by major commercial publishers for years until *Manga Punch* took it on despite the editor's expressed fears that both he and Nakazawa would be arrested by the CIA" (Chute 2016, 116). The book went through a series of rejections for its content. Being a victim of hibakusha for so long a desperate survivor such as Nakazawa went for the "third-rate," the "lowbrow" magazines to express his views on the atomic bomb because **"even if it wasn't one of the major magazines, wouldn't it do if it just got read?"** (Chute 2016, 177; emaphasis author's). Finally, the publisher of the pornographic magazine Manga Punch took the risk and published his story.

Materializing Mother's Bones: An Obituary

This book is not merely the artist's responsibility for what he has seen but also an obituary where the artist wants to pay his mother's debts. The book's foundation lies in Nakazawa's determination to recreate his mother's bones that the bomb deprived him of. Chute discusses that Nakazawa needed to write this book as a tribute to his mother. Her decimation of bones was a turning point in the life of Nakazawa as he was not left with anything to hold on to. As a cartoonist, more importantly, an artist-writer, he wished to recreate his mother's

bones that were deprived by the bomb. By drawing her on the page as Chute writes "creating work about witnessing the atomic bomb that preserves, archives, and makes material his experience in the face of the war that decimated the very materiality of his mother (Chute 2016, 125). Throughout the book, Nakazawa explains the importance of her mother in his life. He believes he would have been a criminal if his mom was not there as a support system that helped him pursue his study and love for cartoons. It was shocking when his mother died, and he came to Japan to collect her ashes. His life was finally taking a good turn when his mother died. Nakazawa remembers that he could not get anything back from his mother's corpses at the crematorium. He has seen his father's bones and his siblings' skeletons, but his mother's bones completely disintegrated. He writes, "I couldn't find even her skull. Thinking this couldn't be so, I rummaged for all I was worth. There were only occasional white fragments" (176). This incident played a crucial role in his life because he channeled his anger and frustration into writing a book about the atomic bomb. The deprivation of his mother's bones propelled him to confront the nuclear bomb even more.

However, Chute asks as important question, "What does it mean to materialize history? What does it mean to mark out of a desire to render history concrete?" (Chute 2016, 26). There is an analysis that might be fitting to these questions, as sometimes drawing can be trans-

formed into something else, something bigger in the articulation of history. As William Kentridge writes in his essay "Double Lines," "I have come to think of drawing as a form of projection. So it isn't really a matter of making drawings of things in preparation for something else, but of *making drawing literally into other things*" (ibid). As Chute describes "Drawing is not just mimetic: it is its own artifact, substance, thing, phenomenology" (Chute 2016, 27). Drawing history from memories is an act of building something where you are not provided with any material to work on. Materializing "history through the work of marks on the page creates it as space and substance, gives it a corporeality, a physical shape—like a suit, perhaps, for an absent body, or to make evident the kind of space-time many bodies move in and move through; to make, in other words, the twisting lines of history legible through form" (ibid). In Nakazawa's case, after his mother's death, he decided finally to use manga as a weapon and a medium to relive his past and recreate them on the pages. However, like the Freudian concept of the fort-da game in Nakazawa's narrative, there is a constant struggle between presence and absence in the process of re-creating because the blast not only left its impact on the places but also on people's memories.

Enola Gay

Nakazawa's, I Saw It visually depicts pika/flash when the child narrator first sighted the bomb, Enola Gay. The

sudden blow of the a-bomb causes spine-chilling darkness. As has been shown, the child narrator was shielded by the collision of a wall meant to kill him. While gradually regaining consciousness, the child narrator was overwhelmed by a pitch-dark silhouette painting the fate of the awe-stricken nation. The child, however, died of malnutrition and a radioactive environment around the nation. The blow of the a-bomb killed the woman the child narrator spoke to a few moments ago. Due to the high-pitched explosion, Nakazawa's mother gave birth to a daughter out of shock. Chute writes, "the panels of the bombing and its immediate aftermath unfold unhurriedly, cataloguing carefully, graphically, the effects of the bomb as the child observes them, each page a fresh encounter with bodies ruined in extra- ordinary ways" (Chute 2016, 124). The gross images and the brutality of the event with people's melted bodies are too difficult to watch. The grotesque images result from what Nakazawa has witnessed with his own eyes. The reality of such an event being expressed in a medium such as manga is challenging. Nakazawa also emphasizes the importance of form and farming in his narratives. As an artist-writer, he creates tension between the verbal and visual modalities. The readers are constantly agitated by the violence they expect to encounter in this book.

The Shadow of Photography

Paul Virilio in his book *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (1989) discusses that the nuclear bomb was a

light weapon that captured the face of trauma and left its print. Virilio writes, "If photography, according to its inventor Nicéphore Niépce, was simply a method of engraving with light" where "bodies inscribed their traces by virtue of their own luminosity, nuclear weapons inherited both the darkroom of Niépce and Daguerre and the military searchlight" (Virilio 1989, 8). There is a connection between nuclear warfare and photography. As mentioned earlier, Lippit in her book *Atomic Light* (2005) writes that there are many forms of documentaries on comics but only a few could "have pointed out that the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were *light-weapons* that prefigured the enhanced-radiation neutron bomb, the directed-beam laser weapons, and the charged-particle guns" (Lippit 2005, 92). Lippit writes, "a negative photography is possible in the atomic arena, a skiagraphy, a shadow photography. The shadow of photography" (Lippit 2005, 95). Hiroshima and Nagasaki both the places became shadows of photography.

Hillary Chute attaches her valuable comments that Nakazawa's book was a counter-inscription to the camera culture of documenting. Chute writes, "its comics form signifies the bodily in the act of making marks against the techne of bodies marked and vaporized by the bomb's light. To the removed, clinical, superlatively high-technology mode of inscription" (Chute 2016, 36). Chute has always been vocal about using comics as a counter-hegemony to the hegemonic world literature that denies comics its worth and treats comics as propa-

ganda. This shadow and light dichotomy forced Nakazawa to think of it as an option, an opportunity to witness and document. But Nakazawa relied on his memory and retraced everything, places, faces, or events. Materializing history from scraps thereby is a difficult job that Nakazawa this with passion because he had to make the trauma faced by his mother and the people of Japan visible to audiences worldwide. As Chute puts it Nakazawa's "desire is to make absent appear" (Chute 2016, 27). His comics and hand-drawn images are "counter burning," forcing his readers to engage, live and relive the realities of the blasts with him.

Thomas LaMarre in his essay, "Manga Bomb: Between the Lines of Barefoot Gen" (2010), writes about Nakazawa's unique style of writing this graphic narrative, as he writes, "its use of a conventional manga style to depict an event that is often deemed to be unrepresentable in its violence and trauma" (LaMarre 2010, 262). Nakazawa's fictional encounter of the a-bomb in Barefoot Gen "invites us to address not only the experience of survivors of Hiroshima but also to consider what manga expression brings to our understanding of the atomic bomb, war, and trauma" (ibid). The difference between I Saw It and Gen is everything is amplified in the latter and there is a sense of plasticity prevalent in Gen. LaMarre comments "Barefoot Gen works through the dynamics of the "plastic line", which contributes to its articulation of a politics in which vitality and resil-

ience do not appear to reside outside historical violence but seem to emerge with it" (ibid). To this Chute added, "The mark in Nakazawa's work is both itself etched and longing to be etched, then—to burn inside a reader's brain" (Chute 138).

Banality of Violence

It is almost next to impossible to talk about the survivors without mentioning the bomb. Lisa Yoneyama in her essay "On Testimonial Practices" (1999) writes, "identity of a hibakusha as a one-dimensional speaking subject was constituted by prioritizing the speaker's ontological relationship to the bomb over his or her numerous other social relationships and positions" (Yoneyama 1999, 85). As if they lacked a life of their own. In Hiroshima Traces, Yoneyama further discusses, "One does not automatically become a witness (*shogensha*) or a storyteller (*kataribe*) simply by telling personal memories to public audiences. Such self-definition is accompanied by an attempt to critically intervene in given cultural and social contexts," also, "the survivors assigned themselves the responsibility of conveying their personal memories of Hiroshima's atomic obliteration to the general public, they did so out of a sense of urgency and with a great deal of self-awareness about the act of telling the past. In the process, many of these storytellers have come to question the given discursive arrangements that have structured first-person accounts of the atomic disaster"

(86). They reveal what they have faced out of self-awareness, a sense of duty to the nation and to become a part of the act of witnessing and, documenting their stories. Yoneyama writes, "the conventional narratives of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have often established the survivors as speaking subjects, while at the same time subjecting them to the regimes of truth production in national and legal-bureaucratic procedures, in medical and psychiatric investigations, and in the then-powerful oppositional discursive paradigm of the peace and antinuclear movement" (ibid). Yoneyama questions the politics of naming terms such as hibakusha, witness, story-teller, survivor and is trying to understand the contexts and purposes behind using them because "the awareness of becoming a witness/storyteller was necessarily linked to the decolonization of the language with which to speak of oneself" (ibid).

Yoneyama is sometimes scared that by making everything available to people, the actual pain somewhere becomes the prey of sensational news in today's media. She discusses how the survivors were divided. Some related to the media exposure to share their stories with the rest of the world, while others shied away. She writes,

> Yet some survivors have despised those who would thus expose their experiences, believing that the mass media's sensationalized treatment of the survivors' stories trivializes even the experience of nuclear dev-

> astation by turning them into commodities. Such critics see publicly representing memories of the bomb as betraying the past moment of deaths and suffering that they alone have witnessed. (87-88)

Thereby, there is a reluctance to disclose what they have witnessed. The survivors' reluctance to speak is often regarded as authentication of the experience. Yoneyama mentions, "Children of survivors frequently claim that their parents completely suppressed stories of the bomb. A newspaper corporation worker, for instance, remembered that his father, whose entire family—including his first wife and all their children—was killed by the bomb, never uttered a word about the experience during his lifetime" (88). However, contrary to this reluctance and fear of being unable to express what he had seen, Nakazawa excels in documenting pain and trauma through this multimodal media. He was conscious of not making his work one-dimensional, as Yoneyama mentioned. That is why in the book, the sequence of atomic blasts appears only after page 249. The book presents trauma and suffering but is never dominated by the nuclear explosion alone. For example, as it has been already raised as an issue, *I Saw It* and *Gen* series have a tendency of assimilating violence with banality. As Hillary Chute simplifies it,

> Their works are driven by such traumatic events, these events are not isolated; their works also bear witness through words and images to the everyday—

> to the ordinary and to the scenes of enunciation that produce the acts of witness. These are works in which the objects of witness operate on scales both large and small. Motivated by crisis, they bear witness to lived experience that is often shaped by crisis but is not necessarily fully dictated by it. Nakazawa's work, for example, is highly attuned to the rhythms of daily family life both before and after the bomb. (Chute 2016, 29)

Thereby, these works function in many ways, the writer himself being a witness, as is Nakazawa, the writer penning down someone else's testimony, Spiegelman and Joe Sacco, and the writers participating in the act of witnessing, all of them did this.

Questioning the Medium and its Approaches

Interestingly, the characters are hauntingly pretty in a traumatic memoir such as Nakazawa's. Art Spiegelman, while discussing Nakazawa's oeuvre, wrote in the introductory section of the First Volume of Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima (2004), "Gen haunts me. . . . Gen burned its way into my heated brain with all the intensity of a fever-dream" (Nakazawa 2004, 2). The event is gruesome but all the characters even after the blast appear beautiful with big eyes and pretty faces. The physiognomy of characters has been looked on with a negative angle by Spiegelman, as he writes, the characters often "leans to the cloyingly cute, with special

emphasis on Disney-like oversized Caucasian eyes and generally neotenic faces. Nakazawa is hardly the worst offender, though his cartoon style derives from that tradition. His craftmanship is somewhat graceless, even homely, and without much nuance, but it gets the job done" (Nakazawa 2004, 2-3). Following the tradition of Robert Crumb's tradition of telling the truth in a simpler style, Spiegelman concludes his introductory note by saying, "The drawing's greatest virtue is straightforward, blunt sincerity. Its conviction and honesty allow you to believe in the unbelievable and impossible things that indeed happen in Hiroshima. It is the inexorable art of the witness" (3).

Marjane Satrapi's memoir *Persepolis* (2004) represents a child's perception of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran through a minimalist approach. In *Comics Journal* Tim O'Neil criticized Marjane Satrapi's approach in Persepolis. He argues, "Marjane Satrapi is not a very good cartoonist—I think I should say that up front so there's no confusion on the matter" (O'Neil 2004, 37). In her book *Graphic Women: Life Narrative & Contemporary Comics* (2010), Hillary Chute defends Satrapi by saying, "Proficiency in realistic drawing is not necessarily the goal of any given narrative. Rather, graphic narrative is about the discursive presentation of time as space on the page" (Chute 2010, 146). Satrapi herself informs her interviewer David Hajdu, "Cartoonists shouldn't have to be good. . . . The technical quality is not what matters"

(Hajdu 2004, 34-35). Therefore, the cartoons do not matter, but the audience must scrutinize and understand the story and narrative they bring along.

New Seeing: Defamiliarization

The question that needs to be raised is why and how comics offer a new way of seeing. How does comics present history in a defamiliarized way? How does the act of insisting on an event's authenticity and its defamiliarized representation go hand in hand? Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan in their book *Literary theory: an anthology* (2004), writes,

> literature would be considered not as a window on the world but as something with a palpability of its own which arrests the eye and merits study. The manipulation of representational devices may create a semblance of reality and allow one to have the impression of gazing through glass, but it is the devices alone that produce that impression, and they alone are what makes literature literary. (Rivkin and Ryan 2004, 3)

They both call this a new way of seeing that makes literature literary. Art Spiegelman in *Maus* provides a new way of seeing by applying the anthropomorphic approach. Joe Sacco captures the quotidian life of the middle east suffering and destruction with his unique ability to render past, present and various testimonies on the same

page same panel. It is a struggle to read Sacco's tags and understand his footnotes and humor simultaneously.

Interestingly, with Nakazawa, the approach is entirely different. His seeing brutality is gruesome when compared with others. He has witnessed people's peeled skins, pus, wounds, and corpses like never before. He presents a new way of seeing injuries that would force the reader to be hooked on the pages and not shy away from or ignore such violence. Hillary Chute's explanatory commentary would be highly essential as she writes,

> The first has to do with visual witnessing, the way that comics can offer an absorptive intimacy with their narratives while defamiliarizing received images of history. *I Saw It* and "Maus" are both narratives of terror that devolve on images of terror: the zombie-like, decomposing citizens of Hiroshima that Nakazawa witnessed firsthand; and the corpses, both pictured and implied, that people the Spiegelman son's visual reconstruction of his father's death-camp testimony. We might think of approaching World War II, after the broad silence that surrounded the war in America and in Japan, as mandating afresh Shklovsky's "new seeing" of reality. Comics picks up steam in the early 1970s as this new seeing. (Chute 2016, 142)

She also writes, "Motivated by the urgencies of re-seeing or re-visioning the war, comics sought to defamiliarize

received images of history, and also to communicate, to circulate in realms of the popular" (ibid). WWII came up with violence in abundance, and people witnessed trauma like never before. Such trauma is so extreme that people are numbed by it. Expressing them in words or drawing photos reminded them of the trauma they wanted to forget and get on with what they had. However, victims and survivors like Nakazawa felt the urge to make the world accustomed to the culture of expressing what they had seen and faced. Nakazawa, like his contemporaries, made violence banal, a perpetually lived reality for the rest of his life, and a new way of seeing and reliving those memories by making the invisible visible to the eyes of the people, by making his mother's bones recreated on the pages.

Using this medium, an artist-writer can recreate lost bodies inside the drawn lines of comics. The characters are resurrected on the page through various marks. Chute writes, "The corporeality of the work comes to stand in for the missing corporeality of the dead parent, eviscerated by war" (142). Both Anja Spiegelman and Kimie Nakazawa survived the war. However, it eventually killed them. Spiegelman's mother committed suicide in 1968, while Nakazawa's mother died of leukemia in 1966. Therefore, "the Holocaust is motivation for Spiegelman to reconstruct Holocaust testimony" and for Nakazawa, "the decimation of his mother's body from atomic radiation—its complete deconstitution—is also the reason

he decides to embark on a career of testimonial visibility" (142-3).

To conclude, the research paper aims to highlight the role of comics and the discursive potential of choosing a memoir as its subject. Chute's commentary is concurrent with the theme as she writes, "The spatial features of comics, such as its activation of the space between word and image and its erection of literal drawn frames alongside its breaking and violation of them, presents a grammar that can inscribe trauma not just thematically" but also visibly through words and images (Chute 2016, 34-35). Thereby, the spatial features of comics helps the artist-writer build his narrative and materialize his memory. Interestingly, every aspect associated with comics helps the writer and reader understand different approaches and decode hidden meanings from the format. Nakazawa's use of strokes, colors, pages, even smudgy page numbering, framing, dismembered panels, mushroom thought balloons, and this entire grammar structure of comics help the artist-writer build a narrative opportunity for the readers to understand the representation of violence throughout the text.

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I Saw It!

The Photographic Witness of Barefoot Gen

LAURA WEXLER

The drawing, instead of marking the site of a departure,
began to mark the site of an arrival.
—JOHN BERGER, "Drawn to That Moment"

INTRODUCTION

If trauma, by definition, is repressed experience and therefore constitutive but difficult to document, by how much does the difficulty of documentation increase when government censorship ferociously bars access to that experience? If the infamous gap between living and knowing that marks the site of any subject's own traumatic narrative is also legally enforced, how much wider does that fissure grow? And if the experience itself is literally without comparison, how can it be possible to represent it meaningfully within a documentary form?

Few have faced more obstacles to recognizing and expressing their own accounts of trauma than the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the *hibakusha*,[1] whose direct experience of the horror of nuclear bombing remains unique in the history of the world. Censorship, denial, and incomprehension have all characterized their existence and remain potent into the second and third generations of survivors in the Japanese population in general. Any traumatic narrative must deal with blank spots and the missing pieces of memory where what was undergone could not be processed. And yet, the struggle of the *hibakusha* to survive, to witness, and to warn has shaped new expressive forms in film, photography, and the literary arts.[2]

This essay concerns one of those new forms, what critics have called the "atom bomb manga" that came into being in postwar Japan in 1966 with the publication of *Kuroi Ame ni Utarete* (*Pelted by Black Rain*, 1968), about a group of young Japanese adults involved in the black market after the war. The author of these books, Keiji Nakazawa (1939–2012), a successful Tokyo-based cartoonist, was a child survivor of the 1945 atomic bombing in Hiroshima. Nakazawa did not begin his career by addressing this event.

But by the end of his career the preponderance of his fifty-nine published works would consider either wholly or partially the causes and effects of the atomic bombing. Chief among them are a short autobiographical manga, *Ore wa Mita* (1972), which was published in English as *I Saw It: The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima: A Survivor's True Story* by EduComics in 1982, and a magisterial ten-volume series, *Hadashi no Gen*, or *Barefoot Gen*, published in Japanese between 1972 and 1985 and translated into English between 1978 and 2009. Because of his focus on the self-described effects of the atom bomb on survivors as evidence, Nakazawa is widely considered an innovator in documentary comics, which historian Hillary Chute explicates as follows: "The essential form of comics—its collection of frames—is relevant to its inclination to document. *Documentary* (as an adjective and a noun) is about the presentation of evidence. In its succession of replete frames, comics calls attention to itself, specifically, as evidence. Comics makes a reader access the unfolding of evidence in the movement of its basic grammar, by aggregating and accumulating frames of information."[3]

In what follows, I will argue that the authority of Nakazawa's atom bomb manga rests not only on his use of personal experience as evidence, as he often claimed, but also on his destabilizing of the disciplinary regime that regulates the mechanical eyewitness image, that is to say, his upending of the truth claims of documentary photography itself. I have called this tactic "transmedial revision." The term does not simply mean to redraw photographs but something more fundamental: to recombine media forms in a way that exposes the photograph's claim to witness as too narrowly self-reflexive. By incorporating drawings of military photographs into his first-person survivor accounts, Nakazawa sets his own experience against the photographic record. He deploys his own eyewitness in confrontation with post-bomb photography and thereby challenges the adequacy of the accepted documentary representation of the depicted events.

This essay focuses on a small selection of Nakazawa's transmedial drawings of the explosion and of the Aioi Bridge in *I Saw It* and *Barefoot Gen*, comparing his drawings with the photographic record. Comparisons that warrant further study throughout his work on the atom bomb include but are not limited to Nakazawa's drawings of the scenes at first aid shelters photographed in the days immediately following the blasts "by Japanese investigators or news agencies" such as Professor Nishima, a famous physicist, and by the Bunka-sha Agency of medical activities at Hiroshima prior to the arrival of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, among others; his reconceptions of the bodies of victims, who also figure in medi-

cal researcher Averill Liebow's photographs of the wounded taken between Liebow's arrival in the city with the Joint Commission for the Investigation of the Effects of the Atomic Bomb in Japan on 13 October 1945 and departure on 23 November; and his wholesale revisions of images of public transportation or schools or huts uniformly pictured as nearly uninhabited by the United States Strategic Bomb Survey (USSBS). Primary evidence of Nakazawa's long-standing interest in the aerial view is found in the form of these drawings themselves and perhaps also in the large aerial photographic view pinned to the wall of his studio and visible in the film *Barefoot Gen's Hiroshima*. Additional archives of "A-bomb–related materials used in creating his works" are contained in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.[4]

Nakazawa's artistic excursions into these materials helped to establish photographic exposure as a new platform for the graphic display of buried knowing. By this I mean not exposure *in* the photograph but exposure *of* the photograph. Nakazawa's brilliant re-rendering of the aerial documentary photography file of the USSBS and on-the-ground documentation in other official photographic records expanded the register of *hibakusha* testimony. In Nakazawa's hands, the state control that spun and censored knowledge also created the opening for a dialectical image that both highlights and deconstructs official viewpoints. That comics could work with photographs in this way gave the *hibakusha* story a new power of resistance against its long-enforced prior silencing. Nakazawa showed how countercurrents and buried precedents can be made available for a post–World War II documentary history alongside of or in opposition to the mantle of mechanical instrumentalism such photography had assumed within mid-twentieth-century military goals. The written history of post-1945 documentary photography, by and large an archive of victors, awaits further development in this vein.

ATOM BOMB MANGA

Nakazawa's work in *Ore wa Mita* has been very important to the creation of documentary comics as a genre, if not always recognized by robust sales to the general public. Chute argues, in *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*, that through his work "we can understand the return to *drawing to tell*, the reemergence and creative expansion in our contemporary world of the power of the hand-drawn image, against the backdrop of [the] . . . saturation of mechanical objectivity and the discourses of technological power that shaped the atomic age."[5] In "Globalizing Comic

Books from Below: How Manga Came to America," comics artist Leonard Rifas assigns the importance of Nakazawa's work to the use of his own lived experience, as well as that of others, to "help increase understanding about issues, but [to] do it in such a way that preserves the drama of real life so that you can see how these facts get generated." Rifas believes such "public interest comics" can be "a tool for raising social awareness."[6] Rifas was the only American publisher of Nakazawa's *I Saw It* in four-color comic book format, and in 1976 Rifas published two volumes of *The Barefoot Gen* series as *Gen of Hiroshima* as well. Though the series was cancelled after those two volumes, Rifas's efforts received strong endorsements from a long list of socially conscious cartoonists, including R. Crumb, Harvey Kurtzman, Will Eisner, Trina Robbins, Sharon Rudahl, Art Spiegelman, Larry Gonick, Spain Rodriguez, Justin Green, Guy Colwell, Joyce Farmer, Melinda Gebbie, and Kim Deitch. Nakazawa, in Japan, worked in isolation from this group, but the underground comix movement lent support, through Rifas's connections, for his work to be published in the United States. Rifas writes, "Thanks to the underground comix movement, I had a way of distributing Nakazawa's violent manga without worrying about the Code."[7] The Comics Code was instituted in the United States in 1954 and in one form or another continued into the early 2000s. It required mainstream distributors to display a seal that, among other things, guaranteed that the publication did not contain "scenes of excessive violence" or "lurid, unsavory, gruesome illustrations."[8] Underground comix successfully evaded such controls. Rifas also published *I Saw It* in the United States after the point when the self-censorship of violence demanded by the Comics Code was breaking down, extending its reach.

Virtually simultaneously, a small group of volunteers called "Project Gen" began to publish volumes of the longer *Hadashi no Gen* in English book format. *Maus* author Spiegelman helped support their English edition of *Barefoot Gen* by writing an introduction in which he described Nakazawa's powerful effect upon his own work. "*Gen* haunts me. . . . The first time I read it was in the late 1970s, shortly after I'd begun working on *Maus*, my own extended comic-book chronicle of the twentieth century's other central cataclysm. . . . *Gen* deals with the trauma of the atom bomb without flinching. There are no irradiated Godzillas or super-mutants, only tragic realities."[9]

Initially, some expressed (and still do express) doubts that the comics genre, be it in a printed book or classic comics format, could be robust enough for material of this weight and complexity. Others were open to

the possibility. In 1983, when Rifas wrote to ask him for an endorsement, Noam Chomsky politely declined but replied that "maybe that is the way to reach people. I don't know. Your general point, in your letter, I very much agree with. It is necessary, somehow, to find ways to reach an audience that isn't attuned to elaborate analysis and documentation. . . . I am glad to see that you are working on it." Frederic Wertham, author of the controversial *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), was not convinced. "I think of course that anything that goes against atomic war deserves attention. But I have doubts whether the comic-book brutality in the first part of the book is effective as an antiviolence message," he responded to an inquiry by Rifas.[10] But by now it is clear that an entire generation of artists, empowered by the successful interventions of the underground comix movement and influenced both directly and indirectly by Nakazawa's example, has doubled down on the project of researching and representing humankind's disasters in comics form. These artists not only see no contradiction between painstaking research and its presentation in comics but also consider comics an advantage for their documentary work. Particularly respected among those who have followed this practice is Joe Sacco, who drew comics to record daily life in the wake of genocidal violence in Goražde and Palestine. Spiegelman, another tireless researcher, believes that comics are especially powerful testimonial documents because "the small scale of the images and the directness of the medium that has something in common with handwriting allow comics a kind of intimacy that also makes them surprisingly well suited to autobiography."[11] He concludes that "the vividness of *Barefoot Gen* emanates from something intrinsic to the comics medium itself and from the events Nakazawa lived through and depicted."[12] As Chute has argued in *Disaster Drawn*, autobiographical historical comics are now broadly accepted "as nonfiction—as a form of documentary—as a form of witnessing."[13]

Such comics have also come to occupy a prestigious place in the production of critique. Histories of manga, including *Manga* by Paul Gravett, *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels* by Roger Sabin, and *Manga, Manga* by Frederik Schodt, give Nakazawa's intimate images a prominent role in countering the grand narratives of the twentieth century.[14] Through his multiple depictions of *hibakusha* trauma, Nakazawa demonstrated that graphic storytelling, rather than diminishing and distorting reality, could approach the lived experience of the survivors of Hiroshima more closely from a popular, working-class point of view than did official documentary photographs, which usually did not arise from such a social position.

In *Documentary Graphic Novels and Social Realism*, Jeff Adams considers documentary comics like Nakazawa's to be a radical form of popular resistance to aesthetic regimes such as documentary. They are "intelligible to the broad masses, adopting and enriching their forms of expression, assuming their standpoint, confirming and correcting it."[15] Adams argues that such comics are actually a form of critical social realism. "They deal textually and visually with disruptive social or political events, and their various critical devices may be said to reveal something of the underlying social configurations."[16] Above all, they demystify the lies and half-truths told by those in power by presenting the lived experiences of ordinary people that conflict with official stories. The particular achievement of *I Saw It* and *Barefoot Gen* is that in one way or another Nakazawa's work was able to intervene, against the limits of the history of the bomb that had been conveyed in the period of overt government censorship during the occupation of Japan.

TRANSMEDIAL REVISION

Transmedial revision—Nakazawa's strategy I am examining here—sets documentary's instrumental knowledge against itself. Neither Japanese militarism nor the brute fact of the U.S. bombing escapes his condemnation. His redrawing of official images makes possible a clearer view of their dehumanization of "the other" through a closer-to-hand, more humane depiction. It amplifies his ability to represent the disastrous consequences of the use of the atomic bomb.

As I will later show, Nakazawa consulted photographic images from the USSBS, among other sources. By 1966, when Nakazawa began to draw his first atom bomb manga, *Pelted by Black Rain*, the public record of such images was rich. Some of the USSBS images had been made immediately available in public outlets such as *Life* magazine to inform the public of the extent of American victory and Japanese defeat. Other images were released gradually, as censorship ended after the occupation, in the public press and in touring exhibitions. *Pelted by Black Rain*, which appeared in May 1968, is a fictional account considered the inaugural "'atomic bomb manga,'" writes Chute.[17] But documentary photographs were available.

His deployment of official photography in comics was both a formal and a functional innovation. In *The Origins of Comics: From William Hogarth to Winsor McCay*, Thierry Smolderen traces the fascination that cartoonist A. B. Frost developed for photography beginning in the 1880s, which ranged from mimicry to irony in his own constructions of sequential nar-

rative. Word balloons and label texts had been featured in English cartoons since George Cruikshank. According to art historian Steef Davidson in *The Penguin Book of Political Comics*, the French Situationists were the first to join the two forms. They pasted "thought balloons" from comic strips cut from the popular press onto photographs, and the resultant collages, like earlier ones that John Heartfield used to pillory the German fascist press, conveyed a range of subversive meanings they called *détournement* (diversion).[18] Nakazawa applied the technique to American military documentary photographs, redrawing them and then adding his own editorial points. Photographs customarily leave traces all over manga because artists use them as preparatory sketches for landscape and background as well as for inspiration. But to understand that the photograph itself is the discursive trace—the sign to seek—was Nakazawa's special insight.

Functionally, it was also a breakthrough. Nakazawa's revisions convey his experience of the bombing of Hiroshima with exceptional force. Drawing is of course fundamental to the manga form, natively a hybrid of hand-drawn sequential images and text. Unless it is to be computer generated, an atomic bomb manga must be drawn. On the other hand, photography is fundamental to the period of modernity, whose negative epiphany is the bomb. In atom bomb manga, the ancient act of drawing meets an expressive threshold in the atomic bomb; like the Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima was (and remains) a crisis of representation. In combining the two dialectically, Nakazawa was able to use drawings of photographs to critique the photographs themselves, sharpening the contradictions.

What were these contradictions? First, the USSBS could and did persuasively record the scale of the destruction of Hiroshima. The aerial view is suited to the sweep of the destruction. Nevertheless, the panoramic perspective was also insufficient. Disaster on the ground played out in thousands of unique, individual, personal lives that could be rendered only in particularity, as distinct from the camera's wide-angle or distanced objectification. Conversely, drawing is intimate, the mark of a human hand, as Spiegelman points out, and it was therefore better suited for that task. But the intimate private world of *hibakusha* knowledge rarely figured in official discourse. As a consequence of the Allied victory, photographic images of the devastation were largely, though not entirely, made by the American forces. These images overwhelmingly display the victors' point of view. Some were meant to underline the fact that the Japanese were military aggressors, and the USSBS survey shows extensive damage done to individual barracks, bunkers, factories, and railroads, attesting to the continuing mili-

tary functionality of the city, despite the fact that in its recent history, as Liebow reported, "the military importance of this center had waned and it was serving largely the function of a quartermaster depot."[19] Hence, a number of the images seek to justify taking Hiroshima as a military target. At the same time, many others show the vast destruction of businesses, hospitals, places of worship, homes, schools, banks, and light rail and civil infrastructure generally, which were part of the war effort but had previously escaped bombing in the war. Because these last, as domestic images, also could fuel impressions of the Japanese as victims themselves, they could "humanize" an enemy said to be less than human. Nakazawa's double-facing practice puts the difficulty of controlling all these factors into view. For him, to resee and then redraw the military photographs of Hiroshima was to incorporate them into a form of storytelling that complicated the ethical and political claims of both sides.

Nakazawa's invention intervened in the mechanical objectivity of the camera, which represents the most deadly common aspiration of the atomic age. By "objectivity" I mean not only that such photographs could be mechanically produced but also that interpretation was managed as well.[20] Transmediating the photographs from the USSBS literally expanded upon, or "drew out," subaltern perspectives. In circulating their own photographs, the Allies claimed the moral victory of ending the war. But Nakazawa's manga competed with the official tale about the history of ruin. His perspectives highlighted the ambiguous historical relationships responsible for the invention and use of the bomb and castigated subsequent denials of the full range of responsibility.

Nakazawa's recourse to drawing was not the same as the mark-making of the military or the civil authorities in sketches, maps, and charts. Nor was it akin to a therapist's use of victims' drawings to heal individuals through direct expression of remembered trauma. It differs by many degrees of art and intentionality from the famous survivor drawings published in *Unforgettable Fire*, in 1977, which are searing but artistically crude accounts.[21] Rather, this drawing practice in sequential narrative sought to reverse the power relations of the extant documentary record. It aimed to speak back and, further, to wound the viewer by registering his distance from what, to paraphrase art historian W. J. T. Mitchell, the photographs officially "want."[22]

In the following discussion I will first describe what Nakazawa tells of his experience as a survivor of the bombing of Hiroshima. Then I will present a portfolio of close readings of some representative examples of his re-

medial interventions in *I Saw It* and *Barefoot Gen*, chiefly his drawings of official documentary photographs of the aerial reconnaissance images of the bomb. This portfolio is meant to be suggestive rather than comprehensive. Finally, I will consider what it is that drawing, in particular, offers to the photographic record and why this particular kind of transmediation plays such a powerful role in Nakazawa's work. By way of conclusion, I will briefly suggest some further avenues for rethinking documentary photography, and post-1945 documentary in general, along these lines.

SURVIVING THE BOMB

Nakazawa was a single individual among many thousands of survivors of the bombing of the city, and he strove to tell both his own and others' stories. On 6 August 1945, at 8:15 a.m., the six-year-old Keiji stood in the shadow of the gate of the Kanzaki Elementary School in Hiroshima, hesitating a bit near the foot-thick concrete wall before entering his first-grade class and talking with the mother of a classmate, when he "happened to look up": "The *Enola Gay* cut its engines, penetrated quietly to the heart of Hiroshima, and dropped the atomic bomb, raising the curtain on hell. Even today, if I close my eyes, the colors of the atomic bomb the moment it exploded come floating right up. A pale light like the flash of a flashbulb camera, white at the center, engulfed me, a great ball of light with yellow and red mixed at its outer edges. Once that violent flash burned itself onto my retinas all memory stopped."[23] Small, stricken, and stunned, young Nakazawa himself could have seen relatively little of the immense, immediate destruction accomplished by the bomb. Yet *Ore wa Mita—I Saw It*—was the title given to his first autobiographical account. In the recent film *Barefoot Gen's Hiroshima: The Story of Nakazawa Keiji*, he describes how, emerging from shock, he found his vision had become literally photographic, explicitly linking the picture-making machine to his own body: "It was a procession of ghosts. I walked among them, like this. My eyes were like the lens of a camera, snapping pictures of everything I saw. Images of how the scene looked were etched on my memory."[24] He embodied this seeing in many scenes of his autobiography, among them the trauma of learning about the death of his father, sister, and brother under their collapsed house in the firestorm that followed the bombing; the frightful sight of the walking dead with peeling skin trailing from their hands and feet, their eyes and guts spilling out; the corpse-clogged rivers and body-strewn trees; the cruelty of others who refused asylum and hoarded food; the omnipresent hunger;

the illness of his mother and the death of his newborn baby sister; and the heart-hardening necessity to put the past aside and move on. This was his own experience.

In the subsequent series *Hadashi no Gen*, the individual autobiographical "I" of his initial narrator, Keiji himself, became the voice of a composite fictionalized eyewitness named Gen. Like the real Keiji, Gen starts out as a six-year-old, but as he grows up, Gen ranges over much more territory and recounts profound encounters with many more persons than did the autobiographical small boy in *I Saw It*. Yet the authorial claim is still based on lived experience. "Gen is my alter ego, and his family is just like my own," Nakazawa asserts. "The episodes in *Barefoot Gen* are all based on what really happened to me or to other people in Hiroshima."[25] "What really happened" has a double meaning; it asserts a personal documentary authority, and it also implies that other accounts might not be so faithful. Here is also where further research into the experience of the views of "other people in Hiroshima" had to have begun.

Nakazawa did not set out to embody this history. Originally apprenticed to a sign painter, he left Hiroshima for Tokyo in 1961 at the age of twenty-two to become a manga creator, or cartoonist, and soon became successful. But Tokyo life was also a negative epiphany. In Hiroshima, the existence of survivors was at least acknowledged. Nakazawa was "shocked" by the discrimination he encountered against *hibakusha* in Tokyo: "When talk of home arose and I mentioned to acquaintances that I'd experienced the atomic bombing in Hiroshima, the glances sent my way were indescribably chilly and strange, and I was bewildered—I couldn't recall ever having experienced such hateful looks."[26] His initial reaction was to disavow his own experience. "I resolved never to speak the words 'atomic bomb' again. When I went to bookstores and there were books about the atomic bomb on the shelves, I averted my eyes and moved on. When the characters 'atomic bomb' leapt out of a newspaper article, I didn't read a word of that article. I truly came to hate the word and the characters 'atomic bomb.'"[27]

Indeed, the *hibakusha*'s tale was commonly a story that went for a long time untold. Certainly it was nowhere in the public record. Censorship in Japan before 15 August 1945 and subsequent military occupation by the American victors prohibited for years any organized public recognition of what had occurred. As political scientist Richard Tanter states, a silence was "constructed": "There were three strands to official American policy towards information about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. First, access to Hiroshima was denied to Allied journalists. Second, public discussion of the

topic was banned in Japan. Finally, through the censorship and official disinformation program as a whole, Western perceptions were channeled in such a way as to minimize understanding of the human, as opposed to the physical, destructiveness of the weapon."[28] Tanter remarks that "the first step in the attempt to suppress the truth about Hiroshima was to attack claims of radiation illness, and to deny authority to Japanese-sourced accounts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."[29] It took six years—precisely the length of the American military occupation—for the first Japanese newspapers to show photographs of keloid scars on the bodies of the victims of the nuclear bombing.

Whereas more information might not have saved the survivors from bodily suffering, their separation and isolation increased the gap between living and knowing, which is the enabling condition of trauma. The most destructive result of this censorship regime was that the lack of public discussion and the suppression of medical reports impeded medical research and information about treatment of *pika*, or radiation illness, about which little was actually known. This denial of information was itself a secondary attack, extending the sense of abandonment felt by the wounded population, which was another deep consequence of the use of the bomb. Deprived of knowledge about what was happening to them, victims of radiation sickness died by the thousands immediately and at a more measured pace throughout subsequent days, weeks, months, and years. Fearing contagion, a majority of Japanese avoided contact with known *hibakusha*, who were also subsequently deemed unmarriageable due to anticipation of genetic damage once radiation was identified as the cause of illness. The actual effects, according to the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, included cancer, leukemia, shortened life span, loss of vigor, growth and developmental disorders, sterility, genetic alteration, abnormal pigmentation, hair loss, and epidemiological changes.[30]

The Japanese government did not begin to pass laws for substantial relief for the *hibakusha* until the mid-1950s. The loss of the chance to know—and to be known for—the personal experience that characterized each survivor individually also damaged society as a whole. The toxic suppression of information extended the bitter harvest of the war. Long after "humanization of the enemy" could lead to any conceivable softening of American resolve to fight, both the Americans and the Japanese averted their gaze from the complex and continuing suffering of so many survivors, or conversely, as in the singular instance of the "Hiroshima Maidens," turned their medical care into a gendered spectacle.[31] And all the while, as Tanter observes, "the

occupation authorities were meticulously collecting scientific information on the bomb and its health effects for American scientific consumption."[32]

In 1966, Nakazawa's mother died in the Hiroshima Atomic-bomb Hospital in Hiroshima after a long, debilitating illness. He was outraged that the American-run hospital immediately requested permission from the family to do an autopsy. "I couldn't forgive the ABCC [the hospital]," he wrote in 1995 in his non-manga autobiography, *Hiroshima: The Autobiography of Barefoot Gen*. "It didn't offer bomb victims a single bit of help. It treated them as specimens, guinea pigs. Always hot on the trail of bomb victims for the purposes of their own country's nuclear war, it took the data it collected back to the United States."[33] After his mother's cremation, Nakazawa found that only small slivers of her bones remained in the ashes, unlike in normal circumstances where a lot of bone remained. At that point, he realized that "radioactive cesium from the bomb had eaten away at her bones to the point that they had disintegrated. The bomb had even deprived me of my mother's bones."[34] Subsequently, something shifted inside him and he was, as he put it, "overcome with rage. I vowed that I would never forgive the Japanese militarists who started the war, or the Americans who had so casually dropped the bomb on us."[35] In the crucible of this grief he "came to want to avenge our Nakazawa family. I resolved to fight a one-man battle: 'Say who—the Japanese government? The U.S. government?—was responsible for the war and the atomic bomb! Speak! Speak! Speak! Never forgive!"[36]

In 1972, *Boys Jump Monthly* published *Ore wa Mita*, a forty-five-page manga autobiography, and in 1973 the autobiographical character Gen Nakaoka was born. Nakazawa's editor suggested that he continue working on the story, and Nakazawa agreed. *Barefoot Gen* was serialized at the rate of sixteen pages a month, eventually totaling its full ten volumes. By that time, newspaper images of the first photographs of post-bomb Hiroshima were widely available, as were hospital records and journalistic accounts. Nakazawa, working furiously, was actively seeking more knowledge, as were the twenty thousand people who came to see the *Unforgettable Fire* exhibition of drawings at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum between 1 and 6 August 1974.[37] Drawing upon such information to deal with his own personal crisis guided Nakazawa's attention to the quality and individual texture of *hibakusha* knowledge being held under erasure.[38] He thought there was a great power in every person's counternarrative. He wrote, "If each single Japanese person who was dealt a grave blow by the war and the atomic bomb musters all his bitterness to wage an angry struggle, he can smash

those guys who rejoice at war and the atomic bomb. It's not something a group of people can do."[39] And he set out to wage this struggle. Notably, this was not simply a campaign for remembering and against forgetting; it was an affective campaign, mobilizing the emotion of anger and maneuvering against disdain. In Nakazawa's hands, each individual *hibakusha*'s memory rebukes the American grand narrative. The difference between them is sharply rendered. In the next section, I will examine a sample of Nakazawa's drawings as examples of the insurgent potential of suppressed *hibakusha* witness.

PICTURING THE BOMB

Among those who could be said to have "rejoiced at the atomic bomb" were the American victors, who while acknowledging its horrible destruction nevertheless credited it with ending the current war and, they hoped, deterring the next. For many Americans, what came to be the iconic photographs of the bomb were proof of American might. The earliest photographs of the atomic bombing allowed to reach a wide audience were aerial photographs of the towering cloud formed by the Hiroshima explosion and the more tightly configured mushroom of Nagasaki, both taken by the retreating planes. The circulation of American photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki commonly compared not the effects of each nuclear attack on Japan but the strength of each kind of bomb relative to the other, for the sake of intimidating Russian eyes. They were meant to signify America's peerless nuclear prowess. These images, published in *Life* magazine in 1945, displayed the awesome capacity of the American military, chiefly for the sake of the Soviets, whom the Americans then understood to be mounting their own threat to the West (fig. 3.1).

But Nakazawa's depictions of the iconic mushroom cloud convey another perspective. In the main, they diminish American claims. In *I Saw It: The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima: A Survivor's True Story*, a postage stamp–sized drawing of the Hiroshima bomb cloud appears near the upper-right corner on the cover of the comic, but it is by no means compelling and only somewhat bigger than the imprint of the price ($2) at the lower left, whose form it mirrors.[40] On the other hand, a giant image of a sweating and screaming Keiji, atomic fire reflected in his huge and horrified eyes, commands attention. The viewer is situated so as to have the choice of looking at or looking with Keiji, undermining certainty about what the picture "wants" (fig. 3.2).

FIGURE 3.1 Mushroom cloud, HG273, U.S. Army. Reprinted by permission of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

FIGURE 3.2 Front cover of Keiji Nakazawa's *I Saw It*, English-language edition, 1982. Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.

A giant Keiji appears on the back cover too, along with a different depiction of the cloud. This time the cloud is enormous, arising from the devastated city. It does not take the iconic form but rather fits eyewitness descriptions of what it looked like from the ground: "an enormous mass of clouds . . . [which] spread and climbed rapidly . . . into the sky. Then its summit broke open and hung over horizontally. It took on the shape of a monstrous mushroom with the lower part as its stem—it would be more accurate to call it the tail of a tornado. Beneath it more and more boiling clouds erupted and unfolded sideways . . . the shape . . . the color . . . the light . . . were continuously shifting and changing."[41] Like Walter Benjamin's angel, Keiji is running forward but blown backward by the force of the blast. He clearly wishes to draw what he sees, but his brushes are scattered. The cloud is more imposing than the city, but Keiji is larger still. He looks back accusingly toward the viewer, with whom this time his eyes securely lock. The eyes, more furious than frightened, show outrage. Closest of all, a titanic diagonal black banner proclaims "I Saw It" in white block letters suggestive of a newspaper headline. The words are at once a simple statement and an accusation. Despite the ruined city, the lethal cloud, and the counter-winds of history, the banner is a declaration that this boy will depict the atrocity, *as he sees it*, and not the USSBS (fig. 3.3).

The bomb cloud is particularly revealing. By the time that Nakazawa drew *I Saw It*, a small number of Japanese views had been published, including a found photographic image of the mushroom cloud taken from the ground. Its round shape is quite different from the aerial view of the American bombers. In *I Saw It* the bomb repeatedly takes the Japanese form: concentric circles of a "flash" of light seen from the ground. In the story itself, the image of the cloud is easily contained in a narrow panel that is only half a page tall. Unlike the stories in the American press, the narrative does not fetishize the awesome power of the bomb but moves swiftly on to the damage it has done to buildings, plants, and people. The mirroring half-page panel shows a living tree being bent and snapped by the atomic wind that is also blowing a hurricane of roof tiles across the churning air. Tree, tiles, and wind are curved, like the explosion. These two panels frame a third that is vertically bisected. This panel contains the faces of a boy (Keiji) and a woman (the mother of a schoolmate) being hit by the blast. The people are much larger, because they are closer, than either the nuclear explosion or the tree. Nakazawa refuses to show the atomic cloud as a separate transcendental symbol, putting his drawings at odds with photographic rep-

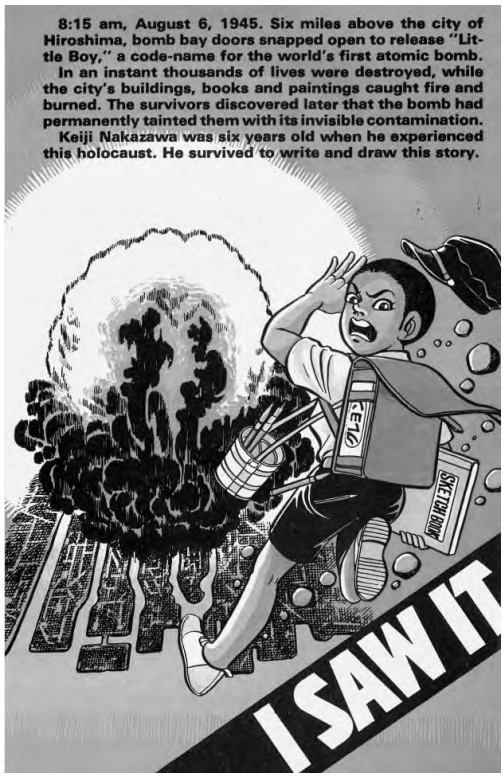

FIGURE 3.3 Back cover of *I Saw It*. Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.

resentations (fig. 3.4). Even when he draws the cloud at full height from a distance, it is immediately counterbalanced by the close-up view (fig. 3.5).

But in another sense the witnessing that Nakazawa invented was not only to use manga as a genre that could address the atomic bomb. Rather, he simultaneously found a new way to contextualize it. He peeled ideological content away from the scientific and political visualization of the time and examined the desire of the photographic image from a different point of view. This process of contesting what photographic documentary wants was painful but necessary, like debridement of a wound.

The most vivid example is found in the second volume of the *Barefoot Gen* series, *The Day After*, where a full double-page spread vehemently confronts the reader. Its size is unique in the whole ten volumes. The drawing is a reproduction of a USSBS aerial view. A vast flattened plane extends to the mountains ringing the city in the distance, while black clouds glower and swaths of heavy black ashes in the rivers simulate reflections of buildings and trees on their banks that no longer exist. There is nothing alive to be seen on the ground. Architectural landmarks still standing loom up out

FIGURE 3.4 Page from *I Saw It* showing the bomb explosion. Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.

FIGURE 3.5 Page from Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima* showing the bomb explosion. © Keiji Nakazawa. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Last Gasp.

of the debris to grab the viewer's attention as on a strategic map. The point of view hovers hundreds of feet in the air. Over it all an enormous figure of Gen rears up. A colossus in judgment, its angry eyebrows are knitted over large, accusing manga eyes disgusted by the Americans, the Japanese, and everybody else (fig. 3.6).

But what is he seeing? Unlike the back and front covers of *I Saw It*, Gen is looking neither at the fire nor at the viewer. Rather, his focus is internal. He is registering how the victors are seeing his city. The photograph was one of the most famous documentary images taken by the USSBS, titled *BRIDGES 23 and 24, 4H/ GZ860–1000. October 14–November 26, 1945. USSBS 3:93, Photo 70-XII* (fig. 3.7). Taken just a few days after the bombing, it recorded the extent of the destruction for the benefit of American civil engineers, who now had to redesign the civil defense architecture of the United States in anticipation of a nuclear attack. The caption reads, "Intersections of Bridge 23 (left) and Bridge 24 (right). All damage from blast effects. Bridge 23 (860 feet to GZ, 2,170 feet to AZ). Bridge 24 (1,000 feet to GZ, 2,230 feet to AZ)."[42]

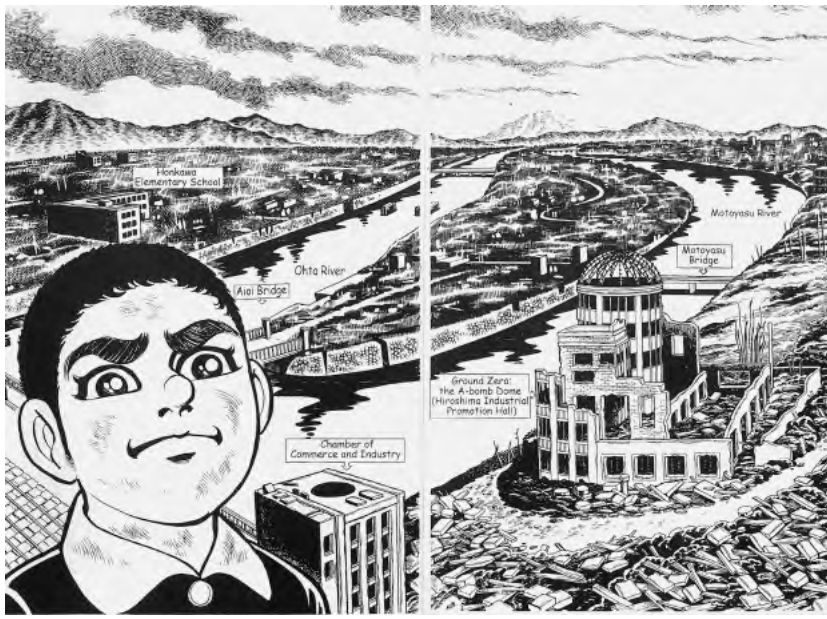

FIGURE 3.6 Double-page spread from Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen: The Day After* showing the Aioi Bridge. © Keiji Nakazawa. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Last Gasp.

Usually there are no people in the USSBS images. But poignantly, this photo of the bridges shows little people walking, riding bicycles, even apparently boarding a trolley car. They too would have had stories to tell, although the USSBS photographer did not seek them out. But Nakazawa rejects any fantasy that might have been on offer about conversing with such *hibakusha*. In his drawing there are no people. No one loved remains. There is nothing in the drawing that Gen desires to see. Neither are the bodies in the rivers, the burned corpses in the streets, and the blinded, still-walking zombies—with their flayed skin trailing from their wrists and ankles—to be found. The city is a vast field of rubble seen from a distance, and the photograph, distinct from the drawing, wants us to accept this as a victory.

Emergent in the drawing is also Gen's consciousness that the photograph is a revelation of how the *hibakusha* are being looked at by the victors. The Aioi Bridge was the original ground zero targeted by the bombers, who missed only by a short distance. The photograph thus shows how close the American military came to technocratic perfection. Gen's eyes reflect this moment of realization about the photograph. If the documentary tradition expects the viewer to accept its vantage point, Gen refuses. Instead, he

FIGURE 3.7 Photo from *The Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, Volume III*, showing the effects of the bomb's blast at the intersection of Bridge 23 and Bridge 24. International Center of Photography, Museum Purchase, Robert Capa and Cornell Capa Acquisitions Fund, 2011.

imports it into his own story and shows why it is unacceptable. The photograph, redrawn, is an indictment of all those whose acts made it possible. Even the big cloud is small in comparison with Gen's avenging face. It is an image of what Walter Benjamin called "dialectics at a standstill." As the philosopher and cultural critic observed in *The Arcades Project*, "It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on the past; rather, the dialectical image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation."[43]

Nakazawa loved drawing manga. Although he had not originally wanted to make manga from his experience, when he did, the sequential form of graphic narrative, constructed frame by frame from memory, may also have been helpful for recapturing an analytically consequential understanding of cause and effect in the world. Chute and others have described such a fit between manga and traumatic memory generally.[44] But Nakazawa's remediated *photographs* also registered what otherwise could not be shown or remembered. This was not the seemingly objective truth of the photo-

graphed scene itself, or its lived experience, but the emergence of its social meaning. The potential for a new kind of documentary realism to emerge from the gap between the photograph and the drawing is a very important contribution to the art of manga and the history of postwar documentary. Transmedial revision allows this buried vantage point to emerge.

But why specifically the medium of drawing, and why specifically photography? In the following discussion I will examine those questions further by turning to John Berger's writings on drawing. In Berger we have a brilliant theoretician of what "another way of seeing" allows.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Nakazawa described what he saw at ground zero in his autobiography, *Hiroshima: The Autobiography of Barefoot Gen*. There are no photographic referents for the brutal scene:

> The Trolley street from Funairi Naka-cho as far as Saiwai-cho was a human exhibition, inhuman forms utterly transformed. Naked bodies moving sluggishly, burned by rays and trailing blackened bits of clothing like seaweed. Moving forward, glass splinters from the explosion sticking into all parts of their bodies, spurting blood. People whose eyeballs hung down their cheeks and trembled; they'd been blown out by the sudden pressure of the blast. People whose bellies had been ripped open, trailing a yard of intestines, crawling on all fours. Shrikes impale fish and frogs on dead tree branches, storing them to eat later; people too had been sent flying and hung from tree branches, impaled. I ran among these horrific humans, threading my way, crying out, searching for family.[45]

Nakazawa also drew these awful images. In his autobiography he makes a connection between the smoke and fire caused by explosion and the tools of his trade: India ink, water, and paper. The implication is that drawing is a kind of knowledge uniquely suited to this task: "Drop India ink into water, and it thins and spreads. Smoke just like pale ink covered the sky and wafted all about. The sky was like an ink painting: boards and sheets of metal danced helter-skelter into the sky, quite like birds. Every now and then, out of the collapsed row of houses a dragon's tongue of bright red flames crawled, disappeared, moved. Aghast, I burned that scene onto my retinas."[46]

In *I Saw It* and *Barefoot Gen*, the smoke and gore of the atomic waste-

land make one long passage, but they do not reappear. Unlike current constructions of post-traumatic stress disorder that consider flashbacks as a key indicator, in each book the trauma of the bomb stays in place in time. Instead, what Nakazawa repeats is his struggle to make the drawing in the first place. "I drew what happened on the day the bomb fell. Even my editor responded negatively to the harsh scenes that unfolded in the burned-out ruins of atomic wasteland: he said, 'It's horrible.' But I continued to struggle, unable to re-create the truth that was still burned onto my retinas."[47] The obsessive exhaustiveness of the 2,500-page *Barefoot Gen* opus gives some impression of the intensity of this struggle. "Rereading my own work made my flesh crawl. It was really tough. . . . Even though I was ruining my health, I finally completed it. From the start of the serialization, it had taken fourteen years."[48]

Unlike a photographic image, each drawn mark on paper describes something one observes. What one is able to observe depends, in turn, on one's access to one's own memory. Some of Nakazawa's own sketches may indicate that is was difficult for him to forge this access. Rifas observes, "I was shocked at the crudity of Nakazawa's pencils in the autobiography [Richard] Minear translated. . . . I was even more shocked by some of his sketches at the Peace Museum. His work could succeed because his wife, Misayo, inked it so sweetly. The stories were his and about him, making her role secondary . . . but her contribution was so vital!"[49] It would be interesting to compare these particular sketches with others in his archive at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. In drawing, one traces not only the physical appearance of the object but also one's connection or disconnection to one's own experience. "It is the actual act of drawing that forces the artist to look at the object in front of him, to dissect it in his mind's eye and put it together again," John Berger observes, "or if he is drawing from memory, that forces him to dredge his own mind to discover the content of his own store of past observations."[50] Over time, this process results in self-discovery for the maker. "A drawing of a tree shows, not a tree, but a tree being-looked-at," writes Berger.[51] The tree being-looked-at reflects one's own self, looking. Apparently, disturbances remained in Nakazawa's visual field.

Yet how can drawing represent impressions or memories when, as in this instance, the events and hence the memory of the first atomic bombing are completely unprecedented? Other events of violence in other kinds of war may look quite similar, but the underlying narrative diverges. Such a drawing cannot show the being-looked-at of anything, because a know-

ing seer does not exist. Drawing is visceral; one draws in relation to the entire physical being. But the embodiment of a traumatized person vis-à-vis the traumatic event is partial and interrupted. The organized self has been destroyed. If to draw an object, according to Berger, one must see it, internalize it, and then reconstruct it, the trauma of Hiroshima makes this repertoire impossible. This trauma is not the missing of experience but the impact of experience that does not get portrayed. In crucial ways, the traumatized observer is fragmented or even missing. In parallel, a narrative of surviving an atomic bombing had yet to exist.

Such a barrier to seeing does not exist with photography. As Roland Barthes puts it in *Camera Lucida*, "Not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory," but it "*fills the sight by force*, and . . . nothing in it can be refused or transformed." The camera makes a picture that seems in itself to be complete.[52] A photograph commonly records things that are not yet fully observed and even makes an impression of things that have never yet been seen, filling in the holes and securing the opportunity for future discovery. Trauma can affect the act of taking a picture, inhibiting the choice of a moment or restricting access to the threshold of a scene, but it will not generally preclude the camera from making an image. Once subjected to the automatized process, however difficult it may be to make the exposure in the first place, the scene will be recorded whether or not meaning is conveyed.[53] But this is not true of drawing. With a drawing, you must see where you are going. "Another way of putting it," writes Berger, "would be to say that each mark you make on the paper is a stepping-stone from which you proceed to the next, until you have crossed your subject as though it were a river, and have put it behind you."[54] Nakazawa's drawing of the photographic record shows Hiroshima being-looked-at by a self that is crossing over by looking at the photograph.

Nakazawa clearly looked at many photographs of what it was so hard for him to draw. Comparing USSBS photographs taken in the days after the bombing with his drawings, one can easily discern some source material for what ultimately became a strong, sinewy black line inked by Masayo in the twisted beams and poles and timbers and wires of the USSBS prints. He draws the ruined schools, the collapsed houses, and the torqued trolley lines as the photographs show them.[55] But Nakazawa's drawings of the dead move him beyond what the photographs show. Robert Jay Lifton notes that the Allies were taught that the Japanese would die with a salute to the emperor on their lips. In reality, those who spoke before they died chiefly called out for their mothers, "an effort to reassert the ultimate human rela-

tionship in the face of death's severance," as Lifton puts it.[56] By adding their cry to his drawings of the photograph, Nakazawa is looking at himself looking and reclaiming what is human from the victors' armed gaze. In another horrific example, Nakazawa draws Gen, wordless, looking into a pail that contains the bones and skulls of his brother, sister, and father. The skulls are precisely rendered. Gen's mother, also looking, eventually tells him, "All . . . all our hopes are gone now, Gen. . . . We know . . . they're really dead,"[57] and they begin slowly to comprehend that they must carry on without them. In the story's diegesis, they try to "go far from these bad memories."[58] But in drawing the bones in the bucket, Nakazawa observes his own unsustainable flight from remembrance and now knows that it is unsustainable. As Berger discovered when he too drew a body—that of his own deceased father—in watching this seeing, instead of being "the site of a departure," his drawing has become "the site of an arrival."[59]

AFTERIMAGE

Nakazawa's antiwar manga have traveled widely. The volunteer organization "Project Gen" has translated the many volumes of *Barefoot Gen* into English and other languages and devoted itself to teaching about the bomb's devastation; it has developed school curricula as well. There have been three live-action films of *Barefoot Gen*, an opera, and two animated films released internationally. Although he is not universally praised in Japan, Nakazawa's admirers also include other comics artists who seek to convey the experience of a wide spectrum of kinds of survivors. Spiegelman stated that he took inspiration from *Barefoot Gen* while in the process of creating *Maus* when "*Gen* burned its way into my heated brain with all the intensity of a fever dream. . . . I've just reread the books recently and I'm glad to discover that the vividness of *Barefoot Gen* emanates from the work itself and not simply from my fever."[60] Nakazawa once said that he wished to travel "together with Gen . . . to various places and collect material—Chernobyl, Semipalatinsk, the Urals in the old Soviet Union; Nevada and Three Mile Island in the United States; the islands of the South Pacific (Bikini, Muroroa); Auschwitz; Nanjing in China."[61] His admirers have gone forward in that spirit to tell other kinds of stories, as he wished to do himself.

But I believe that another important part of Nakazawa's legacy is specifically his way of seeing photographic seeing. There is today a growing group of astute practitioners, among them Art Spiegelman, Joe Sacco, Alison Bechdel, and Marjane Satrapi, and scholars such as Leonard Rifas, Hilary

Chute, Mihaela Precup, Marianne Hirsch, Robin Bernstein, Nina Mickwitz, and Jeff Adams, among many more, who recognize that the transmedial revision of documentary photography offers opportunities especially suited to witness both historical violence and the social trauma of its erasure. Sacco's remarkable achievements in wartime comics—*Palestine*, *Safe Area Goražde*, and *Footnotes in Gaza*—are one example. Shigeru Mizuki's *Showa* and Emmanuel Gilbert's *The Photographer: Into War-Torn Afghanistan with Doctors without Borders* and *Alan's War: The Memories of G.I. Alan Cope* are others. Sacco works in the interstitial space between the news photograph and its hand-drawn copy. He has said that he draws because it is virtually impossible to get a shot of the perfect instant. "When you draw, you can always capture that moment. You can't always have that exact, precise moment when someone's got the club raised, when someone's going down. I realize now there's a lot of power in that. It's a bit scary in a way, because you're capturing moments like that constantly from panel to panel."[62] In redrawing documentary photographs, Sacco can curate his story to show the perfect instant that emerges from the interplay of suppression and discovery. Capturing "dialectics at a standstill" is his way of rethinking documentary's trail. Gilbert, on the other hand, redraws photographs so that they can be recognized as photographs, and the shock of his repossession of them in that manner, in sequence with his drawings, estranges the technocratic narrative, at once so central and so far from the U.S. war in Afghanistan. Through these and other transmediations, it is quite possible to discern that Gen is traveling still.

NOTES

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This essay is dedicated to my father, Bernard I. Kaplan (1916–85), second lieutenant, U.S. Army Signal Corps, Pacific theater, Occupying Forces, Osaka, Japan, 1945, who loved to read the funnies and hated the war.

1. *Hibakusha* is the Japanese term for atom bomb survivor. It literally means "bomb-affected-people."

2. Early achievements in film, photography, and the fine arts include *Summer Flowers*

by Hara Tamiki; *City of Corpses* by Ota Yoko; *Poems of the Atomic Bomb* by Toge Sankichi; *Hiroshima Mon Amour* by Alain Resnais; the sculptures of Kita Kazuaki; the *Hiroshima Murals* of Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi; and the photographs of Ken Domon and Shomei Tomatsu. In the United States, the iconoclastic force of the Underground Comix movement in the 1960s and 1970s also permitted the production and circulation of antiwar art, but widespread truth telling in the general population about the effects on the civilian population of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima remained difficult.

3. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 2.

4. Nishima and other Japanese photographs were published in Liebow, "Hiroshima Medical Diary." The USSBS photographs are published in Barnett and Mariani, *Hiroshima*. Nakazawa's own collection of atom bomb materials is at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

5. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 112. See also Mickwitz, *Documentary Comics*; and Bernstein, "'I'm Very Happy to Be in the Reality-Based Community.'"

6. Rifas, "Globalizing Comic Books from Below," 141.

7. Leonard Rifas, personal communication with the author, 20 December 2016. Nakazawa's sense of distance in Japan is recorded in his interview with Alan Gleason. Gleason, "Keiji Nakazawa Interview."

8. See Amy Kiste Nyberg, *Seal of Approval: The Origins and History of the Comics Code* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998); and Charles Hatfield, *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).

9. Spiegelman, "*Barefoot Gen*," n.p.

10. Quoted in Rifas, "Globalizing Comic Books from Below," 166.

11. Spiegelman, "*Barefoot Gen*," n.p.

12. Ibid.

13. Chute, *Disaster Drawn, 1*.

14. As cited in Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels and Social Realism*, 89.

15. Ibid., 39.

16. Ibid., 9.

17. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, 116.

18. Thierry Smolderen, *The Origins of Comics: From William Hogarth to Winsor*, trans. Bart Beatty and Nick Nguyen (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014); *McCay*, Davidson, *Penguin Book of Political Comics*, 62, quoted in Adams, *Documentary Graphic Novels and Social Realism*, 70.

19. Liebow, "Hiroshima Medical Diary," 67.

20. See, for instance, Daston and Gallison, *Objectivity*; Sekula, "Instrumental Image"; Deriu, "Picturing Ruinscapes"; Kaplan, "Dead Reckoning"; Wexler, "Heightened Histories"; J. Scott, "Evidence of Experience"; Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*; Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*; and Jacobs, *Documentary Tradition*.

21. Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), *Unforgettable Fire*. These pictures were displayed at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum on 1–6 August 1974. Among them is a survivor's view of the Aioi Bridge. See also J. Berger, "Hiroshima."

22. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want*, xv. "The question to ask of pictures from the standpoint of a poetics," writes Mitchell, "is not just what they mean or do but what they

want—what claim they make upon us, and how we are to respond. Obviously, this question also requires us to ask what it is that we want from pictures."

23. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 34–35.

24. *Barefoot Gen's Hiroshima*.

25. Nakazawa, "A Note from the Author," in *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima*, n.p.

26. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 146.

27. Ibid., 147.

28. Tanter, "Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War," n.p.

29. Ibid.

30. Tsuzuki, "Report on the Medical Studies of the Effects of the Atomic Bomb."

31. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshima_Maidens.

32. Tanter, "Voice and Silence in the First Nuclear War," n.p.

33. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 150.

34. Nakazawa, "Note from the Author," n.p.

35. Ibid.

36. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 152.

37. For example, Leonard Rifas relates that Nakazawa "redrew a panel in *Barefoot Gen* when I pointed out that Albert Einstein had not worked on the atomic bomb, and that in volume nine, he gave an unreliable account of the American response to North Korea shooting down a spy place. I do not trust Nakazawa as a *historian*, but he's very important as a *witness*." Personal communication with the author, 20 December 2016. Nakazawa's own rich archive is available in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

38. Martin Heidegger's term *sous rature* is precise in this context.

39. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 152.

40. Rifas states, "As I remember it, I was the one who instructed the colorist to insert that Nakazawa-drawn mushroom cloud into Nakazawa's splash page drawing for *Ore wa Mita* which became the cover of *I Saw It*, to further tip off American (and other English-speaking) readers about what Nakazawa had seen." Personal communication with the author, 20 December 2016.

41. Quoted in Lifton, *Death in Life*, 19.

42. Barnett and Mariani, *Hiroshima*, 17.

43. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 463. Originally published in German in 1983 as *Das Passagen-Werk*, *The Arcades Project* comprises Benjamin's notes on nineteenth-century Parisian bourgeois life written between 1927 and 1940.

44. Chute, *Disaster Drawn*.

45. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 38–39.

46. Ibid., 35–36.

47. Ibid., 164–65.

48. Ibid., 166, 168.

49. Rifas, personal communication with the author, 20 December 2016.

50. J. Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 3.

51. Ibid., 71.

52. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 91.

53. One Japanese eyewitness at Hiroshima, Yoshito Marsushige, started to photograph as soon as forty minutes after the blast but managed to make only five images and spoke of how repugnant it was to him even to use his camera at that juncture. Nonetheless, despite his ambivalence, the photographs he did take do exist.

54. J. Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 3.

55. Compare, for instance, the many USSBS photographs of schools found in Barnett and Mariani's *Hiroshima*—the Yamanaka Girls High School, Fukuromachi Grammar School, Sanyo Middle School, Takeya Grammar School, Sotoku Middle School, Misasa Grammar School, Koko Private Grammar School, Funairi Grammar School, Honkawa Grammar School Auditorium, Honkawa Grammar School, Temma Grammar School, Hiroshima Daini Junior High School, Hijiyama Grammar School, and Koyin Grammar School Auditorium—with his drawings of the gate and wall of his own Kanzaki Primary School before the blast and the schools attended by himself and other child survivors in Hiroshima afterward.

56. Lifton, *Death in Life*, 22. "Trained to go to their deaths with the phrase 'Long live the Emperor' on their lips, they instead called out 'Mother!'"

57. Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima*, 191.

58. Ibid., 194.

59. J. Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, 72

60. Spiegelman, "*Barefoot Gen*," n.p.

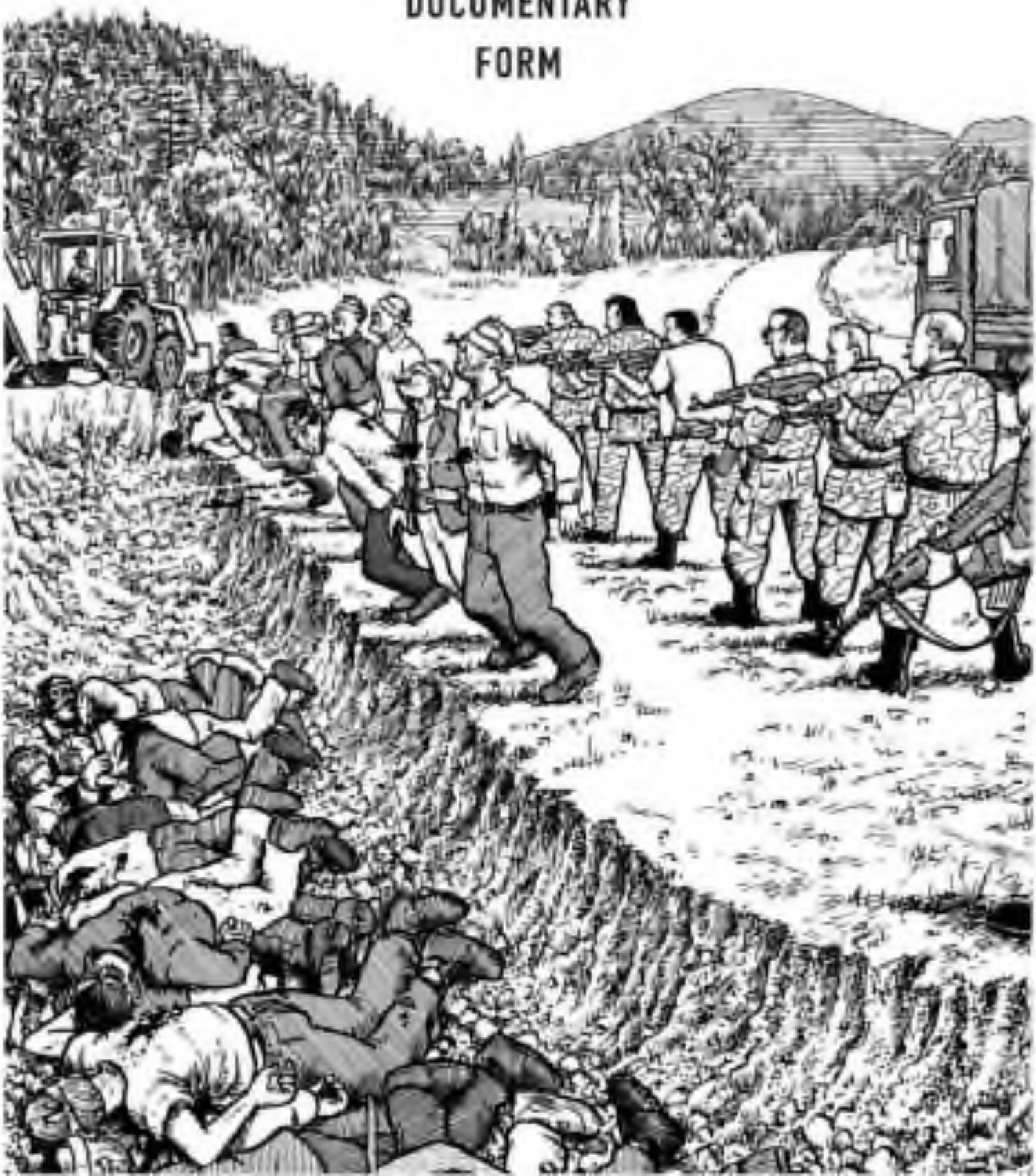
61. Nakazawa, *Hiroshima*, 172.

62. Joe Sacco with Hillary Chute, "Can you draw what you don't understand?," in Chute, "Joe Sacco."

HILLARY L. CHUTE

DISASTER DRAWN

VISUAL WITNESS, COMICS, AND DOCUMENTARY FORM



| 3 |

I SAW IT AND THE WORK OF ATOMIC BOMB MANGA

There's much to be done with black ink and paper.
—WILLIAM KENTRIDGE, 2014

This book proposes 1972 as the crucial moment for the global emergence of comics as a form of bearing witness to war and historical devastation.[1] In this year, some of the earliest works of nonfiction comics emerge from different "sides" of World War II: Hiroshima survivor Keiji Nakazawa's groundbreaking work of "atomic bomb manga," the comic book *Ore Wa Mita*—or *I Saw It*, a title that explicitly evokes Goya's famous caption in his *Disasters of War* series—and Art Spiegelman's pivotal first "Maus" comic, about his immigrant family's survival of Poland's death camps. While annihilated parental bodies explicitly motivate both works, Nakazawa's is an eyewitness account, while Spiegelman is a secondary witness. In the case of Nakazawa and Spiegelman, the obliteration wreaked by World War II,

which each of them approached from a different cultural starting point, led to a new phase in the creation of visual-verbal forms of witness.

In thinking comparatively, which is to say in looking at the substantive innovation occurring at the same time from different sides of World War II, we can begin to paint a picture of why the early 1970s gave rise to what has become the most trenchant kind of work within the comics field: nonfiction, and nonfiction specifically expressing the realities of war. While in earlier decades in both Japan and the United States the subject of the war and the status of "survival" was largely still shrouded in silence or taboo, by the opening of the 1970s, especially after the artistic, cultural, and political upheavals of the 1960s, including fierce anti–Vietnam War movements in both the United States and Japan, the issues that had been simmering under the surface—what does it even *mean* to survive, to remember?—demanded articulation. The world was engrossed by the Vietnam War and immersed in its stream of televisual images, as its American moniker the "living room war" indicates (a television critic for the *New Yorker*, Michael Arlen, coined the term in 1966).[2] In Japan, by the end of the 1960s, the Vietnam War—particularly its visual aspect—offered a context to revisit the Asia-Pacific War. Vietnam "saturated the media with images that resonated with Japan's wartime past," as Eldad Nakar argues, producing a reevaluation that "transformed Japan's vision" of its own history.[3] The Vietnam War was part of the Cold War and so in that sense was an extension of World War II.[4] It also suggested, in its galvanizing of antiwar affect and its full-blown media manifestation, a precondition for the visibility of earlier wartime testimony. We can understand the return to *drawing to tell*, the reemergence and creative expansion in our contemporary world of the power of the hand-drawn image, against the backdrop of this saturation of mechanical objectivity and the discourses of technological power that shaped the atomic age.[5]

Keiji Nakazawa, the innovator of documentary comics of witness in Japan, survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima city on August 6, 1945. He was six years old. (Nakazawa died in Hiroshima on December 19, 2012, of lung cancer.) At 8:15 a.m., when the B-29 *Enola Gay* dropped the atomic bomb on the city, Nakazawa was walking to Kamzaki Elementary School from his home in the Funairi Honmachi neighborhood. Less than one mile from the hypocenter, he paused outside the schoolyard's concrete wall to

answer a question posed by a classmate's mother; when the bomb detonated, the wall fell on him, deflecting and absorbing the shock and protecting him from the heat, while she died instantly. (More than 70,000 people died instantaneously, with as many perishing afterward from radiation sickness.) In *I Saw It*, his groundbreaking documentary comics about the bomb, her instantly blackened corpse plays a central role in Nakazawa's dawning recognition of the horror; in his later prose autobiography he observes that "her entire body had been burned pitch black."[6] Violence so extreme it appears abstract became Nakazawa's instant perceptual reality.

Nakazawa's father, Harumi, older sister, Eiko, and younger brother, Susumu, perished on August 6. The Nakazawa house collapsed on them and then went up in flames while Keiji's pregnant mother, Kimiyo, watched helplessly. Kimiyo, known as Kimie, gave birth later that day on the pavement, induced by shock, to a baby girl named Tomoko, who died of malnutrition at four months old. Two older brothers who were not in the city that day survived the bombing; Akira Nakazawa had been part of a group evacuation to the country, and Koji Nakazawa, the eldest sibling, had gone to Kure as a student-soldier. After the bomb, Nakazawa and his mother fled to relatives in Eba and gradually made their way back to Hiroshima. Nakazawa created the first so-called atomic bomb manga as a cartoonist living in Tokyo after his mother's death. *Manga* refers, as a general matter, to comics from Japan; it translates roughly as "whimsical pictures." Although the term is often credited to self-proclaimed "drawing maniac" Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), the pen name of famed *ukiyo-e* artist Katsukawa Shunro, from his collection of sketches *Hokusai Manga* (which began serial publication in 1814), the word had been introduced at least as early as 1798 to indicate comic sketches.[7]

Shaped by the realities of war, Nakazawa's manga established a new imaginary, and a new culture, for nonfiction manga in Japan. There had been nonfiction manga published previously, largely in the context of political satire and current events commentary, such as in *Jiji Manga* (a Sunday supplement that was added to the *Jiji-Shinpō* newspaper starting in 1902), which depicted, for instance, the discourse surrounding the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923.[8] However, the overwhelming majority of work was fictional.[9] Post–World War II manga of the 1950s—even works classified as *senki mono* (records of war)—were fictionalized: they combined historical settings, dates, and figures with fictitious plots and details.[10] In the 1960s, "artist manga" emerged as a genre, focusing plotlines on young, aspiring

manga artists, but these accounts were semiautobiographical—as were the works that are the closest precursors to what Nakazawa created in 1972. Earlier, proximate manga includes Osamu Tezuka's short story "Cachaboi's Record of One Generation" (1970), in which he recounts personal experiences, including during wartime; Shigeru Mizuki's "The Flight" (1970), which depicts how he lost his arm in the Imperial Army in World War II; and short stories (1971–1972) by Yoshihiro Tatsumi, eventually collected in the volume *Good-Bye*, which concentrates on postwar life in Osaka.[11] (Tatsumi is one of the progenitors of the *gekiga*—literally, "dramatic pictures"—style of alternative manga, which developed in the late 1950s: Nakazawa, although he produced dark, realistic work, worked from within a commercial idiom distinct from *gekiga*.)[12] The most directly comparable work is Kōji Asaoka's "The Tragedy of a Planet," about Hiroshima, a manga adaptation of Tatsuo Kusaka's prose memoir.[13] While these works in part focus on war and the self, they do not claim, as Nakazawa's *I Saw It* does, the status of first person witness, proclaimed by the bold title.[14]

Nakazawa, whose deceased father had been a *nihonga* artist, a creator of traditional Japanese-style ink paintings and lacquer work, discovered manga through Tezuka's 1947 lengthy, creative *New Treasure Island (Shin Takarajima)*, a retelling of the 1883 Robert Louis Stevenson classic. Tezuka, influenced by American comics and Disney animation, widened manga's mainstream scope hugely in the postwar years, in part through his creation of longer narrative work; *New Treasure Island*, a smash hit, marks this shift.[15] (Japan's most famous modern manga creator, Tezuka is known worldwide for his Astro Boy—Tetsuwan Atomu, or "Mighty Atom"—character; in the mid-1980s he also created the series *Adolf*, a historical drama that begins before World War II and features three Adolfs, including a Jewish Adolf living in Japan.) Nakazawa could not afford drawing paper, so he tore down movie posters from city streets and hand-made books from them: he would cut them to size, sew them into a notebook, and copy Tezuka illustrations in pencil on their white backs. He was also taken with the inventive and populist visual-verbal storytelling form *kamishibai* (literally, "paper play" or paper theater), in which a traveling performer displays a series of picture boards, set in a wooden proscenium, voicing the story while showing images to collective audiences on the streets.[16] After graduating from junior high school, Nakazawa became a sign painter—a trade also practiced by his American counterpart Justin Green, who revolutionized nonfiction comics in America in the early 1970s.[17] In his private creative practices and

his professional life, Nakazawa continually worked in and around the edges of handmade culture, where graphic storytelling and design intersect with the accessibility of the vernacular and the artisanal. In 1961, at age twenty-two, he moved to Tokyo with the express purpose of becoming a cartoonist. Nakazawa created a new idiom inspired by witness and established manga as a global export, achievements equaled by few other cartoonists.

The dominant mode of managing the legacy of the atomic bomb in this period was silence and disengagement. In the early and mid-1960s, Tokyo, which had been firebombed during the war, was a city Nakazawa describes "an assemblage of people from all of the country who knew absolutely nothing about the atomic bomb" and who believed rumors of the transmissibility of "atomic bomb disease," in which one could "catch" radiation.[18] There was heavy disdain for atomic bomb survivors, called *hibakusha*—literally, "explosion-affected people" (a phenomenon that, although lessened, persists to this day and also can be recognized in extant attitudes toward those affected by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant disaster). Punning on the anti-genocide and atrocity catchphrase in his often quite funny prose autobiography, Nakazawa titles a section on 1960s Tokyo "Never Again Say the Words 'Atomic Bomb'!"[19] He has detailed in many different outlets the "severe discrimination" he and other bomb survivors faced.[20] Deciding to hide the fact that he was a *hibakusha*, Nakazawa resolved upon moving to Tokyo to, indeed, never again say those words; he even refused to read newspaper articles with the characters "atomic bomb."[21] Nakazawa became a paid assistant to the commercial manga artists Daiji Kazumine and Naoki Tsuji, and he made his solo debut in 1963 with the ongoing serial *Spark One*, about car racing and espionage ("one racing team was trying to steal the secrets of another racing team's car design," as he glosses it), in the magazine *Boys' Pictorial (Shōnen Gahō)*. "I did all kinds of genres," Nakazawa explains of his catholic tastes. "Sci-fi, baseball, samurais . . . I'd try my hand at anything."[22] In his early career in manga, he worked within multiple genres and mastered them.

Kimie Nakazawa's disintegrated body, her *bonelessness*, compelled Nakazawa to create comics about the bomb, a compensatory, material infrastructure. She died in October 1966 in Hiroshima, after ongoing treatment at the Atomic Bomb Hospital and suffering a cerebral brain hemorrhage. In Japanese funerary practice, after a body has been cremated, relatives pick out the major bones and place them in an urn.[23] When Nakazawa went to the crematorium to collect his mother's ashes, he was shocked that "there

were no bones left in my mother's ashes, as there normally are after a cremation. Radioactive cesium from the bomb had eaten away at her bones to the point that they disintegrated. The bomb had even deprived me of my mother's bones."[24] Devastated and infuriated by the invasion of the bomb into the very foundational structure of his mother, robbing him of anything solid to recover of her, to literally hold of her, Nakazawa resolved to make the atomic bomb the central subject of his cartooning practice.

As Herbert Bix writes in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, there was an immediate postwar censorship in Japan, imposed by the U.S. administration but endorsed by both sides, that forbade publications about suffering.[25] This predominant culture of silence persisted long past the end of the U.S. occupation of Japan in 1952. Nakazawa's early attempts, all fictional, to create narratives about Hiroshima in the late sixties were considered so politically radical that he had to publish them in an "adult"—meaning "erotic"—magazine.[26] His "Pelted by Black Rain," which appeared in May 1968, is a fictional account considered the inaugural "atomic bomb manga."[27] It was published in *Manga Punch*, a magazine for young men. In this regard, the field of production with which Nakazawa was imbricated looks much like the American comix underground, where determined political radicalism mixed with what was often the licentiousness of the taboo-shredding 1960s visionary cartoonists. An angry, hard-boiled genre story about a young bomb victim, "Pelted by Black Rain" was completed in 1966 and rejected by major commercial publishers for years until *Manga Punch* took it on despite the editor's expressed fears that both he and Nakazawa would be arrested by the CIA.[28] The "third-rate" magazines, the "lowbrows"—this is where Nakazawa was able to create a venue for circulating work about the bomb. The "black" series, presenting hard-boiled plotlines focusing on the atomic bomb, appeared in four additional installments: "The Black River Flows," "Beyond Black Silence," "A Flock of Black Pigeons," and "Black Flies."[29]

In 1970, still motivated by the urgency of addressing the bomb, Nakazawa published "Suddenly One Day," an eighty-page story about a second-generation bomb victim, conceived of as part of a "peace" series. It appeared in *Boys' Jump (Shōnen Jump)*, a boys' entertainment magazine founded in 1968 as a venue for newcomer talent, competing against the mainstream weeklies *Shōnen Magazine* and *Shōnen Sunday*, manga mainstays since the late 1950s.[30] While Yu Itō and Tomoyuki Omote write in an essay on Nakazawa that it "cannot be overlooked" that the work in *Boys'*

Jump was "at that time disdained as an extremely vulgar medium," that publication had a larger share of the market than *Manga Punch*: *Boys' Jump* sold a million copies a week in 1970. "Suddenly One Day" produced, to Nakazawa's surprise, a major reaction—he received hundreds of letters from people avowing that they had not known or understood even the basic factual parameters of the bombing that he conveyed in the fictional story.[31]

Nakazawa was both impressed and horrified by this correspondence, and depressed by the reimmersion that drawing scenes of the atomic bombing had caused him, as well as at the public backlash. Drawing and memory, particularly sense memory, became fundamentally intertwined: "When I was drawing . . . [t]he stench of rotting bodies returned to me."[32] The *Asahi* newspaper, in covering Nakazawa's controversial atomic bomb manga, publicly announced his status as a Hiroshima survivor. Nakazawa and his wife, Misayo, whom he had married in 1966, were stigmatized by neighbors, and criticized as bringing shame to their families. Misayo Nakazawa asked her husband to stop writing about the atomic bomb.[33] Nakazawa persisted in his focus on war, however, drawing eponymously titled manga about Okinawa prior to its reversion to Japanese administration in 1972 and a whole burst of fictional work about the bomb, creating a new manga field.[34] It is possible to see links between the conceptual and formal underpinnings of Nakazawa's comics and the Japanese art movements of the early 1970s, such as Mono-Ha (School of Things), particularly as a reaction to the annihilation caused by the bomb, but the growing commercial world of manga and the world of the Japanese avant-garde were then deeply stratified.

Finally, in 1972, the supportive editor of *Boys' Jump Monthly*, a supplement to *Boys' Jump*, decided to publish a series of autobiographical comics by manga artists and, knowing of his personal connection to the Hiroshima bombing, asked Nakazawa to be the first in the series.[35] As with Spiegelman in the exact same year, who initially begged off the comics story that became "Maus" for editor Justin Green, Nakazawa refused the invitation until editor Tadasu Nagano, who had published his recent fictional and controversial atomic bomb comics with enthusiasm, wore him down. For both Spiegelman and Nakazawa, these comics stories about witness necessarily involved producing, however contingently, identity affiliations connected to trauma with which both were uncomfortable. In thinking about how they overcame their mutual reluctance, the difference in the cultural contexts of their work becomes clear: the American underground comics

emphasized above all artistic independence (Spiegelman, despite his initial disinclination, eventually came around on his own to a powerful idea that would drive his story), while in Japan's commercial comics industry editors often played a significant, involved role in the careers of manga artists, as in Nakazawa's case.[36] *I Saw It*, Nakazawa's eyewitness account of August 6, 1945, was published in October 1972 in black and white, as a stand-alone, forty-five-page issue of *Boys' Jump Monthly* (Figure 3.1).[37] Indubitably inspired by the war, with this publication Nakazawa invented comics in 1972 in Japan as a form of witness. *I Saw It* was the first autobiographical comics work about the atomic bomb, and it opened up a significant cultural and aesthetic field of practice, confrontational visual idiom, and documentary imaginary.

I Saw It established a serious documentary mode for comics in Japan and was an unexpected success in the climate of the early 1970s, a time when the atomic bomb evoked embarrassment, shame, and silence. The English-language version was published in 1982 by the independent comics publisher EduComics as *I Saw It: The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima: A Survivor's True Story* (Figure 3.2).[38] John Hersey's best-selling *Hiroshima*, in which Hersey, in economical, unaffected prose, offers the reported stories of six civilian survivors before, during, and after the bomb, is the best-known Western work about Hiroshima from a Japanese perspective; it has never been out of print.[39] Nakazawa's narrative offers a similar perspective—but, crucially, in a non-Western voice, where Nakazawa's own witnessing becomes the primary form of expression: *I Saw It* is narrated, verbally *and* visually, by someone who himself had been hit by the bomb. *I Saw It* was printed as a full-color comic book—at that time, there were not that many full-color comic books that were not superhero comics, and so *I Saw It* stood out even in its U.S. context as reclaiming comics conventions for a new subject.[40] *I Saw It* became the basis for Nakazawa's globally important book series *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima (Hadashi no Gen)*, a project that began in Japan in 1972 as a long serial and ultimately concluded at approximately 2,500 pages across ten book volumes. The form, content, and international reception of *Barefoot Gen* show how comics developed across continents as a documentary practice of witness in response to World War II. *Barefoot Gen* was the first book-length manga translated into English, in 1978, by an all-volunteer international group of peace activists known as Project Gen.[41]

Figure 3.1 Keiji Nakazawa, original cover of *Ore Wa Mita*, 1972. (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

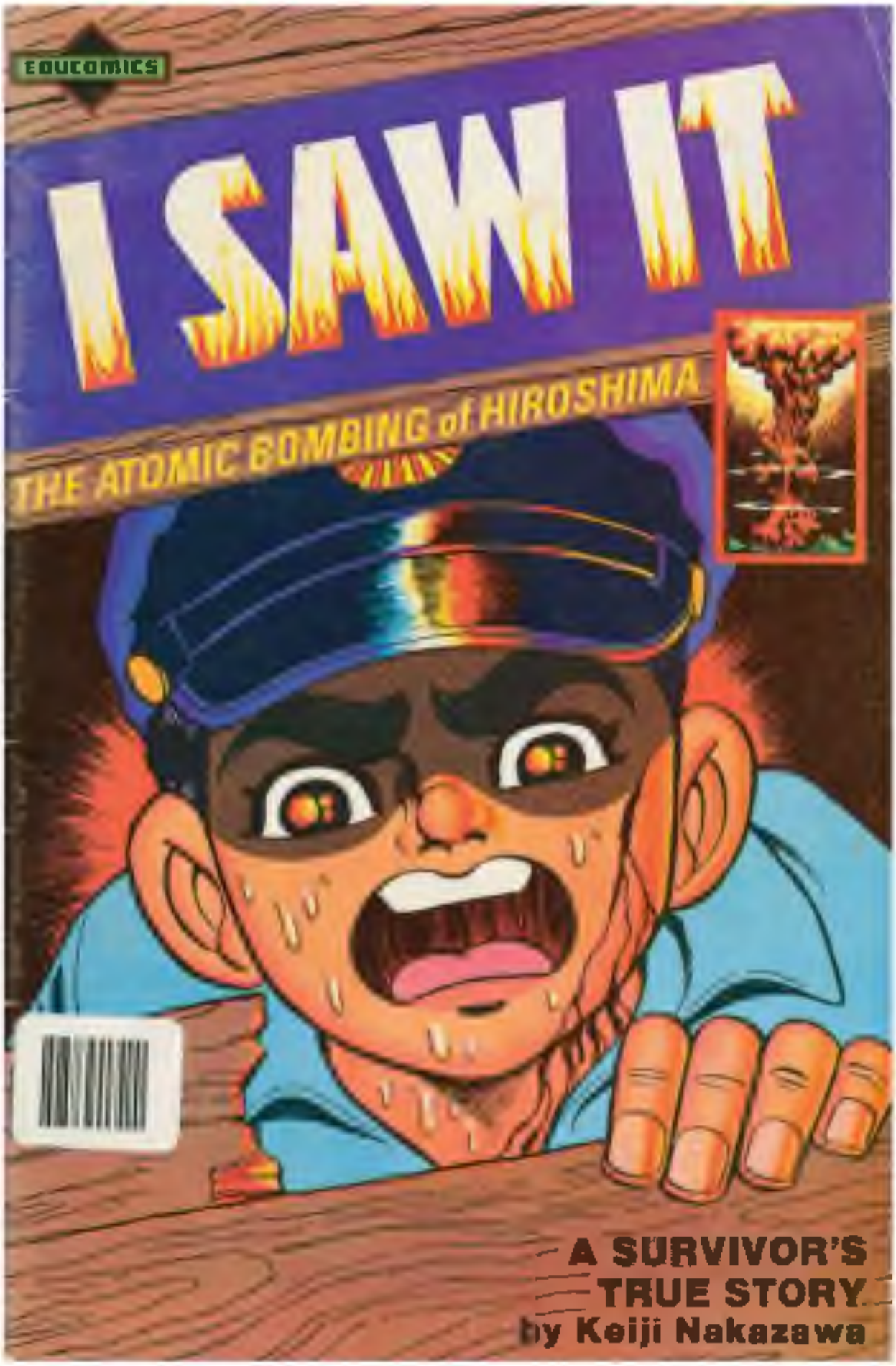


Figure 3.2 Keiji Nakazawa, cover of *I Saw It*, English-language edition (EduComics), 1982. (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

The world's most celebrated cartoonist, Robert Crumb, calls *Barefoot Gen* "some of the best comics ever done."[42] *Barefoot Gen* is one of the most famous manga in Japanese history, and as historian Ferenc Morton Szasz points out, it ranks as the most popular manga in Japanese history, with sales of over eight million copies.[43] It is one of the few manga in translation worldwide, with more than twenty-one foreign editions—including *Nudpieda Gen*, in Esperanto.[44] *Barefoot Gen* was the first manga used in Japanese schools in the 1970s; it has been adapted as two animated films, a live-action film, a television series, a play, and an opera.[45] Nakazawa's graphic narrative has achieved the status of a cultural truth in Japan, but it is often rendered one-note as a polemic or a heartwarming tale of survival, rather than a work deeply engaged with remembering terror and its aftermath. In a 2005 op-ed in the *New York Times* titled "An Anniversary to Forget," Joichi Ito, a Japanese citizen and the current director of the MIT Media Lab, notes how *Gen*, which in his view is one of the few popular "meaningful references to Japan's nuclear past," has "morphed into the cultural equivalent of elevator music."[46]

A rich, weird, and much more aesthetically complicated text than its treatment as a signal work of antinuclear polemic can sometimes indicate, *Gen* offers a trenchant critique of Japanese militarism and the imperial system alongside American warfare practices. Unlike famous works of "nonpolitical" *genbaku* (atomic bomb) literature—and popular works inspired by atomic radiation such as 1954's classic film *Godzilla (Gojira)*, *Gen* names and dwells on perpetrators. Further, it is unusual in being as critical of Japan as it is of the United States for the actions that led to the bomb.[47] Nakazawa grew up in an openly antiwar family: in 1940, his father was jailed for fourteen months for "thought-crime."[48] A theme of *Gen*, for instance, is Japan's mistreatment of Koreans, both globally and locally—to name just one example, the series features the ongoing plight of the Nakazawas' Korean neighbor Mr. Pak. (Nakazawa's resistance to the idea of the nation as the traumatized body of war, in Thomas LaMarre's reading, indicates that his critique of power edges toward a biopolitical paradigm.)[49] As an aesthetic object, *Gen* has a strange serial weight and rhythm, and a striking, violent visual idiom. *Gen* is still controversial in Japan forty years after its first appearance: in August 2013, the Matsue Municipal Education Committee pulled copies of the book off library shelves in the city's primary school, due to complaints about its graphic depictions of atrocities committed by Imperial Japanese Army troops on the Chinese

front—particularly images of beheading and rape (see vol. 10, *Never Give Up*, pages 19–20).[50]

While *Gen* is crucial to my view of Nakazawa's creation of a new graphic idiom for witness, I am interested in attending to the germinal *I Saw It*, a rarely analyzed work—despite being the only of Nakazawa's atomic bomb manga to announce itself as nonfiction, thus creating a new culture of documentary comics in Japan in the early 1970s. *Barefoot Gen*, which is billed as "semiautobiographical"—the protagonist is named Gen Nakaoka—and which repeats precisely many events and details of Nakazawa's earlier comic book, reveals an amplification of the themes and practices established in *I Saw It*, the work inaugurating comics as documents of eyewitnessing.

The Mark versus the Bomb as Documentarian: *I Saw It*

In *I Saw It*, Nakazawa explicitly names himself as the author and protagonist of his narrative. On page 2, the narration shifts from a sort of interiorized, contemplative mode as the protagonist remembers his mother to a scene of public address and testimony, where his body and visage turn outward to face readers and his speech balloon reads, "I am Keiji Nakazawa . . . born in Hiroshima City, March 1939 . . . [t]hird son out of five kids" (Figure 3.3).[51] Like Spiegelman in "Maus," published the same year, he introduces himself immediately as a son of war-ravaged parents. The next panel moves away from an exteriorized view of his body to a scene of his visual and aural memory, framed by the words "The earliest days I can remember were in the middle of the war that started in 1941." The postwar frames are marked by symbols of the past: the lily pads dotting the page's top panels are drawn like mushroom clouds, and the ripples in the water into which he gazes—which subsequently envelop his body, as a figure for memory—evoke the rippling out and up of the atomic bomb.[52] The nine irregular panels on the page suggest the present-day protagonist's distracted, fragmented psyche.

The page is conspicuously marked by its disarticulated body parts. Keiji Nakazawa's feet—the speech balloon looks awkwardly like it is floating up from his boots—open the page, enclosed in the panel. His mother's running bare feet, creating swift motion lines, and angled in the same direction, close the page in their own matching frame, creating a diagonal rhyme across its space; our first introduction to her is as disembodied movement. Before the graphic narrative even brings us to August 6, 1945, the perspective

Figure 3.3 Keiji Nakazawa, *I Saw It* (page 2). (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

of its panels and the composition of its pages underscore an uneasy groundedness that exists in tension with the unboundedness of the sky and aerial views located from space above. This sense of ground connects to the fact that *I Saw It* is an eyewitness account from the ground, which is to say from the perspective of someone hit by the U.S. dropping of the atomic bomb. However, this groundedness does not indicate psychic or bodily coherence; rather, it suggests the body under duress.

Nakazawa is both a protagonist who speaks within the diegetic space of frames and a narrator who provides overarching narration, which appears intermittently as floating text toward the upper inside edge of panels. In *I Saw It*'s frame narrative, Nakazawa walks through the streets of Tokyo in 1971 and remembers his dead mother's suffering. Quickly *I Saw It* moves backward temporally to 1945, but it does not begin with the atomic bomb: instead, it establishes the rhythm of dailiness for the Nakazawas in Hiroshima despite hunger and air raids, presenting scenes of everyday life in the modest, jolly group, in the family business of painting wooden clogs. In this, *I Saw It*'s narrative shape resists what Lisa Yoneyama, in her classic study of testimony and memory, *Hiroshima Traces*, identifies as the problematic conventional postwar "identity of a *hibakusha* as a one-dimensional speaking subject . . . [that is] constituted by prioritizing the speaker's ontological relationship to the bomb over his or her numerous other social relationships and positions."[5] (Amplifying the concerns of the originary work, in *Barefoot Gen* the bomb does not drop until page 249.)

August 6, 1945, takes place over thirteen pages in *I Saw It*, including a tense lead-up to the bomb that includes Keiji's sighting of the *Enola Gay*; the flash of the bomb itself (many Japanese referred to the bomb simply as *pika*, "flash"); his regaining consciousness and horrified apprehension of a suddenly unfamiliar population turned into a fleet of walking dead; his encounter with a neighbor who tells him the whereabouts of his mother, who had just given birth; and his mother's account of seeing her husband, son, and daughter die pinned under their collapsed, burning home. The panels of the bombing and its immediate aftermath unfold unhurriedly, cataloguing carefully, graphically, the effects of the bomb as the child observes them, each page a fresh encounter with bodies ruined in extraordinary ways. In the temporal languidity, Nakazawa conveys how trauma radically disjoints the experience of time, and the feeling of the child observer watching what his adult narrating self describes as "an endless procession of living specters" (page 20). The languorousness of these scenes

rhymes, it feels, with the terrifying visual spectacle Nakazawa chronicles of the slow hordes of burned people who move dazedly, "hunched forward, dragging their skin" — marching onward slowly and automatically (page 20). Later, his older brother returns and they ride a bicycle together through the ruins to their home to recover the bones of their father and siblings, which they bring back to their mother in a pail.

With the compression at which comics excels, *I Saw It* follows by documenting the bleak struggle to survive in the postwar days, months, and years, including the shattering death of Nakazawa's infant sister and the period when he goes back to school, where he is ridiculed, and later finds work, finally moving to Tokyo as a young man in the midst of his mother's declining health. His mother dies shortly after his marriage, and recognition of her bones' thorough decomposition is the turning point in his life that returns us to the present: he is a cartoonist giving himself his mother's bones back in comics, in a sense, by drawing them, drawing her—creating work about witnessing the atomic bomb that preserves, archives, and makes material his experience in the face of the war that decimated the very materiality of his mother. (In the later *Barefoot Gen*, Nakazawa revises his history so that Gen witnesses the deaths of his brother, sister, and father in the fallen house alongside his mother, registering the artist's desire to share the emotional—which here is to say optical—burden of the bomb with her, watching her family die.)

I Saw It is famous for visualizing the effect of the physical disfigurement wreaked by the bomb, such as bodies with flaps of dissolving skin dripping off their frames, eaten faces without eyeballs, and bald, burning women. As with many first-person comics, *I Saw It* shuttles back and forth between picturing the body of the narrator in space on the page and picturing his own optical perspective. Readers not only see Keiji witnessing but also witness his point of view — the perspective of the witness ("I saw it"). In other words, *I Saw It* produces a phenomenology of memory and trauma, both exterior and, crucially, interior; it captures both exterior and interior trauma. Nakazawa draws the enormous, overpowering, white-centered flash of the bomb in an elongated panel, with a hand-drawn time stamp in its upper right corner—8:15 a.m.—in a discursively multivalent image that catalogues witnessing both exoscopically and endoscopically, both as historical record-keeping and as an optical, embodied act. An even larger panel (and thus, perhaps, more heavily weighted) on the same tier displays a kind of expressionistic snapshot before Keiji loses consciousness: a tree breaking apart

amid a sweep of flying roof tiles. The pages that follow are characteristic of Nakazawa's portrayal of the intense suffering caused by the bomb: his child character, stricken, declares that "everybody's turned into monsters" (page 13; Figure 3.4).

The kinds of images Nakazawa drew were new to Japanese culture. A few years later, in 1975—perhaps influenced by the interest in Nakazawa's drawn documents—the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) published *Unforgettable Fire: Pictures Drawn by Atomic Bomb Survivors*. Despite featuring drawings by nonprofessionals, the volume does contain some images that feel close to Nakazawa's.[54] In a survey of World War II manga, sociologist Eldad Nakar writes that *I Saw It*—which he calls "unsparingly graphic" with its "gruesome scenes"—marks a shift in that "the horrific effect of the war is no longer hidden," as it had been previously, even in manga about the war.[55] And it is worth noting that Nakar is here comparing the autobiographical *I Saw It*'s graphic violence to war-oriented work in a whole range of genres, including fiction. The framework of first person survivor testimony *and* visual witness was also unprecedented. Iri and Toshi Maruki's famous fifteen-part *The Hiroshima Panels* (1951–1982), large paintings on traditional folding screens (roughly six by twenty-four feet), depict the aftermath of the Hiroshima bombing; the artist couple arrived in Hiroshima on August 9, 1945, and in 1950 completed the first panel, titled *Ghosts*, which bore witness to the human devastation.[56] But the Marukis' style, while portraying atrocity, has been accurately described as "poetic figurative realism."[57] In *The Hiroshima Panels*, one detects an aesthetic distance absent in the immediacy of *I Saw It*'s cruder hand-drawn images.[58]

I Saw It's mode of witnessing makes us take stock of the gross straightforwardness we might associate with science fiction—a booming Japanese genre in the era of censorship—as a genre of reality ("everybody's turned into monsters"). The grotesque clarity and directness of the comic book's images, which Nakazawa, who witnessed the fallout of Hiroshima with his own eyes, reconstructs for us here in a popular format, are an undeniable part of what makes *I Saw It* so powerful. The disjuncture, or lack of disjuncture, between the "exaggerated" rendering in the story—much of which is conventional to manga—and the real, decimating violence of the bomb throws into even greater proportion the catastrophe of "the real" in this narrative. Frederik Schodt offers a context for manga's stylistic conventions: "Japanese artists in all media have traditionally used a spare approach, concentrating on caricature or on revealing the overall 'essence' of a mood

Figure 3.4 Keiji Nakazawa, page after the bomb hits, *I Saw It* (page 13). (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

or situation," he notes. "Japanese art styles can bewilder Westerners. It is common, for example, for artists to create a very serious story in 'cartoony' style, or to draw humans in an abbreviated, caricatured style against a surrealistic background."[59] In Nakazawa's re-creation of his own Hiroshima experience as a graphic narrative created in Japan's most widely popular style, he structures his text around the productive tension between form (here the overstated idiom of manga) and content (the indubitably traumatic and gravely serious subject of the devastation of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima).

These graphic details show that Nakazawa's intervention resides as much in his visual idiom as in his political content. A text about witness that itself instantiates the "inexorable art of witness," *I Saw It* is also a graphic narrative *Künstlerroman*; it is a "manga on manga," to use the phrase of critic Kenji Kajiya.[60] *I Saw It*, like the subsequent *Barefoot Gen*, is conspicuously about mark-making. Very early in the comic book, Nakazawa presents a scene of his artist father kneeling, painting on a canvas, hand holding a brush, surrounded by dishes of ink (Figure 3.5). The son approaches his father, holding out a blank piece of paper: "Teach me how to draw a soldier, Papa!" (page 5). The blank sheet the son clasps is evident in the panel that also reveals his father's in-progress canvas as the son approaches his father's work: two frames, one blank and ready to be filled, enclosed in the comic book frame. "Don't you remember how, Keiji?" his father asks gently; the implication is that this exercise, this shared production of marks, is one the son repeats for pleasure. "All right—watch carefully now," Harumi says—and the comic closes in for four regular, tight panels on his hand, gripping a brush, inscribing the blank paper, starting with a loop that tracks the blank page. (This horizontal loop, a spiral when rotated vertically, connects with Spiegelman's memoir *Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!*, which opens with a scene very similar in spirit, of the young narrator-protagonist playing the "scribble game" with his mother; as in Nakazawa, the child and parent together make a drawing of a recognizable object from an inscribed abstraction.) As W. J. T. Mitchell points out, the vortex or spiral line is "the signature of the artist since Apelles and Hogarth, the sign of transformation and empathetic doodling."[61]

Throughout *I Saw It* there is conspicuous attention to implements, to revealing and spotlighting acts of marking, to the hand. Keiji finds his father's palette in the rubble of their house when he goes to retrieve his

Figure 3.5 Keiji Nakazawa. page of father and son drawing, *I Saw It* (page 5). (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

family's bones. It sits alone in a rare wordless panel—on the same page Keiji comes to hold and recognize his father's skull—and is echoed twelve pages later, in a matching placement on the page, by a panel spotlighting Keiji's first palette. In *I Saw It*, we read scenes depicting Keiji's excited reading of manga (pages 30, 31, 34), across pages in which Nakazawa portrays his love of consuming popular visual culture: he reads Tezuka, named in the text, with joyful total absorption—"there hadn't been any comics till then," the narrator explains—and he sits through his favorite movies (like *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) repeatedly (page 31). Scenes of Keiji absorbing visual culture, crucially, alternate with scenes of him marking on paper.

One panel in *I Saw It* presents Keiji surrounded at a low desk by what seems like a fortress of paper spread out on all sides, a kind of psychic armor. Sitting in the center, pencil in hand, he marks a page of foraged scrap paper with the lines of an empty frame, comics' essential unit of grammar. Here Nakazawa reveals how Keiji begins to frame his experience by drawing it. While this page with a blank frame faces him, the only two visual images we see inscribed on paper, on the floor along with crumpled balls of paper, are a fighter plane and a space rocket. The next page depicts him—again surrounded by paper—cartooning in bed, in the act of marking the white page in front of him. *I Saw It* shows us again and again Keiji engaged in the act of drawing (pages 31, 32, 35, 40), as well as painting when he begins work as a sign painter (pages 35, 36, 39). What is notable in these numerous instances is how Nakazawa draws himself in the act of drawing, revealing his hands in front of him on the paper, grasping the implement, so that we can see the mark traveling, as it were, from hand to paper. Comics is a haptic form for both its creators and its readers, and Nakazawa visually features the act of touching involved in mark-making (hand touching pen touching paper)—the actual practice of creating itself, and not just its result—in his autobiographical depiction.[62]

This is amplified in the *Barefoot Gen* series. After the success of *I Saw It*, Nakazawa's editors, who had "paid close attention to their readers' reactions," gave him unusual free rein to create a longer series based on his personal experiences.[63] Nakazawa started *Gen* almost immediately and published it serially from 1972 to 1987, filling ten volumes (all now available in English from publisher Last Gasp).[64] In *Barefoot Gen*, which follows its protagonist's daily life in much more detail than the earlier work, there are several critical artist characters whose bodily acts of mark-making

define the project that the later narrative shares with the original. (Nakazawa asserts that the episodes in *Barefoot Gen* all "really happened to me or to other people in Hiroshima"; while autobiographical, it also takes on a collective idiom of witness.)[65]

In *Barefoot Gen*'s arc, then, a key figure is Seiji Yoshida, an artist badly burned by the bomb. Seiji is covered by maggots and pus; his relatives isolate him to one room, fearful of catching his "bomb disease." Seiji's wealthy brother hires the poor and hungry Gen, who had been hawking his services on the street in Eba, to change Seiji's bandages. In the first view of Seiji's room, his cup of brushes, pencils, and palette knives rests on a table next to a tube of paint; framed portraits—a still life and a landscape—hang on the walls, facing readers. Thick swarms of flies buzz everywhere; some rest on the paintings, blots of rot. We see in the page's last panel that the flies come from maggots hatching in Seiji's foot. Later Seiji points out poignantly, "You lose just a single layer of skin, and people start treating you like an inhuman monster" (page 51). He cannot paint with his heavily bandaged hands. And in the post-bomb world, his serene pictures, as our first view of them dense with flies indicates, are no longer relevant: in front of Gen, he slashes them violently with a knife, destroying them.[66] A similar moment of shredding pre-bomb painting, as Kajiya points out, occurs with another central artist figure of the narrative, Amano Seiga.[67] Seiga, a grandfather, painter, and atomic bomb survivor Gen meets in the country six years after his encounter with Seiji, brutally chops his many paintings (also serene landscapes and still lifes) to bits with an axe in front of Gen and his own grandson.[68] After the bomb, with its massive destruction of the Japanese landscape, not only must these representations be destroyed, but also the memory of peaceability that they provoke as objects must be annihilated: images themselves are under attack. (After this performance of rage and helplessness, Seiga agrees to teach Gen the basics of painting, and it is through conversations with him that Gen develops his aspirational slogan, fitting to Nakazawa, that "art has no borders" [page 134].)

Barefoot Gen, like *I Saw It*, ultimately spotlights inscription by hand as a form of recording through its copious attention to mark-making. In perhaps the most tellingly self-reflexive scene in *Barefoot Gen*—and one that is key to my reading of the series and Nakazawa's work in general—Gen, his adoptive younger brother Ryuta (a so-called A-bomb orphan), and Seiji set out to find wide-open space to draw. Clearly yearning for the father artist figure, Gen convinces Seiji to teach him to paint, as he also does later on

with Seiga. As they come up to an embankment built around an army rifle range—the wounded Seiji in a cart pulled by Gen—they glance over the edge and realize it is a site of mass cremation and burial for bodies from all over Hiroshima. Grimly inspired, Seiji insists on "recording this" (vol. 3, page 115; Figure 3.6). Nakazawa and the figure of Seiji discursively merge in a large, tier-wide self-reflexive panel: the cartoonist Nakazawa enacts the recording vowed by the artist Seiji, as the optical perspective of the panel sweeps to the ground of the burial site, allowing Seiji's words, spoken from above the mass graves, to enter the frame and join the bodies on the ground. "I'm going to draw the suffering faces of every one of these people—turned into monsters and tossed away like old rags," the speech balloon reads, in a frame in which Nakazawa draws nine corpses, including three with large, detailed faces that seem to almost push out of the frame, their burned-out eye sockets staring at readers (page 115).

Seiji repeats his urgent need to draw the bodies, to show them—and, in the language repeatedly used in the passage, to *record* the dead: "I'm going to draw this . . . record it all" (page 120). Eliciting shocked cries from his child companions, he rolls himself down the embankment and crawls with his canvas under his arm and his paintbrush in his mouth to a heap of corpses; the brush in his mouth figures voice, the visual voice he creates and lends his subjects in the act of reconstituting them on paper. Seiji bears witness not only to mass death but also to the particularity of the people he sees. He addresses them—in their concrete, not generalized, material aspect—through his spoken interlocutory voice ("You," he addresses each, identifying features in individual bodies as he moves his eyes through the group) and through the visual voice of his drawing that bears witness to their individual existences, even evacuated of life.[9] He documents suffering on the ground, from the ground. Seiji compels the primitive body-made mark to record the devastation of war—what Nakazawa compels comics to do. Reinventing comics form, Nakazawa responds to the most high-tech of high technology, the atomic bomb, and the ominous march of technological scientific progress it represented, with the deliberately low-tech, primary practice of hand drawing.

The conceptual and material force of Nakazawa's comics inheres in how he counters the idea of the bomb as documentarian with his own form of witnessing and documentation. Following the early pages of *I Saw It* that establish the texture of Keiji's life through key vignettes, including his originary scenes of mark-making shared with his father (pages 5–6), Nakazawa

Figure 3.6 Keiji Nakazawa, page featuring Seiji Yoshida painting corpses. *Barefoot Gen Vol. 3: Life after the Bomb*, page 115. (© Keiji Nakazawa. Reprinted by permission of Last Gasp.)

offers a crucial statement that straightforwardly redirects the narrative to the bombing. In the top right corner of the panel that opens the page—which offers a view from below of the still dark early morning sky—is the sentence "On August 6, 1945, when I was just a first-grader, I witnessed a holocaust that left an indelible mark on history" (page 8). Here the figuration of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima as "leaving an indelible mark" is not only idiomatic, a cliché.

Rather, we can read Nakazawa's statement as literal: the atomic bomb, which Paul Virilio refers to as a "light-weapon," acted as a camera, inadvertently documenting its own destructiveness when the light produced by radiation was blocked by a solid object, imprinting surfaces—for instance, shadows on cement (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8).[70] This marking, this imprinting, occurred on surfaces both inorganic and organic; it has been called "shadowing" or "ghosting."[71] People wearing patterned clothing when the bomb dropped had these patterns imprinted onto their bodies. "If photography, according to its inventor Nicéphore Niépce, was simply a method of engraving with light," as Virilio argues, "where bodies inscribed their traces by virtue of their own luminosity, nuclear weapons inherited both the darkroom of Niépce and Daguerre and the military searchlight."[72] The Hiroshima atom bomb, named "Little Boy"—created using uranium-235, a radioactive isotope of uranium—was the result of many years and approximately $2 billion in scientific research for the atomic bomb project (which included plutonium, used in the Nagasaki attack). Its nuclear flash both vaporized bodies en masse and left its own documentary photographic imprint.

Akira Mizuta Lippit understands the atomic blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to be "massive cameras," and in turn he suggests how "the victims of this *dark atomic room* can be seen as photographic effects."[73] In *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*, Lippit argues, "The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 initiated a new phenomenology of inscription. . . . [This was] a singularly graphic event, an event constituted graphically, which put into crisis the logic of the graphic. . . . Atomic irradiation can be seen as having created a type of violent *photography* directly onto the surfaces of the human body." The atomic bomb functioned as a camera, a documentarian; it enacted a high-technology method and devastating practice of documentary inscription. There can be no "authentic photography of atomic war," Lippit suggests, because "the bombings themselves were a form of total photography, testing the very visibility of the visual." For Lippit,

Figure 3.7 Shadow effect: Unidentified photographer, flash burns on steps of Sumimoto Bank Company, Hiroshima branch. (Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., photo no. 243-H-982.)

Figure 3.8 Shadow effect: Unidentified photographer, "shadow" of a hand valve wheel on the painted wall of a gas storage tank; radiant heat instantly burned paint where the heat rays were not obstructed, Hiroshima, October 14–November 26, 1945. (Courtesy of the International Center of Photography.)

the horrifying sense produced by the atomic bombs of "the world a camera, everything in it photographed," leads him to a principal theoretical premise of his book, which he describes as "avisuality" ("a visuality without images, an unimaginable visuality, and images without visuality").[74] Nakazawa's documentary practice, in contradistinction, is about its own very visible visuality, specifically as a form of counterinscription to the atomic bomb's mode of inscription (and death) by light.

I Saw It's hand-drawn form is a documentary counterinscription to the bomb as camera. A deliberately primitive technology that operates as a countermarking and countervisuality, its comics form signifies the bodily in the act of making marks against the techne of bodies marked and vaporized by the bomb's light. To the removed, clinical, superlatively high-technology mode of inscription (and one dropped from above on an unsuspecting populace), Nakazawa counters with perhaps the world's most basic technology—and one associated with the solid surface of the earth. Elaine Scarry, as I note in the Introduction, identifies marking as the most basic urgency of any culture to make. "In any culture," asserts Scarry, "the simplest artifact, the simplest sign, is the single mark on wood, sand, rock, or any surface that will take the imprint."[75] Important comics frames reveal the protagonist marking the ground in *Gen*, as when Gen writes "Mama" repeatedly in the ground during Kimie's illness and when after her death Gen carves the word *jiritsu* (self-reliance) into a rocky dirt road in enormous characters bigger than his own body.[76] This latter scene is conspicuously attentive to the manual process of imprinting (Figure 3.9). The page opens with a frame whose close view is on hands jabbing a sharpened branch into the ground. Nakazawa then lingers over the depth of the mark in two subsequent frames that focus even more closely on the implement traversing the surface. As the documentary *White Light/Black Rain*, among other many sources, shows, Air Force pilots and top brass wrote messages (on Hiroshima's "Little Boy") and their own names (on Nagasaki's "Fat Man") on the atomic bombs.[77] The hand-drawn document *I Saw It*, for which this scene in *Gen* is synecdochical, functions as a countersignature from the ground, responding vehemently to the multivalent "signature" of the bomb from above.[78]

The atomic bomb directly produced a violent photography. In some cases the record it created was of an object that remained intact through the flash, such as the hand valve, and in other cases it created a record of a human body that itself was destroyed. Comics marks both things: the indelible pres-

Figure 3.9 Keiji Nakazawa. tier of panels (drawing "self-reliance"). *Barefoot Gen Vol. 8: Merchants of Death*, page 253. (© Keiji Nakazawa. Reprinted by permission of Last Gasp.)

ence of trauma, but also its limit. In Nakazawa's phenomenology of trauma, comics is the place where the destruction gets recorded, and it is a register of something not destroyed onto which an image can be made. Nakazawa established a new idiom by documenting "the violent inscriptions of light and shadow on the Japanese body" as content in comics, in a revealing, unsparing, direct visual mode audiences had not previously encountered."[9] Further, we can understand that he was motivated by that inscription of light and shadow on the body to generate an iterative form for documentation—for witnessing—that does not replicate it. (Intriguingly, Tatsumi's manga story "Hell" registers suspicion of this technology too: published in 1971, it is about a Japanese military press photographer's radical misperception of the "ghostly silhouettes.")[10]

In Nakazawa's political and aesthetic logic, his hand-drawn images are a counterburning—a spectacle that engages, or reengages, the reader with the realities of the bomb. Nakazawa takes on burning in his work as an action upon sight, a somatic provocation. Seiji, in a climatic scene, rips off his bandages and demands to show contemptuous Japanese citizens his burned body—a spectacular act of display that Nakazawa himself enacts in his drawing of it. "I'm going to burn the sight of this ugly body into their brains," he vows (vol. 3, page 133). In Art Spiegelman's introduction to the first two *Barefoot Gen* volumes, he writes that *Gen* "burned its way into

my heated brain with all the intensity of a fever-dream."[81] Spiegelman echoes this language in an interview, compellingly mixing metaphors of temperature to indicate the affective extremity of Nakazawa's work. "What comes through is so chilling and burns its way so far into your brain," Spiegelman explains of his reading experience, "that I would say the descriptions of the Hiroshima bombing are more firmly etched inside me than many of the written or photographic testaments I've seen."[82]

Plasticity and Corporeality

The mark in Nakazawa's work is both itself etched and longing to be etched, then—to burn inside a reader's brain. (As W. J. T. Mitchell asks, *What do pictures want?*) But how to describe this mark that also becomes an image, and what its shape, weight, and texture accomplish? Nakazawa's marks, or his lines, convey openness and accessibility: generally, we see black linework alongside moderate shading and cross hatching. This set of solid, expositional marks mixes with what can be a more detailed rendering of environments, particularly architectural or topographical in the case of Hiroshima (see Figure 3.10), and with the jumpier exuberance of lines depicting movement, from raging fires to the dripping sweat on characters' faces that is conventional to expressing emotion in manga. In *Barefoot Gen*, the conventions of boys' manga *(shōnen manga)* become amplified, particularly with the introduction of a range of slapstick movement—Gen is often leaping into the air in joy or rage, kicking up puffs of speed and vertical mobility. In one of the few substantial analyses of Nakazawa's visual style, Thomas LaMarre correctly points out, as I suggest throughout this chapter, that *Gen* defies the paradigm of trauma in which representation proves inadequate to depiction. Yet even though *Gen* "leans toward the composition of forces rather than toward the decomposition of representation," he writes, "there is a disjuncture."[83] This manifests itself in Nakazawa's style through the dynamics of the line, LaMarre argues, particularly the co-presence of what he suggestively deems the "structural line" and the "plastic line."

The cartoon line itself is generally plastic; inspired by Sergei Eisenstein's unfinished essay on Disney (composed in large part during the war years, 1940–1946), LaMarre describes it as having a plasticity that "tends to keep open the play between different levels of synthesis, such that we see and feel its dynamic across levels."[84] Cartoons, then—Eisenstein did not

Figure 3.10 Keiji Nakazawa, pane of Keiji and his brother going to collect family bones, *I Saw It* (page 23). (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

distinguish drawings from animated cartoons, using the blanket term "cartoon" for both—return us to a primitive elasticity, fluidity, and flexibility.[55] The plastic line jumps out all over Nakazawa's work: in the springy depictions of Gen as boy hero (the plastic line attaches to children, LaMarre points out); in the copious gag violence of *Gen*, traditional to boys' manga; in the explosive force of Gen's roving anger at Japanese and American cultural and military practices.[56] This anger, instantiated in the plastic line, is held back by the structural line, which is a formalized, regularizing line—for instance, the rectilinear lines of a comics panel—in a dialectical struggle.[57] Focusing intently on registers of style, LaMarre understands the major question of Nakazawa's work to be: *Can there be plasticity after the bomb?*[58]

Just as Spiegelman claims that the vividness of *Gen* "emanates from something intrinsic to the comics medium itself," LaMarre reminds readers that in Nakazawa's work, "trauma is not separable from the medium of comics itself. In other words, if we simply seize upon the 'message' of trauma or its politics, we miss the tonality and the materiality of violence itself, which is related to the medium."[30] LaMarre's suggestion underlines my reading of *I Saw It* as a counterinscription, a counterburning: "the manga bomb explodes with and against the atomic bomb," he writes.[31] The persistent plasticity—unruliness, unruledness, animism—of Nakazawa's lines (or strokes or marks) is a feature of what I identify above as Nakazawa's political-aesthetic logic.

For LaMarre, similarly, we can recognize manga as a political and historical orientation. Nakazawa "spurs a commitment to following the plastic line in shōnen manga," he argues, "which is prolonged not merely into a politics of affirming or protecting life but into a politics *in which life itself emerges as radical exposure*, in which explosion of the plastic line enacts resistance at the very site where life enters politics."[32] In comics, one feels the constant tension between what can be contained within the frame and what cannot be contained within it—both in terms of historical realities and in terms of the burden of expressing those realities. Comics makes readers aware of what can be pictured and what cannot be pictured. It is a form, then, that is *about* disjuncture at its most basic: in what we see in the frame and do not see in the gutter, in what we make of the gap between word and image. The shape and textures of lines on the page, and how they interact, also produce this disjuncture, allowing readers to recognize how thoroughly Nakazawa's work takes on the post-atomic body not only as a theme but also as the structure of its iteration.

The plasticity of Nakazawa's line (a reaction, perhaps, to the "burning flat" or "knocking flat" of his native city) is an index of its signature corporeality. Across all of its aspects—in its content, what I think of as its somatic provocations, its form—Nakazawa's atomic bomb manga invokes the corporeal. One recognizes the corporeality *within* the diegetic spaces of Nakazawa's work—from its shredded, burned bomb victims to the crying, pissing, shitting, eating, pounding, and punching protagonist children carrying on in the aftermath. "What remains constant" in *Gen*, as one critic aptly puts it, "is the grotesquerie and agony of survival"—and this is a closely chroni-

cled *bodily* survival.[92] This bodiliness, which sometimes registers as a carnivalesque excess, is not without its pleasures. Gen, a boy without sanctimony, revels in bodily revenge: he urinates on his foes, in addition to thwacking them, and even smears feces in the face of a doctor in cahoots with the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC), the commission established by the United States in 1947 that studied radiation effects but failed to treat survivors in Hiroshima.[93] Manga critic Bill Randall notes that the "characters have a heft and solidity, a corporeal presence. This weight stems from a combination of heavy linework, a sensitivity for motion and a profound link to the ground for all characters, something that makes Gen's perpetual leaping and dancing all too tied down by gravity."[94] The characters' relentless bodiliness, reinforced by their connection to the ground, aligns them figuratively and literally throughout with the perspective of the bombed witness, in contradistinction to the disembodied aerial perspective of the U.S. B-29s, with their target sites and aerial recordings.

In Nakazawa's manga, as in many of the comics I discuss in this book, we also recognize what Takayuki Kawaguchi identifies as the reading experience of *Gen*, one that "involves a peculiar corporeality."[95] While my own earlier writing on comics has focused on the embodiment of the creator in the act of composing comics—an act of embodiment that translates to the page—the documentary comics I explore in this book also bring the issue of the reader's embodiment to the forefront. This is due to the graphically violent nature of many of their wartime images—and also to how they propose meaning by generating readers' awareness of their own contingent, durational, embodied activity of *reading* and *looking* at the mark, the panel, the page. In Nakazawa's work, prone to a repetition that indexes trauma, the "peculiar corporeality" his comics provoke can be draining. "His images of melting skin and raw brutality exact a physical toll greater than the work of any other comic artist," Randall affirms.[96] Invoking similar language, Ma deems Nakazawa's images of maggot-ridden bodies "nauseating," and she suggests that "the rawness of Nakazawa's art still assaults our senses."[97]

There are two central reasons today's form of nonfiction comics developed so forcefully out of the postwar period. The first has to do with visual witnessing, the way that comics can offer an absorptive intimacy with their

narratives while defamiliarizing received images of history. *I Saw It* and "Maus" are both narratives of terror that devolve on *images* of terror: the zombielike, decomposing citizens of Hiroshima that Nakazawa witnessed firsthand; and the corpses, both pictured and implied, that people the Spiegelman son's visual reconstruction of his father's death-camp testimony. We might think of approaching World War II, after the broad silence that surrounded the war in America and in Japan, as mandating afresh Shklovsky's "new seeing" of reality. Comics picks up steam in the early 1970s as this new seeing. Motivated by the urgencies of re-seeing or re-visioning the war, comics sought to defamiliarize received images of history, and also to communicate, to circulate in realms of the popular. I do want to acknowledge a different argument, however: the Yale historian Laura Wexler argues that Nakazawa aims to *familiarize* Hiroshima by putting domestic bodies in images of the city, to counteract the cold point of view of U.S. military aerial photography of the city after the bombing.[28] In either reading—mine or Wexler's—what we see is that in the early 1970s, the emotional and intellectual exigencies of World War II had the opportunity to metabolize into formal innovation, into expanding modalities for capturing traumatic histories that were not yet part of a culture of expression.

In comics documenting war we also understand the form's ability to reconstitute lost bodies in its drawn lines. The subject of these comics, and often the procedure of composing them, is a resurrection or materialization of bodies in form in the mark on the page. (Cartoonist Alison Bechdel, for one, figures paper as skin and ink as blood.) The corporeality of the work comes to stand in for the missing corporeality of the dead parent, eviscerated by war. While both Anja Spiegelman and Kimie Nakazawa "survived" the war, the war, in a sense, killed both mothers in the late sixties: Spiegelman was a suicide in 1968, and Nakazawa died, as mentioned, from complications of radiation-induced leukemia in 1966. Like *Maus*, dedicated to Anja Spiegelman, *I Saw It* is an obituary for an absent mother destroyed by World War II.

In the same way that the irrecoverable absence of his mother's account of the Holocaust is motivation for Spiegelman to reconstruct Holocaust testimony, to make radically visible and present the narrative of his family's life as best he can, for Nakazawa the decimation of his mother's body from atomic radiation—its complete deconstitution—is also the reason he

decides to embark on a career of testimonial visibility. As discussed, this is the explicit subject of *I Saw It*'s frame narrative. Nakazawa details the painful scene of primary motivation, which is about a physical evacuation we see countered in the frames—or bones—of the comics page (Figure 3.11). Even as it depicts her ashes, this page of his encounter with her boneless-ness reconstitutes the mother's body in its own concretization; one might even understand its gutters as cartilage. (Thierry Groensteen's concept of comics's "arthrology," a way to think about layout and the relationship of elements on the page, is suggestive here because it indicates the jointing that comics pages propose.)[99] The rectangular cart onto which Kimie's ashes are delivered to her son also conspicuously frames what is left of her body in clearly bordered space, echoing the son's own hand-drawn frames that commemorate and, more important, evoke her. Framing her experience, and his own, in hand-drawn comics boxes presents a psychic and material architecture of memory and history. The page becomes a foundation, a body, a corporeal index and archive.

I Saw It and "Maus" aspire to give voice and body to the mother's absent—decimated, wordless—body in composing a narrative form contoured by testimony so tangible, so manifest, so radically visible as to figure the reinstatement of a more intimate bodily form, the mother's body. The reconstruction of bodies on the page—what Spiegelman has called "materializing" history—addresses this loss with visual shape; as Clark Coolidge and Philip Guston phrase a simple but powerful suggestion, "To draw is to make be."[100] There is an instantiation of the lost body on the page in comics.

Japan's comics culture grew enormously after World War II, when Western comics were imported in large number, and strong narrative structures for comics developed in children's comics publications, which then claimed adult audiences, shifting the field dramatically. Modern comics as form had gained shape in large part because of the influence of the *Japan Punch* (1862–1887), which was based on the canonical English satire publication *Punch* (1841–1996) and was created by Charles Wirgman, an Englishman who arrived in Japan as a correspondent for the *Illustrated London News*.[101] (Wirgman never left, dying in Yokohama in 1891.) As Hiroshi Odagiri points out, Japan's modern manga took so-called *ponchi-e* (*Punch* pictures) as its point of departure.[102] And Adam Kern suggests that the beginning of contemporary manga might be considered the serialization of a Japanese children's comic strip, Shosei and Katsuichi's *Shochan's Adventure*, alongside translated Western imports such as George McManus's

Figure 3.11 Keiji Nakazawa, *I Saw It* (page 43). (Used by permission of Misayo Nakazawa, arranged with Japan UNI Agency, Inc.)

Bringing Up Father in the *Asahi Graphic Weekly* in 1923.[103] We can note the bidirectional roots of cross-cultural exchange in Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama's *The Four Immigrants Manga: A Japanese Experience in San Francisco, 1904–1924*, an often humorous, actually bilingual (Japanese and English) hardcover 104-page proto–graphic novel printed in Japan and bound in San Francisco in 1931 that chronicles in a series of comic strips the misadventures of four Japanese friends in California.[104]

However, Japan's comics culture developed from culturally specific antecedents that shape its tradition, such as early picture scrolls from the twelfth century, the most famous of which is the ink-on-paper Chōjū Giga (Animal Scrolls), attributed to Bishop Sojo Toba (1053–1140).[105] The pictorial, sequential art of scrolls was often religious, illustrated by Buddhist monks, and circulated to a limited powerful audience including the clergy and aristocracy. Secular woodblock prints from the seventeenth century and beyond, however, were produced for a popular audience, such as the *ukiyo e* illustrations that began as depictions of Yoshiwara, a decadent area of Edo (now Tokyo)—pictures of the "Floating World," a term suggestive of life's uncertainties and the search for pleasure.[106] (*Ukiyo-e*, especially with Hokusai, continued to grow more aesthetically precise and inventive.) By the mid-nineteenth century, a variety of formats of caricature and sequential art, some quite sophisticated, had proliferated across periods, including *otsu-e*, Buddhist-inspired folk art; *toba-e*, bound books of twenty to thirty witty cartoons; *akahon*, lowbrow "red books," eventually joined by black and blue books; and *kibyōshi*, yellow-covered books with strong storylines.[107] By and large the Japanese manga tradition and the U.S.-European comics tradition have developed independently, but we can see that these spaces of the popular were expanded globally, and really reinvented, in the early 1970s to address the disturbing legacies of war.

There are, of course, a range of important precursors to the emergence of comics of witness, even in the framework of the Pacific War. In Miné Okubo's *Citizen 13660* (1946), illustrated with pen-and-ink sketches, the Japanese American Okubo records life in the Tanforan and Topaz internment camps, where she and thousands of others were held in "protective custody" after Pearl Harbor, and where cameras were prohibited.[108] While

Okubo's narrative combines word with image and offers a fascinating documentary model, *Citizen 13660* differs from the body of work whose postwar increase I am interested in tracing, which specifically understands itself as comics and articulating comics conventions.[109] It was not until 1972 that comics itself became a form for witnessing in any kind of nonfiction context.

However, in the United States, one might consider the foundations of comics to be built, in some way, on atomic fears and possibilities. As Szasz points out, many if not most of the form's early field-setting—and transmedia—exemplars, such as *Buck Rogers* (which began in 1929) and *Flash Gordon* (which began in 1934), have plots premised on radioactivity, as does the more recent *Spider-Man*. They were filled with references to the "atomic," a term that in context implied both a positive energy benefit and potentially devastating weapons.[110] In the interwar years, Szasz argues, comics contributed hugely—even more than professional science writing, and along with science fiction—to popular understandings of the basic framework of nuclear futures, in part because of how they visualized scientific events and possible outcomes.[111] In August 1945, the *New York Herald Tribune*, among other papers, declared that President Truman's Hiroshima press release was as if the "fantasies of the 'comic' strips were actually coming true." After the release of the bomb on August 6, *Enola Gay* copilot Robert Lewis remarked "the actual sight caused all of us to feel that we were Buck Rogers 25th Century Warriors."[112]

Szasz traces the evolution of three main types of atomic comics in the postwar period: educational comics for young people, short-lived new fangled atomic superheroes, and customary superheroes taking on the fissioned atom in their storylines.[113] While comic books created more atomic bomb stories than any other media form, Szasz confirms, and images of mushroom clouds blossomed all over the comics, what is clear is the rarity of sophisticated nonfiction accounts—and any that themselves took the form of witness.[114] As discussed in the Introduction, there were many comics about World War II that sought to engage the war, especially with abundant imagery, but which actually engaged history indirectly, even as many of them thematized the act of witnessing.[115]

And on the other end of the cultural spectrum in the 1940s, inverting the word-and-image problematic, we can see the inability—or the simple lack of desire—to grapple with images of war in the *New Yorker*, which ran John Hersey's groundbreaking "Hiroshima" as its entire issue on August 31, 1946, but which offered a cover of a New England vacation by Charles

E. Martin (Figure 3.12). *The New Yorker* indicated the enormity of its subject by transforming its own format—allowing one article to run uninterruptedly for the whole issue for the first time in its history—but it refused to tamper with its genteel visual aesthetic.[116] Five years later, in 1951, Laurence Hyde extended the tradition of the wordless novel, with its strong history of social justice, to atomic issues in *Southern Cross: A Novel of the South Seas*, which presents 118 wood engravings imagining destructive atomic bomb testing in the Bikini Atoll in 1946. While Northrop Frye reviewed it on the radio, connecting "simple" pictures with the actual recognition of nuclear reality ("man . . . can tie himself up in words"), the small-press book, now considered a classic, was an outlier, as opposed to a galvanizer.[117]

In subsequent decades, atomic anxiety and anger around models of progress attached to nuclear power shaped underground comics powerfully; the underground became a space in which political fears, including fear of the destruction of the planet, found shape.[118] An engagement with atomic anxiety is also a large feature of superhero comics of the period; two of Marvel's enduring Silver Age superheroes are Spider-Man and the Hulk, both of whom derive their powers from nuclear radiation.[119] In the underground, Ron Turner started one of the major, lasting, significant independent comics publishers and named it, appropriately, Last Gasp. Its first title, the also aptly named *Slow Death Funnies* #1 (1970), was a benefit title for the Ecology Center in Berkeley, the first of its kind. *Skull Comics*, among other gloomily named anthologies, followed from Last Gasp. Meanwhile, Rip Off Press, the other key underground outlet, published *Hydrogen Bomb and Biochemical Warfare Funnies* #1 in 1970 with the subtitle running vertically down the spine: *Apocalyptic Apocrypha for Apoplectic Apostates*.

The first story, significantly, is by Robert Crumb, whose hugely resonant comics inaugurated the underground comics movement in 1968 and gained wide recognition. Crumb's comics, as Leonard Rifas points out, repeatedly refer to nuclear destruction. In *Foo*, the comics magazine he self-published with his brother Charles in 1958, mushroom clouds appear repeatedly—including as the concluding image of the first issue.[120] In Crumb's famous *Zap* #0 (1968), the story "City of the Future" ends with the President of the World pushing "the button," producing an enormous mushroom cloud to "blow up the world!!" Helen Swick Perry, in 1970's *The Human Be-In*, analyzes forces that in retrospect one can read as an explanation of the rise of comics culture: "Two central messages seemed to emerge from Hiroshima, followed so shortly by mass television: *unless something is done*, we shall all perish by thermonuclear accident . . . *and there is nothing to do about*

Figure 3.12 Charles E. Martin, cover of the *New Yorker* ("Hiroshima" issue). August 31, 1946. (© Charles E. Martin/*The New Yorker*.)

it, except sit in front of the picture box." She continues, "In the process of trying to escape this double message, the young in the Haight-Ashbury disavowed television as the focal point of their interest; practically none of them watched television at all. Yet in another way, the television screen had taught the young the power of a symbol, the importance of pictures."[121] What she calls this double message is registered in the creation of underground comics.

In the opening piece of *Hydrogen Bomb Funnies*, "Mr. Sketchum," Crumb offers a brilliantly succinct one-page story—four clean rows of two frames each—that expresses the fear of the end of world that fueled much underground culture and production (Figure 3.13). Mr. Sketchum, a boyish cartoonist, gets an idea at the drawing board, pencil in hand: "I'm going to send some o' my cartoons to Bertrand Russell!!" (Russell, the philosopher and famous nuclear disarmament activist, died later that year.) He walks to a mailbox with a shining sun and cityscape in the background, mails the letter, then looks up to see a bomb dropping through the sky. "What's that!" he proclaims. The clearly marked H-bomb falls to his eye level, and his pencil flies out from behind his ear. The comic pauses—stopping time, as comics does—as Sketchum mutters, "Gee . . ." before exploding. In the final frame, a speech balloon emanates from only a pair of glasses hovering in the air: "Now I'll never know if Bertrand Russell liked my cartoons." As with Nakazawa, this piece pits a cartoonist in the act of writing and drawing by hand against the disembodied technological prowess of the bomb.

Underground cartoonists, including founders of the movement such as Crumb, made comix the arena in which they could visualize disaster. Crumb explains of his Marine father: "He survived World War II and was sent in to Hiroshima ten days after the Americans dropped the atomic bomb. I can't even imagine the things he witnessed. He never talked about it."[122] World War II and its repercussions—atomic warfare, the Cold War—become visualizable, imaginable, in comics, animating a generation that in some cases was haunted even by the silence it engendered. In 1976, Leonard Rifas started the independent publishing company EduComics in order to promote nonfiction comics and specifically his underground comic book *All-Atomic Comics*, which went through five printings; he published *I Saw It* in 1982.[123]

In the United States, the underground comix movement, and even many earlier genres of comics, from comic strips to wordless novels, revealed an

Figure 3.13 R. Crumb, "Mr. Sketchum," *Hydrogen Bomb Funnies* #1 (Last Gasp), 1970. (© R. Crumb.)

atomic haunting, an atomic imaginary, that we might say was foundational to comics at key moments. But the atomic *reality* was voiced in hand-drawn words and pictures by Keiji Nakazawa, creating a field, a movement, and a transcultural exchange. Motivated by World War II, in the early 1970s Nakazawa—and Spiegelman—invented comics afresh as a testamentary form to violence.

In 1972, "Maus" was first published in *Funny Animals*, an underground comic book anthology edited by Terry Zwigoff and Justin Green, who stipulated only that the stories contained within must somehow be anthropomorphic. Spiegelman, born in Sweden in 1948 to Polish Holocaust survivors, produced "Maus," a three-page story employing the abstraction of an animal metaphor even as it announced itself as a nonfiction narrative. Spiegelman interviewed and taped his father, Vladek (unnamed in the piece), about surviving Auschwitz; the transmission of that testimony from father to son is the framework of the story. "Maus," unlike *I Saw It*, was received with very little fanfare in 1972; Spiegelman recounts that cartoonists, unable to assimilate the serious content, complimented his rendering of mice. Meanwhile, his father's survivor friends, unable to recognize the mice or to recognize visually shaped narrative, reacted only by situating themselves in relation to the facts presented in the story. In the Robert Crumb cover to *Funny Animals*, in which two nattily dressed cats lust after a callipygian chicken girl, we can recognize, as with *I Saw It*'s appearance in the lowbrow *Boys' Jump Monthly*, what might seem like a discordance: serious work about the status of eyewitnessing, in an uncharted form, yet shaping and being shaped by the field of the popular. As Green explains of the ethos of underground cartoonists, "[We' all held to the ideal of reaching a common audience while reinventing the formal boundaries that defined the medium."[24]

Nakazawa and Spiegelman's foundational texts opened a new phase for hand-drawn forms of witness and the representation of war broadly—and they also generated lengthier works that circulated internationally and created a phenomenon in popular culture. *I Saw It* became the basis for the long-form graphic narrative *Barefoot Gen*, the serial that became Japan's most popular manga and a globally important book series; "Maus" became

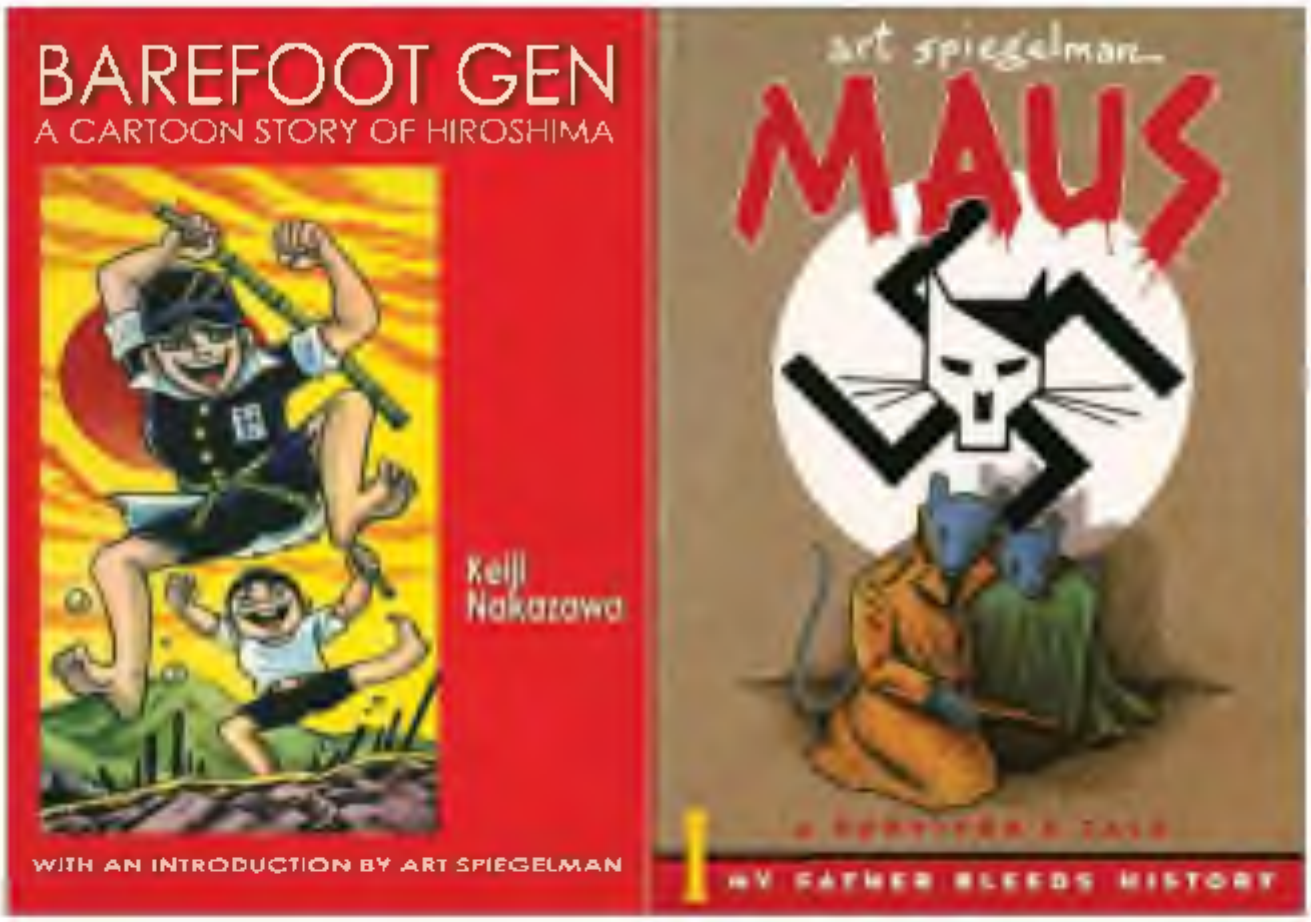


Figure 3.14 *Left:* Keiji Nakazawa, cover of *Barefoot Gen*, first trans. 1978. (© Keiji Nakazawa Reprinted by permission of Last Gasp.) *Right:* Art Spiegelman, cover of *Maus I*, 1986. (Copyright © 1986 by Pantheon Books, a division of Random House LLC; from *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* by Art Spiegelman. Used by permission of Pantheon Books, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.)

the basis for the long-form graphic narrative *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, arguably the world's most famous work of comics, which first appeared serially in 1980 in *RAW* magazine and was published to massive critical acclaim by Pantheon as two book volumes in 1986 and 1991, forever altering the terrain of comics in America and worldwide (Figure 3.14). *Barefoot Gen*, as I noted earlier, was the first book-length manga translated into English, in 1978, by an international group of peace activists. Spiegelman read it that year.