

**HIBAKUSHA CINEMA: UNDERSTANDING JAPANESE
CULTURE AND SOCIETY AFTER THE ATOMIC
BOMBINGS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “Hibakusha Cinema: A Study of the Japanese Culture and Society after the Atomic Bombings” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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I dedicate this dissertation to mama, papa,

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Chapter I

Introduction

Mainstream International Relations (IR) theories are built on the Westphalian system which treats all states as sovereign actors interacting with each other in an anarchical international system. The prominent realist strand of these IR theories, applies the Hobbsian '*state of nature*' logic to the international system, where all states are considered to be power seeking, selfish and insecure, operating in an anarchical structure. The major IR theories of liberals, liberal institutionalists, realists, neo realists to name a few, treat states as timeless, ahistorical actors whose actions are dictated by any of the three levels of analysis namely: by the individual elite heading the state, the domestic state system or the international structure. This approach however, poses a methodological problem as it treats states as -- what Kenneth Waltz describes as billiard balls in the international system, wherein the actions of the states are considered to be driven exogenously and not endogenously. The realist and liberal theoretical strands thus, do not historicize states and bracket their interests and identities.

This epistemological error is corrected by the constructivist approach which historicizes and contextualizes states so as to explain their identities and interests which in turn, determine the state behaviour in the international system. In his article, *The State as Person* (2004: 315) Alexander Wendt addresses a state's psychological personhood and explains how this personhood is constituted from inside rather than from outside. It is this point that this study would attempt to explore-- that is: understanding a state's identity from an inside-out approach wherein, the psyche of a society would be taken to affect and influence the state's identity. It is this contextualized and historicized state identity that would be taken to shape a state's behaviour in the international system.

In doing so, the study would endeavour to understand how state decision making in the international system is also endogenously driven, thereby making it a unique variable of the international system.

For realists, all states are power seeking actors and states with capabilities would pursue more and more power so as to make themselves secure and stronger in the international system that is essentially anarchic. Any state behaving in a way that is not in consonance with this realist way of thinking is considered an anomaly. For instance, Japan not having pursued a nuclear weapons programme or South Africa and Brazil giving up their nuclear weapons programme are considered anomalies by the realists. However, on contextualizing such state behaviours, one could trace the same to be natural outcomes of the state's history and not aberrations. Peter Katzenstein (1996) and Nina Tannenwald (2007) explain the Japanese and South African state behaviour respectively through domestic or societal norms that were anti-nuclear and anti-military in nature.

Thus, it could be argued that 'anomalies' in state behaviour may point towards the inadequacy of the prominent IR theories in explaining certain state patterns. Such mainstream theories, that treat states as ahistorical entities, could thus be problematized.

It would be further argued that on contextualizing and historicizing states, patterns of emotions could be explored in them that may be governing their foreign policies. The major IR theories however, do not consider 'emotions' as a major factor driving foreign policy decision making of states. The Waltzian neo realism avoided taking into account emotions pertaining to human nature, morality and self-interest in his study. This study argues that by ignoring emotions, the neorealist theory is rendered incapable of explaining differing state behavioural patterns which the realists would consider anomalies.

It should be noted that although classical theorists like Thucydides, Hobbes, Morgenthau have discussed a great deal in their writings about emotions, these emotions nonetheless feature very little in the writings of the contemporary mainstream IR scholars. For instance, in *The Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides explains how the emotions of 'honour' and fear drove the Spartans to break the 'treaty of peace' with the Athens and go to war against them. Likewise, from the contemporary example of India and Pakistan it could be argued that to understand the

relationship between these two states, a neorealist explanation would not be enough. Instead, historicizing the two states and understanding their behavioural patterns vis-à-vis the emotions that the two have carried since partition would be more helpful.

Therefore the questions that the study would engage with are:

*How do the emotions, ideas and norms in a society influence the state identity?

*How does an interplay between society and state affect the state identity?

*How does a state identity, (which is affected by ideational factors such as emotions) act itself out vis-à-vis the international system?

In this study, these questions would be explored with reference to Japan and the emotional and psychological impact that the atomic bomb (which hereafter will also be referred to as the nuclear holocaust) left on the society. This exploration would then attempt to understand how the emotional impact on the society influenced the Japanese state's behaviour with regard to the international system.

The constructivist theory of IR would be adopted to explore the above mentioned questions. This approach looks into how the identity of a state and its interests are shaped and affected by ideas and norms prevailing in the domestic society and international system that is: ideas and norms are considered both endogenous and exogenous including not just those prevailing in the domestic society, but also those prevailing in the international system. The constructivist approach thus looks at both the state (agent) and the international system (structure) ontologically.

It could thus be argued that the constructivist approach takes neither the agent nor the structure to be ontologically primitive. While positivist IR theories consider state interests to be determined by homogenous factors of material and economic power, the constructivist approach treats the state interest to be determined along with material factors, also by ideas and norms prevailing in the domestic and international system. This differing understanding of state behaviour has been explained by

Waldrop (1992: 232) where he suggests that if a rock is tossed into the air, it would only make a simple response to the external physical forces that act on it. But- he states- that if a bird is thrown into the air, it may fly off into a tree. “Even though the same physical forces act on the bird as on the rock, a massive amount of internal-processing takes place inside the bird and affects its behaviour”(ibid). Likewise, it could be argued that states being made up of differing collective identities, shared knowledge, inter-subjective understanding; may react differently to similar international forces and pressures.

Constructivism thus contextualizes state interests depending on the prevailing endogenous and exogenous norms and ideas and the interpretation of the same.

“For constructivists, norms are collective understandings that make behavioural claims on actors. Their effects reach deeper: they constitute actor identities and interests and do not simply regulate behaviour” (Finnemore 1996: 327). The constructivist scholarship argues that norms have deeper cognitive effects on the state identities than acknowledged by the positivists. For instance, in her book *The Nuclear Taboo: United States and the Non Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945*, Tannenwald (2008) suggests that along with deterrence other factors like ideas about national identity, morality in warfare, legitimate use of weapons and norms have also played important roles in socially constructing a self-reinforcing norm of non-use, or a nuclear weapons taboo. Likewise, as Peter Katzenstein (1996: 107) argues, Japan’s decision not to possess nuclear weapons could be traced to the antimilitaristic norms prevailing in the society in the post holocaust Japan.

The aim of this study is to use the constructivist lens to study the state identity of Japan as affected by the holocaust and this would be done by taking emotions, norms and ideas in the Japanese society as independent variables. In doing so, the study would attempt to understand how the Japanese state identity, shaped by the emotions and norms in the society, played itself out vis-à-vis the international system. Thus the Japanese state identity and the state policy would be taken as dependent variables and the emotions and norms in the society would be the independent variables. These emotions prevailing in the society after the nuclear holocaust would be studied through the medium of Japanese cinema.

The Japanese films on the atomic bombing, or what Mick Broderick (1996) terms *hibakusha* cinema would be studied so as to explore the psychological impact of the bomb on the society. *Hibakusha* is a Japanese term used for the surviving victims of the atomic bombings and cinema on the same is termed *hibakusha* cinema.

This study would attempt to analyse the *hibakusha* films and through the same, the emotions of the Japanese following the nuclear holocaust would be studied. The study would thus use cinematic representations as a means to understanding the emotions of the Japanese people as it would argue that cinematic and popular cultural representations are not detached from the society, instead they represent a society.

It is here that this dissertation takes a departure from other studies of mainstream IR as, by using *hibakusha* cinema as a point of analysis to understand the Japanese society and state identity, the attempt would be to bring in a fresh perspective into IR. Therefore by using popular culture as an independent variable to study the constitutive role between the society and the state identity, this study would endeavour to add value to the discipline of IR by introducing a relatively new area of study.

This dissertation would be divided into three main chapters that would explore the following **Research questions:**

What were the main trends of the Japanese atomic bomb cinema?

What do these trends tell us about the post-holocaust Japanese society?

How did the psyche of the Japanese society that was affected by the holocaust, influence the Japanese state identity and behaviour with regards to its foreign policy?

This dissertation, by taking cinema as its object of analysis, would also attempt to broaden the scope of its analysis by arguing that studying the medium of popular culture helps us in developing a deeper understanding of the culture and emotions in a society.

The second chapter of the dissertation, '*Cinematic Imaginations of the Nuclear Holocaust*' would be an empirical analysis of the various films on the victims of the atomic bomb wherein each would be briefly analysed. The analysis of the *hibakusha* films would be on the basis of how they treat the bomb and the society that has been impacted by it. It should be noted that while there are many films that revolved around the theme of the nuclear holocaust, only some of the films will be taken based on firstly the availability of the films online, or in various libraries and secondly, based on the popularity of the films both domestically or internationally. The handicap of this pattern of selection of films is however that some of the films that were made immediately after the American occupation of Japanese ended in 1952 would not be included due to the difficulty in tracing the same.

This chapter would also look at the visibility of the atomic bomb related theme in other sources of Japanese popular culture including the *Manga*¹ culture in Japan. Due to the narrow scope of this research however, this *manga* culture would be explored very briefly.

While looking at *hibakusha* films, this chapter would attempt to bring out the prominent themes of trauma, *mono no aware*², fantasy and apocalypse, thereby studying the treatment of the atomic bomb in the films falling under these categories.

The third chapter of this dissertation titled '*Cinematic Representation of Societal Emotions*' would attempt to tease out prominent emotions of trauma, insecurity, fear, anxiety, victimhood and dissociation from the *hibakusha* films. In the process of teasing out these emotions, the chapter would attempt to relate the same to the traumatized Japanese society so as to understand the psychological impact of the atomic bomb on the people.

Another point that the chapter would endeavour to explore is the link between catharsis and cinema. The term catharsis originates from the Greek word *Katharos*

¹ *Manga* are comics that were created in Japan in the late nineteenth century.

² *Mono no aware* is a Japanese term to describe the transitory nature of life. This term has been used by Donald Richie to explain certain films in *hibakusha* cinema that reveal unperturbed acceptance of the nuclear holocaust and detachment from the same.

which means ‘cleaning’ signifying an object initially dirty or contaminated and later cleaned (Tuairise 2003: 174). In this study the term would be borrowed from Aristotle’s *Poetics* where he suggests catharsis to be an essential ingredient of tragedies, wherein through the actions of the tragic hero, the audiences would vicariously achieve a purging of emotions of fear and pity, thereby feeling relieved or ‘cleansed’ and emancipated by the end of the drama. In this chapter, it would be examined whether *hibakusha* films helped the Japanese feel a sense of catharsis.

Thus the aim of this chapter would be to arrive at two substantial arguments using inductive approach, the first being: that cinema or popular culture could be studied to understand the emotions within a society and second that films (in this case being atomic bomb films), dealing with catastrophic events of history help viewers to release their pent up emotions associated with the event thereby helping them to feel a sense of catharsis.

However, it should be noted that the relationship between cinema and societal emotions that this chapter would be discussing is limited to *hibakusha* cinema and its impact on the Japanese society. A general assumption however could be made about the link between cinema and society. The endeavour would not be to draw a general theory on cinema and society but to arrive at a general assumption about a link between the two that could possibly be explored further.

The final chapter of this study is, ‘*Popular Culture and Emotions: Shaping the State Interests and Identity*’. This would trace the genealogy of the concept of popular culture and in doing so attempt to theorize the concept and find its relevance in International Relations. The chapter would attempt to argue that the popular cultural tools do not operate in isolation and instead reveal and represent the emotions of societies. In doing so the Japanese example would be explored in terms of how the societal emotions after the holocaust, as visible through *hibakusha* cinema, shaped the state identity and its foreign policy decision making. The chapter would take the prominent emotions of fear, insecurity and victimhood as visible through the *hibakusha* films and understand how these emotions influenced and revealed the Japanese state interests and identity.

In short, this dissertation would be an exploratory research that would use the cinematic medium in order to understand as to how societal emotions and psychology shape and influence state interests and identity.

Chapter II

Cinematic Imaginations of the Atomic Bomb

"The Twentieth century catastrophes are extraordinary because they must be comprehended through a revolution in representational practices and the technologies of representation made possible by the electronics revolution."- Janet Walker (2001)

Introduction

Cinema has, since its inception, responded to wars and catastrophic events via subjective interpretations and representations of the same. However, scholars of International Relations have made very limited critical attempts to understand the cultural manifestations of catastrophic events. The role of popular cultural forms in interpreting and portraying memories of traumatic and catastrophic events has so far not been explored as a focussed area of study by the International Relations scholarship.

The principle aim of the discipline of International Relations after the end of the WWII was, to study state behaviour with regards to the international system so as to prevent the recurrence of warfare that the world had seen since the beginning of the twentieth century. For this purpose, the predominant IR scholars of that time--namely realists and neo realists-- began to theorize the state behaviour with regard to the 'three images' a concept introduced by Kenneth Waltz in *Man, the State and War* (1959). According to this concept, the international politics can be explained by three levels of analysis or 'images': the first image theorizes the psychology of the individual as driving the international politics; second image explains International politics from the level of the domestic politics of the state and the third explains international politics from the level of the international system ie it theorizes how the international system affects the state behaviour. This third image approach (Waltz 1979) transfers the Hobbsian '*state of nature*' to the international system, which is assumed to be dominated by anarchy and self-help. It is this basic assumption of the

mainstream positivist approaches of IR that considers all states to be trans historical and unitary in a system dominated by anarchy, that has been problematized by Alexander Wendt in '*Anarchy is What States Make of it*' (Wendt 1992).

The Positivist approaches assume that the anarchical structure makes states insecure of the other states thereby making them power seeking (both material and economic). In the process this approach ignores the social, cultural and psychological factors that make a state. However, Jacques Hymans (2010: 461-462) argues that if the theory of international politics is only limited to the system and does not include the society then it would be incomplete as, "politics is only possible in the context of society, and in society the micro and macro levels are inevitably mutually constituting" (ibid: 462). It is the supposed incompatibility between society and the international politics, tagged by the mainstream IR theories that would be problematized and questioned in this research work.

This study has attempted to explore the underprivileged characteristics of societal memories, emotions, ideas and norms and thus find their interplay with the state behaviour. The ahistoricism of the neo rationalist IR theories which take the interests of the state actors as temporally and spatially universal is problematized. Instead, the aim here is to explain state behaviour on the basis of their contexts and narratives thereby treating them as unique historical actors in the international system.

Thus, by emphasizing the inadequacy of the positivist IR theories in explaining state behaviour, the aim of this study is to historicize states by taking the ideational factors of the society as the level of analysis.

As has been explained in the introduction of this dissertation, the case of Japanese state identity would be explored by analysing how it has been affected and shaped by the memories, emotions, ideas and norms in the Japanese society with regard to the nuclear holocaust. In order to explore the constitutive behaviour between the societal emotions and the state identity with regards the nuclear holocaust, the medium of Japanese cinema would be used to analyse the societal emotions. The study would thus attempt to theorize the memories of the holocaust, as portrayed via *hibakusha*

cinema, so as to develop a better understanding of the society. Thus, as Naoko (2003: 111) argues with regard to the representations of post-war Japan, not only is the study interested in how the past is portrayed by the present, but also in how the portrayal helps form a basis for a new cultural consensus in the society.

Antonio Gramsci argues, popular cultural forms like cinema, could be used by the elites to hegemonise the minds of the masses for their motives, popular cultural forms have also been used by masses in order to express their anger and frustrations towards the hegemon of the society. For instance, during the middle ages, *Carnavalesque* was a festival wherein, the powerless of a society would come together and mimic and lampoon the elites of the society including the kings, queens, and church figures (Weaver 2009: 37). During these festivals, the powerless of the society questioned the tastes and culture of the elites thereby demonstrating their discontent and anger via popular culture (Bakhtin 1981: 293).

It should however be noted that popular culture falls under the concept of cultural theory which included cultural forms like operas, theatre and poetry to name a few. However, these cultural forms were reserved only for the elites of the society since it was argued that only they possessed the expertise and skills to understand such cultural forms (Weaver 2009). In this context, Strauss (1968: 8), who was highly critical of the ability of the masses in understanding the 'essence' of the cultural forms, advocated the 'high culture' of the elites.

It is because of these dichotomies of culture and power that were present in the society that--if not erased—were at least reduced by the coming in of technologies of mass communication like cinema, radios and televisions.

Cinema and International Relations

The late nineteenth century found a very novel and popular mechanism of communication through cinema wherein events were remembered, re-imagined and retold in an audio-visual form. This discovery thus saw a number of films being made during the inter-war period which were not only based on war related anxieties and

victories but also propaganda films, commissioned by the ruling elites as the influencing capability of the cinematic medium was becoming known. It should be noted here that this cinematic representation of memories has varied in its narration depending on when it was made, who made it and with what intention. For instance, the period before the World War II saw a lot of German expressionist cinema which exaggerated the anxieties and emotions of the filmmakers played through loud contrasting colours and textures, abstract infrastructures and expressions. *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang 1927) is an example of such a German Expressionist film which revealed not just the anxieties about the industrial revolutions and power of the machines but also displayed subtle anxieties of a holocaust like situation which was to follow later during the World War II. While on the one hand, motion pictures have been made as an expression of the emotions of people, they have, on the other hand also been made to influence a certain people in form of 'propaganda films'. For instance *Triumph des Willens* (Leni Riefenstahl 1935) was a German propaganda film that was made with the underlying theme of rise of Germany and Adolf Hitler as the 'true German leader'. The film also contained excerpts from Adolf Hitler's own speeches. It may be argued that the theme of the film was pure propaganda for the Nazi party at a crucial time during the World War II. In Japan too, during the World War II, after the Japanese success at Pearl Harbour, a Japanese propagandist film on the victory was made in 1942, titled, *Hawai Mare oki Kaisenor* 'The War at Sea from Hawaii to Malay' (Kajiro Yamamoto). The film contained some real life footage of the battlefield and could be argued to have been made in order to serve the purpose of boosting the morale of the people during the war and for instilling in people a sense of radical nationalism

Introduction into Japanese Popular Culture

Before proceeding further it should be noted that although the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is mostly referred to as 'the atomic bombing', this dissertation would hereafter refer to the incident mostly as the nuclear holocaust as, going by the oxford dictionary meaning, holocaust is 'the destruction or slaughter on a mass scale, especially by fire or nuclear war'. Considering that the atomic bomb brutally burnt and killed thousands within minutes of dropping it, the

use of the term could be justified. Also, the use of the term 'atomic bombing' instead of nuclear holocaust could also rob it off the intense impact of the event.

The nuclear holocaust in Japan greatly impacted the popular cultural forms ranging from *manga*, anime, cinema, television, novels, paintings etc. These forms, to this day, show multiple interpretations of the bomb and continue to shape the memory of the people regarding the bomb and the war. *Manga* critic *Jun Ishiko* (1983: 11) stated that the history of *manga* and other popular cultural forms testified the history of Japanese involvement in the war and determined what the Japanese thought of the war even today, and connected them to their past. Before exploring the cinematic representations of the holocaust, this portion would look briefly at other popular cultural forms that depicted the same including *manga* and television.

Manga are Japanese comic strips that started in the late nineteenth century and have been a very popular form of entertainment having a large readership amongst all age groups. Although *manga* has diverse genres including action, adventure, sports, romance etc.; war and the holocaust have also been a prominent theme in these comics as well. The following section would explore various representations of the atomic bombing and the impact of the same on the society through *manga* and argue that the *hibakusha* have been represented in a much romanticized manner reflecting *mono no aware* or the passive submission to fate that Donald Richie (1996: 22) talks about with regards *hibakusha* cinema. As *Masashi Ichiki* (2011) discusses, this section will attempt to explore how Japanese *manga* has been a major source of 'promoting and proliferating the *Genbaku Otome*' or the myth of Atomic bomb beauties and thrived on establishing and maintaining a social notion of victimization in post war Japan.

It should be noted that even before Japan experienced science and technology at their worst in the form of the atomic bomb, the Japanese cultural forms, particularly *manga* started to portray scepticism towards anything scientific and questions were being raised regarding the unethical and immoral nature of the same. This was visible in the

genre of ‘mad scientist murders’³ that came to the fore in *manga* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These *manga* were based on the theme of scepticism towards anything scientific and technical in Japan such as towards doctors and scientists. For instance, the works of four key authors, *Kozakai Fuboku* (1890-1929), *Yumeno Kyusaku* (1889-1936), *Oguri Mushitaro* (1901-1946) and *Unno Juza* (1897-1949) criticized science in their *manga* pointing towards the incompatibility between science and ethics. Here, an analogy may be drawn between the German expressionist film *Metropolis* (1927) and these mad scientist murder in these comics that revealed the popular sentiment of growing insecurity towards the power of science as a destructive tool. The magnitude of the destructive capability of science was only later found in form of the *genshi bakudan* (nuclear holocaust) dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Following the end of the American occupation of Japan in 1952, themes revolving around the atomic bomb began to become visible in the *manga*. Of the 74 *mangas* that employed the a-bomb and its survivors as their themes, 33 were produced from 1954-1973. Thus, for Ishiko (2011: 37), quantitatively, this time was the golden age of *manga*. The early years during this period portrayed the *hibakusha* as evil characters that were ostracized or alienated from the society due to some deformities that they carried with themselves from the radiation of the holocaust. Yoshiyasu Ohtomo’s *Anata-no ban-desu* (you next), published in 1957 and Kazuhiko Tanigawa’s *Hoshi-wa Miteiru* (stars are watching), 1957 are two examples of *mangas* revolving around the theme of *hibakusha* being treated as misfits in the society. This portrayal could point towards the notions in the society that were always sceptical of the *hibakusha* particularly in terms of marriages with them. Such scepticism was also visible in Masuji Ibuse’s book *Kuroi Ame* (Black Rain), published in 1965 wherein the protagonist, Shizuma Shigematsu, a real-life person, tries to find a husband for his niece, Yasuko who is looked at by the society in a very suspicious manner for having been in the radiation affected black rain.

This kind of treatment of *hibakusha* however, was soon replaced with *manga* that started to portray *hibakusha* as powerless, beautiful women reeking of the notions of

³‘mad scientist murders’ were comic strips dealing with scientists and doctors indulging in immoral and unethical activities and using science for evil purposes.

mono no aware or passive acceptance of fate altered by the bomb. Such a theme fell under the *shojo manga* that dealt with romantic relationships and emotions falling thus targeting young girls. Ishiko (2011: 39) points that a huge number of *shojo manga* dealing with the *hibakusha* were produced during the period between 1954-1973. The main themes of such *manga* involved a beautiful character falling in love and discovering that she/he has developed a radiation sickness and through the sickness the character is shown as very resolutely bearing the physical pain. To this effect, *manga* critic Masato Kibi argues that *shojo manga* romanticizes death and that ‘a-bomb is rather conveniently used to dramatize the story’ (Kibi 2006: 152). Such *shojo manga* have however been criticized for underplaying the political context during the bombing and the psychological and physical struggles of the victims following the bombing. Neither do these genres depict the ground zero nor do they portray the anger of the people against the bombing. Even the recent *manga* on the holocaust, that did a comeback in early twenty first century, such as Fumiyo Kono’s *Yunagi-no machi, sakura-no Kuni* (town of evening calm, country of cherry blossoms), stories of beautiful maidens resolutely dying of a radiation related illness are portrayed.

Such emphasis on victim mentality, wherein the victim is depicted as passive, tolerant, patient, could be argued to be portraying the Japanese identity following the holocaust wherein the Japanese state decided to remain passive so that she could develop herself quickly.

It should however be noted that there were also *manga* that dealt with the bomb in a realistic manner depicting the ground zero and demonstrating the anger of the people. *Barefoot Gen* by Keiji Nakazawa (1973) is an example of one such comic strip that soon became a popular atomic bomb genre in *manga*. Nakazawa, who was a *hibakusha* himself and saw his family dying due to the bomb, depicted the incident and the after effects as he saw it and as he felt it. Thus, this realistic genre showing the anger of the people was a departure the *shojo manga* genre. However, even though this above mentioned theme was popular amongst its readers, the *shojo manga* has been more visible and as has been discussed above, has even made its comeback in

the 2000's. The following section would look at the representations of the nuclear holocaust through cinema.

In this section, by studying the representation of the nuclear holocaust and the effect of the same on the Japanese society, this chapter would examine the three major underlying themes running through *hibakusha* films. These themes would be that of *mono no aware*, trauma and science fiction or fantasy films. It would be argued that through each of these themes, the films are acting as agents for expressing how the Japanese society and state dealt with the memories of the holocaust. It should be noted here that this exploration of *hibakusha* films is limited only from after the end of the U.S. occupation of Japan in 1952 to the end of the Cold War or the beginning of the 1990's. Another point that needs a mention here is that a major handicap in this study of *hibakusha* films is the lack of proficiency in Japanese language. However, an attempt has been made to overcome this handicap by understanding the films through the subtitles.

Cinematic Trends

"Like any powerful text, Hiroshima must be read, absorbed, and recreated by each generation searching for its own truths"- Robert Lifton, 1987

Hibakusha cinema or films related to the theme of nuclear holocaust have significantly contributed to constructing holocaust related memories in Japan. As mentioned by Lifton above, these forms of memory have been expressed in different ways by different generations, each expressing their unique understanding and truths about the holocaust. These also include generations that have had no living memory of the holocaust but have interpreted it through the stories running amongst the people or sources of popular culture. As Tessa Morris Suzuki rightly explains, our memory does not necessarily stem from what we experience; rather it is made up of information from 'variable sources' (2005: 2). The following section would explore the films made on the holocaust and understand how each shows a unique way of interpreting and remembering the bomb or in some cases, remembering to forget the bomb.

This section would look at the journey of *hibakusha* films which changed notions about how Japan viewed itself before and after 1945. The pre 1945 propaganda films, mostly displayed pride in an imperialistic Japan. However, post the Japanese surrender following the holocaust in August 1945, Japan was portrayed as having suffered from victimhood after being mercilessly bombed. This section would look at the post 1945 phase wherein there is a glorification of notions pertaining to Japanese victimhood and portrayal of traumas of the people following the holocaust.

The cinematic representations of the nuclear holocaust in Hiroshima and Nagasaki began only after the end of the American occupation of Japan in 1952. During the occupation from 1945 to 1952, also known as the '*Showa*' period⁴, U.S. authorities supervised, guided and censored all forms of Japanese artistic expression and mass communications (Hirano 2009: 44). While the American justification of the occupation was to change Japan from a fascist-militaristic nation to a democratic one, Hirano (1992: 7) points that the strict regulatory mechanisms adopted by the Americans, including a complete silencing of any form of expression pointing towards the colossal destruction caused by the nuclear holocaust in itself was very fascist in nature. It was not just the publishing or artistic rendering of experiences that the occupation government forbade, but also giving public voice to the atomic bomb related experiences was strictly banned. During this period, the occupation force needed to make sure that any expression of anger within the Japanese people against the atomic bombings be totally discouraged. Gibson (2012: 193) stated that the bombings were only allowed to be portrayed to show them as a legitimized necessary strategic measure in order to save lives on both the Allied and Japanese side. The film makers were also asked to portray the bomb in such a way that it would be conveyed that the Americans did not have any other solution but the atomic bomb because Japanese militarists refused to surrender.

Under these circumstances, Nichi-ei's executive Kan'ichi Negishi planned a documentary with crew and equipment volunteered by Toho Studios in September 1945. Despite being against it, the Americans eventually allowed the documentary to be made as they wanted to use the footage in the U.S. government's Strategic

⁴The post war period in Japan is known as the *Showa* period, this period is also marked by political uncertainty and political change.

Bombing Survey. The U.S. occupation government finally confiscated all the negatives of the documentary so as to prevent any reactions in Japan that would be detrimental to their occupation. It was much after the occupation government left that a 16mm print of one of the first documentaries on the bomb, *The Effects of the Atomic Bomb*, was returned by the America to the Japanese government in 1967. And it was only in early 1980's that the rest of the 930,000 feet of the atomic bomb footage was purchased from the U.S. National Archives before it was finally released in Japan for the public. It is perhaps because of this long struggle to get the full print of the documentary that, for a very long time, the film was known as the *maboroshi* atomic bomb film (Nornes 2009: 98). The term *maboroshi* is used for objects whose existence is known but the location remains a mystery.

It should however be noted that the documentary⁵ is a twenty-two minute long footage which shows images of the infrastructural destruction wrecked by the bomb on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The documentary is highly objective, the narration sounds very detached and the industrial and infrastructural loss is emphasized much more than the human loss. This apart, there is not a single image the tens of thousands of people who were left maimed, mutated and dead by the bomb. All in all, the documentary reeked of the American discourse of avoiding any criticisms from home or abroad by completely silencing the human angle of destruction in the documentary.

Not only did the U.S. government work towards silencing any piece of information on the extent of destruction caused by the atomic bombs in Japan but in America too, the destruction of the atomic bombs was widely suppressed which also included suppressing of the pictures and figures of the dead and the maimed. The discourse that was instead encouraged was that of the bomb being essential for bringing an end to the WW II. American cinema dealing with atomic weapons too reflected amnesia towards the destruction wrecked on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their 'atomic bomb cinema'⁶ was instead based on the themes of Cold War related anxieties and

⁵<http://motherboard.vice.com/2010/8/6/the-documentary-about-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-the-u-s-didn-t-want-us-to-see--2>

⁶A name given by Jerome F. Shapiro meaning films where "the bomb" is an explicit part of the mise-en-scene, theme, context and narrative.

scepticism towards science and technology, mostly represented through science fiction, satires or dramas containing nuclear accidents. H. George Well's film, *The Time Machine* (1960), Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove: or how I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), *Red Dawn* (John Milius 1984) are some examples. One thing common in all American atomic bomb films is the absence of the mention of Japanese nuclear holocaust. It needs to be noted that American science fiction writers and filmmakers of the 1950's played upon the Cold war anxieties of the era wherein the destructive power of scientific forces unleashed questions about technology, humanity, nature and the future of the planet. Yet there was no space for a narrative on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. This apart, even Japanese films that were exported to America were edited so as to not show the atomic bomb related themes in them-- for instance, *Gojira* (Ishiro Honda 1954) was exported to America in 1956. However the film was first edited to delete references to the holocaust in Japan before it was ready for public viewership in America.

Thus, this loud silencing of the Japanese angle from the 'atomic bomb cinema' reeked of the selective memory of the American society towards the atrocities conducted by them. As opposed to this, in Japan the traumatic memories of the atomic bombings were very fresh and thus this popular sentiment was expressed in multiple ways through cinema.

Nuclear Holocaust Cinema of the 1950's

The 1950's saw films being made around the theme of moving on or what has been termed as *mono no aware*. These included, *Bells of Nagasaki* (Hideo Ôba, 1950); *I'll not Forget the Song of Nagasaki* (1952), *Children of Hiroshima* (1952) and *Still, It's Good To be Alive* (1956). These films, instead of carrying anger towards the perpetrators of the holocaust, displayed mentally resolute characters, who while perturbed by the destruction only found ways of moving on instead of displaying anger or other similar sentiments.

For instance, in the film *Still, It's Good To be Alive*, the director divides the film into three parts: the first part deals with the immediate consequences of the bomb

including the suffering induced by the keloid burns and other disfigurements; the second part deals with the plight of those who have survived the bomb but suffer from bomb related deadly diseases like leukaemia and other radiation related problems; and lastly, the final section deals with those survivors who have, despite the circumstances, managed to make useful lives for themselves for instance by nursing those worse off etc. This film deals with various elements including the physical radiation related diseases, the trauma of physical ailments and approaching death and the spirit of moving on and helping others. Thus, like the films mentioned above, this film also revolved around the theme of enduring the suffering and not indulging in blame game. However, soon after, a large number of anti America films were also released in the mid 1950's. Some of them include *Hiroshima* (Hideo Sekigawa 1953), Fumio Kamei's⁷ *A Japanese Tragedy* (1945), *Still, It's Good To be Alive*, *Voices of Hiroshima* (1959) to name a few. Due to the handicap of neither getting access to these films nor literature on the same, this study would not be able to analyse this genre deeply. However, in Mick Broderick's book on *Hibakusha Cinema*, it has been argued that these anti American films of the 1950's were tagged with leftist ideologies since most of them were funded by the leftist parties and it was this very tag that disinclined many of the filmmakers from dealing with this theme.

Science Fiction and the Metaphorical Bomb

In 1954, with the release of *Gojira*, a new age started in Japanese cinema wherein a very popular metaphor for the nuclear holocaust was born. The film became a personification on how the cinematic visual culture interpreted the bomb, inspired over sixteen successful sequels over the years and became the first Japanese film to be exported abroad. The term *Gojira* comes from a cross between Japanese words for a whale and a gorilla, and looks like a dinosaur, which may have been inspired from the American film, *King Kong* made in 1933. In *Gojira*, this Dinosaur like creature is born out of the effects of a nuclear detonation and goes about destroying Japanese cities. *Gojira* is a metaphor for the bomb that represents a scenario of post war fears of the bomb and the evil hidden in science. While scientific methods were used to kill *Gojira*, the movie nonetheless displayed a great sense of scepticism towards this

⁷A director responsible for more atomic bomb films than any other director.

scientific knowledge which is evident in the way in which the scientist in the film destroys himself and the “oxygen destroyer” that he creates to kill *Gojira*. This, it may be argued, displayed the popular opinion in Japan which was completely against the possession of nuclear weapons

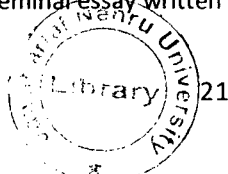
Noel Carroll (1987: 650) makes an argument with respect to horror and science fiction films that they poignantly express the sense of powerlessness and anxiety in a society that correlates with times of depression, recession and national confusion. This point could also be made with regards the sense of anxiety and insecurity following the nuclear holocaust in Japan and the vicarious releasing of those feeling through *Gojira* and the sixteen sequels that it was followed by.

With regards the sequels Carroll (1987:66) argues that their central theme being search for a solution to kill the monster, pointed towards a sign that these films displayed serious attempts at dealing with trauma therapeutically. It is through the fantasy like themes of this film and its sequels which tweak the past and re-imagine a different past that the film provides a sense of catharsis to its viewers. The next chapter would explore this concept of catharsis in detail.

While *Gojira* was one kind of monster-cum-science fiction film, wherein the theme of ‘imagination of disaster’⁸ was dealt with, the following portion would look at another science fiction film revolving around the theme of the nuclear holocaust and attempt to analyse whether the treatment of this theme altered with time. In other words, the following would attempt to look into how different generations interpreted and portrayed the holocaust through science fiction. For this purpose, *Akira* (1989) would be explored relatively to *Gojira*.

Akira, made in 1989, takes its first disjuncture from *Gojira* as being made by and for a generation that had no personal memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While both the films make allegorical references to post-war Japan, the difference is that unlike *Gojira*, where all scientific efforts are made to produce a solution to destroy the

⁸The term is borrowed from a seminal essay written by Susan Sontag, that sets the ground for analysis of science fiction films.



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dinosaur, thereby giving an equal importance to science; in *Akira*, anything scientific is considered to be a cause of evil. In this film, which starts with a nuclear explosion in Tokyo 1988 and then shifts to 2019 Neo-Tokyo, the shift is from a 1988 developing city to a global city, almost an empire in 2019. Thus, with respect to this film Lamarre (2008: 144) argues that it takes the acting out of nuclear destruction of the city as the basic condition for its transmission into a new, advanced, global world. Thus, it could be argued that the film displays a psyche that believes that destruction leads to creation (a trend also visible in *Gojira* series), that nuclear bomb led to a state that took to becoming a global city, in a way portraying a mentality which has to prove its might because it has been destroyed or challenged. Here, an analogy may be made with the Japanese economic boom in the 1980's and it may be argued that *Akira* uses "Neo Tokyo-2019" as a metaphor for the present day Japan that reached its economic boom despite the nuclear holocaust of 1945. In this context, Napier (1993: 333) argues that Japan emerges as a technocratic power in order to 'exorcize' the country's shame and thus delivering a sense of catharsis to the audiences. Another point that needs to be stated here that in the film, the character 'Akira' is a metaphor for a psychic bomb and the movie uses children as guinea pigs for scientific experimentations that give them psychic powers that are used for the destruction of Tokyo. It could thus be argued here that the filmmakers were attempting to hint at the psychological damage that was caused by the bomb or how science could take over the human mind, making it completely a slave of science.

In the movie *Akira* and all the *Gojira* series, a Japanese obsession towards technology is notable. As Low (1993: 50) argues, this may also be likened to the role that the Japanese public policy played at that time towards encouraging technological innovation by continuing to foster a national consensus concerning the need to move towards information age. It could be argued here that since it was at the hand of technological innovation that Japan had to finally surrender in the WW-II, the need to succeed in that area became of prime import and this was visible in these two films as well.

While not being in the genre of science fiction but falling under the rubric of allegory, Shindo Kaneto's 1964 movie, *Onibaba* is a horror film that makes many indirect

references to Hiroshima. In the film, based on fourteenth century Japan, two women, a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law, make their living out of killing passing samurai and then selling their possessions. It is in one such incident that the mother-in-law kills a samurai and starts to wear his mask to cause trouble elsewhere. It is during one such session that the mask gets stuck to her face and on eventually being pulled out, her face looks just as disfigured and maimed as a *hibakusha*'s did after the atomic bombing. It is after this incident that the daughter-in-law runs away from her 'demon' looking mother-in-law, refusing to recognize her. Here it may be argued that an analogy may have been made between the demon looking mother-in-law and a *hibakusha* since, Hiroyuki (2004: 71) points that one popular way of understanding the atomic bomb in post-war Japanese culture was as an evil spirit or a kind of demon. Also, as argued by John W. Dower (ibid), the film being based in the fourteenth century is noteworthy as 'there are quite a few similarities between 14th century Japan and post-war Japan'. It may also be argued that the film maybe symbolic of the abandonment that the *hibakusha* suffered by their family wherein the mask may be likened to the atomic bomb, and anyone who wears it becomes a *hibakusha* and becomes disfigured and infected and suffers abandonment from their own family. Similar themes of alienation from the society were also visible in *manga* like Yoshiyasu Ohtomo's *Anata-no ban-desu* (You next), published in 1957 and Kazuhiko Tanigawa's *Hoshi-wa Miteiru* (Stars are watching), 1957.

***Akira* Kurosawa and the Bomb: visiting the traumatic emotions of the *hibakusha* films**

Following the end of the World War II, filmmaker *Akira* Kurosawa began to write and direct a succession of *gendai-mono*, or contemporary short films that addressed social issues that rose out of Japan's defeat. In 1950, five years after the holocaust, Kurosawa created *Roshomon* which although did not fair very well in the domestic settings but did very well internationally. The film won itself the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and also received an Academy Honorary Award at the 24th Academy Awards. The film revolves around three characters, a woman, her husband and a samurai each narrating a completely different story on the rape of the woman by

the samurai. The next chapter would analyze how the film is an allegory for a hapless, confused and powerless society.

In 1955, Kurosawa directly dealt with the theme of the nuclear holocaust for the first time and later made two more films on the same theme in 1990 and 1991. The following would attempt to look at how the same filmmaker deals with the same issue in different times. Kurosawa's 1955 film, *Record of a Living Being* (1955) is very innovative in its treatment of the bomb as 'it dealt with psychological force devastating human life from within, rather than simply as an outer force of destruction' (Toda 1982: 56). This film is a family drama wherein the protagonist, Kiichi Nakajima, also head of the family, is depicted as a very nervous and insecure character always paranoid about another nuclear holocaust that could kill him and his family. It is to escape this fate that he constantly tries to persuade his family to move to another continent altogether. However, his family is very reluctant to do so because of their family business. Nakajima eventually burns down his factory to convince his family who then try to send him to a mental asylum as, his paranoia is treated as a mental illness. It should be noted here that the film very sensitively deals with the trauma that was left by the bomb, so much so that someone as wise as the head of a family succumbed to constant fear of death from another atomic bomb. 'Throughout the film, scenes of Nakajima's visits to various locations in Tokyo emphasize great density of population through constant background activities thus dramatizing the eccentric personality of the film's protagonist against the backdrop of daily routines and social norms'(Goodwin 2009: 101). A point to be noted here is that in the film, the judicial panellist who has to decide whether or not to send Nakajima to the mental asylum eventually begins to question the 'sanity' of his own passive acceptance of the nuclear bomb status quo as opposed to someone who refused to accept it. An analogy may be drawn here with the Japanese who, despite having had an association with the bomb, simply accepted their circumstances and fate without rebelling or retaliating. It may further be argued that having experienced two nuclear holocausts in 1945 and also suffering consequences of nuclear test fallout in 1954⁹, the Japanese psyche may have been left very insecure and traumatized especially with their being a backdrop of a robust arms race during the Cold War. The rest of the family who are insensitive

⁹radioactive contamination of the vessel *Fukuryu Maru No.5* following a nuclear test in the Pacific ocean by the U.S.

towards this trauma may be interpreted in several ways. While one reading of the family may liken them to the insensitive western world who kept on indulging more and more potent nuclear bombs and arms race throughout the Cold War; another reading could liken them to the many families during the nuclear holocaust who had to abandon their loved ones due to fear of catching illness from them. The movie ends with Nakajima being left alone in the mental asylum where a loud sound is heard that he imagines as another nuclear destruction that consumes the earth.

Kurosawa dealt with the subject again in 1991 in his film, *Rhapsody in August*. The film moves at a very slow pace depicting the mental setup of the principle character Kane, the grandmother to a large family. The endeavour of the film is to find the contemporary meaning of the past from the eyes of the third generation of the nuclear holocaust.

In the film, Kane is visited by her grandchildren and a Japanese-American relation Clark on the forty fifth anniversary of her husband's death who died of the atomic bomb at Nagasaki. While the grandchildren are very curious, they are also equally unaware about their family's history and the bomb and this is evident when their grandmother Kane narrates the incident to them. Here, a disconnection maybe visible between the present generation that was born after the Japanese economic miracle and the previous generations who directly experienced the bomb. The film thus demonstrates that 'for the non-*hibakusha* in the atomic age, denial, indifference and historical amnesia are common impairments to consciousness' (Goodwin: 2009).

As the film ends, there is a very noisy and violent storm which is mistaken by Kane as another nuclear explosion and she is seen protecting her grandchildren from what she believes to be another 'nuclear attack'. Kane's trauma and paranoia here could be compared to Nakajima's behaviour in Kurosawa's 1955 film, '*The Record of a Living Being*'. The last scene shows Kane running out of her home and wandering off to another place leaving behind her family. This, it may be argued shows that half a century since the attack, the victims of the bombings are still traumatized by the event and feel that they are alone in it. Thus the theme of trauma and paranoia, though different in intensity, remain present in both of Kurosawa's films. The only difference being that in the former film, the principle character is left alone by his family and in

the latter the protagonist leaves the family behind and wanders off alone. Thus the theme of suffering alone remains constant. Another interesting point in the film *Rhapsody in August* is that in the end, the Japanese- American character Clark apologizes to the grandmother for the bomb that was dropped by America. This very scene, it may be argued may have helped provide a sense of catharsis to the audiences.

The Bomb and suffering maiden: visiting the theme of “*mono no aware*” in the films

Japanese popular culture including films, television, *manga* to name a few, portray *hibakusha* women as beauties who steadfastly endure the physical and emotional suffering of atomic bomb related illness. Such women characters are mostly portrayed as possessing attributes of endurance, self-sacrifice, spirituality which seems larger than life in most cases. The following section would take two such movies portraying the suffering women namely, *Yumechiyo* (1985) and *Black Rain* (1989). From these films, two points would be argued firstly, that the men in the society expected the women to virtuous and strong even in the face of sickness and secondly, through these films, the underlying theme of victimhood of post war Japan was being emphasized.

The year 1985 saw a popular television series *Yumechiyo* being remade as a very popular movie. The movie is about a beautiful geisha named *Yumechiyo* who develops leukaemia at the age of thirty as a result of the fact that she was in her mother's womb during the atomic bombing. The film is about her last six months wherein she develops very strong endurance that allows her to go through her deadly disease strangely unperturbed by it. In the process, she also finds her romantic love, whom *Yumechiyo* tries to save from his weaknesses, making no mention of her deadly disease to him. The character in this movie can be compared to the female character in Imamura Shohei's film *Black Rain* (1989). In this film, the female character, *Yasuko* gets exposed to the black rain that follows the bombing and it is because of this that even five years after the bombing, despite being physically fit, she is unable to find a marriageable match for herself. However, half way down the film, *Yasuko* starts to develop radiation related symptoms and endures them without sharing her misery with anyone else in her family.

In both these films, the physical and mental beauty of the women seems to remain unaffected by their deadly disease and strangely they show no signs of anger towards the bomb. This may be associated with Japanese victimhood following the bombing and as has been argued by Masashi Ichiki (2011), Japan did not want to be reminded that the holocaust was the doing of the same state under whose nuclear umbrella they now secured its nuclear security. It is for this reason, that the anger towards America was perhaps not overtly visible. Instead they seem to accept the atomic bombing as a natural disaster that had happened, thereby demonstrating strong undertones of what Richie describes as '*mono no aware*'. It may be argued that the films, both directed by men, also show the societal expectations out of a woman, that of endurance even in the face of utmost tragedy. At the same time however, it may also be argued that, both the films explain a society where the women have been enduring the burden of the past without any sign of regrets or grudges.

Animie

Japanese animie or animation is a very popular art form not only in Japan but also worldwide. Animie evolved from ancient Japanese art including narrative scrolls and *ukiyo-e* or woodblock prints through to pre war *manga* before it became a phenomenon with the emergence of '*Astro Boy*' in post war Japan. This section would look at two visible trends in animie, first the dichotomy between man and technology as visible in *Astro boy* and *Akira* and second, the realistic version of the nuclear bombings as visible through '*Barefoot Gen*' and '*Grave of Fireflies*'.

As in the former two films which became very popular globally, a fascination for technology and science was visible. '*Astro Boy*' or *Tetsuwam Atomu*, created by Osamu Tezuka in 1951, was about a nuclear powered robot that was endowed with enormous strength, power to fight and to speak many languages (Matthews 2004: 8). Created soon after the end of WW- II wherein, the surrender of Japan happened after the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or after the destruction of the two cities by a bomb that epitomized science and technology at their worst; this animie and its popularity could be argued to have expressed latent feelings of mastering science, and especially nuclear powered science. Although Tezuka claimed that many

of the central themes and characters of Astro Boy were meant to be cynical, the public opinion however, made him more romanticized. As has been argued by James Matthews (ibid: 9), the series was an attempt to show science as a 'double edged sword' which on one hand leads to progress but, on the other hand also leads to destruction and calamity. Destruction to the effect of an apocalypse has been visible in many Japanese science fiction and anime. With regards anime, Susan Napier (2001: 75) outlines three types of anime including the festival, the elegiac and the apocalyptic. This Japanese fascination for anime has been visible in various films like Neon Genesis Evangelion, Final Fantasy and *Akira*. As has been discussed in a section above, *Akira* is a science fiction- anime that begins with a nuclear blast before shifting into a neo Tokyo twenty years later. Napier (2001) and Schodt (1988) argue that the apocalyptic like themes (mostly with regard to apocalypse due to scientific destruction) in many Japanese films points to the fact that Japan has been the only nation to have faced an apocalyptic event in form of the 1945 nuclear holocaust of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. However, Napier (ibid) argues that many of the anime also depict a post-apocalyptic scenario. For instance, *Akira* depicts a post nuclear destruction world and likewise, Astro Boy is depicted to have risen 'from the ashes of the atomic bomb'.

As mentioned above while discussing the famous *manga* series *Barefoot Gen* by Keiji Nakazawa Hadashi, the cinematic adaptation of the same, made in 1983 and 1986 by Mori Masaki was as graphic and realistic as the *manga* series. A considerable part of the film includes life of the people of Hiroshima before the holocaust thereby emphasizing the sudden change of life immediately after the nuclear holocaust. This anime, based on a real life account, takes a positive departure from the rest of the anime on this subject as it brings a very realistic account of the event as it happened. The anime shows the holocaust through the eyes of a six year old boy who loses his family to the nuclear bomb and shows his account of viewing the dying, mutated bodies all around, fear of death that envelopes him after seeing the others dying, anger at the senseless and unavoidable destruction to name a few. This film also takes a departure from other *hibakusha* films in terms of the sheer anger amongst the people that it reveals and the very graphic description of ground zero. Although argued with

regard to anime, Nakazawa's detest towards the romanticized and 'sugar coated' version of the bomb is also loudly evident in this anime film.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the multiple nuances and perspectives that have been adopted by filmmakers of different periods to interpret the bomb. The visible trends have included '*mono no aware*' or silent acceptance and endurance of the bomb; films engaging with fantasies through allegorical and science fiction; trauma films, or films that revolve around fears, anxieties, guilt and insecurities relating to the atomic bomb and lastly apocalyptic films or films that depict 'end of the world' type scenarios particularly through nuclear bombings.

The following chapter would look at the characteristics that each of these trends reveals about the Japanese society thereby trying to understand the emotional and psychological effects that the nuclear holocaust left on the people.

Chapter III

Cinematic Representations of Societal Emotions

The previous chapter culls out four prominent themes while studying *hibakusha* films namely, *mono no aware*, trauma, 'fantasy or science fiction' and apocalyptic themes. These themes are however not independent and point towards certain characteristics about the post holocaust Japanese society. The following chapter would look into these characteristics that the above mentioned themes point towards and in the process, attempt to ontologically and epistemologically understand the post holocaust Japanese society.

Introduction

"Films mirror social developments and reflect how sentiments change or become further entrenched" -Tadao Sato (1984)

In his book on *Currents in Japanese Cinema*, Sato explains how the Japanese film industry drew heavily from the history and social developments of the Japanese society. This, Sato explains by tracing the genealogy of the Japanese film industry showing how the same drew from *Kabuki* and *Kodan* or historical tales, revolving around the themes of samurai culture of the feudal times. He further emphasized his point by explaining how the samurai-loyal movie going public supported period drama stars who played strong, loyal samurais (1984: 26).

With respect to *hibakusha* films, it would be argued that the same derived hugely from the notions and the emotions that were present in the post holocaust Japanese society.

With respect to the four broad themes that the previous chapter has culled out namely *mono no aware*, trauma, fantasy and apocalyptic films; the following study would analyse and theorize each of these themes so as to understand what each theme portrayed about the society.

This chapter would discuss the films falling under each of these four themes and in doing so, point at what each theme explained about the society. The study would thus show how themes of *mono no aware* display a victim ideology prevalent in the society; trauma related films demonstrate the latent emotions of fear, insecurity, guilt and anxiety; fantasy films point towards a society that indulges in ‘dissociation’ or selective amnesia with regard to their traumatic past and finally apocalyptic cinema portrays the opposite emotions wherein, the imaginations of an end of the world type scenario show how the films could not detach themselves from a similar event in the past thereby pointing at how the points towards the imaginations become a site of the historical and the political.

This alongside, the chapter would not only explore the societal emotions that affected the ‘atomic bomb cinema’ but also reflect on the emotions that this cinema released in its audiences thereby understanding how *hibakusha* cinema helped its viewers achieve a sense of catharsis. With regard to *hibakusha* films, catharsis would be used in a way similar to the way that Aristotle employed in *The Poetics* wherein, he uses it to explain how the audiences watching tragedies vicariously relieved their emotions through dramas. It was through the actions of the tragic hero, that the audiences would achieve a purging of emotions of fear and pity, thereby feeling relieved and emancipated by the end of it.

At any given point of time, the emotions and ideas and norms running within a society usually get reflected through mediums of popular culture, cinema being one of them. For instance, following the World War II, Italy was stricken by economic, political and social crises and this was very realistically portrayed by the Italian Neo realist cinema of that time. Neorealist films like ‘Rome, open city’ *Roma, citta aperta* (Roberto Rossellini 1946); *Bicycle Thieves*, *Ladri di biciclette* (Vittorio De Sica 1948), reeked of the political troubles and the economic crunch that the society was going through at that point of time involving real life locations and usually real life people acting in them.

Likewise, the period from 1950’s onwards saw a lot of science fiction films in American film industry. These films, Huebner (2010: 8) argues, are a result of the

socio-political changes in the American lives due the pressures of the Cold War. It is through such films that the society might have attempted to defamiliarize from the past.

Likewise, the development of nuclear weapons and the fears associated therewith have been widely captured by films and other sources of popular media. For instance, Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, a black comedy made in 1964 was a satire on the madness of an army general bent upon using the bomb and the efforts of the rest towards dissuading him. Likewise, *FailSafe* is another example of a film that was made in 1964 by Sidney Lumet that displayed the situation of an accidental thermonuclear strike by America on the then Soviet Union and the consequences that followed. It should be noted here that both the films were made during the peak of U.S. - Soviet tensions during the Cold War and portrayed latent fears and anxieties within the American society regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

Similarly this chapter attempts to use *hibakusha* cinema as a level of analysis and argue that the same explains how the people and the society of Japan have been impacted by the bomb, interpreted it, responded to it and importantly, coped with it. Here, the cinematic variable would be theoretically studied so as to better understand the impact left by the bomb on the society. This point could also be used to argue the larger point that popular culture helps understand the norms and ideas in the social setup of Japan vis-à-vis not just the nuclear bomb but also all the elements associated with the bomb including America, science and technology. This argument however will be dealt with in the following chapter.

The chapter would be following an inductive pattern of research as specific examples of films would be observed and analysed in order to reach the above mentioned broader arguments.

"The relationship between man and his surroundings is the continual theme of the Japanese film, one which quite accurately reflects the oneness with nature that is both the triumph and the escape of the Japanese people. The Japanese regards his surroundings as an extension of himself, and it is this attitude that creates the atmosphere of the Japanese film at its best." - (Richie 1971)

Through this quote, Richie very succinctly describes Japanese cinema as an art form that absorbs from its surrounding environment and is thus dependent on the same. Japanese cinema is an amalgamation of several aspects of Japanese memory including the samurai culture; the incompatibility between traditional values and westernization; the dichotomies between spirituality and science and technology; the war culture; the defeat of WW- II and the nuclear holocaust to name a few.

The following section would look deeply at the four prominent themes that have already been culled out in the previous chapter and in the process, attempt to theorize the emotions and the impact on the post holocaust society.

Trauma

Trauma is a phenomenon that possesses the thoughts and psyche of an individual by its repeated occurrence. This characteristic of trauma has been explained by Cathy Caruth (1996: 4), who explains it as a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, and thoughts but only belatedly in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. Freud considers traumatic events as those that leave deep wounds in the psyche (Turim 2001: 207). This Freudian analysis of trauma could be extrapolated to the Japanese nuclear holocaust and it could be argued that that the holocaust was a traumatic event which led to multiple wounds of losing one's family, home, dignity, and security of life.

Trauma has been visible in various atomic bomb related films including 'Record of a Living Being' (Kurosawa 1955), *Rhapsody in August* (Kurosawa 1991), *Black Rain*

(Shohei 1988), *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (Resnais 1959). This section would look at this theme of trauma to explain better the society that these films are trying to reflect.

Black Rain (1988)

Made by Shohei Imamura in 1988, the film is an adaptation of a novel by the same name, written by Masuji Ibuse. As discussed in the previous chapter, the film revolves around three characters and the trauma that they suffer in the aftermath of the holocaust. The trauma that they suffer is in form of constant and repeated reminders from their bodies, family and the society that sooner or later, they would succumb to the radiation related illness and perish. While the film begins with the scene of life on a normal day, the explosion of the bomb emphasizes the unexpectedness with which the lives of so many lakhs of people changed forever. Throughout the film, Imamura uses the narrative of flashbacks to emphasize on how the lives of the characters in the film changed following the bomb.

The film is based not on the immediate impact of the bomb but instead keeps switching between the day of the Hiroshima holocaust and life as it was, five years later. It revolves around the life of a small family of three wherein while two members, Shigemitsu and his wife were caught close to the epicentre (which is addressed to as the 'flash' throughout the film), their niece Yasuko was caught in the radioactive black rain that happened later. Since it is based on life five years hence, the film very subtly shows how the bomb impacted the survivors and affected them physically, emotionally and socially. Shigemitsu, the head of the family is seen getting weaker and more fatigued, and keeps revisiting the day of the bomb through flashbacks. Shigemitsu is shown to have carried with him the guilt for having taken his family to the factory on the day of the bomb, a place that was close to the epicentre. A lot of *hibakusha* had been traumatized by the feeling of guilt as; Donald Richie (1996) argues that a lot of *hibakusha* families did not want to discuss their experiences regarding the holocaust as many of them were guilty for having left behind their family members. *Barefoot Gen*(1983) also shows a situation where in the six year old boy Gen and his mother had to leave their family behind.

Apart from the feeling of guilt, Shigemitsu and the other *hibakusha* in the film, constantly see their friends, and neighbours and family dying every now and then due to radiation related sickness and the survivors seem to be living constantly under the fear of awaiting death.

Cathy Caruth (1996: 5) quotes Freud's concept of *survivor guilt* which is associated with having survived a traumatic event and what follows is repetition of trauma. It could be suggested that this survivor guilt becomes very evident in Shigemitsu's character in the film particularly in the way that the flashbacks keep taking him back and forth to constantly revisit the scene of the holocaust. This apart, the family is shown as struggling to attain a normalcy of life after the holocaust particularly visible in the struggle to find a marriageable match for their niece Yasuko. The film shows the struggle and helplessness of the family in finding a suitable match for Yasuko, and the agony that they suffer in form of constant rejection as Yasuko is considered by the rest to be an atomic bomb victim. Through this struggle to get Yasuko married, the movie demonstrates a society which considers the survivors of the bomb as the "others" and thus alienated from the 'normal' society. This characteristic of stigma attached to the survivors of the atomic bomb and their alienation from the society was also visible in *manga* during the mid-1950's wherein, Yoshiyasu Ohtomo's *Anata-no ban-desu (You Next)*, published in 1957 and Kazuhiko Tanigawa's *Hoshi-wa Miteiru (1957)* show characters who are ostracized from the society for carrying some nuclear bomb related deformity.

Though released in 1989, the film is shot in black and white perhaps pointing towards the absence of colour from the lives of the 'survivors' and emphasizing on a time gone by. The film is an effort towards interweaving the past with the present wherein both are not detached from each other.

Roshomon (1950)

Roshomon is one of the first 'Kurosawan' films to have dealt with the bomb and the war allegorically. While there is no mention of the bomb throughout the film, the entire feel and setting of the film created an environment of a society that had been

devastated by a war and that was left in a helpless and shattered state of affairs. It has been argued that the film could be taken as a 'timely allegory wrought by the bomb' (Desser 1995:55), as Desser argues that the physical ruin and metaphorical doubt are emphasized throughout the film. Revolving around three characters and a completely different version of the same story narrated by each one of them, the theme could also be interpreted as different versions and perception of the war by three different parties, the Japanese state, America and the Japanese society.

Here the rape of the woman in the movie could be likened to the physical and spiritual devastation of Japan and what followed was distrust, doubt and helplessness. The film thus could be likened to a post holocaust Japanese society that was left traumatized by emotions of confusion and powerlessness following the atomic bombing.

Record of a Living Being (1955)

As elaborated in the previous chapter, this film made by *Akira* Kurosawa in 1955 revolves around the insecurity and fear of the protagonist, Nakajima, who wants to migrate to another continent with his family due to his constant fear of another nuclear holocaust and his struggle in convincing his reluctant family to do so. In the conclusion of the film, Nakajima is found in a mental asylum where, on hearing a loud sound he gets convinced that another nuclear explosion has taken place which would consume the earth.

Throughout the film, the constant fear and insecurity of the protagonist and his restlessness about its repetition suggests what Freud (1920) mentions as trauma's nature of returning to haunt the survivor. The last scene, wherein Nakajima believes that he is seeing the holocaust of the earth may be likened to what Freud (1920) terms as *traumatic neurosis* which 'emerges as the unwitting re-enactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind'. This may be suggestive of the traumatized psyche of a larger section of people at that point of time, a society that not only 'survived' the nuclear holocaust, but also viewed the on-going nuclear tests that the two major rivals of the Cold War indulged in.

In the film, the restlessness and angst of the protagonist is compared to numbness of the rest of the family towards the bomb, and this, Robert Lifton (1991) calls into question. He argues that the ultimate psychological question in a nuclear world is: 'Who is crazy--the man so sensitive to the threat, so able to envision the 'end of the world', and so insistent upon pressing this vision in the face of general resistance that he becomes what is conventionally described as 'insane'? Or the world's ordinary functional people, who numb themselves to the threat and oppose actions that either remind them of it or affect their material interests?'

Rhapsody in August (1991)

Likewise, in Kurosawa's *Rhapsody in August*, the trauma element is visible when the *hibakusha* wife of a person who dies in the nuclear holocaust is seen getting paranoid with loud thundering sounds that she constantly relates to the bomb and thus protects her grandchildren from. The film explores how, forty years after the holocaust, the *hibakusha* were still living with a fear psychosis that could get triggered by anything akin to the atomic bomb like loud thunder. Since *Rhapsody in August* is based on life forty years after the bombing, it also traces the emotional distance between the first and the third generation survivors, thereby emphasizing on the growing loneliness of the *hibakusha*. The film takes a departure from the other trauma related films on the bomb as it emphasizes the distance that developed between the first generation of the holocaust and the third generation or the economic boom generation.

A pattern that is found repeating in all the above mentioned films is that of the difficulty of leaving the past behind and how the past traumas always manage to creep into the present to repeatedly disturb the subjects. They expose a very important point of how the 'survivors' of the nuclear bomb eventually became the victims themselves. By juxtaposing various concepts of trauma explained by Freud, Cathy Caruth, Maureen Turim and Janet Walker with the films mentioned above, the presence psychological characteristics of survivor guilt, trauma neurosis and fear psychosis becomes visible thereby emphasizing the emotions of fear, guilt, insecurity and anxiety that the holocaust left on the 'survivors'.

Fantasy visited through Science Fiction and Allegorical Films

“Fantasy can elevate us from the monotony of life or distract us from terrors, ‘real or anticipated’. It can normalize what is psychologically unbearable, thereby inuring us to it” Susan Sontag (1996).

Fantasies can distort reality and as Sontag has described above, can re-imagine certain past events in a way that helps the human mind to accept them and cope with certain unbearable or traumatic memories. Fantasies could also be linked with the psychological phenomenon of dissociation wherein traumatic events of the past can detach the traumatized by psychological numbing.

In the medium of cinema, a lot of science fiction films create fantasy like situations by re-imagining a past or present event in a different way or by creating ‘larger than life’ images or events. It should be noted that cinema that employs a lot of clubbing of science fiction and fantasy and in the process, transports the audiences temporarily to a different place nonetheless, reflects certain characteristics of a cultural, temporal, political and social context. For instance, one of the most popular fantasy-science fiction series, *Star trek*, made during the peak of the Cold War (1966-1969), which displayed space odysseys and explorations of newer galaxies and peaceful co-existence; reflected some of the most basic patterns of American life. Made during the time of Vietnam War, this series has been interpreted as a fantasy that dwelt on exploring newer territories peacefully as opposed to the military invasions of that point of time. The series has been argued to have worked well due to two reasons, firstly: ‘it presented a continuity with the philosophy of exploring new frontiers; secondly, because it permitted a transformation of an American ‘mythology’ concerning the free enterprise into a techno-militaristic framework without the usual undesirable associations with war’ (Theall and M.A. 1980). That is, unlike the Vietnam War, *Star trek* justified explorations of different planets and territories on the basis of peaceful co-existence thereby making the audiences believe what they wanted to believe regarding American ‘explorations’ of different parts of the world during the Cold War.

In case of this section would look at the fantasy generation of some Japanese science fiction films and explain how the same firstly described the society and secondly, helped the audiences to vicariously cope with the nuclear holocaust.

***Gojira* (1954)**

The first *hibakusha* film to have approached the bomb from the cinematic style of science fiction is Ishiro Honda's *Gojira*. Sontag (1965) defines science fiction films as those that are not just about science but revolve extensively around disaster.

Likewise, in the film, *Gojira* was a huge dinosaur looking beast that was born out of the effects of nuclear detonation and thus the entire theme of the film revolved around trying to find a solution to stop *Gojira* from destroying the Japanese cities thereby involving a lot of disaster and destruction. In the film, *Gojira* metaphorically represents the atomic destruction and it could be argued that the same symbolically re-enacts a problematic U.S.-Japan relationship that includes atomic war, occupation, and thermo-nuclear tests (Noriega, 1996:61).

Thus the film and the sixteen sequels that followed included on one hand a lot of destruction by *Gojira* and on the other, a rigorous quest by the scientists to stop the beast from destroying cities and homes. The treatment of the film and its characterization are larger than life generating the feel of a fantasy amongst the audiences. In the film, this fantasy generation could be argued to be delivered from having eventually controlled *Gojira*, pointing indirectly towards having controlled the atomic bomb or the United States. In other words, by eventually controlling the beast that has been portrayed as a metaphor for the atomic bomb, the film, as argued by Janet Walker (2001: 212), represents a wish that could be linked the past.

In this sense it could be argued that within the sphere of cinematic fantasy, the film provides a space to come to terms with trauma (Roberts 2011). Thus it could be argued here that through the fantasy provided by science fiction, *Gojira* works towards creating a different history or altering the past, thereby providing the audiences with a sense of catharsis. While used in a different context, Ashish Nandy can be quoted here from *History's Forgotten Doubles* wherein he argues that artists

could 'break the shackles of history' in their own creative way and exercise this autonomy to 'live outside history for short spans of time'. Science fiction fantasies, it is argued here, offers not just that recourse but also that catharsis to temporarily live outside history.

It should be noted that the timing of this film and its sequels matched with the Cold War politics that were happening on the world stage wherein attempts were being made of creating a positive world view regarding the use of atomic energy. At this time, science fiction genre emerged greatly in cinema particularly in American cinema, providing an outlet for an expression of fear and anxiety related with the nuclear weapon (Bennett 2012).

Space Battleship Yamato (Uchu Senkan Yamato), a television and film series from 1970 deals with the subject of the war and the holocaust indirectly. As Susan Napier (1972) argues, this portion would attempt to look at this series closer so as to find the 'cathartic and fantastic reworking of the loss of WW- II' that the film attempts to achieve. It's noteworthy to understand the significance of the name of the battleship of the series. *Yamato* was a very tough Japanese battleship during WW- II that was destroyed in 1945; this was considered a huge loss for Japan. *Yamato* was also the ancient name for Japan (Napier 1972).

The film begins with the destruction of Yamato in 1945 and then jumps to the future when the spaceship is resurrected and used to fight the aliens, pointing towards the analogy driven here with the destruction of WW- II and the resurrection of Japan in the future. The destruction of Yamato in the film maybe linked with the holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which led to a scenario of hopelessness and powerlessness, akin to the feelings that the destruction of the spaceship left in the film.

The series repeatedly keeps displaying demolition of the spaceship and encounters with the aliens. However, just when the end of the spaceship looks apparent, it survives. This may be linked to the therapeutic concept of 'working through' wherein the repetition of traumatic experience helps lessening the intensity. It has been argued that "by offering the audience the chance to vicariously approach the moment of

Yamato's (Japan's) annihilation and then successfully escaping what seems like inevitable destruction, the films can be seen as a form of cultural therapy in which loss is revisited in a fundamentally reassuring manner" (Napier 1972).

From the above section it could be argued that the *Gojira* and *Yamato* series of science fiction fantasy films point at two different aspects first, that the fantasy like distortions of the past suggest that the post holocaust society was somewhere troubled with the reality of the past and how it ended and second, that through re-imagining an alternate past or by visiting the bomb in a fantasy like way, the films helped release traumatic emotions regarding the atomic bomb and thus helped achieve a catharsis.

Apocalyptic themes

Walter Benjamin (1999: 507-510) explains a catastrophic event as one that destabilizes the way in which one sees the world, thereby leading to an 'end of the world as it is known and cognized'.

The use of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki proved for the first time, that a phenomenon that was until then, only part of imagination in pulp fiction, could actually be real. The idea of a bomb that could devastate an entire race of human life in the span of a few seconds became a reality and this idea led to multiple cinematic imaginations including zombie like and post human imaginations (Baishya 2011: 3). The following section would take a few films with the underlying themes of apocalypse and argue that the trauma caused by the nuclear holocaust was very huge as it destabilized the way the people imagined the world.

Akira made in 1989 begins with a holocaust like situation of a nuclear explosion in Tokyo in 1989 and shifts to Neo Tokyo 2019- a technocrat, global empire that reconstructed itself from the destruction of the bomb. As argued in the previous chapter, an analogy may be made here with the Japanese economic boom in the 1980's and it may be argued that the director, Katsuhiro Ohtomo used 'Neo Tokyo-2019' as a metaphor for the present day Japan that reached its economic boom despite

the nuclear holocaust of 1945. This analogy could be argued to be delivering a sense of catharsis by evidently pointing to the progress that the society made.

The film revolves around characters that possess post human characteristics that possess the ability to cause physical destruction or destruction of a bomb by using their mind. Such characters are mostly children that look old and senile pointing towards a theme of loss of innocence. '*Akira*' is one such character in the film that is feared to possess the power or capability for maximum uncontrollable destruction. The argument here is that *Akira*, who is part human, part machine; is a metaphor here for the unstoppable and destructive potential in a post nuclear age. It is portrayed as an example of a Frankenstein like experiment gone wrong wherein analogies can be made with a post nuclear world where the nuclear bomb controls the behaviour of the states and not vice-versa. While used in the context of instinctual behaviour, particularly sexual behaviour, an analogy may still be made with Sigmund Freud's argument in '*Civilization and its Discontents*' wherein the 'increasing levels of 'civilization' in human history sees a simultaneous increase in the repression, and unhappiness inevitably accompanies it'. The society in the movie *Akira* reeks of an advanced 'technology civilization' which sees an exponential increase in unhappiness and repression. The film is based on a society that has resurrected itself from the ashes of a nuclear holocaust and is constantly struggling to prevent a similar situation in the future. Thus the film reeks of an unstable and unhappy society that creates more technology to fight technology.

Shindo Kaneto's horror film, *Onibaba* (1964) is another film that subtly expresses an apocalyptic like situation. Based on the medieval era wherein Japan is torn apart by war and men keep dying in senseless fights; the film reeks of absurdity of life, akin to the theme of 'meaninglessness of life' visible in the 'absurdist fiction' written by European playwrights in the 1960's. It is in this scenario that a gang of a mother and daughter- in- law try to survive in the absence of their husbands who have gone to fight the war. They survive by killing passing samurais and selling their tools for food in return. It is in one such attempt that the mother- in-law keeps the mask of a samurai and wears it to scare the other woman from have an illicit affair with a third man. In the process, while the mother-in-law takes off the mask, her skin sticks to it and she looks demon like and similar to what a lot of people looked like after the nuclear

bomb hit ground zero in 1945. “The film views trauma victims as haunted by death in perpetuity and sexuality becomes the only life force in times that are ridden by lifelessness” (Kumar 2011). While there is no direct mention of the nuclear bomb, the icy monochrome direction, the hopelessness and meaninglessness of life, and the demon like face of the mother-in-law after the removal of the mask, and the portrayal of a society where everyone keeps dying thereby suggesting an end-of-the-world-like-situation reek of times of the holocaust and thus maybe taken as allegorical representations of the same. The theme of the film could be argued to be of a distorted perception of the world in the face of a catastrophic event.

Films like *Akira* and *Onibaba*, by pointing at an ‘end of the world’ type scenario, point at the way that the impact of the holocaust triggered an unstable imagination of the world. This instability also points at a fear and insecurity of a world that could be. The Japanese anime also has displays a very prominent trend of imagining apocalyptic like scenarios. For instance, Susan Napier (2001: 75) explains how apocalypse is one of the three major trends of Japanese anime including *Astro Boy*, *Akira*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Final Fantasy*. The following section would look at the trend of *mono no aware* and attempt to understand the Japanese society

‘Mono no aware’

This section would look at two films, *Yumechiyo* and *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and thus tease out the prominent themes of victimization and the characteristics of ‘acceptance of fate without any resistance’. In so doing, it would be argued that this aspect of the post holocaust Japanese popular culture romanticized the *hibakusha* by emphasizing on the theme of ‘non-resistant victimization’ thus pointing at a society that indulges in glorifying its traumatic past. It would also be argued here that this glorification of self-victimization may also point at the process by which the Japanese society is engaging in forgetting the Japanese war past that is associated with war crimes and atrocities, during and before the WW -II. It should also be noted here that many Japanese films like *Yumechiyo* and *Black Rain*, present unfortunate women as their central motif thereby “emphasizing more on women shouldering alone the evil of men and cleansing it by their self-sacrifice” (Sato 1984: 77). Here it could be argued that a

victim ideology is being emphasized so as to wash away an embarrassing, violent past.

Hiroshima Mon Amour (1959)

The title is a paradox, while Hiroshima symbolizes the most devastating and long lasting destruction of the twentieth century; 'mon amour' signifies passionate love. Similar contradictions signify this film which is a French-Japanese co-production combining a mixture of documentary footage and narrative fiction. The film is a story of a passionate love story between a French actress and a Japanese architect who meet in Hiroshima a few years after the atomic bombing. The director keeps switching back and forth between the love affair of the above characters and between the love affair of the woman and a German soldier during the World War II.

The film portrays the loss of love and loved ones to war and keeps pointing towards the absurdity of life. The transitory nature of relationships and love is pointed out throughout the film revealing similarities with the 'theatre of the absurd' which also talks about the meaningless of human existence. The opening of the film displays unclothed bodies embracing each other and nuclear ashes begin to cover them pointing towards the presence of death in life or life in death. This could also point towards a state of lifelessness that followed the holocaust where, the only life force consisted of indulging in sexuality.

The film explores the dilemmas of remembering and forgetting pointing towards the complexities of this act for war 'survivors' and making the larger point of how the survivors of the war end up becoming the victims of loss of love, loss of hope and eternally trapped in their past which, they are not able to let go of.

Likewise, as discussed in the previous chapter, the film *Yumechiyo* revolves around the last six months of the protagonist's life and the unperturbed nature of the character almost glorifies her victimhood. Although argued with regard to *manga* and the atomic bomb, Masashi Ichiki's (2011: 35) point about 'Genbaku Otome, or A-bomb beauties myth' could be used with reference to films like *Yumechiyo* and *Black Rain*

that glorify a ‘suffering beautiful young girl’ thereby emphasizing on the notion of victimhood. The next chapter would explore this concept of victimization and understand how the same has been taken as a garb to forget the Japanese atrocities and imperialistic violence during the WWII and how the notion of ‘victimization’ helps the society forget this humiliating past.

Conclusion

The above essay has attempted to test two hypotheses, firstly that the Japanese cinema on the atomic bomb is not detached from the society and thus portrays the emotions within the Japanese society regarding the holocaust. This, the essay does by exploring four broad themes and thus arguing that themes of *mono no aware* display a victim ideology prevalent in the society; trauma related films demonstrate the latent emotions of fear, insecurity, guilt and anxiety; fantasy and science fiction films point towards a society that indulges in re-imagining disaster so as to release their heightened emotions through the process and finally apocalyptic cinema points towards the powerful and long lasting impact that the atomic bomb left on not just the *hibakusha* but also on the second and third generations with no personal memory of the holocaust.

This apart, the chapter also establishes that the *hibakusha* films arise certain emotions in the audience thereby helping them release those emotions and thus achieve a sense of catharsis. This has been most visible in the case of films engaging in fantasies.

The next chapter would look at the medium of popular culture theoretically and establish how the tool could be used to understand societies and how the understanding of a society could in turn affect and explain certain characteristics about the state identity.

Chapter IV

Popular Culture and Emotions: Shaping the State Identity

The previous chapter, by exploring the *hibakusha* films falling under the prominent themes of *mono no aware*, trauma, fantasy and apocalypse; established that the same portrayed certain basic characteristics about the Japanese society. These characteristics included firstly, a society that romanticized the notion of ‘victimhood’; secondly, a society that was traumatized by emotions of fear, insecurity, anxiety and guilt; thirdly, a traumatized society that engaged in dissociation by re-imagining a different past so as to cope with it and finally a society that engaged in unstable, ‘end of the world’ type imaginations.

This chapter would use the above mentioned analysis of the previous chapter so as to explore the question of how the emotions of the post holocaust society affected and shaped the Japanese state identity.

The study so far, has attempted to emphasize a co-relation between cinema and society by explaining how films reveal the latent emotions of a society. In this reference, Walter Benjamin’s argument on how films serve as optical unconscious by camera helps introduce one to the unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to conscious impulses.

In this chapter, this very area would be expanded further and a link between cinema or other forms of popular culture and the state identity and policies would be traced. This would be done by tracing an inter-relationship between the three variables of popular culture, society and the state identity. In so doing, an attempt would be made here to theorize the psychology of a society, as interpreted through popular culture and explore the interplay between this societal psychology and the state’s identity and policy making. That is, unlike the leading IR theories that consider state as a timeless entity, state identity instead would be considered to be a product of the subjective memories, ‘constituted by inter-subjectively recognized narratives’ (Ringmar 1996: 451). That is, unlike the overly reductionist assumption about societal psychology that

has so far been made by all major IR theories, this very societal psychology and memories would be considered an important agent in affecting the state identity.

The scope of the chapter is to analyse the interplay between agents (society as interpreted through popular culture) and structure (international system) and this would be done with relation to the psyche, ideas and norms in the society. Thus, unlike the stand of Structuralism which treats states as unitary actors dependent on the structure, it would be argued here that in international politics, the behaviour of a state is affected not just by external factors but, equally also by the internal factors of the psyche of a society shaped by memories and ideas. That is, an attempt would be made to explore the societal memories, norms, psyche and understand how the same shapes a state's identity which, in turn plays a role in how a state perceives the international system and thus reacts to the same on the basis of its own unique perception.

For instance, Japan and North Korea, although located in the same geographic region, have completely different approaches towards nuclear weapons. While the former is a very vociferous part of the discourse on nuclear weapons disarmament, North Korea on the other hand, has been covertly engaging in making nuclear weapons for which it has been under a lot of international pressure as well.

The point of analysis to be explored in this chapter would be societal and that level would be explored to see how it shaped the identity of the state. That is, the society would be taken as an independent variable affecting the policies of the state, which would be the dependent variable. It is for this purpose that the lens of constructivism would be adopted in the chapter. Adler (1997: 330) explains constructivism as a middle ground theory in the IR as it is interested in understanding 'how the material, subjective and inter-subjective worlds interact in the social construction of reality and because, rather than focusing exclusively on how structures constitute agents' identities and interests, it also seeks to explain how individual agents socially construct these structures in the first place'.

With regard to this chapter, the constructivist framework would be used to find how the traumatic emotions and memories of fear, anxiety, guilt, insecurity and victimhood following a nuclear holocaust, shaped the psyche of a nation and thus

influenced the state's identity and its perceptions about the international community. For this purpose the Japanese case would be studied. It should also be noted that study does not propose to arrive at a general theory on the relationship between the psyche of a traumatic society and the state behaviour but only engages in contextualizing the Japanese post holocaust example.

While Chapter III studies the interface between cinema and the society, thereby arguing that the *hibakusha* cinema was affected by the traumatic emotions that the holocaust left on the society, this chapter would study the broader concept of popular culture which subsumes cinema and thus in the process will attempt to theorize the concept.

The Nuances of Culture and Popular Culture

The modern concept of popular culture is as recent as introduction of different kinds of media of mass communication including television, radios, cinemas developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was with the introduction of such mass media that, for the first time, there was widespread dissemination of drama, dances, operas and other forms of culture which earlier reached only the elite section of the society. With the introduction of television, cinema etc., the so called 'high culture' was no more disseminated selectively, instead it reached across masses or across people from all classes thereby making it 'popular culture'. It has been argued that with films, newspapers, photographs and magazines, 'art was open to the consumption of the 'masses' ushering in the beginning of popular culture and the end of high art' (Weaver 2009: 2).

Before theorizing popular culture, it should be noted that it falls under the rubric of cultural theory which entailed cultures like operas, museums, theatre, literary texts etc that, before the arrival of mass media, could only be viewed and understood by the elite, and the so called 'cultured' few of the society. Leo Strauss, who was an advocate of the cultured elite defined culture as the 'cultivation of the mind' (Strauss 1968 : 3) and this cultivation, Strauss argued was only limited to the mind of the elite few. Strauss was highly critical of the ability of who he very condescendingly termed

as masses, to understand culture and for him, only a 'cultured few' had the right to head a democracy and rule the 'uncultured' (Strauss 1968: 8). This could be likened to the concept of Cultural Capital, a term coined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to describe how people defined culture to obtain and maintain power in a society (Weaver 2009: 1). For instance coronation ceremonies that have existed since ancient times, and exist even today in United Kingdom and some parts of Asia, have been cultural ceremonies, marking the investiture of monarchs. These elaborate 'cultural' ceremonies, it could be argued here, have been practiced by the rulers of a society as symbols of maintaining their power and prestige.

While technological innovation led to the creation of popular forms of media like radios, television and cinema which effectively led to quicker dissemination of different forms of entertainment and information amongst a larger section of the society; this however was not the beginning of popular culture. Even during the Middle Ages, when culture was mostly associated with 'high culture' and intimately linked with power and prestige, there existed popular forms of dissenting cultures in form of *cranivalesque*.

Carnivalesque was a festival wherein the powerless of the society would come together and mimic and lampoon the elites of the society including the kings, queens, and church figures (Weaver 2009: 37). During these festivals, Mikhail Bakhtin argues, the powerless of the society questioned the tastes and culture of the elites and thus sending messages of their belief in the equality of all (1981: 293). Such forms of popular culture existed in the society since Renaissance and Middle Ages demonstrating resistance of the subalterns in the face of domination by a certain high culture. With the coming in of technologies of mass communication in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it could be argued that there was a celebration of the subalterns as, the so far cultural forms that were meant only for the spectatorship of a selective few or for the benefit of the so called 'cultured' audiences, could now be available for a much larger segment of the population.

Hegemonies of the Mind

It should however be noted that despite its victory by making cultural forms available to the masses, popular culture has not been without its own set of problems. As has been argued by Adorno and Horkheimer (1993: 33), mass communication technology is controlled by that segment of the society whose economic hold over the society has been the greatest and this, they have argued, would lead to further domination of the society through technology. From the contemporary society, this point could be established by analysing how people's notions of beauty have been altered through the effects of mass communication wherein the cosmetics industry, by glorifying certain body, skin and hair types, engages in conditioning people in order to sustain their thriving business. In such a case, the biggest injury would be that people being conditioned by such media generated images would not even be aware that their mind-sets and thought processes were being affected by what they watched and heard on televisions, movies, radios and the World Wide Web. This point could be likened to Antonio Gramsci's argument on cultural hegemony wherein he points that the cultural mediums are used to ingrain a certain kind of understanding amongst the masses which would in turn suit the ends of the hegemon. That is, cultural mediums are used as a means to hegemonise the masses but this kind of hegemony is even more dangerous as it is not apparent since it's not practiced through overt violent methods but, through subtle conditioning through media which finally works on the psyche of the audiences. Such hegemonies, it may be argued, could not just be instrumental in controlling the minds of the individuals but in also triggering strong passions that could be detrimental to the society. A couple of fitting example to display the working of mass media in triggering strong passions amongst the masses includes the film *Triumph of Will* which was used by the Nazis to influence Germans and instil in them feelings of anti-Semitism. The use of AIR radio to trigger anti-Sikh passions amongst the masses, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, could be another example of such hegemonies of the mind.

While the cultural critiques presented by Adorno, Horkheimer and Gramsci are very relevant in the contemporary context, this study would attempt to argue that although not without its follies, popular culture can, very advantageously be employed by the

traumatized, disempowered or the subaltern class as well. The following section would attempt to explore how it is that popular cultural tools can be employed by the disadvantaged in redeeming, intelligent and cathartic ways.

By presenting examples on how popular cultural tools can benefit the subalterns, the following section would argue that, the medium of popular culture are not just used by the subalterns to demonstrate their anti-hegemon frustrations and narratives, instead, popular cultural media can also help the subalterns release their emotions thereby achieving a sense of catharsis.

Popular Culture of the Traumatized

Popular cultural tools can be employed by the disadvantaged of a society to demonstrate their struggle. For instance, this dissertation, by analysing the *hibakusha* films made following the nuclear holocaust, has tried to understand the long term psychological effects of the atomic bomb on the victims and the society. This apart, by exploring the films, the study has also attempted to explore the ways in which the victims of the bomb have expressed themselves and demonstrated their anger, resentment and traumas not just towards the U.S. but also towards the aggressive policies of the Japanese state at that point of time.

It could also be argued that the critics of culture ignore the sense of catharsis that the subaltern feels when she/he engages in artistically expressing her/his feelings, a point that has been explained in detail in the previous chapter.

In the contemporary context, video documentaries can be used as examples of popular forms of mass communication which explain the stories of the victims of hegemony and usually revolve around expressing their narratives, expressing their rage and anger, getting noticed by a wider circle of people and also to help similar subaltern viewers of the documentary achieve a sense of catharsis. Such forms of art, which demonstrate subaltern social issues shows that art becomes powerful when it engages with social issues. This point has been better explained by Walter Benjamin (1970:

52) who argues that ‘the rigid, isolated object of art is of no use whatsoever. It must be inserted into the context of living social relations’.

Final Solution (Sharma 2003) was a popular documentary on the Gujarat anti-Muslim riots revealing suppressed facts on the pogrom, including the police complicity with the state against the Muslims, atrocities on the Muslims etc. The documentary made its point stronger with interviews of the survivors and glimpses of real life footage of the pogrom. *Chernobyl Heart, Countdown to Zero, Osama, Nero's Guests* are names of just some of the documentaries that have been made to demonstrate and communicate publicly, similar harmful effects of different forms of dominance on the oppressed.

The internet and social networking sites, which are fast becoming available to a large section of the population, make such documentaries readily available to the public. With regard to documentaries however, it could be argued that their reach in terms of number of people watching them is much lesser than commercial films, however, their viewership is slowly improving as a result of their easy accessibility through internet and other social networking sites.

While the problem of documentaries is their lack of popularity, commercial cinema too, engages in making popular films that narrate stories of dominance, exploitation or satirically mock the hegemony of the society. *Tere Bin Laden, Dr. Strangelove, The Dictator, Lagaan, Rang De Basanti, Paan Singh Tomar, The Boy in Blue Stripped Pajamas, Hotel Rwanda* are some examples of such popular commercial films. Thus Simon Doring's (1993: 60) point on cultural studies, that he elaborates as being ‘most interested in how groups with least power practically develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products- in fun, in resistance, or to articulate their own identity’ is very fitting in this context, a context that has long been ignored by the critics of cultural theory.

Another point that could be made in defence of popular culture is the role that it plays in helping understand a society better. As has been argued in the previous chapter of this study, analogies could be drawn between the cinematic responses to the nuclear

holocaust in Japan and the psyche of the society that was shaped by the holocaust. For instance, the fears of the victims relating to the recurrence of the bomb in form of 'trauma neurosis' as visible in films like *Black Rain*, *Rhapsody in August* and *Record of a Living Being*, could be related to the fears and insecurities prevailing in the society with regards the nuclear bomb and thus be related to the anti-nuclear policies pursued in Japan thereafter. Likewise, the third chapter also argues that, although metaphorically, *Roshomon* (Kurosawa 1950) exhibits a sense of utter confusion, helplessness, distrust and abandonment that could be compared to similar emotions that the Japanese and the *hibakusha* must have felt following the holocaust and the war. By analysing the science fiction films like *Godzilla*, *Akira*, *Space Battleship Yamato et al.* that have dealt with the bomb allegorically, the study has attempted to argue that the unreal, dream like narratives of the films could be linked to emotions of unfulfilled wishes which could be connected to real events of the past (Walker 2001). Susan Sontag (1996) argues that such science fiction fantasies inuring which elevate one's emotions, are more prevalent in societies where the audiences attempt to distract themselves from terrors (real or anticipated), thereby inuring themselves to it. Another point to be noted here with regard to the loud display of technology in the science fiction films is that similar portrayal of technology are also seen in the Japanese society. Following the war, Japan has invested a lot in technologically developing itself. Richard Samuels and Eric Heiginbotham term Japan a 'techno-nationalist' state, preoccupied with making itself self-sufficient and enhancing its national security by developing itself technologically.

A trend visible through Japanese science fiction is that a large number of films revolve around the theme of an apocalypse and this could be traced to not just the fact that Japan has been the only country to have experienced a nuclear holocaust but also to other reasons including the regular frequency of natural disasters in Japan including earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis to name a few. Within the theme of apocalyptic like scenarios, the chapter also looks at the prevalence of the same in Japanese horror cinema and there has been an attempt at linking some such films, allegorically to the holocaust e.g. *Onibaba* and *Ringu*.

Thus, the analyses of *hibakusha* films explained the strong relationship between films on the one hand and the ideas, emotions, traumas prevalent in a society, on the other. From this study, on the interplay between the Japanese psyche shaped by the holocaust and the visibility of the same in *hibakusha* cinema, it could be argued that social psyche and cinema could be linked to one another. On broadening this argument, one may argue that there exists a link between social psyche and popular culture. It is this aspect that the critiques of cultural theory did not explore. However, that being said, because of the narrow scope of the study, only the analyses of cinematic representations of traumatic events would be linked to the psyche of a society.

The above section explains how popular culture helps portray a society better and how it is used as a tool by the oppressed and traumatized section to express their narratives. However, this could not be true of all societies, as there might be traumatized, subaltern and emotionally weak societies who may altogether be lacking the tools, means and technology for engaging with popular cultural tools.

Silencing of Japanese Atrocities in *Hibakusha* Cinema

While *Hibakusha* films have explored the psychological impact of the holocaust on the society, it should however be noted that, such forms of cinematic representations are not without their set of agendas either. In this respect, Stuart Hall (During 1999: 97) quoted Gramsci, wherein he argues that “structures of representation are instruments of social power, requiring critical and activist examination” and to this, Hall (ibid: 97) further adds that it is this very ‘examination that is at jeopardy in professionalized cultural studies’. With regards to *hibakusha* films, such critical examinations are also necessary as, in so doing, one could point at a one sided perspective running through the themes of many films. That is, while there is a portrayal of the mental, physical and emotional effects of the bomb on the people, the aggressive policies of Japan during WW- II have mostly been ignored. While there have been films that deal with the popular mass discontent towards the government for having made them suffer the brunt of the latter’s aggressive policies, such as *Barefoot Gen*, *Akira*, *Black Rain*; such anti-government emotions have been sparse

and inconsistent. Another point to be noted here is that while there were people, who were anti the aggressive military policies of the state, there also existed popular opinion that was in favour of the war. This very aspect has also not been brought out in the films.

Selective Amnesia and Moral High Ground

As discussed above, on exploring the purposeful silences or selective amnesia in *hibakusha* cinema, the following portion would attempt to argue that, by silencing the Japanese atrocities before and during the WW-II, the films not just reveal an ‘honour-saving’ pattern but also portray how, in the garb of victimhood, the films attempt to absolve the Japanese off their past atrocities thereby achieving a moral high ground. As argued by Stefan Tanaka in *Japan’s Orient* (1995: 17), since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese state has tried to emulate the West so as to prove their modernity in an international system where only the West was considered ‘modern’, superior and powerful. Carrying this mentality forward, it is to maintain prestige and honour, (virtues so far only reserved for the West) and to revolt against the ‘Orientalist’ identity, that the West had type casted the East as, that Japan aggressively began its expansionist and imperialist agenda in Asia following WW- I. “The Japanese elite concluded that to become a full ‘civilized’ member of the society, in addition to observing meticulously the ‘standard of civilization’, they would have to construct a strong, imperialistic state and take on the identity of a powerful ‘civilized’ state” (Suzuki 2005: 154). Thus, from this it could be pointed that, for the Japanese state, her image and honour were very important in the world society.

It could be argued that on the pretext of saving this “securitized” Japanese image that, Japan was reluctant to apologize to Korea and China for its past atrocities even several years after the war. In this context Zarakol (2010: 8) argues that Japan has been particularly concerned about her standing in the international system and also about criticism from the West.

The argument here is that it is this image and honour saving characteristic, so very ingrained in the Japanese psychology that is also prominent in the *hibakusha* films. By focusing mostly on the fears and traumas of the victims of the holocaust, the films

have whitewashed that historical truth about Japan which, it would associate with shame and embarrassment. On the contrary, it may be argued that by solely focusing on the traumas of the defeat of the war, of which the holocaust is most symbolic, films attempted to construct a past which romanticized the victimhood of the war. This may be linked to the nation building process of post war Japan where selective memories were constructed through films, public speeches, memorial days, museums so as to capitalize on victimhood and associated trauma, thereby achieving a moral high ground and in the process, saving the nation from the dishonour of being the aggressors in a very bloody war. In this respect, Sebastiaan Conard (2003: 86) very fittingly describes the process of national imagination of the past as portrayed through a 'tunnel vision' where the influence of and entanglements with other national memories, associated with national disgrace, are marginalized.

Thus, this section has attempted to argue that, while popular culture does give a platform to people in expressing their traumas or domination and gives them a sense of catharsis alongside, helping an outsider understand their story of domination or trauma; such expressions should, nonetheless be not taken as the absolute truths, instead they should be looked at very critically.

The Emotion of Fear in the Japanese Antimilitaristic Policy

While the above section explored how some characteristics of the Japanese state identity could be traced to *hibakusha* films or vice-versa; the following section would briefly endeavour to relate the emotion of fear, which was very prominent in most *hibakusha* films (including *Record of a Living Being*, *Rhapsody in August*, *Akira*, *Gojira*, *Black Rain*) to the antimilitaristic policy adopted by Japan in the aftermath of WW- II or during the Cold War years.

From an imperialistic, militarily aggressive state, Japan depicted a roundabout in the years following the WW-II and adopted an anti-militaristic or a 'pacifist' policy. The Japanese post WW- II constitution restricts Japan's use of force, relegating the country to a minimal military role in the world (Izumikawa 2010: 123). Such a stance has been an anomaly from the realist lens which argues that in an anarchic

international system, states always work towards increasing their relative power and security because of the constant environment of 'security dilemma'. Thus, neorealist Kenneth Waltz predicted that Japan would eventually adopt nuclear weapons (Waltz 1993: 66-69). However, with regard to nuclear weapons, Japan has a firm non-nuclear policy which is based on the principles of non-possession, non-production and non-introduction of these weapons.

Berger and Katzenstein (Izumikawa 2010: 124) argue from the constructivist lens that such an anti-militaristic stance of the Japanese policy following the WW- II has been a result of domestic, societal norms which were very anti the militaristic policies of the state. They argue that this was because there was a widespread belief among the people that the loss of dignity and life during the WW- II was a result of the aggressive military policies of the state. It is with respect to this 'anti-militaristic policy' of the Japanese state following the end of the WW- II that it would be argued that, the emotion of fear had become a predominant factor in shaping the Japanese decision making.

The argument is that the 'fear of military over ambition' prevented the state from indulging in any military behaviour during the Cold War, thereby making it adopt a 'pacifist' policy. It should be noted that here, 'military over ambition' would mean the aggressive expansionist policies pursued by Japan during the WW-II that finally led to her disastrous defeat and the nuclear holocaust in 1945.

This fear in the decision making of the state would be traced to the trauma and the fear that the defeat of the war and the nuclear holocaust left on the people. As has been argued in the previous chapter, the *hibakusha* cinema revealed how the trauma of the war had made the people very insecure and how they were constantly fearful of another holocaust. Such fears in the nuclear holocaust films, the chapter further argued, portrayed the latent traumas and fears of the society. It could be argued that it is such fears that embittered the people and made them very sceptical of the militaristic policies of the state.

As Berger and Katzenstein point, this study also attempts to argue that an anti-militaristic norm was created in the society that interplayed with the state in the form of anti-militaristic policies. However, this study takes a departure from them as it argues that the reason for this norm creation could be traced to trauma, fear and paranoia that the holocaust and the defeat of the war left on the people. While Robert Jervis (1978) explains security dilemma as the fear and insecurity between states in an international system, the argument made here is that fear of the people within a state vis-à-vis the latter's militaristic policies, could result in an anti-militaristic norm creation, thereby leading to anti militaristic state policies. While leading realists like Kenneth Waltz (1959, 1979) reject the psychology of a society/individual as a tool of research in IR, Goldeier and Tetlock (2001: 70) argue that psychological models of group behaviour should be studied in International Relations. In the context of the fear psychology of a post war population and the display of the same in the state policies, Robert Lebow's argument should be noted that 'a theory of International Relations embedded in a theory of society is also a theory of foreign policy'.

In *The State as Person in International Theory*, Alexander Wendt argues that if the 'state can be reduced to the brains of the people who conceive of it as a state, then why does a state have a personality of its own and not of the people who conceive of it?' Juxtaposing this argument to the notion of psychological trauma and fear in a society, it could be argued that post the war and the holocaust, the Japanese people were left traumatized and fearful and this characteristic played itself out in the state policies with regard to military behaviour.

It should however be noted here that this study is not trying to argue that it was only on the front of militaristic policies that the psychological emotion of fear was visible. Infact, because of time and scope constraints, the study has chosen to explore only this narrow aspect of the Japanese foreign policy. It should also be noted that this argument is also limited to the cold war period during which this anti militaristic policy was visible. After the cold war period however, Japan has been engaging in militarily policies. This, Berger and Katzenstein argue has been a result of the changing of the anti-militaristic norm within the society.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to fathom the intrigues of the relationship between the social psyche of a society taking it as the independent variable and the state deemed as the dependent variable for the present context. *Hibakusha* cinema was used in the Japanese society as an instrument for shaping up the social psyche by the policy elites and masses likewise. Whereas the elite preferred to explore the purgatory role of the cinema in building up a morally upright victimized state, conveniently forgetting its role as the aggressor, the masses chose to express their dignified resentment against that very amnesia through the empowering force of the popular culture. The challenging forces that were unleashed from within the society ended up influencing not only the Japanese national self- image but also the policies it followed in the post war period be it in the field of technological development or nuclear weapon restraint. The immense significance of this societal transformative influence on state action needs to be acknowledged and accommodated by the scholarship in their understanding of international relations.

Chapter V

Conclusion

In her essay *The Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth explains Trauma as an experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs. This being the case, it may be argued that studying the ways in which a traumatic experience is repeatedly expressed can help understand not just the impact of the traumatic event, but also help understand how a society copes with such an event. This study explores the cinematic expressions of the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through *hibakusha* cinema in order to explore the long lasting impact and the deep seated wounds that the holocaust left on the Japanese society. The purpose of studying the above was to understand if a link could be drawn between the societal psychological effects of a catastrophic event and the state identity wherein, the state's identity could be influenced and shaped by the social psychology.

For this purpose, the study started off with the basic question of whether the state was a constant, timeless entity or whether it was a dependent variable whose interests and identity were shaped by the society that it constituted. The study further attacked the ahistoricism of the prominent mainstream IR theories and instead adopted the middle ground approach of constructivism in order to contextualize and historicize the state behaviour in the international system.

This research tried to understand if the psyche and emotions of traumatized society influence the interests and identity of a state and consequently the state's behaviour in the international system. For this purpose, the study attempted to understand the impact of the trauma on the society by studying their expressions, representation of the same through popular culture.

In order to explore this, the study looked at the Japanese society after the nuclear holocaust and attempted to draw a link between the Japanese traumatized society and the state identity. In order to understand and learn the impact of the nuclear bombing on the Japanese society, *hibakusha* cinema was empirically analyzed.

By studying the popular cultural expressions of the holocaust in order to theorize the emotional and psychological effects of the bombing on the society, this study analysed the traumatized society's ontological foundations.

This study is divided into five chapters including, introduction, three main chapters and a conclusion. The following section would briefly look at the main findings and arguments of each of the three main chapters.

The second chapter of this study introduces the impact of the atomic bomb on the Japanese popular cultural imaginations including manga, television and cinema. In so doing, the chapter establishes how the popular medium of manga, through a vast trend of comics revolving around the theme of the ‘suffering and dying beautiful young women’, romanticizes the suffering that followed the holocaust and glorifies the victimization of the society. As Masashi Ichiki stated, the atomic bomb related manga engaged in ‘promoting and proliferating the *Genbaku Otome*’ so as to propagate the notion of Japanese victimization.

The chapter closely analysis various films that revolved around the nuclear holocaust, for which it also borrows Mick Broderick’s term for the same namely, *hibakusha* cinema or cinema of the victims of the atomic bombings. In this chapter, various *hibakusha* films are analyzed on the basis of how they handle and treat the holocaust. In so doing, four basic themes are teased out including, *mono no aware*, trauma, fantasy and apocalyptic themes.

The third chapter on ‘The Cinematic Representation of Societal Emotions’, engages with understanding the ontological foundations of the *hibakusha* films and the society by theoretically understanding the relationship between *hibakusha* films and the emotions of the society. This chapter takes films falling under each of the four themes teased out in first chapter and by using psychological concepts, relates the themes and concepts of the films under them to the emotions predominant in the society. For instance, films falling under the themes of *mono no aware* including *Yumechiyo*, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, glorified the suffering of the victims of the bomb thereby showing how the Japanese society constantly reminded themselves of the suffering that they had been met with because of the bomb. This chapter also discusses how this concept of glorifying victimhood has been associated with forgetting a past linked with aggression and war crimes and developing selective memory wherein only the victimhood related to the war is remembered.

Likewise, by analyzing the films falling under the theme of trauma including, *Record of a Living Being*, *Rhapsody in August*, *Black Rain*, the emotions of insecurity, guilt, fear, anxiety related to the bomb are brought out. This section uses Freud's concepts of survivor guilt and trauma neurosis to emphasize the repetitive nature of trauma and fear psychosis to explain how fear gets ingrained in the people.

Through fantasy films, a link is drawn with the concepts of dissociation and melancholy. The argument here is that the imaginations of an event of the past in a distorted and transformed way, as visible from films like *Gojira* and *Yamato*, point towards a society that is engaged in dissociation or a society that is detached from the past as a result of psychological numbing or depersonalization. Likewise, detachment from the external reality, as visible from fantasy films, also points towards the concept of melancholy, a notion that Freud associates with the loss of an external object that the libido or the sex drive was fixated upon.

Walter Benjamin explains how catastrophic events in the history of a society may lead to destabilized imaginations of the world. In such imaginations Benjamin argues, 'the end of the world' to be a prominent imagination. This could be related to apocalyptic scenarios that have been another predominant theme of the *Hibakusha* cinematic imaginations. In this regard the chapter points towards Giorgio Agamben's *state of exception* that is perpetuated through apocalyptic imaginations. That is, it argues that Japan considered itself to be an exception in the international system as it was the only state to have been defeated by atomic bombs and a repetitive imagination of this apocalyptic event through cinema only perpetuated this thought further.

The chapter thus draws parallels between the *hibakusha* films and the Japanese society thereby pointing out how the films reveal the various emotions of the Japanese society. With regard to this understanding of the chapter, Jameson's point of treating texts as psychiatric patients could be juxtaposed to films wherein, just like Jameson points towards reading the unconscious reality in texts, this chapter argues in favor of reading the hidden meanings in the films to bring to surface the unconscious realities of the society that they encompass.

The final chapter on 'Popular Culture and Societal Emotion: Shaping of State Identity and Interests' deals with the interactions between the three variables of popular culture, societal emotions and the state identity. This chapter begins by theorizing the

variable of popular culture and in so doing, it explains how the same can be used as a tool of understanding societies more holistically thereby developing a better understanding of state identity.

On finding a link between the *hibakusha* cinema and the psychological understanding of the society in the previous chapter, the fourth chapter theorizes the *mono no aware* concept of victimization and relates the same to the ontological security of the Japanese state. That is, it relates honour, self esteem and prestige to be the basic existential requirement of the Japanese state, and relates the post WW II pacifist stance of the Japanese state as a tool to silence the imperialistic, aggressive and violent past of Japan. The chapter argues that by portraying themes of victimhood in many *hibakusha* films, and by silencing the aggressive past of Japan in the *hibakusha* films, the films reveal the elements of honour and self esteem that are very basic to the Japanese identity.

This chapter also engaged in relating fears within the post holocaust Japan to the anti nuclear weapons behaviour of the Japanese state. In so doing, themes in certain *hibakusha* films like Record of a Living Being and Rhapsody in August are related to the trauma neurosis and fear psychosis that the atomic bombings left on the psyche of the society. Taking from Peter Katzenstein's argument, this chapter points out that anti militaristic ideas and norms in the Japanese society informed the state's opposition to nuclear weapons and its propagation of nuclear weapons disarmament. The chapter thus draws a link between the emotions of the society and the development of the Japanese state interests and identity.

Thus it is learnt that not only do the *hibakusha* films explain the Japanese state reluctance towards going nuclear, but they also show how the state identity revolves around emotions of honour and self esteem thereby pointing at the state's ontological security.

It should be noted however that the study only explores *hibakusha* films made till the end of the Cold War. Therefore the Japanese state identity that it explores is also limited till the end of the Cold War. Another limitation of the study is that a lot of films that were made immediately after the end of the American occupation of Japanese in 1952, particularly including films made by the leftists in which Japanese anger towards the Americans is revealed, were not explored due to paucity of

literature on the same and due to practical inability of gaining access to them. Yet another limitation of the study is, as Donald Richie (1988: 19) explains the limitation of misinterpreting a culture and language that is very different from that of the oneselves.

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