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MASTER'S THESIS

***Hibakusha cinema as a means
of rediscovering identity***

A study focusing on the analysis of rediscovering identity by Japanese society through Japanese films created after Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

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The undersigned have examined the thesis entitled: ***Hibakusha cinema as a means of rediscovering identity: the study focusing on the analysis of rediscovering identity by Japanese society through Japanese films created after Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings*** (presented by Karolina Malinowska, a candidate for degree of Master of Fine Arts - Cinema and Digital Media - Directing) and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

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The aim of the analysis of Hibakusha films directed by the generation of filmmakers who survived the war will aim to present how Japanese rediscovered and redefined their identity as a nation after the bombings. Works of the filmmakers like Akira Kurosawa, Kaneto Shindo, Shinsei Adachi, and Hiroshi Teshigahara were chosen on the basis of their *first-hand* experience and insight into the Japanese condition before and then after the war.

Thesis refers to Junichiro Tanizaki's essay on Japanese aesthetics *In Praise of Shadows*. His examination of the society sheds new and interesting light on the Japanese outlook on the world and art.

One of the sources that the thesis uses is the work of Akira Lippit *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*. The publication provides the analysis of the atomic light as a new concept for interpreting the meaning of light, especially the cinematic light, which shapes movies' inner worlds and provides additional aesthetics to Hibakusha films.

Apart from a general overview of the Japanese history and culture thesis focuses on in-depth analysis of the content and form of movies of Akira Kurosawa, Kaneto Shindo, Shinsei Adachi, and Hiroshi Teshigahara.

Cílem analýzy Hibakusha filmů, natočených filmaři, kteří válku přežili, je představit, jak Japonci znovu objevili a předefinovali svou národní identitu po bombových útocích. Díla filmařů jako jsou Akira Kurosawa, Kaneto Shindo, Shinsei Adachi a Hiroshi Teshigahara byla vybrána na základě jejich zkušeností z první ruky a nahlédnutí do japonského stavu před a po válce.

Práce se zabývá esejem Junichira Tanizakiho o japonské estetice *In Praise of Shadows*. Jeho zkoumání společnosti vrhá nové a zajímavé světlo na japonský pohled na svět a umění.

Tato práce se také zaměřuje na práci Akira Lippit *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*. Publikace poskytuje analýzu atomového světla jako nového konceptu pro interpretaci významu světla, zejména toho filmového, které formuje vnitřní svět a poskytuje další estetiku Hibakusha filmům.

Kromě obecného přehledu o japonské historii a kultuře se práce zaměřuje na hloubkovou analýzu obsahu a formy filmů režisérů jako jsou Akira Kurosawa, Kaneto Shindo, Shinsei Adachi a Hiroshi Teshigahara.

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Introduction

Undoubtedly the atomic disaster shook not only islands of Japan but also the rest of the world. It began a new chapter in modern history. However, for such a small country the issue must have been a big bone to chew on. In order to raise from the ashes, Japanese had to reconcile with demons of their past. Weakened by the war and atomic radiation disaster, the country had to find out who have they become after the war. Did the fact that they've been through changed anything in the way they saw themselves? Who are they as a country? Where are they heading towards? In my opinion, one of the means, through which Japan was able to effectively explore those issues was the medium of film.

The study of rediscovering identity by Japanese society after the bombings will be done only through the eyes of Japanese. It's intriguing to me how they interpreted what has happened to their society after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I am interested in how they saw themselves within the tragedy. Could Japanese directors be objective about the disaster which *buried* their country? Finally, could they take on the blame for what has happened to them?

My analysis will focus on the generation of directors who survived the war. They provide a first-hand comparison of the society at peace and society after the conflict. I am not including the films, whose directors were born after WWII, as for instance *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989). Director of the film, Shinya Tsukamoto, was born in the '60s hence he is not the direct survivor of the atomic explosion. I do, however, analyze one of the chapters of *Dreams* (1990) by Akira Kurosawa. The film was shot in the '90s but the director is a generation who survived WWII.

Hiroshima Mon Amour (1959), which is part of a canon of classical as well as atomic cinema, isn't covered by my analysis either. I am not disregarding the importance of the film in the canon of cinema classics but the film doesn't fit the criteria of my analysis. I want to focus exclusively on films made by Japanese directors and *Hiroshima Mon Amour* was directed by French director Alain Resnais.

My thesis is divided into four chapters. The first one is a general overview of Japanese history and culture. I am referring to work of Junichiro Tanizaki essay on Japanese aesthetics *In Praise of Shadows*. His examination of the society sheds new and interesting light on the Japanese outlook on the world and art.

Second chapter analyses *Dreams*, *Onibaba* (1964) and *Face of Another* (1966) in terms of visibility, which through its extreme vividness masks the truth. Studied films will explore the paradox of visible features of identity, which in fact used as a cover-up of the deeper truth.

As the contrast to the above, the third chapter will look into *The Invisible Man Appears* (1949), *Pitfall* (1962), and *Woman in The Dunes* (1964). Explored themes of invisibility of identity in these movies will relate not only to the physical transparency but also invisibility within a particular surrounding their characters occupy.

The fourth chapter is looking onto already analyzed films from the perspective of their form. Content but also film language is a crucial aspect of Hibakusha cinema. The means through which *hibakusha directors* communicate their message is as crucial as the content of their films. In fact, in my opinion, both are homogenous in terms of communicating the filmmaker's ideas.

Fat Man and Little Boy

Fat Man and *Little Boy* gimmicky and surreal sounding code names for the atomic bombs, literally and metaphorically invaded Japan, almost like the ancient gigantic sea creature, Godzilla in *Godzilla* (1954) by Ishirō Honda. It seems that those tools

of destruction carrying cartoonish names, diminished the identity and *character* of Japanese people. They sucked out the essence of identity from Japanese men, transforming them into unimaginable emotional and physical mutants.

Question Who am I...? gained a new meaning. *Fat Man* and *Little Boy* began a cultural earthquake, which not only brought out what always dwelt inside Japanese people but also what caused their future 'mutations'.

Since the Japanese atomic event word "apocalypticism" gained broader meaning. The religious explanation of deity or natural disaster, which will wipe out human civilization, progressed with growing scientific development. Since the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it's the technology, not the heroism of the army men, which is winning the war. The new exodus term started to stand for an idea that humans will bring an end to their own world.

Holocaust, that is coming from the Greek word "holocauston", which means 'a thing wholly burnt,' (Garber, 2004, p. 5) after 1945 found its physical representation in the form of human shadows etched in buildings, pavements, fences and other elements of the surrounding. Nuclear holocaust phrase terrorized the world, as it stood not for ideas or theories but originated from real-life exodus. People all over the world saw the evidence, not only of the direct effects of the atomic explosion but also its preposterous aftermath.

It's the effects of the A-bomb on the environment and humans what really petrified societies all around the world. The invisible particles of radiation burnt bodies of the affected ones and trespassed the physical and psychological well being of Japan. Since August 1945, radiation contaminated this small, self-contained group of islands. They became an experiment to the whole world observing not only the medical or environmental, but more neglected, psychological effects of the tragedy. The

collective consciousness of the nation has changed forever; taking generations to digest and re-invent its identity after such inexplicable tragedy.

In his *Cultural Criticism and Society Essay* (Prisms, 1997, p. 34) Adorno says that writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. His statement wasn't supposed to discourage artists and writers from continuing speaking about the topic. What Adorno seemed to imply, is the fact that new forms of artistic expression have to be explored, in order to convey the message of the inexplicable tragedies, like Holocaust for example. Arts, whilst actively commenting socio-political issues is obliged to speak, even knowing that message will never reach the addressee. Speaking about the ungraspable has to fail.

So is the case of *Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (1945) the only documentary filmed in the aftermath of the bombing, which fails to communicate the terror after the Hiroshima tragedy. Documentary genre, which implies a fair amount of objectivity and truthfulness, instead of serving the anti-war propaganda, evokes numbness in its viewers.

This severely censored film, made by Americans and Japanese, is more of a science film, unemotionally depicting effects of atomic explosions. When watched simply in order to seek the gore elements of the atomic explosion, one may be disappointed with the military-like PowerPoint presentation style of the film.

This strikingly dull footage enhances understanding of the necessity of other forms of expression to be introduced. When prohibition (imposed or internal) forbid the use of atomic explosion references in post-war Japan, a replacement, paradoxically, as elusive as the atomic explosion itself, had to be presented.

There is something interesting about the impossibility of understanding the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through purely literary tropes, literary transcriptions. The inability of language to absorb and stabilize the atypicality of the atomic destruction had to give birth to different forms of expression. 'The body's surface where many of the atomic marks were recorded, serves as a ritual repetition of the original violence, the act of anarchiving. Film seems to become the medium attempting to represent the non- dialectical writing.' (Lippit, 2005, p. 112).

Famous Japanese writer Junichiro Tanizaki, one of the first philosophers who discussed Japanese aesthetics in terms of Japanese collective subconscious, in his book he states that Japanese complexion, no matter how white, is in fact 'spiced with' slight cloudiness...' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 32). According to Tanizaki, Japanese skin actively radiates darkness. '... the darkness that lay below their skin. Beneath the surface.' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 32). Darkness for him is simply profound but apparent, inherent. He compares it to dirt that settles at the bottom of a pool of clear water.

For Tanizaki, Japanese body is a shadow body, inner gloom, which holds qualities of the ink stain. Blackness inherited by all Japanese people writes on everyone who comes in contact with them. Like an ink, the shadow projects onto the world spills and is soaked by its surrounding. The nature of shadow originates from within the body, from what is under the skin. It is an essential feature of the body – the darkness is no longer an effect of the absence of light nor its interference but 'autonomous, luminous condition' (Lippit, 2005, p. 107). It is transcendent darkness.

The dark body radiates outward, it shades not only Japanese body but expands darkening surroundings. Tanizaki calls it a paradoxical light, a liquid engendering not only an aesthetics of shadows but also a form of writing. Tanizaki's shadow, through radiating onto the surface of the skin, marks (inscribes) its existence on it. Cloudiness of Japanese skin is the visual evidence of the invisible shadow radiating from within the body.

What is important to highlight is that Tanizaki treats shadows as 'features' which are not imposed from the outside but which are engraved onto the physical features of their 'bodies' – they are originally and inherently corporeal. Tanizaki mentions that unlike other races with white skin, all Japanese people have their eyes and hair dark. For him, this is evidence of the body creating its own graphic order, where the shadow writes on the body's surface. This statement raises an immediate connection to the Jungian theory of shadow, where the shadow is the 'storage', a hiding place of the subconscious.

The atomic bombing introduced a new form of the inscription of the skin. Unlike Tanizaki's shadow, it didn't derive from the inside but from the outside; testing to the extreme the capacity of the human body to sustain the burning impact of atomic

radiation. 'The catastrophic flashes followed by dense darkness transformed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, left them with the traces of photographic and skiagraphic imprints on the landscape, on organic and non--organic bodies alike.' (Lippit, 2005, p. 109).

Nuclear shadows are created when thermal radiation bleaches the surface of walls that it comes in contact with, just like sunburn bleaches the exposed surface of the skin. But when an object comes in between the portion of any surface, the surface behind that object does not bleach. So it looks like a permanent shadow that has been formed on the wall when it is just the unbleached part of the surface.

These are the physical, scientific explanations of the shadowy figures 'cast' on the surface of the remains of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cities. However, already familiarised with Tanizaki's shadow body theory, one may make an assumption on what they can be evidence of. They become less of the skiagraphs but more of the physical entities, shadow figures, leftover from the atomic bomb explosion witnesses. They embody evidence of the emotional, internal and subconscious state of the victim; the victim who becomes avisual - visible in a different way.

To whiteness, the atomic blast means to destroy the subject who is seeing it. Like in case of X--rays. When 'seeing' the invisible X--ray one is losing oneself. What it actually means is that the very materiality of the ray of radiation physically destroys the body. In this process, vision is basically destroyed. The termination of the visibility, however, shows what is invisible – the image of the subject re-emerges as a consequence of radiation.

'The character's subjectivities when overshadowed by external and uncontrollable forces of the invisible, leave traces, while interiority of their souls and the exteriority of bodies are destroyed or absorbed into the afterlife.' (Kugo, 2016, p.1). The impossibility of experiencing to its extreme.; when seeing the invisible X--ray one is losing oneself. This is caused by the fact that the beam of radiation physically destroys the body. Although the vision simply annihilates, it gives the field to what becomes invisible but still exists in a way. Meaning, the collapsing visibility externalizes what is invisible, gives birth to something invisible.

The destroyed subject cannot be perceived as visible but becomes something invisible, like in the case of nuclear shadows or the X-ray image 'different' subject

re-emerges. The surface on which both scripts (shadow and radiation) are formed - the skin tissue- erases the boundaries between the inside and the outside. Everything that happens on the skin represents an unresolved encounter between the interior and exterior elements.

After the 1945 tragedy, Japanese cinema became preoccupied with the symbolism of atomic destruction. The radioactive drawback of the II WW influenced how they perceived themselves and the existence of their culture in the world before and after the bombings. They had to re-invent the way in which they described the terror of the atomic blast.

Japanese aesthetics is rooted in the collective subconscious of Japanese people. X-rays, atomic radiation, dreams, and invisible men are phenomena that are visual in nature but unseen. The philosophical and physical importance of shadow in cinematic language allowed showing what's visible and what's hidden in the radioactive play between light and darkness in the Japanese moving image.

Unlike written language, cinema is able to capture what's unspoken. Its use of allegories stimulates the subconscious in a fresh way. Cinema screen becomes a skin/tissue, a place, where two impossible to visual concepts meet- the Japanese shadow (a collective subconscious passed on from one generation to another) and the atomic radiation (innate and absorbed by a person through the natural environment). Hence, the aesthetics of film began to embody phobias of being dissolved by unseen forces.

Screen tissue is a term expressing how Japanese cinema used the aesthetics of film in order to externalize, picture and relate to the post-atomic world. Cinema screen is a surface where it's possible to speak about, show, picture, deal with indescribable themes. Screen tissue is something which seems eternal, difficult to deny, which is alive.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims died, taking to grave the psychological as well as the physical evidence of the tragedy. However, the cinematic language and the allegorical world of atomic cinema is almost like a living membrane where even today, even non-Japanese, may perceive it as a record of the subconscious state of the Japanese nation. The innate shadow (dark subconscious) combined with the invisible deterioration, e.g. atomic radiation, can both meet, be elevated, captured by the film

language. People witnessed things dissolving and transforming into unrecognizable forms.

Like human tissue, the cinema screen is the whiteness of the 'impossible' merger of two surfaces: the filmed subject and the film foil. The screen, like skin, is the surface where something gets inscribed, engraved and is not to be forgotten, is able to finally re-emerge. Why? One may ask. Why would one want the invisible from the outside and from the inside to re-emerge?

Film is an attempt to capture the collective subconscious of the Japanese people. The necessity to picture the elusiveness of the atomic radiation theme. Characters and their surrounding are two surfaces at constant war, rubbing against each other, destroying one another. Film becomes evidence of the conflict, constant friction between the substances which are unable to merge.

The conflict between the *demons* haunting Japanese collective consciousness and the nation's day-to-day reality is interestingly explored through the life of Hoichi, blind biwa lute player in Kobayashi's anthology horror movie *Kwaidan* (1965), who attracts a messenger dressed in armory inviting him to play for a royal family. Not wanting to be disrespectful Hoichi allows the stranger to lead him towards the assembly. He is asked to play *The Tale of Heike*. During the next few nights, the young musician is playing for them. His disappearance doesn't get unnoticed. Temple's priest notices how Hoichi becomes drained out of life: he is pale and weak. He tells temple servants to follow Hoichi next time he walks out of the temple. They discovered that Hoichi, in fact, was playing at the graveyard to the ghost. In order to protect Hoichi from being possessed, monks write on his body heart sutras. Thanks to their protective power musician will become transparent to the world of the dead like a ghost is transparent to the world of the living. The trick almost works. Hoichi does appear invisible for the ghost, except for his ears. The ghost seeks to bring back as much of Hoichi as possible and he rips them off.

For Hoichi ghosts are invisible, he is able to see them differently, on the plane of their ghost world. Thanks to the protective sutras Hoichi, becomes in-visible - still existing in the physical world but covered up by the blanket of invisibility through sutras. His

body became avisual. It existed on the plane between the two - visibility and invisibility.

Lippit claims that contact between the human body and the world makes the humanity of the human body possible. 'There is a human body when between the seeing and the seen, between the touching and touched, between one eye and the other, between the hand and hand, a blending of some sort takes place. A blending of the world, of this world and that.' M. Ponty (Lippit, 2005, p. 106).

Hoichi needs to be aware of the ghosts which shaped his culture. He cannot, however, fully merge within their world. The ability to experience their environment gave him greater understanding and awareness of how he should pass on the knowledge and memory of the dead ones, who shaped Japan. It's important that it's the heart sutras which cover his body. The equilibrium, the reconciliation of the past with the present could be only achieved through the heart. It seems that loving emotions carry the ability to prevail the necessity of understanding within upcoming generations. It's the art evoking emotions, not the rational mind, which enables the country to rise from the ashes and learn from its mistakes.

Not protected by the sutras Hoichi's ears are ripped off, as an example of the powerful influence of the past. A warning for the living ones about its destructive potential. It's important to know the demons haunting the society's past but there is a greater necessity of Japanese to move forward. The message is not to plunge too deep in the past as it can swallow and take over the present, disabling a proper present existence. The heart sutras don't diminish Hoichi's identity. On the contrary, they seem to prevail in his identity whilst he's exploring the demons of the past.

Hoichi's story, in my opinion, states a good example of Japanese cinema screen is a *screen tissue*, a living entity, a tool through which filmmakers could capture multi-layered stories picturing what's slumbered deep down its culture's collective subconscious. The human body is shaped on the occasion of its contact with the world, it blends with the world. It's suggested that the body is a mixture of the surroundings and everything that is part of it. 'Painting makes this continuity visible it itself the visualization of this continuity of this blending of the inside and out.' (Lippit, 2005, p. 106).

Hibakusha is a term referring to the direct victims of the atomic explosions, witnesses of the atomic blast. The term, however, describes the 'indirect' victims of the bombing, who are the offspring of the direct victims.

Till today, Hibakusha generation undergoes severe discrimination due to public ignorance about the consequences of radiation sickness, as the public still believes in it's hereditary and contagious qualities.

Unlike war survivors in other parts of the world, Hibakusha is far from being treated as war heroes or privileged war victims. Paradoxically, they are being swept under the carpet, marginalized by their own nation. It could be the fact that they are shameful proof of Japanese losing the war. They are a stain in the nation's history that lingers on from generation to generation, reminding about the painful past.

Ostracism of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims originated a trend in the Japanese film industry called *Hibakusha cinema*. Atomic cinema provides a reinterpretation of the past, leading to an examination of repressed anxieties within the social context of Japan. Just like in case of Hoichi, the Japanese understand that it's the arts which has an overwhelming power to communicate the unspeakable.

There are great examples of classic movies like *Children of Hiroshima* (1952), *The Bells of Nagasaki* (1950), *Black Rain* (1989) or *Rhapsody in August* (1991) which deal with the aftermath of the atomic explosion. However, in my opinion, it's the genre films, which allowed to communicate the terror of that event on a deeper level. Through their symbolism and archetypal nature, genre films, enable the Japanese to unfold various layers of collective unconscious related to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedy. Horror, science fiction, and avant-garde films became an innovative, fresh tool for exploring the conditions of visibility in the aftermath of WWII.

Thanks to their allegorical form they forbid the memories of the past to perish and left space for contemplation and reconciliation. Abstract at times scenarios of those films, in my opinion, gave them the power to transcend generations with message they carried. Visually powerful and archetypal in their nature they allowed freedom to search for the identity without judgment and prejudice.

Weirdness and deformities of the characters and surroundings in those films channeled inner demons and insecurities through giving them a physical form. It's so much easier to defeat, what's haunting once it's identified. Through such simple tools Japanese could begin their own search for their collective and individual identity. When the enemy is given a name or form is so much easier to confront it. It's not hiding in the shadows or dark corners of the psyche. It awaits in the conscious plane/sight ready to be defeated.

The Weeping Demon

There could exist a complex system of visuality that shows nothing; in the system of the very place of the visible, something else appears - a visuality - a mode of impossible, unimaginable visuality. It defines the experience of seeing, sensing visual, without presenting an image. All signs lead to a view, but in the end, nothing is really seen.

In this chapter, I will focus on visible aspects of identity, which through their unimaginable vividness, in fact, distort and mask it. I will look into films, which deal with the paradox of high visibility which results in disappearance or distortion of the true identity. Presented films are showing characters of graphic physicality, which should imply transparency of who they are. In fact, their *explicit* appearance infects their perception of their true identity.

Monstrous size dandelions, usually perceived as graceful flowers with 'healthy' symbolism in most cultures, in Kurosawa *Dreams* (1990) seems to carry a different meaning. They occupy radiation transformed world of a mutated man - Weeping Demon. As the story progresses it's explained that Weeping Demons were government officials exiled to a *dandelion world* after the atomic explosion. Their surrounding is a purgatory where they cannot die, they cannot perish unlike the world they contributed to destroying. Overgrown gigantic dandelions visually represent what is happening with the Weeping Demon. Rather than the usual associations of joy and happiness in *Dreams* (1990), yellow color carries the symbolism of madness and suffocation, Demon has a 'tumor-like' structure growing out of his head, which alters him not only physically and mentally but also takes over his identity. Affected by the tumor he becomes insane, overwhelmed by the agony. His identity is altered into basic instincts of relief before the next wave of pain.

It's important to remember that transformation of a dandelion is complete; flower utterly changes its form- yellow petals become elusive seeds. One day, just like the dandelion's, Demon's head will transform fully, taken over by the tumor. This as well could be a moment when his identity ceases to exist. Maybe the head of the once light-headed man - will literally become a seed-blow structure? That could be the

demon's wish, however, his reality, in fact, is to be condemned to be in pain for eternity. Unlike in the case of dandelions, his body will not transform into anything different from what it is now. Like a pack of wolves, demons gather around a crimson lake and howl out of agony, which will never end.

It's all consequences of our polluted minds, Kurosawa seems to suggest by positioning the tumor inside Weeping Demon's head. Atomic destruction originated in heads, not in hearts. Hence, it's the head which is taken over by the illness.

There seems to be no hope in Dandelion World. Yellow flowers will ripen. Their 'invisible' seeds will be carried across the world and spread quietly, just like atomic pollution. No one knows where toxic seeds will fall. Kurosawa seems to imply that further consequences of the atomic explosion won't be fully visible, however, their deteriorating impact will stay unchanged. They will contaminate the minds of the next generations to come.

Similar theme as in Kurosawa's *Dreams*, we can trace in Kanete Shindo's film *Onibaba* (1964). The name originates from the Japanese folklore, meaning: *an old woman that feasts on humans*. Shindo's film from 1964 of the same title, tells a story of two women, who kill Japanese soldiers for their possessions. It is the only way of survival for the old woman and her daughter in law during the 14th-century civil war. Both women seem to master their predatory way of survival. Stolen possessions are exchanged for food, whereas bodies of their victims are thrown into a deep hole. The film is set in a secluded swampy area covered in moving sea of thick, tall reeds. Women seem completely detached from what is happening to the rest of their country. Conflict in their story is introduced through a neighbor, Hachi, who has just arrived from the battlefield. He tells the old woman that her son died during the fight.

Hachi makes advances to the young woman, which after a while are accepted. The old woman doesn't agree with their relationship. She decides to scare the young widow away from their neighbor.

The old woman uses a disguise to threaten her daughter in law. She gets back to the deep hole where they dump bodies of her victims. She takes off a mask from a samurai she killed. Before his death Samurai confessed that during the war mask helped him protect his beautiful face from getting damaged in the battle; it made him look fierce.

After taking the mask off woman learns that Samurai's face is in fact disfigured. In her eyes, it's his punishment for starting the war.

The mask serves its purpose. *The old hag* is able to scare the young woman away from visiting Hachi. However, despite old woman efforts to keep her away during a stormy night, her daughter in law gets through to their neighbor. Deformed by the rainwater mask clings strongly to old woman face. She is unable to take it off. She asks for help her daughter in law. After a few unsuccessful attempts, the young woman manages to remove the wooden mask. Only then, both of them realize that the old woman face has been permanently disfigured.

Not by coincidence, Shindo's female character wears a flowy gown with a print of a crab on her back. Legend says, that during the 12th-century civil war over the Japanese imperial throne, defeated Heikegani samurais, who instead of surrendering, committed suicide in the sea. Their remains were eaten by crabs. It's believed that samurai's souls incarnated into crabs bodies. Thus, Heikegani crabs have their shells shaped in the form of an angry samurai's face. Women in *Onibaba*, like crabs, *pray* on their victims. However, in the film as well as in the legend, the consequences have to be paid. The imprint of the bad deed has to be left behind. Just as Heikegani crabs carry imprints of their victims on their back, so does samurai's mask, marks face of the old woman.

The vividness of the mask is deceitful. One may think that because of its explicitness the mask represents transparency. *Onibaba* (1964) shows a perfect example of visibility, which makes other things invisible, the too much vividness carries a potential for invisible danger. When women are honest about who they are and what they do to survive, the world seems to be forgiving even for them taking lives.

Shindo's world, however, is unforgiving for an old woman, who tries to pretend to be someone else. Her disfigurement after wearing the mask isn't the result of a punishment for her killing the samurai. Strangely enough, it seems she is punished for using a mask to hide her identity and use it as a *weapon* against someone else. Same fate meets Samurai, he dies because trying to preserve a 'face' which is not his own. Samurai and old woman want to hide their true identity and this is what they are

punished for. Shindo seems to suggest that even the worst deeds could be forgiven when they are out in the open.

Once the mask alters her face physically, the old woman becomes a stranger to the young one. As if the mask not only made her unrecognizable physically but also in the eyes of the world, she becomes someone else. The mask, as if permanently makes her *invisible* and diminishes her identity to the world around.

The final sequence of a young woman being chased by the old hag finishes with a freeze-frame of the old woman jumping over the ditch, shouting desperately into the abyss: *I am still a human*. Such an open ending could suggest that the well in *Onibaba* is like a Pandora's box. This mass grave acts as a symbol of the collective subconscious. Filled with rotting faults and crimes, if it's unreconciled by the present generation, it will prevail and haunt new generations to come.

Japan is an island, nothing truly gets away, disappears from there. Heikegani crabs will come out of the sea to haunt the new generations of Japanese. With their shells of a scary samurai's faces, they will remind about the past.

Collage of multiplying headshots of anonymous people takes over the screen, soon to create an indistinguishable texture filling up the frame. CUT TO: the night shot of a mob 'flowing' in various directions. Overexposed, highly contrasted with dark, almost invisible bodies, faces in the crowd are indistinct, not individualized. They seem to have more in common with the photos seen in the previous shot, rather than with real people.

This is the opening to Teshigahara *Face of Another* (1966). The film tells the story of a man, Okuyama, whose face was severely deformed during an industrial explosion. Most of the time he hides his appearance behind bandages wrapped around his face. Thanks to the innovative method of a psychiatrist Dr. Hira, Okuyama has a chance of receiving a newly manufactured, artificial mask, which when applied is indistinguishable from the real face. Potential side effects of wearing a mask like the danger of losing the perception of morality and distorting social relations don't seem to discourage Okuyama. A lifelike mask which Okuyama is given 'saves' him in terms of interpersonal, very superficial relations. However, new face means new ME and new life as well.

Teshigahara never objectively shows Okuyama's facial disfigurement. When bandages or mask is off, the director makes sure his angles or shot composition *haze* the image of the main character's scars. At the beginning of the film Dr.Hira says he doesn't treat physically ill people, he is not a physician. He just fills the gap in the mind by providing artificial limbs and parts of the body.

Does Okuyama exaggerate his disfigurement? Throughout the film, it seems that people around him deal with his *disability* better than him. The isolation is mostly caused through Okuyamas behavior towards them, rather than their inability to accept his disfigurement. He is offered to go back to work whenever he wants. His relationship with his wife suffers mostly because he cannot comprehend that she could still love him, regardless of his deformed features. He doesn't trust her even when she says: '*He's old enough not to care about how he looks*'. Maybe his scars are more psychological than physical?

Over his X-rayed image at the beginning of the film, Okuyama states he would be able to accept his scars if he could call them a destiny or a war wound. He admits the explosion was his fault, him making a wrong decision. Scaring, unlike in the case of the war victim, originated from his poor choice. He feels exiled and thinks, unlike war tragedies, no one remembers the accident he was a victim of. Maybe the fact that the world didn't change much after his disfigurement, is what really bothers Okuyama?

His cynicism appears to originate from the fact that his surrounding doesn't pity him, it simply moves on disregarding his tragedy. He lost his face but people around him act as nothing really happened. There are no oversized dandelions to remind everyone about the tragedy that deformed Okuyama. When he walks down the street with a bandaged face, people really don't pay as much attention as they're expected to, when seeing half mummified man walking.

His attitude to his faceless condition reminds affected by the head tumor, Weeping Demon. Okuyama confesses to his wife, that: '*Face is the door to the mind. Without it, the mind shuts off; it's left to corrode and disintegrate.*' Demon and Okuyama suffer from the illness of the mind. Both cannot function in society because of the wrongdoings of their mental actions.

Even when Okuyama wears a mask, his choices are rather unusual for someone who was given freedom and the possibility of starting his life all over again. Okuyama in his disguise rents a new flat and lives a double life. However, instead of plunging into the pond of different acquaintances and romances, Okuyama circles around his old life. He visits his workplace, unsuccessfully makes advances to the secretary and spies on his wife. Maybe he tries out how good the new look really is? The question arises WHY?

His masquerade escalates to the point where he sets on a task to seduce his wife. After spending a night together, he tries to take the mask off in order to reveal his disguise. He thinks his actions will humiliate her and prove he was right thinking, she will betray him. Strangely enough, Mrs. Okuyama knew all along he was her husband. She found it insulting to prove to him how she knew. She thought she should try to wear the mask as well pretending she doesn't know who he is. In her eyes, maybe this would help their relationship.

The world was forgiving for Onibaba's sins until she started to hide her true self under samurai's mask. Okuyama's wife cannot accept his new appearance, she *cannot stand pretending the mask (his new face) is real*. She sees through Okuyama, despite his altered face, regardless of how much he changes his physical appearance. She walks away from Okuyama as if the worst thing you could do in the society they live in, is to hide who you really are. Just like in the case of Onibaba's world, their surroundings are more forgiving for those showing their true colors, than living in a world full of shams.

The Face of Another (1966) explores the theme of duality, hence Okuyama's disheartened attitude towards the indifferent society could be seen from another perspective as well. Maybe the reason for Okuyama's cynicism is the fact how easily, in his eyes, the society forgot about the accident and was able to get on with their lives.

He doesn't bear war wounds but he feels there is something wrong with the society that pretends that nothing really happened. Maybe his need for gaining new face is so

important because it's only him who sees the loss of the Japanese *nation's face* as a consequence of the war?

Okuyama represents the pre-war society, whose involvement in the war will mostly affect the next one to come. The old generation, ashamed of their inability to reconcile with their wrongdoings during the war, will lead to the faceless, identity lacking society. A young girl, another character in the film, whose burns are the bitter reminder of Nagasaki explosion, is an example of the direct consequences of that. Although she carries similar disfigurements to Okuyama, it is she who suffers typical Hibakusha ostracism. While the girl is unable to merge in the new world constantly reliving the past, Okuyama surrounding seems to disregard the importance and terror of the consequences of the atomic explosions. It's so detached from their WWII sins, that doesn't recognize they are becoming faceless too. After the war, they put on a mask of *indifference*, became a faceless crowd.

During one of their meetings, Dr. Hira asks Okuyama to give him his mask back. In response, Okuyama stabs the psychiatrist in the back. An interesting moral question arises: Has he always been bad, or was it the freedom of its disguise that confused his morale? When we meet Okuyama, he's never likable as a character. From the beginning of the film, he appears cynical and sarcastic. Maybe, Teshigahara intentionally doesn't reveal too much about his past suggesting Okuyama has always been like this.

After the killing Okuyama turns towards the camera. He examines the mask covering his face. Is it permanently attached to his face now? The way Okuyama touches his face, it seems he's asking himself the same question.

Okuyama's mask isn't as vivid as the one in *Onibaba*. In fact, it covers something already disfigured rather than having disfiguring qualities. Through its visibility, the mask seems to alter the inner aspects of the one who is wearing it. Okuyama becomes visible in a different way. His inner qualities, personality traits which aren't visible at first, emerge on the surface.

Teshigahara doesn't give us answers. He only raises questions in terms of dislocation of the identity of his main character. The duality of his situation as well as a repetitive

doubling in setting and film language, suggest there is no right answer to this dilemma. Maybe Okuyama has more qualities which identify him with the Weeping Demon. Okuyama's disfigurement causes his existential pain and disgust to the world around him. His surrounding is deteriorated in a different way than the Dandelion one. However, it's the only appearance. In reality, both worlds represent post-atomic Japan where both characters weep out of pain and injustice of their disfigurement.

The world is indifferent to Japanese need of preserving the face, which has been lost during the war. It's how Japan will deal with the atomic aftermath on its own, will eventually bring the new beginning and reconciliation. It's a Japanese problem to reconcile with it. Looking at it from the wider perspective one could conclude that the world moved on after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The world will be ok after the atomic explosions. In order to move on the world HAS to be ok with it.

Okuyama, along with Dr. Hira visits a Munich pub, which alludes to beginnings of Hitler's reign. These days we eat Italian pizza, drive English cars and drink American Coca Cola. Is there something inappropriate for Okuyama to enjoy his time in a German pub in post-war Japan? It seems his generation lives in the state of denial of how significant impact they had on the outcome of the war. They were the reason how the war affected their society in the first place but they seem to carry on as if nothing happened. It's the young generation, who are paying for their deeds.

Hibakusha generation will not only live in constant fear of the next war but will be ostracized for upcoming decades. The hypocrisy of the privileged Japanese will exile the affected ones to the margins of the society. They will not cherish and honor the atomic blast proofs encrypted within the bodies. It's too painful. It would mean they would have to admit it was them who caused it. Hibakusha generations will have to hide behind fake identities to prove they have equal rights to occupy the Japanese soil.

Did the Japanese become Hitler's marionette? Is that what Teshigahara is trying to say? Perhaps Hitler took away Japanese identity, through giving them the mask under

which they felt free to do as they please. However, maybe if the Japanese weren't already spoilt inside, the mask would have never affected them?

Crow Trap

In this chapter, I will focus on the idea of invisibility and transparency as symbolic tools, which explore the Japanese quest of finding their identity after the atomic blasts. Analyzed films investigate the notion of invisibility in a direct and indirect way. I will try to defend that in all the cases presented by me, although some film characters aren't invisible per se, they still are to be treated as if they were. The transition from invisibility to transparency may suggest not the absence of visibility, but complete penetration of the body by light; Where an invisible man does exist, although may seem to disappear.

Derrida differentiates two kinds of invisibility: *in-visibility* and *absolute invisibility* (invisibility). What he means by *in-visibility* designated with a hyphen, is the notion of invisibility of visible things, which are kept out of sight; things which aren't directly visible to the viewer through being concealed one beneath the other (Lippit, 2005, p. 31). For example, internal organs of our body are invisible but they are still in order of visibility. If undergone an operation they can be exposed.

Whereas *invisibility* is not only invisible to the sight but also other senses. Derrida states that it's a *visibility* that resides somewhere else. It keeps its nonvisibility, because it's invisible through other senses it is still visible, perceived through another sense: It is given to be seen only somewhere else. To see otherwise, to see in another sense, to see in secret (Lippit, 2005, p. 32).

In Adachi's *Invisible Man Appears* (1949) Professor Nakazato, works on the formula for invisibility. He is able to make his lab rabbit disappear. However, the animal dies out of cancer once the process is reversed. Invisibility affects rabbit's behavior, altering it to a worrying degree. Professor admits to his young assistants that because of those flaws, he kept his discovery a secret till now. Both men are fascinated by Nakazano's achievement and decide to work on the concept more thoroughly.

One of them, Segi, suggest reducing the body's molecular structure until it becomes completely dense. This way it will create an effect of a human black hole, through its opaqueness, it'll become absolutely invisible. Professor seems to be against the idea of absolute density as it implies that the physical body, even though being invisible, still cast a shadow - a *leftover* of corporeality that marks the invisible body. Nakazato

seems to be more keen on the concept of his other apprentice, Kurokawa. The young scientist wants to shuffle the body's molecular structure to allow the light to pass through it. This will lead to complete transparency of the body, making it invisible in the physical world. The rivalry between the two young chemists begins. The one who succeeds will marry Machiko, professor's Nakazano's daughter.

News spread fast and professor Nakazano is kidnapped by klan of thieves wanting to use his scientific invention to commit more crimes. During the course of the story, Kurokawa drinks the invisibility formula, despite its side effects. His transparent body preserves its physical functions and is affected by the environmental element. The invisible body continues being avisual in the world until the time of its death.

Invisibility alters Kurakawa's identity, making him more aggressive and keen on bending the rule of widely-accepted moral domains. He becomes a shapeshifter changing clothes every time he needs to be *visible* to merge within the 'normal' world. This way, clothes become almost like layers of skin. He sheds one layer to put on a new one, along with the new identity that implies it. Paradoxically though, while gaining the *new self* he starts losing more of who he truly is. Just like Okuyama, Kurokawa' face is wrapped in bandages. However, the difference in how both men are perceived in their *disguise* differs drastically.

The fact that there is no visible physical body to reveal to the world, Kurokawa's situation seems much more dramatic. It's not the disfigurement or scars that people seem to be afraid of when young chemist exposes himself. It's the idea of nothingness in the place where a human being is supposed to be. Surrounding needs some kind of identity to connect with. It appears to relate to the human basic survival instinct. Seeing the enemy equals being able to calculate his/her weak points and assess if one is in danger or not. If transparency relates to the atomic radiation it becomes clearer why the surrounding has problems with accepting the invisibility so easily. Atomic radiation being horribly fatal but also transparent means that everyone is in danger; death may come unnoticed any time.

The title of the film *Invisible Man Appears* relates to the last image of the movie. Kurokawa becomes visible in the moment of his death when his features are *washed*

into the visible world by the ocean waves. His return to visibility is accompanied by illumination of his body. 'The body, whose radiant and volatile substance is disclosed only by a nuclear event, the body disappearing in the catastrophic medium of the atom' (Lippit, 2005, p. 85).

H.G. Wells in his book *The Invisible Man* suggests that humans are in fact in their nature, transparent (Wells, 1897, p.165). That the human body is a network of fibers which are see-through, lacking colored tissue. It's actually body pigmentation, which enables its visibility in the world. Kurokawa's death is accompanied by the *visible light* when his features are given back to the world. Death seems to be a process which has to be visible. It's important to acknowledge it and be aware of its visibility. Dying people aren't anonymous. They all have lives and identities which pass and disappear along with them. The atomic explosion was extensive and global in its destruction, however, the lost lives and the lives affected by it, have to be individually acknowledged. Every person who died or survived becomes evidence of that event. The return of the visibility of the body during passing, suggests also that the natural order has been restored. Scientists disrupted the laws of nature creating a monster. Their creation outgrew them and became their enemy. Only the most primal and basic natural law, dying, restored the body into its proper place. The unnatural, atomic transparency, a terrific artificial creation cannot mask the true identity of the body and its true origins, it's belonging to the natural world.

What is then the nature of ghost then? How one can then differentiate what's ghostly and what's physical if both seem to differ in such a slight extent? Maybe the difference between ghosts and humans aren't as big as it may seem?

The topic of ghostly existence is widely explored in Teshigahara's *Pitfall* (1962). Here a migrant worker along with his son moves from one place to another in search for work. Only miner's son is aware of an enigmatic man in white who is following their every step. The same stranger sends miner a map of new employment to lure him into an abandoned mining town. The city is empty except for one woman who owns a candy store. As the miner wanders the outskirts of the city in search of his new employment place he is stalked by the man in white. Without any obvious reason, the man in white stabs miner through the heart. The victim turns into a ghost which allows

him to see the other ghosts in the seemingly abandoned town. The killing is witnessed by miner's son and the candy store owner.

Throughout the course of the film, we learn that the dead miner bears an uncanny resemblance to a union leader of an old mine pit. The old and new mine pits union leaders have been in conflict for a while. Regardless of their animosity, they decide to explore the unusual circumstances of the death of the doppelganger. Soon both are framed in a murder of a candy store owner, who is in fact, killed by the man in white for being the witness to his terrible crime. Union leaders distrust each other of who killed candy store owner. In the end, they kill each other almost at the exact spot where the miner died. They're as well, turn into ghosts. All is witnessed by the man in white who murmurs to himself that everything went according to the plan. He rides off on his motorbike leaving the young boy behind.

Man in white seems an enigmatic and alienated figure. A stranger who, without any consequences, kills and stirrup conflicts in places where he appears - all done in white gloves. His identity isn't important. It's more important what he does to the identity of people he comes across. Why he kills? It seems that the man in white could represent the WWII enemies of Japan, who neatly brought death and confusion to the country. Moreover, it's quite vivid that they never intended to affect the lives of the ones in power but targeted the poorest and most *invisible* in the Japanese society. War victims don't get the answer to why it's them who pays for the consequences of the ones who caused the war. Just like ghosts in *Pitfall* will never get the answer to why it's them who were killed by the man in white.

Teshigahara's ghosts aren't that different from humans. They seem to lead a similar life to the one they lost. The only worry to them is the way they die because this is how they are going to look like for eternity. The dead miner says that being invisible when he was alive was bearable but *transparency* after death is something he cannot accept. It's widely accepted that humans get one thing unconditionally and regardless of their social status. *Death* is the only thing, which everyone is certain of and which *honors* everyone. For death is our right and belongs only to us. No one can take dying away from us.

In *Pitfall* (1962) the anonymous death of the miner and the fact that his identity is confused with someone else is the worst thing that could happen. The identity loss after death is what's haunting ghosts in Teshigahara's film. They were deprived of being acknowledged as dead and memory about their *unimportant* lives is lost forever. They vanished, almost without a trace. In *Invisible man Appears* death reverses the process of invisibility. The body is given back to the world in order to confirm the identity of the dead one. However, in *Pitfall* body's identity is confused after death, disabling the dead one *to rest in peace*.

Ghost towns are filled with spirits of forgotten, unidentified people. They live in a parallel world, representing the collective subconscious and unresolved problems of Japanese society. Teshigahara seems to ask the question of how different are those worlds to one another? Can a society of confused identities raise a generation which would not choke in the exhaust fumes of its coal mines? The true killer is not punished for his crimes. He rides away never being confronted by anyone. The film finishes with a shot of young son of the miner running into a deteriorated and a ruined environment. He has witnessed the crimes and throughout the film stayed indifferent to what he saw. Nothing could have been understood from his expressionless face. Even whilst skinning a frog or stealing candies he seemed utterly emotionless. Completely immune and unable to react to the terror happening around him. As he runs away from the ghost town tears appear in his eyes. He remembers what he witnessed, however, would it be enough to hope for a new beginning?

When the content of the film is analyzed from the perspective of the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedy, it appears that bombing brought not only the 'surface' destruction but unearthed what has been dwelling inside Japan for thousands of years. Mine is a place where toxic dirt gets out on the surface, creating an interesting metaphor of Japanese collective consciousness, where coal represents something venomous stored under the layers of history that resurfaces and contaminates the generations to come.

At the beginning of the film, miner states that he doesn't see the point in running from one place to another. If he escapes from one mine he immediately lands in another. He is an ordinary man subjected to dig out the dirt for the privileged ones. Interesting

thing is that it's the ordinary people who suffer and are contaminated by the consequences of war. The anonymous, the invisible ones aren't heard of, they are silent and unimportant. Their tragedy is swallowed by the earth and stored into another layer of coal. The film seems to point out that if Japan will stay conflicted the exterior elements will always use that weakness to introduce the conflict within the society.

It's important to notice that man in white snaps photographs of his future victims. 'When we define a photograph as a motionless image, this doesn't mean only that the figures it represents don't move. It means that they emerge, don't leave, they are anesthetized and fastened down like butterflies.' (Barthes, 1981, p. 57). Victims are captured forever on the photographic paper, almost like ghosts are captured within the new reality. They are pinned down like trophies. Just like the photographs which capture them, so does the place they died, become imprisonment they cannot leave. Visuals of people captured by the camera are sacred to the person who took them. Photographs are never revealed to the viewer. Identities captured on the film are in-visible. Existing in another reality but in-visible to the audience's eye.

Also, Jumpei Niki is armed with a still camera wanders around the postatomic looking territory, where the sound dunes remind of the ashes of deceased Japan. There is no one around but him and his butterfly net. In this barren environment, he looks for life. He catches sand bugs, which he traps either in glass tubes or on the photographic paper of his camera. As he wanders around he meets a fisherman, who tells him it's too late to catch the last bus. Jumpei is offered a place to stay. He climbs down a rope ladder to a shabby hut at the bottom of the sand dune. He is hosted by a young widow, the eponymous character of Teshigahara's *Woman in the Dunes* (1964).

When the morning comes man realizes that the rope ladder, the only way in and out of the bottom of the sand dune, is gone. He is trapped just like one of his specimens. The woman wants him to stay and share a life together, where he would help her in everyday chores. In exchange for water and food, every night she clears off the sand that gathers around the house to send it back up on the surface of the dune.

From now till the end of the film Jumpei will not stop trying to escape his imprisonment.

Many times in the film, Teshigahara alludes to the artificiality of meaning and importance of identity. Even the main character asks himself why people need so

many papers to prove who they are e.g. ID's, passports, birth certificates, etc. At first Jumpei clearly defines himself as a registered school teacher. He even acts like a man who is more knowledgeable than villagers. What he sees and what he can catalog and examine is that truly exists. Thus, he finds it ridiculous when the woman tells him that sand cumulates moist. For him, it's an improbable paradox, because sand already implies lack of moisture.

Jumpei slowly merges into the life he was forced to lead; he even gets romantically involved with his female oppressor. He still thinks about freedom but the longer he stays in the dunes, the greater danger of the *invisible sand* washing off his identity. In order to become free again, Jumpei is ready to try everything. From keeping the woman captive, constructing his own rope ladder or subjecting himself completely to the physical work - the surrounding is indifferent to his call for freedom. One night he begs to be allowed a walk by the sea. He should be praised for becoming an obedient villager. Fishermen agree to consider his request only if he and the woman make love in front of them. Jumpei is ready to be humiliated if only for a moment, he could reach the surface of the dune. He and the woman struggle when he tries to force himself on her. He is degraded to the level of an animal. Paradoxically, in order to save himself, he has to lose himself first.

The sand dunes are the gathering point for crows. Those carrion birds are known to visit cemeteries or like vultures prey on decomposing bodies. Jumpei believes that in order to be found, he needs to let the world know that he is still alive. He constructs a small ditch, which serves as a crow trap. Once he catches the bird, he will attach a message to its leg with information about his captivity.

The trap seems ineffective for catching the birds but to Jumpei's surprise, it provides something else. Its design enables to extract the moisture out of the sand and collect the water. When Jumpei looks at his own reflection, the shot is intentionally flipped, showing him upside down. It's almost as if Teshigahara wanted to imply that Jumpei's inner image of himself already started to change. He's already losing his identity and begins to see a distorted image of himself.

Woman gets contractions and only then it's revealed to the viewers she is pregnant with Jumpei's child. Fishermen transport her to the doctor. As they leave the sand dune house they forget to pull up the rope ladder. Jumpei is finally able to climb up the walls of his imprisonment. He wanders around the seaside. As he faces the water horizon it seems there is nothing else around except for the sea of sand or the sea of water. Japan an island from which there is no escape.

Jumpei goes back to the shabby house at the bottom of the dune. He checks the water level in his well. As he looks at his reflection in the surface of the water he says that there is still time for him to escape. He can stay longer where he is, there is no rush. He can think about escaping some other day. Besides, he wants to tell fishermen about his invention. This time water reflects not only him but also a boy observing him from afar. Is it a flashforward to his future life, suggesting he will become a father?

Looking inside the well could be interpreted as finding one's inner source, a new beginning, new hope. For me, this image always embodied a different, more bitter conclusion. There is no one else but Jumpei to save him. Only he can save himself. However, will he be cautious enough not to get overwhelmed by the sands of the dunes and the commodities of life he forced himself to accept?

Teshigahara makes quite literal associations to the atomic blast. The story of the film takes place in August, a close up on the watch showing 8:15 is also indicating the time of the explosion. Thus, Jumpei's story could relate to the situation of Japanese post-war society. In order to move on, they have to stop getting overwhelmed by the atomic tragedy. They have to stop disappearing within the invisible sand of self-pity. They cannot hide behind the survivor's guilt. In order to function in the world again, they have to look inside themselves and face their true image. Accept their faults and extract the droplets of hope from seemingly barren ashes of war.

There is an interesting parallel of metaphors of sand and coal in *Woman in the Dunes* and *Pitfall*. *Pitfall* seems to represent the consequences of what has been originating in *Woman in the Dunes*. As if white sands of the dunes throughout centuries turned into stagnated, submerged dark coal ore. Both films deal with in-visibility of characters who are swallowed by their society. Their identities aren't protected and important to their world. If they forget who they are so will their surroundings. Both films finish with

hope, a young boy who could be interpreted as the future society. It becomes crucial to the Japanese not to get overwhelmed by shame and blame of the doings during WWII. As someone once said, tomorrow is free from mistakes.

Filmic Autopsy

This chapter will focus on film language of the analyzed films. The visual style of each of the movies constitutes an essential part of the message they carry. The artistic expression of film language embodies the search of the lost identity. I will argue that the form and not only the content of the analyzed films, is what is really striking about conveying their message. The fact that they don't present the explicit, gore images challenges directors to explore unusual ways of designing their shots and sequences. Autopsy means 'seeing for oneself'. The metaphors and deep symbolism in atomic cinema, channel the consciousness of its viewers because directors understand that the terror of the atomic explosion goes beyond the physical, beyond explained. The audience gets used to violence and explicitness; becomes immune and detached when bombarded with vivid imagery.

Filmmakers try to evoke *understanding* through allowing the audience to see for themselves not only the outer but the inner, deeper drawbacks of the atomic explosion on Japanese society. For the viewers, it means channeling symbolic visuals through emotion and not *dry* perception. Directors impose on the audience deeper emotional exploration of what they present on the screen to affect them on a subconscious level. They understand that in order for their cinema to be effective, it can't be literal. Literal is out of date.

Weeping Demon, the chapter of *Dreams* (1990) by Akira Kurosawa, starts with a character walking towards a deteriorated and barren landscape. What is interesting in that Kurosawa's shots never show where the character is coming from or where he is heading. The audience sees him walking towards or profile to the camera. Through such composition director already comments on the destination of the wandering man. It seems wherever he goes, Japan looks like this, there is nothing better than this. It also seems to suggest that Kurosawa doesn't have a positive outlook on the future either. The whole country seems turned into ashes.

Dreams (1990) by Akira Kurosawa, is the only color film in my analysis. Unlike in the case of the black and white atomic cinema films, in Kurosawa's movie color adds terror to his visuals. He keeps the deteriorated landscape in washed-out tonality only to

strike it with meaningful vivid hues. Crimson lake where the howling demons gather exaggerates the toxicity of their exodus like environment. This is how the hell could look like, there is nothing alive there. Giant dandelions, though being the most alive elements in the film surrounding, also appear toxic. Presenting them the first time Kurosawa plays with audience expectations. He shows the yellow flowers on their own where they seem to look like ordinary bloom. Only when in the same shot Demon and the Man enter the shot, the perception of the presented nature changes. The flowers, which appearance was ones were taken for granted exaggerates the idea that the world is the same but different. Different in an awkward and striking way. This may resemble what they wear before, but undeniable is the fact that there is something uncanny in their appearance.

Radiation is invisible and may not alter the affected ones. Life may start on the toxic soil and new generation may be born. The question is how much of the unresolved emotions and inner conflicts will be left on the surface and how much will be stored and hidden deep down. Some problems of society simply become invisible.

Japanese novelist Junichiro Tanizaki in his essay *In Praise of Shadows* mentions that invisibility is linked with the power to the possibility of the absolute power, which leads to destruction, self-destruction and ultimately madness (Lippit, 2005, p. 92). Those aspects build the tragedy of Kurokawa's character in the *Invisible Man Appears* (1949). Invisibility seems so detached from anything, which is called human or human behavior; that any apparent advantage becomes a curse in the end. The character can, of course, use his transparency to help finding professor Nakazano. However, the negative side effects of the invisibility almost immediately take over his identity. If transparency is looked at from the perspective of atomic radiation, it may mean it penetrates not only the body but the intangible aspects of the human psyche. It alters not only the physicality but the core of one's own existence and perception of self.

Point of view of the Invisible Man is a key visual element to challenge and entertain viewers perception of the film action. The first-person perspective allows capturing the expressions and reactions of people who interact with the invisible one. It also builds up underlying tension and anticipation of what will happen next. Point of view camera angle is an effective tool to arouse the sense of the threat of invisibility, which can

come from anywhere at any time; creating an almost psychotic atmosphere. Camera IS the invisible man. Through the use of the point of view angles, the audience becomes him. Characters react directly to the camera as if it was the viewer who was committing the crimes.

The invisibility of the character had to be believable also from an objective perspective. The use of visual effects supervised by Eiji Tsuburaya, who was a pioneer of visual effects on the Japanese film market, constitute a core element of film language. His ability to use the available film techniques allowed an effective and believable outcome of the character's invisibility even till now. Visual effects were supposed to create an awe effect on the audience. Highlight the effect of the danger of the transparent forces which could attack from anywhere.

Various film techniques expressed in *The Face of Another*, whether technological or compositional, spoke for Teshigahara's need of making his own, visual autopsy. In my opinion, the film's language is so complex because it's supposed to embody thoughts. Its purpose is to dissect chequered and patchwork nature of the mind and psyche. Back projection, crossfades visualize and externalize thoughts and fantasies of the main character.

Japanese atomic explosions survivors, called *Hiroshima maidens*, were invited to the United States after the war. Those females underwent various plastic surgery on their wounded bodies. Reconstructive procedures were to help them avoid further ostracism and provide normal functioning in society. However, the scale of the initiative was focusing only on a handful of female victims from the Hiroshima explosion. No males or survivors of Nagasaki bombings, who as well underwent the same discrimination, were included in the enterprise.

The Face of Another (1966) begins with an X-ray image of Okuyama's face. An audience isn't presented with the disfigurement he talks about. Regardless of the surface deformities, Teshigahara seems to say that inside we are all the same. However, in my opinion, the use of the X-ray image at the beginning of *Face of Another* has a much deeper meaning. X-rays are highly radioactive. Just like the atomic light

from the explosion blast *photographed* shadow bodies, so does the X-ray in its radioactive nature allows taking a *fatal image* out of a human body. Penetration of Roentgen's rays is as destructive as the atomic black light radiation.

'The X-ray situates the spectacle in its context as a living document even when it depicts, actually and phantasmatically. An image of death or deterioration of the body that leads to death. A living image of death and the deathly image of life are intertwined in the X-ray.' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 50). The destructive symptoms of Roentgen's discovery exposed its destructive nature. 'The extravisibility of the X-ray is an effect of its inflammatory force. It sees by burning and destroying.' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 50).

X-ray light diminished the border between the outside and the inside. Objects subjected to it are presented inside out. X-rayed body is anonymous because it lacks features which make one man different from the other. Okuyama can alter his appearance but the damage goes beyond his physicality. Through this one shot at the beginning of the film, director encapsulates the problem of the identity and collective consciousness of the Japanese society after the war. Through this strong visual, Teshigahara externalizes the radioactive and fatal deterioration of the main character that goes beyond his facial disfigurement. It's the interior of Okuyama that suffers and needs healing, not his *superficial* scars. Fiction unlike the life of Hiroshima Maidens victims looks at the problem of identity in greater complexity. Film medium allows greater exploration of a hibakusha problem on various levels, especially the ones hidden deepest in victims inner lives.

The Face of Another's, very surrealistic in its form, film language, *embodies* the main character's world view. Formalistic compositions with various edge framings seem to result from looking through the gaps between the bandages enveloping Okuyama's head. His expressions are hidden, hence the world around him has to externalize what he thinks and feels in a particular moment. This contributes to the dreamlike, avant-garde stream of consciousness way of how his story is told. Film language expresses the internal chaos of the main character and his inability to preserve his identity. Surreal angels and close-ups exaggerate the weirdness of human body construct of characters in the film. The fragmented inner world of Okuyama Teshigahara creates thought disembodiment of the body, defragmenting its elements, deconstructing rather

than putting it together. The audience is supposed to fill up the gaps and put the scattered images into a whole.

Such busy and thought through compositions require only slight camera movement. Slight reframings within the same shot create a powerful storytelling tool. Film language becomes more poetic allowing the viewer to follow emotionally and mentally the philosophical monologues of the characters. Teshigahara wants the audience to contemplate his visuals, each resembling a surrealist painting. As a result of that, with every viewing film allows the discovery of new layers of understanding and allows even deeper contemplation.

If viewers are confused by the complexities of film language in *The Face of Another* I think it's intentional. The viewer is put in the shoes of the main character in search of his identity. Director wants his audience to experience confusion and inability to find oneself within the presented world. Through parallel and dualistic construction of his shots and sequences, Teshigahara visually creates two parallel worlds existing one next to the other. In one of them, the character has a face, in the other, he is missing it. It seems that this way, Teshigahara wants the audience to answer for themselves which of the presented world's is better.

In comparison to *Face of Another*, *Onibaba's* film language is very classical. The shot design is heavily based on its shooting location. Thick reeds growing over small island fit perfectly the dark fairytale genre of the film. Moving grass builds up an underlying tension of the danger of hiding within its plane. What is interesting about the film is that surreal and fantasy shot design owes it to the *simplicity* of the landscape.

The film has its surrealistic elements created purely by the wildlife. Unlike the artificiality of the production design in *The Face of Another*, here nature brings the poetry and fantasy to the imagery. Disfigurement of the body is contrasted with the plain natural world. The stillness on the uniformity of the natural world and Onibaba's facial disfigurement only enhanced the tragedy and artificiality of atomic radiation.

Boldness and bareness of the environment, especially of the night shots along with high contrasted figures of women against the darkness of the night resemble kabuki

theatre. Tanizaki mentions that female puppets consist only of a head and a pair of hands. 'The body, legs, and feet are concealed within a long kimono. (...) This is the epitome of reality, for a woman of the past did indeed exist only from the collar up and the sleeve out.' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 28).

It's striking that Onibaba looks exactly like Tanizaki's description when she wears a mask to scare the young woman. Her figure has more demonic rather than human qualities. The disfigurement properties of the mask seem to make anyone who wears it a vassal. The human qualities are extracted and a man becomes its puppet. Marionette of the disease which consumes identity.

Postatomic world of the *Woman in the Dunes* (1964) is diminished to desert planes. Here as well, like in the case of *Onibaba*, use of the natural world works as a visual metaphor for the atomic degradation. Everything gets absorbed by the sand. A man physically and mentally disappears within its surrounding. The surface of the sand just like woman's body absorbs the identity of whoever comes in touch with it. Sand which has rotting qualities alludes to the side effects of the radiation. Everything collapses with each other. Everything is temporary, nothing really stays and is preserved there.

The opening sequence of *The Woman in the Dunes* starts with close up of *hanko*, which are official stamps visually representing the identity of the people. They soon are replaced with stonelike objects. The shots are getting wider and wider in order to show a bigger perspective of the solid pieces. It's revealed they are simply grains of sand which are clustered into one fluid plane of dunes. A man enters a shot from the bottom of the frame and climbs up the dune.

Most of the time Teshigahara shot composition doesn't allow the viewer to see where Junpei is actually coming from. Visible is the only environment he is heading towards. It's almost as if Teshigahara thought that if by visualizing and contextualizing origins of his character, he would immediately tell the viewers who the man is. What I find interesting is that we don't know exactly where the man is coming from and whatever he says or does is questionable. Everything that is known about him is based on what he wears and what he says about himself. He calls himself entomologist but it's only his words. However, even his entomology knowledge is questioned when he

undermines the existence of a bug, which seems to be a common one in the dunes. Neither of the characters in the film addresses themselves by their names.

The audience gets a slight insight into Junpei's background when he says his monologue about identity proofs. This is when Teshigahara shows an image of a woman against the sand dunes. One seems to see a parallel between the woman of his vision against the sand dunes, and the woman who in fact traps the man inside the sand dunes. Maybe Teshigahara want to tell the viewers something about love, and how one loses his identities to it? People lose themselves in it, denying the danger of being completely swallowed by that emotion. It's an infatuation that can cost lives.

I will go further into my analysis stating that woman in Teshigahara film represents Japan. The country, just like the woman in the dunes, is affected by the radiation and swallows the identities of its loved ones (citizens). Japanese cannot run away from the feelings they have towards their country almost like in a love relationship. To extenuate the statement I will use Tanizaki's quote 'In making ourselves a place to live, we first spread a parasol to throw a shadow on the earth, and in the pale light of the shadow we put together a house.' (Tanizaki, 1977, p. 17).

In one of the interviews given to the CBS Masako Tachibana, one of the Hiroshima Maidens, made a statement that she is glad that Americans dropped the bomb. In her mind, it put an end to turmoil within Japanese society. (Tachibana, 1995). The country was already too exhausted and deteriorated by war hence if it kept fighting the warfare would completely wipe out the whole country. Japanese are known for their devotion and feistiness they would have fought till the last drop. It's interesting to hear that from the perspective of the victim. Is Tachibana's view distorted by the fact that she was, in a way, given *new life* by Americans? She was biased to understand the choices behind such a drastic decision.

In *Pitfall* a black, round stain spreads across the screen. It looks as if it was burning through the film celluloid. It reveals life in a seemingly abandoned town, a settlement which is occupied by a ghost.

Ghosts won't find their peace until they know why they died. To them, the explanation is never given. The absurdity and senseless crimes they were victims of are beyond their understanding. It almost seems that even if they were provided with the answer, it still won't be enough to justify crimes committed by the man in white. Ghost town looks almost like a war landscape.

Confused, naked boy, who is standing in the middle of the road, reminds children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki wandering the streets of the destroyed cities in search for their parents. The child isn't responsive to anyone; seems as overwhelmed by his circumstance as the main character. There is no one to make him understand what has happened to him because no one really knows. How can this boy identify himself as a citizen in the future, if he is never reconciled with terror he encountered. Teshigahara ghost town represents the collective subconscious of Japanese people living in shame and senselessness of their phantom lives.

Although *Pitfall* seems less consistent in terms of its film language like *Woman in the Dunes*, e.g. it used a few interesting techniques worth analyzing. The archival footage of the collapsing coal mines created a powerful allegory to the atomic bombs aftermath images. It's hard to differentiate whether the shown victims were injured in caving of a mine pit or have just survived bombing. In my opinion, it's an interesting way of dealing with the topic of hibakusha victims. Indirect, however, a vivid and clear terror of the mine pits create a visual allegory to documentary footage of *The Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)*.

During main characters monologue of no possibility of escaping the work in the mine pits, Teshigahara uses cross dissolves. Diagonal, black coal hills are superimposed on the character's face profile. It creates a poetic metaphor of his state of mind. It almost seems as if coal has been excavated from within his psyche onto the surface. However, layers of coal, just like the layers of the psyche, seem bottomless. Furthermore, the dangers of suffocation and repression arise when too much coal is excavated than can be processed, dealt with.

Almost all of the analyzed films used the symbol of a hole or a ditch as one of their most significant metaphors. It seems that directors had an understanding of the impact

of atomic destruction on the collective subconscious of their country. A stain or a ditch will become a black hole, which isn't going to disappear. It will deepen and spread absorbing lives and identities of Japanese people. One thing is certain, the mark cannot be neglected and the country will become hell on earth if the Japanese won't reconcile with the history.

Conclusion

Tanizaki in his essay *In Praise of Shadows* written in 1933, years before the atomic explosions, ends his study with words: *In the mansion called literature, I would have the eaves deep and the walls dark, I would push back into the shadow things that come forward too clearly, I would strip away the useless decoration. (...) we may be allowed at least one mansion where we can turn off the electric lights and see what is it like without them.* ' (Tanizaki, 1933, p. 42).

When looked deeply into his analysis, one already sees that the majority of what resurfaced after the atomic destruction has always been slumbered deep down Japanese society. Hiroshima and Nagasaki only unearthed its hidden darkness and conflicts.

I am aware that my analysis only scratched the surface of the broad topic of Hibakusha cinema. However, I hope that even this brief insight shed new light on the perception of how Japan dealt with their shaken identity after the atomic bombing.

Teshigahara's films dominate my analyzed selection, maybe because they are based on Abe Kobo books. The allegorical and abstract worlds described in his works, support the timelessness of their films adaptations. This allows the movies to be versatile in its message and prevents them from being outdated even today.

Do films show a fascination with *What's next?*. It's the future which interests filmmakers the most. The open ending is an element, which is common to all analyzed movies. Just like the process of finding and exploring identity never ends. It's like examining different layers of the psyche. There is always something new to investigate and deal with.

Directors don't try to influence a particular point of view. They show a complex, dramatic situation and allow viewers to draw their own conclusions. Especially in terms of such controversial themes as atomic bombing, directors shouldn't answer questions for their audience nor play all knowledgeable God. Otherwise, their work serves only propaganda of one viewpoint.

It seems that directors ask themselves questions explored in their own films. The process of filmmaking was a journey they had to go through as Japanese. The medium of film allowed them to explore the theme of identity in a more varied way. They themselves needed to investigate who they are in the society which suffered so much. Stories they were telling in their movies, were in fact stories they were saying to themselves, in order to find out who they have become after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Just like in case of the prehistoric caves paintings, Hibakusha directors understood that *Image speaks for a thousand words*. Such a banal phrase carries an ancient knowledge of the power of a visual, which transcends generations. In order to be effective and versatile, the cinema cannot be direct. An image *painted* on a celluloid film has to penetrate the psyche of new generations to come. It carries a testimony of the unspeakable in order for the next ones to come, to be able to answer the question *Who am I?*

Filmography

- *Black Rain*; Imamura, Sh., (Hayashibara Group, Imamura Productions, Tohokushinsha Film Corporation 1989) DVD, 123 min
- *Bells of Nagasaki*; Oba, H., (Shochiku, 1950) DVD, 94 min
- *Children of Hiroshima*; Shindo, K., (Kindai Eiga Kyokai, Mingei, 1952) DVD, 97 min
- *Dreams*; Kurosawa, A., (Warner Bros., 1990) DVD, 119min
- *Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki*; Ito, S., (Nicie, 1945) DVD, 160 min
- *The Face of Another*; Teshigahara, H., (Teshigahara Production, Tokyo Eiga Co.,1966), DVD, 121 min
- *Godzilla*; Hinda, I., (Toho, 1954) DVD, 96 min
- *Hiroshima Mon Amour*; Resnais, A., (Argos Films, Como Films, Daiei Studios, Pathé Entertainment, Pathé Overseas, 1959) DVD, 90 min
- *Invisible Man Appears*; Adachi, S., Fukushima, S., (Daiei Studios, 1949) DVD, 87 min
- *Kwaidan*; Kobayashi, M., (Bengei Pro, Ninjin Club, 1965), DVD, 182 min
- *Onibaba*; Shindo, K., (Kindai Eiga Kyokai, Tokyo Eiga, 1964) DVD, 102 min
- *Pitfall*; Teshigahara, H., (Teshigahara Production, 1962) DVD, 97 min
- *Rhapsody in August*; Kurosawa, A., (Shochiku Films Ltd. 1991) DVD, 98 min
- *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*; Tsukamoto, Sh., (Japan Home Video (JHV), K2 Spirit, Kaijyu Theater, SEN, 1989) DVD, 97 min
- *Woman in the Dunes*; Teshigahara, H., (Teshigahara Production, 1964) DVD, 146 min

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