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Black Rain: Reflections on Hiroshima and Nuclear War in Japanese Film
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In the literature on atomic bomb-related themes in Japanese cinema we find a number of trends. Some films-surprisingly few-are intended as open social protests of America's use of the bombs. There are critics who see the bombings as the key stimulus to entire film genres, including the works of Yasujiro Ozu and others, concerned as they were with rapid post-war social transformations and their related spiritual costs. There are others who see the science-fiction genre, especially the *Godzilla* films, as the main cinematic legacy of the bombings and identify in this genre - and its natural extension into anime films - deep insights into transformations in Japanese attitudes and social relations. Finally, there are those films which perceive in the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki indications of broader spiritual and social dynamics with very real, apocalyptic potential. It is the films in this latter category that I wish to consider here, since they evoke a cautionary attitude best suited to the spirit of Hiroshima-one I believe is especially important to encourage in our students, given America's growing emphasis on aggressive foreign policy and technological war-making.[1]

The lack of protest films in the 1950's and subsequent decades primarily resulted from the suppression of Hiroshima protest films during the occupation, the reluctance of directors to be associated with the political left, and the policy of Japanese distributors to show protest films infrequently, in remote venues, with little promotion. Also significant, Donald Richie argues, are certain cultural factors: while Western and other non-Japanese critics of the bombings saw them as atrocities, the Japanese saw them as closer in species

to earthquakes and other natural disasters. Richie remarks that the basic view of the bomb in early documentaries [2] was

“... in effect "This happened; it is all over and finished, but isn't it too bad? Still, this world is a transient place and this too is sad; what we feel today we forget tomorrow; this is not as it perhaps should be, but it is as it is." This awareness of evanescence and the resulting lamentation has a term in Japanese: *mono no aware* [translatable as "sympathetic sadness" or "inescapable sadness of living." It indicates a feeling for the transience of all earthly things; it involves a near-Buddhistic insistence upon recognition of the eternal flux of life upon this earth. This is the authentic Japanese attitude toward death and disaster (once an interval has passed). (Richie 1996, p. 22)

This is certainly one reasonably effective form of reconciliation and integration. However, note that Richie calls this a "near-Buddhistic" attitude, and being a man who chooses his words carefully, I think he indicates that there is reason to see this attitude as falling short of genuinely Buddhist one. To be sure, Buddhism advises against attachment to things in ignorance of life's transience, and against adding to the sufferings by pointless ego-expressions like resentment. But from a Buddhist-and humanistic-point of view, if, as the Four Noble Truths make plain, the reduction of needless suffering is paramount, then such passive acceptance is *not* desirable if it perpetuates or threatens to perpetuate suffering.

The films I have chosen to highlight do not rest with *mono no aware* reconciliation. They force us to feel a deep and unsettling sense of unfinished business, if not outrage. And they beg us to channel these feelings toward the reduction of suffering. In their ways they rebel against the notion that we should *get over* all this, because, after all, suffering is

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inevitable. Yet, on the other hand, they avoid what I think Shudong Chen was right to characterize in an earlier paper in this conference as a myopic, nationalistic emphasis on victimization. Three major films dealing directly with Hiroshima in the Japanese popular cinema have reached Western audiences: *Record of A Living Being* and *Rhapsody in August*, by Akira Kurosawa; and *Black Rain*, by Shohei Imamura. Here I will focus on *Black Rain* and *Record of A Living Being*, by far the more effective of anti-war statements. I will also say something about Kurosawa's later *Dreams*, which picks up on and very effectively expresses many of the themes in these films. Although the direction these later films take may have been molded by occupation and post-occupation censorship of political criticism, they draw on the immense symbolic power of Hiroshima in useful and important ways.

Black Rain (Kuroi Ame)

Shohei Imamura's 1988 film (based on the novel of the same name by Masuji Ibuse) centers on the experiences of a young woman, Yasuko; her aunt, Shigeko; and her uncle, Shigematsu. It examines in detail the post-nuclear effects on the life of a woman poisoned by the fallout-laden black rain of the Hiroshima blast and on her family and her village. As Dorsey and Matsuoka note, despite his intention to depict plainly the direct and indirect consequences of the bombing and to make a very clear statement about the events surrounding them-as opposed to merely reporting about them-Imamura "said that he chose to work in 'a quiet voice.'" He thus faced criticism both from commentators "who favor strong political statements and from those who prefer that art have nothing to do with politics." (1996, p. 204) 111ere is an undeniable tone of *mono no aware* in *Black Rain*, and a number of critics have noted thematic and stylistic similarities between this film and the films ooze dealing with the long-term impact of postwar factors on the fabric of

Japanese social life. However, the film is pervaded by a sense of urgency and unresolved injustice that takes an important step beyond *mono no aware* reconciliation. Indeed, in a recent discussion of the film Carole Cavanaugh remarks on the Significance of its release date, which came at the moment of Japan's broadest economic expansion up to that point: "When Imamura's film was released, Japan had become a superpower economically and the Japan that can say, 'No!' to the United States politically." (2001. p. 254)

The movie opens on the day before the bombing of Hiroshima-August 5th, 1945. It focuses on scenes of daily, mundane life, presumably in an effort to emphasize the bombing's sudden and staggering *disruption* of life. There is a powerful account of the detonation itself. The film is shot in black and white in a way that calls to mind a life gone by-reminiscent of the documentaries once common in cinema programs. It also reduces the potential for gaudy sensationalism that color might introduce, allowing Imamura to keep his audience's eyes trained steadily on some rather horrific depictions of grossly burned and panicked victims.

Here is a clip of the film's opening sequence:

[Yasuko is participating in a tea ceremony in the countryside several miles from Hiroshima as the bomber flies over. Shigematsu is in a train station in Hiroshima, and is caught in the direct chaos of the explosion. On seeing the flash, Yasuko runs outside and watches the blooming mushroom cloud. She takes a boat to Hiroshima after the blast to be with her family. She is caught in the black rain.]

The opening sequence - and several subsequent flashbacks to it - suggest that there is something more than a quiet voice at work here. They do more than underscore certain of the film's characterological aspects, for instance the guilt Yasuko's uncle feels for having

taken his family to his factory in Hiroshima right after the blast. The intent of the opening sequence and its recurrence is not to dwell on the horror of the bomb's immediate effects, but to impress upon the audience how suddenly life can tum from ordinary routine to nightmarish horror. The film focuses not on the bomb's immediate impact, but, on the contrary, on its indirect effects. Ironically, of the three central figures, Shigematsu turns out to be one of the few long-term survivors.

Much of *Black Rain's* cinematic force resides in its depiction of life five years after the blast (the point at which Abuse's novel begins), in Fukuyama city. The family has survived the worst of the war, everything is back to normal, and the family is engaged in the everyday business of finding Yasuko a marriage partner. Yet there are immediate reminders of the past directly affecting the present: Yasuko visits a clinic to get a certificate of health. Her uncle tries to interest her in a plant whose leaves are supposedly good for fighting off radiation sickness. American planes are flying constantly overhead. There are continuous news reports of the Korean conflict and of the possible use of atomic weapons in it.

Imamura's main concern here is to show how the 'survivors' have become victims. Yasuko, who now lives with Shigeo and Shigematsu, has advanced well into her marriageable years, but has received no proposal for marriage because potential suitors have doubts about her health. At the time of the explosion, Yasuko was, as we saw, outside the city, but while traveling to search for her relatives after the blast, she was caught in a shower of radioactive black rain. She tries to convince each suitor she is in excellent health and produces paperwork to prove it (thus making suitors wonder why the paperwork is even necessary, if she is indeed healthy). She finds

herself profoundly torn by the conflict between her deep desire to marry, which her family shares, and her inclination to stay home, which would break up what she terms their "community bound by the bomb." There is no single scene that carries the full meaning of Yasuko and her family's shared plight; rather, the contours of their suffering are drawn out gradually, often subtly, through the portrayal of their daily interactions. Especially powerful are Yoshiko Tanaka's performance as Yasuko, Imamura's artful placement of Yasuko's face in select scenes in order to highlight her reactions, and Toru Takemitsu's remarkable score. Yasuko is victimized anew by rumors and attitudes reflecting, in one commentator's words, "a general belief ... that the *hibakusha* [atomic bomb survivors] are weak and likely to die, and worse, are likely to pass on some hidden disease to their offspring." (Dorsey and Matsuoka, 1996, p. 207) She and other blast victims have "found themselves victims a second time. After surviving the destruction of Hiroshima, they are now the objects of discrimination and even scorn." (*Ibid.*) Focusing on the plight of survivors forced both Ibuse and Imamura to tell their stories carefully, so as not to make Yasuko's eventual illness from radiation appear to support the very condemnation of the *hibakusha*, who were perceived as weak and thus were made to rest, but then accused of laziness for not pitching in-especially in farming communities (p. 216).

Here is a clip of one central sequence in which Yasuko interrupts her family's efforts to confront the failure of another marriage effort:

[Yasuko's family learns that another suitor discovered that Yasuko was exposed to radiation and has given up on her. They suspect gossip is to blame and discuss how to deal with it in order to get the suitor back. Yasuko enters the room and informs them that she has told the suitor the truth. She is resigned to the fact that she is likely to become ill, and no

longer wishes to get married. She does not wish to leave her family, as they are also likely to become ill.]

Also extremely powerful are sequences in which Yasuko struggles in private with her fears. The film's most chilling moment is arguably not the chaos of the bombing, but one in which a large handful of Yasuko's hair comes off while she brushes it.

The film, as I noted, focuses on indirect victims in order to send a message that we are all victims. The main lesson that these juxtapositions mean to get across, as Dorsey and Matsuoka note, is that "others, more or less indirectly exposed to the bomb, die of radiation or, as they see it, of the 'Pika' [flash]. There is no safe distance, no sanctuary with nuclear weapons." (p. 212)

It is interesting to note that in the first clip we saw, Yasuko witnessed the flash of the detonation, then rushed out to watch the mushroom cloud ascend into the sky. Imamura pointed out that it was his explicit intention to depict the mushroom cloud from the ground - that is, from the victims' point of view, since up until then most audiences were accustomed to seeing it from the safe vantage point of an American aircraft. This calls to mind not only the typical perspective on the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - assumed from a respectful, safe distance - but also the news broadcasts of the Gulf War and the current Iraq invasion. To be sure, "embedded" reporters got viewers a little closer to the action in the second Iraq war; but their coverage provided no palpable sense of the suffering and chaotic confusion experienced by Iraqi victims. Much of this war appears to have been fought from a safe distance - as exemplified in images recently broadcast on CNN of high-tech soldiers in camouflage uniforms controlling 'smart' weaponry from behind rows of computers.

In summary, the lessons of *Black Rain* are these: the damage inflicted by nuclear weapons-and other weapons that deeply distort natural processes goes well beyond their physical effects, hideous though these may be. They also tear apart the fabric of society-especially in this case, given the strong interdependence and intimacy of personal relationships in Japanese society. But the lesson of course extends to all of humanity.

Record of a Living Being /I Live in Fear (Ikimono no Kiroku)

In this 1955 film, Mr. Nakajima (played by an almost unrecognizable Toshiro Mifune), a 60-year old foundry owner, decides he must move his family after a period of brooding over the Second World War's end and the so-called Bikini incident, in which an unexpectedly large detonation on the Bikini atoll poisoned the crew members of the Japanese vessel *Lucky Dragon*. He develops a deep fear for the future of mankind, and for his family in particular, one that is so compelling that he tries to convince them to move to Brazil to get away from the danger. His motivation is very close to that of Kurosawa's own in making the film, caught up as he was in the widespread anti-war sentiment spurred in Japan by the Bikini blast. Nakajima's family worries about his psychological instability-especially insofar as it threatens their financial security-and at the film's opening we learn that they have convinced his wife to take him to court in an effort to have him declared mentally incompetent. The family wins the case, but the father immediately appeals, and the ensuing legal battle rages in the background throughout the film.

In the foreground is a series of compelling tableaux in which Nakajima appeals to his family members, individually and collectively, to see his way of thinking. Also significant is a dentist who, having served as an advisor to the court, harbors deep reservations about

the court's initial decision. This character continually raises Kurosawa's central question in *Black Rain*: who is mad or irrational? Nakajima or the society around him?

I want to look at three scenes in which the Hiroshima bomb image is especially prevalent.

It might be hard to take someone so insane seriously, but we are ultimately won over by Nakajima's sincerity and compassion. The following scene, in which he argues with his younger son and daughter-in-law, gives some flavor of his character and his madness, while also calling Hiroshima to mind:

[As Nakajima discusses his plans, jet planes are heard passing by low overhead. Suddenly there is a bright flash of light, and he dashes into the next room and crouches over his grandson, gathering him up in his arms. The child begins to cry. There is a clap of thunder followed by rain. His daughter, with a horrified look on her face, grabs the frightened child away from him.]

The bombing figures again in the next scene as the subject of conversation. It also forces a comparison between Nakajima's 'mad' logic and the 'sane' logic of his second son, who sees no reason to worry about the bomb:

[Nakajima is once again at his younger son's house. Nakajima holds his grandson in his arms. There is a strange and continuous rumbling of thunder. In an effort to provoke his father, the son remarks that the weather is odd and that newspapers blame it on atomic testing, and that if there is a war, Japan is a likely place for radioactivity to drift. He remarks on the gruesome effects of radiation. Parodying mono no aware thinking, he then he tries to convince his father that there is no point in worrying about what cannot be helped and that he should simply focus, as the son does, on his own life plans and on his own and his family's

happiness. Nakajima grabs a newspaper which has an article about the atomic threat bearing the headline 'Weapon to Massacre Humanity' and picture of a mushroom cloud. Nakajima shouts "They've created a monster" and makes another desperate appeal to his son and daughter-in-law to leave with him.]

Nakajima meets with his entire family to make one more effort to sway them by begging them to join him—thus behaving in a manner most unbecoming of family patriarch. The argument ends when he collapses. Later, upon waking on the floor below, he overhears that it is their fear of losing the steady income from his successful foundry that fuels their opposition to his plan. Thus he decides to burn down the foundry, an action which of course seals the loss of his appeal and ultimately lands him in an asylum. In this last scene the dentist comes to visit him:

[Nakajima is now quite insane. He believes he is living on another nearby planet. He asks the dentist if many people are left alive. When he is told they are, he warns that they had better change their ways before it is too late. Suddenly, he sees the rising sun through his window, and mistakes it for fiery explosion. He shouts "It's burning, it's burning! The earth is at last on fire!"]

Cavanaugh is critical of the turn in Japanese post-war cinema. *1 Live In Fear* represents. Although it sought to be a plain statement of protest about the impact of the nuclear threat on all humanity, she believes this film solidified Japan's *avoidance* of protest against the bombings themselves, and redirected attention to confronting the psychological effects of the current nuclear threat: "With this film Japan's most 'international' director redirected nuclear cinema along the psychological lines of the American B movie, and it

was his apprentice, Honda Ishiro, who would turn that threat into the cartoonish *Godzilla*. ... the first in a globally successful series of monster films for export." (2001, p. 250)

Richie speaks in more approving terms of the film's steadfast rejection of both the political extreme of blaming America for the bomb, on the one hand, and the *mono no aware* theme of sad acceptance and moving on, on the other. It refuses to become reconciled to the dangers. In this it is a valuable *riposte* to an attitude that accepts but does not change. In the following remark, Richie nicely captures what I consider to be the film's intended significance, and makes plain its connections to *Black Rain*:

"This film differs from the usual atom bomb film in many ways. First, it recognizes that the bomb is out of control, that no one single country owns it, that it is one of the facts of existence in this century. Then, it offers no panacea whatever, no talk of how nice it would be if everyone stopped testing it. Too, there is no indication that the director believes Japan alone is threatened; rather it is made clear that the film is not so much about a Japanese family in danger as it is about people, about any family, anywhere, in danger. What it offers is an object lesson on what it means to live under this fear, and of how one man and his family are wrecked by the fear alone. There is a further hint that this fear is well founded, that this fear is only the beginning. (1996, p. 32)

David Desser notes that although it is the dentist's job to determine whether the father is competent to continue to run his business. He seriously doubts Nakajima's sanity, but, Desser continues

"... the dentist, recognizing that Mifune is paralyzed by fear, also recognizes a core of sanity in his soul. Is it madness to fear destruction by weapons with a proven ability to destroy on an unprecedented scale or, rather, is it madness to pretend that the world is unchanged, that the nuclear presence in Japan (highlighted throughout the film by US Air Force supersonic jets) portends nothing of any significance'? In other words: Is it madness to pretend that nuclear weapons are merely a fact of life. or is it insane to continue to allow their proliferation? (1995)

The film failed financially, and Kurosawa turned at this point to work almost exclusively on historical period pieces. Arguably, his prior work, including his famous

Rashomon, are about Hiroshima. For example. Desser argues:

“Thus even before *Record of a Living Being*, one could make the case that Kurosawa dealt with the bomb, or at least its legacy, in allegorical form. Consider *Rashomon*, with its vision of a ruined gate at which sit three perplexed men. What, precisely, has brought Japan, or indeed mankind to its present, perilous state where nothing is certain? Physical ruin and metaphysical doubt, the major pictorial and thematic characteristics of the film, made *Rashomon* a timely allegory of Japan’s ignominious defeat and a universal philosophical examination of the new world order wrought by the bomb. (Desser 1995; cf. 1992, pp. 65f.)

As Desser notes, the real question this film puts before us is 'which is the true madness' - the paranoid fears of the father, or the open possibility of nuclear war. Of course this extends beyond nuclear weapons to all weapons of mass destruction.

What further solidifies the connections to *Rashomon* are the previous scenes in which Nakajima clutches a child-calling to mind the concluding scene of *Rashomon*, in which a priest and a woodcutter, both wracked by uncertainties about reality, society, and the worth of humanity, are saved by their compassion for a crying, abandoned child. In the closing scene the priest passes the crying child to the woodcutter (also played by Mifune), an act which immediately pacifies it.

These concerns also form a central theme of *Dreams* (Yume, 1990), along with the costs of humanity's unbridled effort to dominate nature, to bring it into conformity with scientific, rational will. Kurosawa is chiefly concerned here with humanity's determination to use science and technology to master and profit from nature-and to subjugate one another. In two of the film's vignettes, nuclear disaster and a burning earth (Mt. Fuji) represent the direct result of the destabilization of nature resulting from these all-too-human attempts at subjugation. [Film critic Vincent Canby sees a direct link here to the final scene of *I Live in Fear* (1990).] As such, they take up and expand

upon the notion of nuclear irrationality, and familial greed and self-interest, that run through *I Live in Fear*.

Conclusion

Dorsey and Matsuoka note: "... the subject of Hiroshima embraces not only the destruction of that city at that time, and incidentally that of the 'forgotten' bombed city Nagasaki, but it also embraces the future of mankind in the nuclear age." Insofar as we are all threatened by nuclear war, "the theme of Hiroshima is not parochial, and it is not merely an event in world history, it is directly related to the 'fate of the earth'..." [3]

Certainly one question that Kurosawa raises is whether scientific rationality aimed at the heedless domination of nature and each other does not contain some deeply embedded self-destructive dynamics. This calls to mind Dr. Fukui's historical survey, on the first day of the conference, four passionate and deliberate development of weaponry* Weapons of mass destruction are the culmination of a long process driven by competition, greed, and myopic nationalism, among other things. They have now come to the point where they can destroy us. Perhaps now that the US has dominance in nuclear weapons, nuclear destruction is no longer the most likely path to Armageddon. However, biological and chemical weapons can certainly achieve this. Consider also how deeply embedded images of the apocalypse are in various cultures-the Shapiro (2000) article in my bibliography contains some very interesting commentary on this score.

* A reference to the Plenary Lecture, "Views of War and Weapons, Past and Future, From the Perspective of Hiroshima, Spring 2003" given by Dr. Haruhiro Fukui. President of the Hiroshima Peace Institute and Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

So generalizing on the meaning of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as the films I've considered suggest, might be seen as a way of absolving America of responsibility for these attacks. We deflect attention away to the commonly shared threat. Moreover, we might argue, this was all inevitable: these weapons would have been developed by the Germans or someone else if not by us. However, the argument "someone would have killed X in hadn't" wouldn't hold up well in court and shouldn't here. The US developed and used these weapons. The question then is, what responsibility falls on our shoulders as a result?

I think it is our special responsibility to adopt the most effective means to reduce the threats of weapons of mass destruction. However, to speak this way seems to lead right into the ideology behind our current Iraq policy-that is, we must reflect seriously on the role of myopic nationalism in the escalation of armament technology and conflict through history. These films encourage students to ask a very important question, especially in light of their constant exposure to an American news media establishment that appears to encourage trust in the prospects for high-tech war: Do we correctly address the threat of weapons of mass destruction by emphasizing our capacity to overwhelm any enemy through our monopoly on technologically superior-and infinitely more precise-military technology, along with our dominance in information and surveillance capacities? Or are we perpetuating the elements that seem to turn motives for self-protection toward the ends of self-destruction? The tradition of *Frankenstein* to *Godzilla* to *Dreams* contains constant reminders of what unbridled human passion coupled with ambitious scientific innovation can produce.

As many critics of US policy have noted, the attempt to use our weapons advantage to crush any opposition-in ignorance of the motivations behind the actions of our enemies,

and in disregard of the plight of the societies from which they come-only perpetuates a reliance upon such weapons. The US's responsibility, which would result from its current state of dominance alone, even if it were not guilty of various atrocities and in a position to commit more, is to move away from the Cold War mentality in which it still operates. In his 1993 inaugural speech President Clinton remarked that "Today, a generation raised in the shadows of the Cold War assumes new responsibilities in a world warmed by the sunshine of freedom but threatened still by ancient hatreds and new plagues." He went on to wonder whether American foreign policy could shake itself free of these influences. I think we have an obligation to encourage our students to consider these same concerns.

Appendix: Thematic Clusters for Classroom Use:

Black Rain

Yasujiro Ozu's films, especially *Late Autumn* and *Tokyo Story*, highlight the theme of postwar impact on Japanese social structure. It might be productive to consider some of the sharp contrasts in the anime tradition-like *Akira* - which signal complete liberation from traditional social values in a post-apocalyptic world. Also, the film is ripe for development of feminist themes - see especially Todeschini's "Death and the Maiden" (1996). A potentially useful film on this score is the 1983 made for TV film *Testament* (directed by Lynne Littman and starring Jane Alexander) about an American community indirectly poisoned by fallout from a nuclear war. Also, Stanley Kramer's 1959 *On the Beach* fits well. (Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* plays up interesting themes concerning the subtle transformations that Hiroshima makes to our memories, but it is complex and may not be

especially accessible to students. Also, it can appear to use the Hiroshima symbol to make more of a point about the complexities of human relationships.)

The impact on social relations is also a central theme in the third film I mentioned at the outset, Kurosawa's 1992 *Rhapsody in August*. An elderly woman who lost close family members in the Nagasaki attack is contacted by an estranged brother, who many years earlier emigrated to Hawaii and married an American. A reunion results in which an American cousin, played by Richard Gere, deals with the resentment of the woman's grandchildren. Although generally regarded as weak and pedantic by critics (Kurosawa intended the film to educate younger Japanese who had dwindling knowledge of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), the film boasts one fairly effective scene in which Gere apologizes to his great aunt for the attacks, and it might be worth showing this scene, if not the whole film.

I Live In Fear

Let me first sound a note of warning: the early scenes of the film have an undeniably B-movie feel about them, and this might undermine its effectiveness for students. I found the film grew on me, largely due to Mifune's compelling portrayal. Its air of camp is linked to the absurdity of his character's dream and the oddness of his behavior; but his dead seriousness and profound fear for humanity become progressively clearer. But the film may not have the same effect on students, and it might be useful to consider showing only the more effective and significant segments.

The film's concerns are elaborated, as I indicated, in Kurosawa's *Dreams*, which also develops some of the themes of *Black Rain*. Also, critics note strong connections between this film and *Rashomon* and also *Throne of Blood*. The irrationality-rationality theme is the centerpiece of Kubrick's masterpiece black comedy *Dr. Strangelove*. This latter film also is

good at demonstrating the interconnections between nuclear irrationality and certain mainstream American values. Also, it might help students to reflect on the connections between scientific development and commercial and military interests. In this respect, you might find useful James Burke's *Connections* series, which aired on PBS in the early 1990's. It is still, I believe, available on videotape.

Notes

[1] Worth some mention in passing are the atomic themes many critics see in the sci-fi genre. I will mention, but not discuss, the atomic trends many critics see in the sci-fi genre of *Godzilla*, *Mothra*, and related films about nuclear radiation-induced monsters-as well as in the anime genre. An interesting article in my bibliography is Noriega's effort to explain the psychological dynamics of repression he sees reflected in sci-fi. Also intriguing is Freiberg's piece on *Akira* and other recent anime films, which she reads in postmodern terms as expressing a vision of a post-nuclear holocaust world which empowers Japanese youth by freeing them from the traditions of their past.

[2] For example, *Nagasaki After the Bomb* (1952), *Pictures of the Atom Bomb* (1952), *The Bell of Nagasaki* (1950), *I'll Not Forget the Song of Nagasaki* (1952), and *Children of Hiroshima* (1952).

[3] They here refer to Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* (1982), which was inspired by Ibuse's novel, *Black Rain*, and John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1985; originally published in 1946).

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