

Ashes. Words and Images in the Forms of Remembrance

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1. Trauma as a Political Issue

My first and only meeting with Tony Harrison happened a few years ago, in May 2010,¹ when I was involved in a presentation of his work with specific reference to his film poems.² The event – *Poesia in scena, poesia in video* – was meant to reflect on how words and images interlace in Harrison’s poetry of commitment and it plausibly included the screening of *The Gaze of the Gorgon* (1992), introduced by Andrea Lorenzini, who had translated and edited the subtitles of the film. During the meeting, the poet explained his position on the Holocaust and the way in which *The Gaze of the Gorgon* tried to approach and resist Adorno’s statement that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of how it has become impossible to write poetry today” (34). While proposing commitment through poetry as a possible way out of Adorno’s “barbarism”, Harrison also mentioned *The Shadow of Hiroshima* (1995), somehow connecting two different holocausts in the same historical frame and showing how they can both become the hub of poetic vision.

Quite obviously the notion of trauma kept cropping up, and it was presented as an experience that cannot be *merely* individual or *simply* collective: it necessarily interweaves the individual perspective and the collective dimension in ways that can be described as defensive answers to unbearable conditions (Scarry 60-81; Luckhurst 4-7). Trauma drives both the individual victim and the community – be it a whole ethnical group or

a bombed city – to respond to a number of factors (generically related to space and time) in ways that are constantly remoulded and rewritten (Scarry 28-38). These responses not only redefine the individual identity but also the national one. “Trauma” – writes Luckhurst – “is a piercing or a breach of border that puts inside and outside into a strange communication” (3). Harrison grounds his poetry in this very assumption. In an interview with John Tusa, in 2009, he explains how tragedy is a fundamental component of both the individual and the social experience of the human being, who is constantly in charge of “coming to terms with, sometimes even celebrating, the darker parts of experience”³.

The act of ‘coming to terms’ and ‘celebrating’ often takes the form of commemoration as a ritual to reconstitute a cohesive communal identity after a highly traumatic event (Herron, Dodge, Crawley, Mitchell 79), and it finds its most effective, though ambiguous, tool in shared myths. In their analysis of the poem “Shrapnel” (2005),⁴ Herron, Dodge, Crawley and Mitchell quote Harrison’s description of his childhood in “The Inkwell of Dr Agrippa” (1971) to show how the tragedy of Hiroshima triggered a reflection on the modes and modality of celebration as a way to resist and eventually overcome trauma. The “collective masking of tragedy through the fabrication of superficial mythology” (80) has a Janus-faced quality. On the one hand, it reinforces the feeling of being part of a re-built community, on the other it evokes a sudden and unexpected breach in the previous feeling of security and fraternity that the community was supposed to make possible, thus unveiling the illusory strength of the community itself. If it is quite true that joy and celebration may remain artificial in any act of commemoration, it is also undeniable that they respond to the social and individual need to re-appropriate one’s own identity after a traumatic event. Within this context, Harrison is concerned with the risk of transforming the commemoration into an empty rite, encouraging the process of forgetting rather than granting forms of remembrance that would be cohesive for the community because they are felt as “appropriate to a particular locale or period in history” (Herron, Dodge, Crawley, Mitchell 80).

This approach may prove extremely effective when analysing *The Shadow of Hiroshima*. Both the film and the poem were conceived as a commemoration, on the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, exactly ten years ago⁵. On this occasion, Tony Harrison, a poet laureate already known for his deeply committed idea of literature, was asked to create a text aimed at preserving the memory of one of the worst tragedies in

human history, and he did so by producing a film poem, a brand new hybrid text: he combined words and images, with the objective of documenting the facts and at the same time providing an unusual and highly personal *vision* of them.

I will go back to the use of images in reporting war and to the many ambiguities implied in their exploitation. What is relevant here is that Harrison must have been aware that an atrocity made visible is not in itself readable as a protest against war. Harrison's position is by no means unusual. Commenting on Jarecke's very famous photograph of the dead Iraqi soldier, John Berger points out that, though perceived as the plain statement of a fact (the death of a soldier that, in its barbaric materiality, contradicted the official portrayal of the Iraqi war as an almost bloodless conflict), the photograph potentially elicits a response that is different from the one expected by the printed press using it. The image is likely to be perceived – and in fact *was perceived* – as referring to circumstances that are *extra-ordinary* and that do not belong to the reader's everyday experience. It therefore tends to be located out of time and space, as an iconic representation of the general human condition, henceforth losing intensity. This generalizing perspective weakens and neutralizes the protest against the barbarity of war instead of intensifying it, because any protest springs from the awareness of a specific spatial and historical frame (Berger 290). The removal of this specific spatial and historical frame unavoidably results in a loss of political strength (Whitehead 351)⁶.

My approach to *The Shadow of Hiroshima* means to show how Harrison succeeds in re-politicizing the use of images and words in the commemoration of a tragedy, by proposing a highly historicized and deeply individual vision of the atomic bombing and therefore reminding his audience that Hiroshima was not universal evil (at least, not only this), but a very specific event, that belongs to the history of a specific conflict and affected the successive development of both Japanese culture and US imperialism. In stating this, I would suggest that maybe Rowland is simplifying a little when he writes that:

The Final Solution, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and a projected nuclear war are all linked, therefore, by the referents or signified referents of fire, mass murder and Christianity. Flames function as synecdoches in my three examples of H/holocaust: the crematoria which disposed of the victims of Nazi atrocities are compared to the devastation caused by an atomic bomb blast. This connection is

central to Harrison's poetry. The trope of fire runs throughout his work to connect diverse referents (Rowland 16).

It seems to me that, as Berger says, this critical approach runs the risk of transforming the historical reference to a very specific tragedy into something universal that belongs to war in general and that only accidentally – and therefore unimportantly – takes the form of a particular city, a particular community and a particular voice. It is quite true that the trope of fire belongs to both Harrison's poetics in general, and to the context of WW II as a worldwide conflict. And it is also true that the poet was not new to reflections on wars⁷. Consequently he must have been well aware of war as a traumatic experience, in which the individual perception of the impending risk of death fatally combines with the impact of violence on society as a whole, emphasizing a struggle for survival that, instead of collating the community, works as a disruptive force, affects the previously operating social relations and ultimately determines their revision in a situation of emergency. All of this belongs to a universal vision of war, and it is the ground in which Harrison's film poem is rooted. At the same time, and more importantly, I want to stress that the poet's vision in *The Shadow of Hiroshima* also takes a resolutely situated flavour, so that the tension between private grief and public tragedy is articulated in ways that can be understood as referring to *that* place and *that* time. While I share Rowland's definition of Harrison as "a humanist poet" (218), I wouldn't speak of "failure of representation" as to be understood as "a flawed success" (261).

The political emphasis of Harrison's vision resides in the poet's exploitation of the *facts* of the nuclear strike, how they happened and why: they are vital components of his representational choices. In other words, Harrison is fully aware, and makes it clear, that the bombing of Hiroshima resulted in the destruction of a city and caused 14.000 victims (plus the ones who died even many years after the bombing as a consequence of nuclear contamination). It also put an end to WW II, determining the utter cancellation of the Empire of the Sun and triggering the birth of the Republic of Japan through a process interlacing the memory of the most ancient Japanese traditions, but also forgetting the imperial legacy. It also affected the culture, the political choices and the subsequent development of US imperialism, suddenly remoulded by the awareness that their international power had to be built on grounds that were no longer military.

In his vision, Harrison combines all these historical aspects, preserving the ambiguities of a process that is, in fact, still to be completed, in a portrait of words and images.

2. *Listening to the Invisible: the Speech Act of a Ghost*

In their seminal study published in 1992, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub define testimony as “a *discursive practice*, as opposed to a *pure theory*. To testify – to *vow to tell*, to *promise* and *produce* one’s own speech as material evidence for truth – is to accomplish a *speech act* rather than to simply formulate a statement” (5).⁸ I feel this definition is particularly suited to the kind of operation Harrison puts into practice when writing *The Shadow of Hiroshima*.

The first and most relevant device the poet exploits – and that is subsequently translated into a filmic voice-off – is the choice to develop the poem as a dialogue between a Western narrator and an Eastern immaterial presence. Shadow San appears in the first line of the poem. He represents, literally, the voice of a ghost:

“This voice comes from the shadow cast
by Hiroshima’s A-bomb blast.
The sound you hear inside this case
is of a man who fans the face
he used to have before the flash
turned face and body into ash.
I am the nameless fanning mall
you may address as Shadow San”. (Harrison 3)⁹

In its structure, *The Shadow of Hiroshima* is mostly shaped as a long, intensely subjective, meditation on an eye-witness account of events that are widely documented and universally known. The prevailing point of view is *individual* and *personal*. Shadow San speaks as an ordinary man, all the more so when the narrative voice tells the stories of other individual victims that are to be commemorated and often stand for a number of unknown, nameless victims who disappeared leaving no trace at all. The same ethical duty to remember the lost ones is bestowed on Hiroshi Hara (Hara San), who survived the burning of his school and is forever condemned to remember what happened to his friends:

His schoolmates' shrieks from blackened lips
haunt Hara San each time he dips
his brush in water from the stream
to give relief to those who scream,
all his dying schoolmates, those
whose skin slid off their flesh like clothes. (Harrison 6)

All these mute and invisible presences, though impossible to name, are not only icons but what is left of *real* people in a *real* city, affected by a *real* bombing. The emphasis on a poetic vision that is to be firmly rooted in specific events in a definite historic and spatial context appears unmistakable, and well supported by the strategy of first person narrative. Some metrical instability and the occasional switching from the iambic tetrameter, that Harrison felt was more suited to his film poems, to trochees add more emphasis to the portrayal of the young victims¹⁰. Memory is openly suggested as the only way out of trauma, both for Hiroshi Hara and in a more global perspective.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the device of the first person eye-witness acquires a specific flavour because of the peculiar characteristics of Shadow San. It is certainly true that the familiar, faltering and partial pace of testimony provides the bare bones of the storytelling. But the eye-witness does not exist any longer, and he therefore needs the poet's help, in his "one-day parole", to perform his role as a witness:

and you will be my eyes to see
this fiftieth anniversary. (Harrison 3)

We know that, as happened to most victims of the bombing, Shadow San's body was literally dissolved by the explosion; its only surviving trace was an image cast on a brick step. By choosing Shadow San as a first-person narrator – an eye-witness who needs new eyes – Harrison is in fact developing a theory of tragedy and witnessing in which the profile of a ghost has a central role. The poet had already experienced a quite similar device in "A Cold Coming", a poem that can, in several respects be read in conjunction with *The Shadow of Hiroshima*. In a broader historical context, moreover, the choice of relying on a witness defined by the removal of his own body evokes the Holocaust as "a radical historical crisis of witnessing [...] an event eliminating its own witness" (Felman & Laub XVII). Harrison

retrieves the voice of the vanished testimony that is not easy to listen to. It is faltering and uncertain, and it speaks a language that is mostly made up of silences:

“Dead men’s mouths make only M,
the M in Dome, the M in Bomb,
tuned to the hum that’s coming from
the A-Bomb Dome that I hear hum
all round this baseball stadium,
still after all these fifty years
reverberating in my ears.
Can you *not* hear it? Or the choir?” (Harrison 7)

In her seminal study *The Body in Pain*, Scarry mentions, as “a fifth dimension of physical pain”, “its ability to destroy language, the power of verbal objectification, a major source of our self-extension, a vehicle through which the pain could be lifted out into the world and eliminated” (54). Scarry is referring to the consequences of torture as affecting the relation between body and language, but I think that the principle she states may be also applicable here. The inability to speak in understandable words makes it impossible to “lift the pain” even when the suffering body is also a dead body. The only available sound is pre-linguistic, pre-verbal and soaked in sorrow.

And this sound is plural: “a choir”. Here we get to another keypoint in Harrison’s poem. Shadow San, as we said, explicitly mentions some other characters (Kobaishi San, or Hiroshima’s champion pigeon man; Hara San, the painter who survived; Mitsufuji San, who likes singing, playing and laughing). But he also makes it very clear that he is speaking in the name of a whole community. His monologue is implicitly multi-vocal, and his objective is quite plainly to conjure up the city that used to exist and that was utterly pulverized by the nuclear strike. His wrecked life echoes the devastation of other lives and also a whole city and its architectural symbols:

“My shadow’s eighty, so is this
devastated edifice,
built 1915 by a Czech
now A-Bomb Dome, symbolic wreck
left standing for our meditation
on nuclear death and devastation.” (Harrison 4)

Again, Harrison is creating poetry from something that always happens in conflicts, when an urban site is hit and destroyed. “When Berlin is bombed, when Dresden is burned,” writes Elaine Scarry, “there is a deconstruction not only of a particular ideology but of the primary evidence of the capacity for self-extension itself: one does not, in bombing Berlin, destroy only objects, gestures, and thoughts that are culturally stipulated but objects, gestures and thoughts that are human, not Dresden buildings or German architecture but human shelter” (61). The feeling of disruption affecting the urban community is therefore connected not only to the physical losses – the bodycount that marks any war tragedy – but also to the destruction of a whole culture, which was in fact and for the reasons stated above, radical and absolute in the case of Japan. So it is true, as Luckhurst reminds us, that “[...] traumatic identity is now also commonly argued to be at the root of many national collective memories” (2), though ‘collective memories’ result from the combination, melting and the re-articulation of the individual ones. In terms of political choices, these principles stand out very clearly in Harrison’s mind. Quite obviously, he wants to interlace the personal and the public, the individual and the national, even the Eastern and the Western, always proposing a two-sided perspective, and leaving the audience the burden of deciding how to decode the message.

For this reason, I am not sure I share Rowland’s position on how the Western narrator and Shadow San interact in *The Shadow of Hiroshima*. In his *Tony Harrison and the Holocaust*, Rowland writes:

More problems arise when the subject positions of the Western narrator and the Shadow San appear to blur. Littered with close-ups of the neon and tin-can detritus of Coke-culture, the programme suggests a deep-seated hatred of the American presence in present-day Japan. [...] Rather than a celebration of postmodern hybridity, the film displays a disturbing version of cultural difference which covertly longs for the utopia of a Japan uncontaminated by American influence. (62)

I do not believe nostalgia is an issue here, no more than “Harrison’s renowned hatred of mass culture” (62) that seems to find “an ally in, or even initiated, in San’s anti-Yank invective” (62). What appears to happen here is that we have several semantic fields interlacing, each of them presenting multiple complexities. If alive, Shadow San would be an eighty-year-old Japanese, who had gone through a nuclear strike, the end of the Empire, the remaking of Japan and the rebuilding of the city. His profile is

exploited, as it should be, to present the astonishingly fast pace of change in post-war Japan, and his emotional reaction (disorientation, sorrow, and, why not, nostalgia) is only plausible, in the light of his age and position. The Western narrator – clearly a co-protagonist – provides the perspective of a European observer, considering the Eastern world, but also the deep change concerning US imperialism, switching from military invasion to economic monopoly.

Shadow San is explicitly critical about the US cultural invasion, certainly epitomized by the many references to sports and the baseball stadium. There is a grotesque implication in the coordinate of space that Harrison provides when speaking of this place:

Close to the Dome on soil where heat
burnt the soles off people's feet,
on Saturdays, close to Ground Zero,
crowds cheer the current sporting hero. (Harrison 7)

While commenting on this, Shadow San reverses the grandiosity of the stadium, exploiting it to give relevance to the enormous number of the victims of the nuclear strike:

“You'd need a stadium five times higher
to seat all those who died by fire.
Where you see baseball I can hear
all those thousands who can't cheer.
Listen, can't you hear the choir
of those who perished in the fire?” (Harrison 8)

The point here is that what has been destroyed is not only Shadow San or his house, but a whole community, a city of people and buildings, “a space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication, and so forth” (Donald 6). This conglomeration of bricks, mortar, flesh and feelings has been made invisible. Harrison's words repoliticize the commemoration of the death of a city making it into a vision that is something more than the image of a massacre.

3. *Seeing the Invisible: "You Will Be My Eyes"*

The *Shadow of Hiroshima* is incomplete if considered merely as a poem. The visual aspect is basic in defining the meaning of the text, and it cannot simply be removed in my analysis. Harrison's work with images appears fully aware of the implications of this stylistic choice, and it contributes to the lyrical atmosphere of the whole text.

As a film, *The Shadow of Hiroshima* begins with a reference to history: black and white images of the nuclear explosion, soon followed by familiar representations of the destruction of the city. The scratched and old sequences are soon followed by new colour footage portraying contemporary Hiroshima: urban landscapes, people moving around and scenes of everyday life, introduced by the morning ritual of Tai Chi. Music, sounds and a voice-off reciting the first lines of the poem articulate the process of storytelling, emphasizing moments of official and private mourning and insisting on the image of the Bomb Dome as the symbol of a tragic event that is not to be forgotten. The skeletal remains of the building, representing the only architecture left standing after the nuclear strike, is exploited as a sort of 'visual punctuation', imposing a rhythm that echoes the mainly iambic tetrameter of the poem. Any metrical instability is soon reinforced through unexpected visual development, so that the music of words is paralleled by the pace of images.

The colour footage is utterly dominated by water imagery (basically the Motoyasu river); frequent shots of the sky and of flying doves and pigeons belong to the same semantic cluster and emphasize the idea of change and flux. Conversely, the black & white sequences – which only appear at the beginning of the film – develop around symbolic references to fire, smoke and nuclear destruction. The opposition appears simple, though never simplified, and it multiplies and transforms the words of the poem into a vision.

It is quite obvious that, when choosing the form of a film poem, Harrison is aware that he is calling into play a number of complex considerations on the use of images – past and present – in commemorating a massacre. This is why the process of decoding implies a number of synchronic and diachronic considerations on the portrayal of war. In her article on the poetry of protest in connection with Tony Harrison's work on the Gulf War, Anne Whitehead shares Sontag's position about the truthfulness of the photographic images of a massacre. She suggests that these images

are ambiguous, in that “they may give rise to a call for peace, but they may also provoke a cry for revenge” (351). And in fact, in her *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag clearly warns us that words – the ones given in the photographs’ captions – may be the key to highly different, sometimes conflicting, meanings, because “all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by their captions” (9).

We know that one of the most unusual stylistic aspects of *The Shadow of Hiroshima* is the combination of poetry and filmic vision in a text meant for a commemoration. So, in a way, the combination suggested by Sontag is respected, though in Harrison the relationship between them is neither explanation nor mystification. Words are not supposed to describe, force a meaning for and provide the key to images. They simply ‘go hand in hand with’ them, in the same way as thoughts are supposed to wander when the eyes see something unexpected. At the beginning of the poem, Shadow San puts the poet in charge of “being his eyes” (Harrison 3), apparently (and ironically) relying on the objectivity of the vision and the self-evidence of images. Which is not the case.

Particularly in the new footage, Harrison quite obviously creates a bridge between the need for everyday life to go on in modern, re-built Japan, and the impossibility of forgetting, effectively represented through the image of the Bomb Dome constantly shown all through the film and drawn and re-drawn by Hiroshi Hara, the painter. Ostensibly mimetic, the reference to the ordinary actions of ordinary people is interrupted by the stubborn attempt of Hara San to paint the Dome, infusing his drawing with his memory of how “scorched throatscroak / where new thirsts get quenched by Coke” (Harrison 12). Though the black and white images of the historic bombing are shown only at the beginning of the film, the trauma of the nuclear strike is evoked through images that do not belong to a condition of war but rather to the ordinary life of the contemporary community. The origin of trauma is implied rather than exhibited, and the audience is in charge of decoding this implication, reconstructing things long past, that are not shown and that appear possibly more sorrowful precisely because they are unexpectedly invisible.

Quite obviously, Harrison is not the first writer to rely on images to represent a war trauma. In 1938, Virginia Woolf had already drawn a reflection on the barbarity of war from photographs that appeared to her as a “crude statement of fact addressed to the eye” (31). On this ground, in *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf justified her anti-war position, concluding

that, whatever your education, social class, political affiliation, and even gender, watching the photographs of victims of the Spanish War may result in only one conclusion: “War is an abomination; a barbarity; war must be stopped. For now at last we are looking at the same picture: we are seeing with you the same dead bodies, the same ruined houses” (21). Woolf’s line of reasoning was grounded in what was thought to be a scientific approach to the act of vision: the process of understanding images was experienced as resulting from what might be called a physiological chain-reaction, basically mechanical, until the visual stimulus/memory link was activated. Even then, there was no subjectivity in the interpretation of the images: since photographic documents were still perceived as totally true to facts, objective and absolutely mimetic, they were likely to be processed and understood in the same way by different human brains.

Harrison’s position is understandably different from Woolf’s. So much so that Harrison needs words, other images, music, and sounds to articulate a meaning that is not necessarily implied in the traditional visual representations of the Hiroshima nuclear holocaust. They are not self-evident, because no image is true in itself. Woolf’s position, though historically motivated, is of course untenable today: any image mediates between facts and opinions, therefore it needs facts to acquire meaning, otherwise it simply masks a *void of meaning* (Franzini 24). Thus, no image speaks for itself. Instead, it draws its meaning from the context it refers to, it belongs to a very specific *locus* in space and time: in this case, Hiroshima on the morning of August 6, 1945. Though the film is almost totally set 50 years later, the sequence of described actions develops in a precise timespan (between 8:15 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.), thus obliging the audience to constantly go back to the same timespan half a century before, when any possibility of everyday life for ordinary people was cancelled by the nuclear strike. The final melting of the clock in water, just before the film credits, marks the dissolution of time, and has a tragic flavour comparable to the final vanishing of Shadow San.

I saw the saddened shade retire
to face again the flash and fire. (Harrison 10)

In conclusion, it is certainly true that “Some events refuse to be told as stories” (Mirzoeff 90). They go far beyond what Benjamin defined “information” (Benjamin 217-234) and they need different representational

tools to be narrated. For this reason, Harrison chooses to rely on a combination of words and images, organized so as to synaesthetically produce a vision of the consequences of war, and a highly political one. 'Political' is to be intended in its etymological meaning, as pertaining to the economy of the *polis*. Within this frame, *The Shadow of Hiroshima* shows how images can be made into poetry so as to mirror the horror of war even when this war is not explicitly and visually portrayed. And to reject it, not only as universally evil, but mostly as a kind of evil affecting a very specific population at a very specific time.

On this issue, I agree with Anne Whitehead when she says that "He [Harrison] forges a post- Holocaust poetics which is characterized by awkwardness and embarrassment, and insists that it is better to confront the horrors of war from a distance than to remain silent" (356). Distance is in fact a key issue in Harrison's work, and in this specific case, it is reinforced by the author's belonging to the Western world, and therefore not fully able to understand the Japanese culture.

It may be better, as Mitsufuji San wonders, to forget (Harrison 10), but trauma is not worked out through removal. And the ultimate doubt is spoken by the poet itself, in the final lines of *The Shadow of Hiroshima*:

Or are we all like Shadow San
facing inferno with a fan? (Harrison 17)

These lines seem to be conceived as a highly politicized call for action, and they define a form of resistance through poetry that is Tony Harrison's most precious hallmark.



- 1 Tony Harrison was invited as a guest to the Festival Trevigliopoesia. The programme is available at: <http://www.trevigliopoesia.it/archivio/2009/programma.html>. The meeting was on 29 May 2010, at the Museo Civico, Chiostro della biblioteca, in Treviglio (BG).
- 2 The film poems – *Loving Memory* (1987), *The Blasphemers' Banquet* (1989) *The Gaze of the Gorgon* (1992), *Black Daisies for the Bride* (1993) – are available at the Docucity archive (www.docucity.unimi.it), Università degli Studi di Milano.
- 3 The interview was broadcast on 11 April 2001 and is available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nc89r> (accessed 20 August 2015). It was included in the BBC series run by John Tusa, managing director of the Barbican Centre and focussed on leading creative figures in contemporary UK.
- 4 The poem refers to London 7/7 and it originally appeared in the 21 August 2005 edition of *The Independent on Sunday*.
- 5 As I write, it is the 60th anniversary of the bomb: 6 August 2015.
- 6 In drawing this conclusion, Whitehead, too, refers to Berger's reflections on Jarecke's photograph (351).
- 7 The famous poem on Jarecke's photograph of the burnt Iraqi soldier, "A Cold Coming", appeared in *The Guardian* in March 1991, while "The Cycles of Donji Vakuf" and "The Bright Light of Sarajevo", on the Balkan wars, were both published in September 1995. On Tony Harrison and War, see Rylance 137-160.
- 8 On this issue, Agamben has been reflecting a lot, pointing out the relevance of testimony in connection with archive building. Though published later, his reflections in this field are groundbreaking, as they appear in his *Quel che resta di Auschwitz. L'archivio e il testimone* (1998).
- 9 As Rowland explains, the disembodied voice belongs to the blasted shape of a victim of the nuclear strike, "whose body was reduced to a fading smidgeon on a step now ensconced in Hiroshima's Peace Museum" (61).
- 10 Rowland provides a very precise analysis of this section of the poem, that proves very useful, though I do not completely share his conclusions (62).



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