

What the Survivors are Telling: Nuclear Trauma and Narratives of Toxicity in Japan

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Abstract

This study explores the issue of nuclear toxicity in Japan which has shaped and inspired the insight and work of many writers. The focus in this study is to criticize, analyze, and identify trends in how contemporary Japanese novelists locate narratives of war and trauma in their novels. Individual and political traumas have characterized the works of Japanese writers who have been either wounded themselves or have witnessed the victims' trauma during the war in Japan. Drawing on the theory of trauma, this study seeks to investigate the notions of war trauma and nuclear violence in Masuji Ibuse's *Black Rain*. It examines the ways in which this novel testifies to, protests against and depicts the distressing effects of nuclear wars.

Keywords: Black Rain, trauma, Ibuse, Hiroshima, nuclear, atomic bomb.

Introduction:

“War, I concluded, paralyzes people’s power of judgment.”

Masuji Ibuse, *Black Rain*

Nuclear energy shapes the future as well as the identity of countries worldwide. As nuclear industry became a part of the modern wars weaponry, any nuclear war became a symbol of a human catastrophe. Identifying nuclear wars within the conceptual framework of trauma and toxicity designates a literary inheritance of nuclear disasters that relentlessly correlates to the experiences of the traumatized victims.

As nuclear weapons of mass destruction became inseparable part of modern technology, the ghost of nuclear wars haunts humanity via genetic, psychosomatic, and socio-political means. Nuclear phantom gives rise to global toxicity and trauma that is transmitted to the coming generations. Within this context, nuclear

wars have been a global issue and the focus of literature, which created a literary genre named the Atomic bomb literature, started in Japan, and developed into a complex and rich data against the nuclear weaponry.

Indeed, since the falling of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, world literature since the Second World War strived to reflect the destructive side of the nuclear weapons. The atomic bombing of Japan in have been represented in various literary and artistic works worldwide. Atomic Bomb literature whether in Japan, or in any country dramatizes the trauma of civilians who are exposed to nuclear radiation and standing between life and death.

Nuclear wars are always possible and threatening, especially in the wave of the technological advancement in our recent age. Literature about nuclear wars is recognized as a global vision of nuclear threat in terms of history and international nuclear politics. Specifically, Atomic bomb literature refers to the victims who suffer from any kind of nuclear radioactivity. A variety of literary works written by both Japanese writers arise a global awareness towards the destructiveness of nuclear wars.

Successive generations of atomic bomb writers in Japan and rewrote the stories of the actual survivors of the bombings. Yōko Ōta, Tamiki Hara, Shinoe Shoda, Sadako Kurihara, Masuji Ibuse, and Ineko Sata in Japan wrote remarkable anti-war novels that depict the agony of victims of nuclear radiation. One of the remarkable narratives of the disaster in Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been Eleanor Coerr's novel *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (1977). The novel is based on the true story of a victim named Sadako Sasaki, who struggled with cancer. The little girl was diagnosed and died with leukemia resulted from the nuclear radiation in Hiroshima.

The writer chosen for this study is a representative of many Japanese authors who focus their narratives on the nuclear war story. These narratives shed light on the impact of war on the entire components of the Japanese society including the fragile people like the simple male workers, women, and children. However, a major part of this study focuses on how the themes of war and nuclear toxicity mostly dominate and influence the female characters represented in Yasuko in *Black Rain*, whose voice is prominent in the novel as she goes through strenuous nuclear diseases.

The focus in this study is, however, to analyze *Black Rain* as a trauma novel. The term “trauma novel” refers to a work of fiction that conveys profound loss or intense fear on individual or collective levels. A defining feature of the trauma novel is the transformation of the self, ignited by an external often terrifying experience, which illuminates the process of coming to terms with the dynamics of memory that inform the new perceptions of the self and world (Balaev 2008, p. 2). Consequently, *Black Rain* is a trauma novel in two levels: First, in an individual basis, it narrates the traumatic experiences of several characters. Second on a historical basis, it is the cultural products of the Japanese struggle with traumatic history of war.

This study inspects the various facades of trauma drawing upon Robert Lifton's psychoformation theory of trauma. This analysis encompasses the toxicity and radiation of nuclear weapons, and the trauma that they cause to the victims as depicted in the two texts. It clarifies how intellectuals like the Japanese Mesuji Ibuse re-writes and negotiate various cultural, psychological, physiological, moral, and geographical aspects of using nuclear weapons against civilians in Japan.

Pondering what Hiroshima, Nagasaki, mean in history, this study reads *Black Rain* as an alert of consciousness to the existential traumas, anxieties, and dread of nuclear annihilation years and decades after these toxic wars. The discussion however builds a textual and contextual relation between toxicity and Robert Lifton's psychoformation theory of trauma. It examines the constant physiological and psychological stages and development of trauma, as illustrated in Lifton's study of the psychology of war victims. It sheds light on two scopes of the multiple traumatic and toxic discourses of dissimilar nationalities that share the same traumatic response: the first scope focuses on what have been the psychological and physiological

consequences of nuclear weapons in Japan. The second scope focuses on the distressing issue of how toxic violence in Hiroshima and Nagasaki has become a controversial issue in the collective victims psyche.

Ibuse's *Black Rain* depicts the first allied nuclear attack of the 1945 atomic bomb. In *Black Rain*, narrative of trauma is an essential post-modernist tool to reveal the damage of Japan. The two novels employ the surrealistic elements, nonlinearity, fragmentation, and other post-modernist techniques to narrate and archive the inescapable certainty of the traumatic situation that the victims have undergone for decades.

The enormous fragmentation in the two novels leaves deep wounds in the memories of those who survived death. This study explores the existence of trauma that a group of characters in *Black Rain* face. It examines how the traumatized fictional characters in this novel constructed complex experiences when they expected to feel secure in a world they believe to be measurable and thus under control. They found themselves unable to avoid the sudden catastrophes accompanied by the toxins released via war weapons.

The survivors in the novel suffered from several physiological and psychological transformations. Their trauma developed into post-traumatic stress disorders that affect varied dimensions of their personality. Such development of the traumatic disorders is explained through Robert Lifton's principals of Psychoformative Theory of the survivors that he worked on from 1971 until 1988. In his *Death in Life: The Survivors in Hiroshima*, Lifton writes about a long-standing interest in the interplay between individual psychology and historical change, or in "psychohistorical process".

Lifton explains that severe trauma through history creates a *second self* in excessive involvements through which one's sense of self is radically distorted. And there is a traumatized self that is created. In his work, Lifton distinguishes psychoformative theory, which emphasizes the processes of symbolic changes in the configuration of the self as a dynamic entity. The self that goes into traumatic changes is translated through the concept of "Posttraumatic self" which, as Lifton illustrates, embraces several dimensions of personality transformation.

Central to the understanding of the posttraumatic self is the attempt to understand how basic self-processes are alerted or influenced by stressful life events, such as toxic disasters. Psychoformative theory also examines how persons conceptualize and symbolize their experiences in life. As a dynamic process, victims develop images and forms of their experiences, which contribute to a sense of continuity or discontinuity in the self.

The psychoformative aspects of the toxic nuclear exposure can be delineated through **four post-bombing stages** that survivors of war experience. In his "Beyond psychic numbing: A call to awareness", Lifton examines the phases of trauma in Hiroshima as a standard case that can happen after any war. The discussion of Ibuse's novel follows Lifton's study of trauma resulted from the toxic nuclear influence in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the first stage, immediately after the atomic bomb fell, Lifton illustrates that the terror the survivors experienced went beyond their death. One feeling repeatedly expressed was that "the whole world was dead ... the whole world was dying..." (620).

The second stage, lasting days or weeks, people who first appeared to be untouched, began exhibiting physical symptoms of acute radiation - bleeding from bodily orifices, particularly the eyes, severe diarrhea, high temperatures, weakness, anorexia, and then, often death. These symptoms "gave the people the sense that the weapon had left behind poison in the bones...from that day on, trees, grass, flowers would never grow again"(621). The third stage involved effects that appeared years after the bomb, of increased incidence of leukemia and other cancers in people who were significantly exposed. This led to understanding the experiences as "...an endless process, and an endless fear...about transmitting radiation effects to subsequent generations..." The fourth and final stage has to do with the lifelong identity of the atomic bomb survivors who are haunted by the experience and the fears that they had from the time of the first exposure (621).

In his *Death in Life*, Lifton illustrates that the first phase of trauma of "nuclear weapons left a powerful imprint which continues to be transmitted, historically and psychologically, through the generations"(4). He explores the psychological trauma of "atomic bomb survivors", which the Japanese name as *hibakusha* to delimit those who have experienced the bomb. *Hibakusha* is a coined word whose literal meaning, "explosion-affected person(s)," suggests a little more than merely having encountered the bomb and a little less than having experienced definite injury from it (6-7).

Lifton explains that the traumatic experiences during wartime start with "anticipation" which is "prior imagination and the extent of one's capacity to imagine a profound event has important bearing upon the way in which one responds"(9). Waiting for something extremely toxic puzzled the civilians in Japan; they were unprepared for such toxic disasters "on many psychological dimensions". They felt in some way specially secured; besides, they were unable to conceive of the extraordinary dimensions of the toxic weapons about to strike them (18).

As the disasters occur, Lifton illustrates that victims live in the "illusion of centrality," when the "immersion in death" occupies the scene. The number of deaths immediately and over some time became incredible and was probably never completely known. The unforgettable imprint of death immersion shapes the roots of what victims shall later see to be a permanent encounter with death. Lifton illustrates that such "fear of annihilation of self and of individual identity", along with the sense of "having virtually experienced that annihilation; destruction of the non-human environment, of the field or context of one's existence", and therefore "of one's overall sense of being-in-the-world and the replacement of the natural order of living and dying with an unnatural order of death-dominated life" (30).

Years after the tragedy were enough to write about the four stages of trauma that Ibuse's fictional characters go through. Survivors in the novel live distressing events that make them overwhelmed by their situation. They experience an enduring account with death that remains with them. The four stages of trauma that Lifton categorizes appear in the fiction of Ibuse, who however writes about a traumatic communal history of military wars that produced toxins that changed the lives of millions of innocent civilians globally.

The view after the mushroom cloud: Voices of hibakusha in *Black Rain*:

Before there was the bomb, there was the fear of the bomb. Hitler's phantom arsenal inspired the real American one. And so even before nuclear weapons existed, they were proliferating. Nations acquire nuclear arsenals above all because they fear the nuclear arsenals of others. But fear--soon properly renamed terror in the context of nuclear strategy— is of course also the essence of the prime strategic doctrine of the nuclear age, deterrence, which establishes a balance of terror.

(Schell , "The Case Against the War", P.18)

There is no doubt that the phantom of the atomic bomb is fictionalized in Masuji Ibuse's *Black Rain* which undermines the connection between the nuclear disaster and human societies. *Black Rain* is one of the significant literary texts in twentieth-century Japan. The author of the novel, Masuji Ibuse, is a Japanese writer and painter who was born and raised in a rural village in Hiroshima, a place called Kamo. In 1966, Ibuse published his novel *Black Rain* which won him international acclaim and several awards, including the Noma Prize and the Order of Cultural Merit, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a Japanese author. The novel takes its content from the bombing of Hiroshima and the title refers to the nuclear fallout. It however intermingles events taking place from 1945 to 1950; it narrates the life of a group of Japanese people after the falling of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima (Treat, 1996, p. 100-101).

Black Rain was adopted into a movie directed by Shohei Imamura. Both the novel and the film have strong and authentic usage of flashback encountering the catastrophe followed the falling of the atomic bomb. The catastrophe in the novel is however visited via journal entries focusing on the trauma of life in 1950, five years after the atomic bombing. The text synthesizes the historical documents to underscore a story of a family recovering from the physical and mental destruction of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima at the end of World War II.

Many of the diaries and journal entries are taken from actual journals kept by survivors. Ibuse writes the realistic story of a man named Shizuma, a real *hibakusha* (bomb-affected person), whom he met in Hiroshima. The original title of the novel was *Marriage of a Niece* because the story is about Shigematsu's efforts to arrange a marriage for Yasuko, who was caught in radiation sickness some years after the disaster (Treat, p.208).

As Kyoko Matsunaga illustrates in her "Post Apocalyptic Vision and Survivance", the novel shows an important side of the victims dealing with Hiroshima trauma. It shows the strength and human dignity of the *hibakusha*. Although being traumatized, Shigematsu writes about his atomic experiences because he wants to help his niece Yasuko by proving that she didn't catch any radiation. Moreover he believes it is necessary to keep this historical document. Shigematsu considers that his writing might do some good for future generations. His intention however represents that of its author. Ibuse based his novel on many *hibakusha* documents, memoirs and stories. As conduit between the *hibakusha* and his audience, Ibuse becomes something of a "spokesperson" for the atomic bomb survivors, making the "political" message of the novel quite obvious (p.149).

In the post of Ibuse's *Black Rain* publication in serial form in the literary journal, *Shincho*, from January 1965 to September 1966, it became the "bible" of atomic bomb canon. It was later published as a book, made into a film and television drama, and often included in school textbooks. Both literary critics and the general public in Japan acknowledged the importance of the text, making the book's publication a seminal moment in the history of atomic bomb literature (Matsunaga, p. 147).

Although *Black Rain*, the novel, is an important archive of the experiences of the victims in the aftermath of the atomic bomb, many critics obviously prefer to look into the film adaptation of the novel from different perspectives. In his article "Black Rain: Reflections on Hiroshima and Nuclear War in Japanese Film", Robert Feleppa illustrates that the novel was an inspiration for Shohei Imamura's 1988 film. The film is based on the novel of the same name. Feleppa emphasizes that the film reflects how the events of the atmosphere of the novel dwells on the horror of the bomb's explosion and the destruction that dominated the character's lives in the aftermath of the bomb. Feleppa further argues that "the film is pervaded by a sense of urgency and unresolved injustice that takes an important step beyond *mono no aware* reconciliation"(6).

Another critic, Reiko Tachibana sees between the lines the similarities and differences between the novel and the film. Tachibana argues that the film caused a sensation after its release." One reason for the extraordinary success of the film lies in its sharpened emphasis on dramatic human interactions, which remain more implicit in Ibuse's version." Tachibana further illustrates that the filmmaker has shed more light on Yasuko which made the story in the film look more tragic and eye-catching for the audience. (304)

Indeed, *Black Rain* is controversial among critics. Some critics like Jun Eto argue that the novel lacks of political content (Treat 266). The novel focused on the lives of "ordinary people," succeeding in making itself a "real fiction" "despite" the fact that it didn't directly deal with "political" content (qtd.in Treat 267). Although critics like Eto highlight the "apolitical" nature of *Black Rain*, the sharp reader of Ibuse would recognize his anti-war sentiment through Shigematsu's critical voice. Shigematsu obviously expresses feelings of resentment toward the miseries the war has forced in his society: "For a moment, I felt like

flinging my bundle in the river. I hated war. Who cared, after all, which side won? The only important thing was to end it all as soon as possible: rather an unjust peace, than a 'just' war!" (p.161).

Ibuse's literary production beholds Hiroshima's traumatic and toxic discourse that is engendered by the atomic bomb. In his novel, the hidden details about his characters' trauma become as important as the revealed ones concerning the lives of the victims after the bombs. The following discussion of *Black Rain* however tries to approach the hidden and the obvious details of the hibakusha struggle, focusing on Yasuko in particular.

What adds to the critical scope of *Black Rain* in the following discussion is that it tends to approach the psychological trauma of the victims in Shigematsu's narrative. It tries to shed light on what happens to some hibakusha from the perspective of traumatic influence of the radiation. The components of the complexities of the survivors' voices and their traumatic experience and the toxic impact can be traced in *Black Rain* through the location of war in the survivors' narrative. Their traumatic experiences are however encapsulated within Robert Lifton's four stages of trauma where the psychology of the victims is reformed through the tragic disaster that inflicted their bodies with radiation.

Shigematsu narrates the four stages of trauma in the life at the end of the war. He goes back to the time when the Japanese Emperor addresses the country to announce the Japanese unconditional surrender. He recalls the white flash and the flames of the explosion filled the air. In his present narrative, Shigematsu himself depicts how he struggles with radiation sickness which gets worse when he does any extra work. The dilemma in the novel isn't Shigematsu's sickness; it's Yasuko's who as summer comes after the war shows symptoms of radiation sickness.

In the first stage of trauma, the novel represents Ibuse's attempt to portray a vision of life constantly haunted by the image of death which becomes a part of the victims' minds. They face indelible images of grotesque forms of death and felt sure that "the whole world was dying" (Lifton, p. 620). Shigematsu's own diaries represent his shed of tears for "Hiroshima became a burnt-out city, a city of ashes, death, and destruction"(Ibuse, p. 18). As the bomb fell, Shigematsu describes the massive trauma that people experienced for the horrible physical injuries that were sooner followed by series of deaths among the victims; he illustrates that:

The countless people who had blackish dried blood clinging to them where it had flowed from their faces onto their shoulders and down their backs, or over their chests and down their bellies. Some were still bleeding, they seemed traumatized, they seemed to have no energy to do anything about it. The people staggering along in whatever direction the crowd carried them, their arms dangling purposelessly by their side. The people walked with their eyes shut, swaying to and fro as they were pushed by the crowd (Ibuse, p. 57).

Shigematsu describes death resulted from the nuclear explosion as dehumanizing in terms of how the explosion left the bodies of the victims rigid and deprived of feelings, or even respect. When he sees a group of soldiers burning deformed corpses, he comments on the loss of mercy towards the tormented bodies for treating them as dolls. "Body after body the soldiers brought ... They must have been working under orders from superior officer; whatever emotions they felt, their expressions gave no clue" (Ibuse, p. 57). Shigematsu describes the shock of the bodies hitting the ground, and how it would do something to the joints of the dead bodies.

Such view of collapse and pain sets a comparison between humans and "Pinocchio, in the children's tale, with all the pins removed from his wooden limbs". Shigematsu comments that "the poor plaything of wood and metal pins was supposed to have felt pain in his own wooden limbs when he banged his shin against something, what of the dead who had once been human beings?" (Ibuse, p. 161-162). It is through

such scene Ibuse shows the loss of meaning and value of humanity expressed by treating the victims' bodies in such way.

Trauma resulted from the massive death and the way of cleaning the city trapped Shigematsu and the soldiers in the sense of helplessness and loss. After burning the dead bodies, one of the soldiers tells his partner "if only [they'd] been born in a *country*, not a damn-fool state". As Shigematsu hears the soldiers' conversation he nodded as he left the sight that "Hiroshima was no more Who could have foreseen that its end would be of such horror as this?" (Ibuse, p.162).

The view of death was not the only trauma in the novel. The community in *Black Rain* discovered that their bodies are inflicted with radioactive toxins released by the bomb. In the second stage of their trauma lasting days or weeks after the bombs, people in Hiroshima began showing physical symptoms of acute radiation. The journals however begin with the Yasuko's exposure to the black rain after the bombing. They however explain the reality of the poison released into the environment and its influence on Hiroshima. Yasuko's diaries describe the dark clouds of black smoke filling the sky, followed by "thunderly black clouds" covering the city and "the rain from them had fallen in streaks the thickness of a fountain pen". Yasuko illustrates that the weather was "cold enough to make one shiver although it was midsummer" (p.34).

Shigematsu narrates how Yasuko was in the boat going to Hiroshima shortly after the blast. Yasuko details that there were "clouds of black smoke filling the sky" followed by "a nasty cheat of shower "(34). The rain after the bomb was dirty with soot and ash, Yasuko illustrates that when she tried to wash the gray drops off her face, they would not come off. Yasuko describes how she "felt horrified, and then awfully sad" when she went to the ornamental spring to wash herself and the stains from the black rain remained on her skin (p.35).

Shigematsu depicts the general nature of the physical injuries and mental wounds of the victims exposed to black rain and how they are commonly varied. He explains that he hasn't got down on paper one thousand part of all the things he actually saw. He was anxious about the cases of injuries he saw, especially when it comes to Yasuko's. He felt an intolerable pity for Yasuko at being exposed, as it were, to the public gaze like this. He tried as hard as possible to finish copying Yasuko's diaries written in times when she was healthy. His goal was to show the complete journals to those who insist that Yasuko suffers from radiation sickness, his hopes however are directed to refute such assumption of Yasuko's illness.

Shigematsu's transcription of Yasuko's diaries tends to hide the true story radiation infliction. He tends to silence the wounds as depicted in the diaries since they are complicated in its relation to atomic bomb discourse. As Kenzaburo Oe explains in *Hiroshima Note*, for a decade after the atomic bomb exploded, there was little public discussion of the bomb or radioactivity. Such silence was partly because of the censorship atomic bomb literature had to go through during the Occupation of Japan that lasted until 1952, and partly because of the "mistaken statement" the U.S. Army Surgeons Investigation Team in the fall of 1945 made: the team claimed that "all people expected to die from the radiation effects of the atomic bomb had by then already died," thus refusing to acknowledge "further cases of physiological effects due to residual radiation" (p.60).

Ibuse's depiction of hibakusha in the Hiroshima society is however problematic when Yasuko is represented as an "atomic bomb maiden". The society was traumatized and developed a phase of psychological transformation that moved from "psychic closing off and on". The society was occupied by fear of radiation which isolated individuals with sickness. Shigematsu, in this sense, reveals the difficulties facing *hibakusha* and how they became a group of excluded victims in their society. The social psychology formation goes through two paradoxical reactions some time after the disasters among survivors and those who witnessed them. The traumatized become however unable to remain open to experience of this intensity

for any length of time. Lifton illustrates that sometimes victims began to undergo a process of "psychic closing off"; that is, they merely ceased to feel. They had a clear sense of what was happening around them, but their emotional reactions were unconsciously turned off (p.31).

Shigematsu's physical collapse after the bombing leads to a phase of terror and fear of the approaching death, he describes the fragility in his body and the effort he makes in hope to overcome the disease. "If he tugged at his hair, it came out painlessly. At such time he would take to bed for a while and eat plenty of nourishing foods"(Ibuse, p. 14). Shigematsu explains how doctors at hospitals started the struggle to understand the cases after years and decided that there is no need to keep silent any longer.

Doctor Kano, the head of the center's medical section clarified that the "patients came pouring in, but neither the chief nor the other doctors knew how to treat the disease, with its symptoms of high fever and diarrhea and slight loss of hair". At that time of critical phase after the war, "there was a great deal of panic" among the victims who eventually soothed their nerves by restoring to moxibustion, avoided going out into the sun, going on certain diets, some even ate the leaves of potted aloes. They were traumatized that they felt the need to clutch at any straw (Ibuse, p. 218).

Within such discourse of toxins and radiation diseases in novel, the third and the fourth stages of trauma appear in the in an obvious structure with certain details among a variety of characters. Their stories are narrated in Shigematsu's journals of the bombing which exemplify how people in Hiroshima, through word of mouth, realized that radiation sickness became a part of the Hiroshima community. Many feared the idea of approaching death for themselves and for their family members.

The most prominent fear that haunted the survivors was cancer which is depicted in the novel as a mysterious ramification of earlier invisible nuclear radiation. So many apparently healthy survivors in the novel for instance became sick over time with radiation poisoning. Stories from hospitals remarkably traumatize those non-injured as they have contact with the victims. Shigematsu explains how a doctor called Norioka told him how people who came to tend the sick or look for the missing had to pick their way among the victims in the hospital with disgust. They become terrified because some fevers at the hospital were extraordinary contagious;"It sometimes happened that a healthy person caring for patient would die before the patient himself"(Ibuse, p. 202).

Shigematsu describes their efforts at raising carp five years after the catastrophe because they were forced to stop doing any kind of physical jobs. He remembers his doctor saying that "fishing [is] very beneficial in mild cases of radiation sickness, both psychologically and because it provide[s] an added source of fat in the diet" (Ibuse, p. 27). They were harassed at the time they were fishing at a lake by a passing village woman pauses to satirize their situation and accuse them of laziness.

The woman intended to reduce their value in the society saying that "Some people are lucky, I must say, seeing how everybody else is so busy". Shōkichi, who suffered from leukemia, responded angrily illustrating that they both " have got radiation sickness, and [they're] fishing for roach at the doctor's orders" Shōkichi was influenced by the prejudice and explained that he would "be only too glad to do some work" but *hibakusha* "have only to do a bit of hard work and their limbs start to rot on them" (Ibuse, p. 28).

Survivors of the nuclear bombing were stigmatized for being poisoned by the radiation. The villagers in the narrative substituted the real experience of the bombing with a set of passive responses; they have entirely separated the mind and morality from the reality of a world affected by radiation poison they could no longer control. Shigematsu and Shōkichi live in a crisis hard to be framed or expressed. The woman's words made Shōkichi lose control of his temper and shout that "the people have forgotten that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were atom-bombed. Everybody's forgotten! Forgotten the hellfires we went through that day"(Ibuse, p. 29).

People in Hiroshima experience a phase of fragmentation. They always go through all of the symptoms and fears that they experienced in the time of the first exposure to the atomic bomb. Their exclusion traumatizes and isolates them from the normal life of healthy people. They become haunted by the phantoms and memories of their exposure to a "living hell", a phrase repeatedly used in the novel. Shigematsu stresses on the distinction between those who suffer from nuclear sickness and ordinary people for they had undergone an experience that non victims can never understand. Lifton illustrates that those undergone a nuclear explosion experience

Have what [he calls] symbolic reactivation whenever a nuclear device is tested or when various issues come up that relate to their experience. survivors are likely to re experience all of the symptoms and fears that they had from the time of the first exposure. They also can retain various forms of guilt-questioning why they survived while others died, why they couldn't save more people, and also just a gnawing discomfort on the border of guilt that survivors can often feel (p.12).

The journals reveal a very important point considering the trauma of the radiation sickness and the guilt of survival. Shigematsu notices that the victims find it easier to talk about their physical condition than the psychological and social sides of their experience, especially when they are the only survivors in their families. Some other victims however avoided to talk at all, and decided to hide from facing the judgmental society.

Yasuko's sickness was among those silenced cases. Her collapse was an avoided area of discussion, even to Yasuko herself:

For several years past, Shigematsu ... had been aware of his niece Yasuko as a weight on his mind. What was worse, he had a presentiment that the weight was going to remain with him, unspeakably oppressive, for still more years to come. In Yasuko, he seemed to have taken on a double, or even a triple,

liability. That no suitable marriage was in sight for her was a circumstance simple enough in itself. The real trouble was the rumor... [for people] were saying that she was a victim to radiation sickness (p.9).

Yasuko's sickness was hidden as the society stopped the sympathy toward the traumatized survivors, especially women. The journals depict how the varied radiation diseases prevented individuals to marry freely and unable to get certain jobs. Moreover, they were sometimes avoided or locked away by their own families. Yasuko was among the women hibakusha known as "genbaku otome (atomic bomb maidens)". Journalist Kazunori Nakano (2002) illustrates that many young female hibakusha, who suffered from the atomic explosion and radiation, have chosen to isolate themselves from public or to hide the fact of their injuries or their exposure to radiation "The Story of Atomic Bomb Maidens", p. 58-71".

Yasuko was the focus of the villagers' attention. She was lost between hiding and revealing her sickness even years after the bomb. She tries to keep her journals private out of shame while Shigematsu copies them to prove she is healthy and untouched by radiation. As Yasuko's case becomes more complicated, the rumors became true and everybody started the gossip about her disease. Along with the wave of gossip about Yasuko's condition, the most important to Shigematsu and his wife was to reduce Yasuko's trauma and pain.

However, the narrative of the novel ends with Yasuko's last breath. She was almost dead as Shigematsu finishes writing the journals. A pure rain fell over Hiroshima in the end which Shigematsu hopelessly wishes would clean the radioactive curse that struck his country. "If a rainbow appears over those hills now, a miracle will happen," he desperately prophesied to himself. "Let a rainbow appear- not a white one, but of many hues- and Yasuko will be cured". He told himself, with his eyes on the nearby hills, though he knew all the while it could never come true (300).

Conclusion:

This study explored how Masuji Ibuse examined the collective nature of national and universal trauma through criticizing the toxic influence of nuclear wars. By confirming such traumas that changed the destiny of nations through history, it looked into how Ibuse depicted the development of a collective traumatic identity. Furthermore, it investigated the varied stages of trauma in the novel that Robert Lifton explores in his Psychoformative theory of the survivors. It shed light on how the exposure to death, then to radiation which later engenders fatal diseases traumatized the victims. The last stage of trauma was however summarized as the trauma that becomes a part of the lifelong identity of the atomic bomb survivors in both nations. Generations in Japan are haunted by and inherited the fears and radiation that they and their ancestors experienced.

This study explored the psychological and physiological aspects of trauma, from a cross-cultural consideration, individually and collectively. It particularly shed the light on how ordinary people are connected to an "extraordinary" experience like nuclear weaponry and radiation. To speak concretely, it attempted to depict the problematic situation of the fragile victims like Shigematsu, his friends, and Yasuko within the ambiguous atomic diseases. That is, while focusing on their tragic images and collapse, this study stressed on the theme of nuclear ethics in the modern and post-modern sense. Thus far, the discussion has pointed out that the success of *Black Rain* is attributed to the fact that they comprise the idea of literary awareness of the devastation caused by the atomic blast and radiation.

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