THE BODY AND JAPANESE CINEMA - III provera

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THE BODY AND JAPANESE CINEMA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Body and Japanese Cinema

By
Ana Došen

The dissertation *The Body and Japanese Cinema* examines the notion of body in context of Japanese culture, specifically in a film domain. Throughout this study converging the cultural and philosophical models of both East and West, the focus is on various aspects of the body perception generated and mediated in Japan.

This dissertation is the first attempt in Serbian scholarship, on Japanese cinema, to explore the corporeal perspective of Japanese identity. The first part of the dissertation features an extended analysis of the Japanese cultural outlook dealing with the questions of body and language, silence and visual space. Even though this is a study on nationally determined culture, it opposes to drawing the conclusions on the Japanese uniqueness following the *Nihonjinron* discourses of homogeneity. Rather, the focus is on the issues of heterogeneous taxonomy that could provide a platform for better understanding of Japanese culture as well as to offer a standpoint from which it is possible to indicate the similarities and differences of other, not necessarily national, identities. Without any intention of cultural essentialism, I argue that due to distinctive attributes and specificity of Japanese language and in addition, firmly established communicative practices that indicate intuitive understanding that goes beyond spoken words, the *visceral perception* is the crucial point of the Japanese

film viewing.

Second part of this study is a close analysis of selected movies from the filmographies of well-known Japanese cineastes. In particularly, this work proposes the taxonomy that deals with invisible aspects of the body in Japanese cinema. Chosen filmmakers whose opuses have been here reinterpreted are familiar to the audience outside Japan but their work is located on the furthest edges of mainstream, rendering them a somewhat outsider position. Here, the prominence is found in perspective that these filmmakers' attitudes resist the "official" Japan imagology which fixates the corpus of what is intended for foreigners to understand. Their body of work contrives effective communicative strategies that allow kaleidoscopic and more diverse insights of Japan.

Keywords: Japan, cinema, phenomenology, *Nihonjinron,* silence, *visceroceptiveness*, the invisible

REZIME

Telo i japanski film

Doktorska disertacija *Telo i japanski film* preispituje fenomen tela u kontekstu japanske kulture, tačnije kinematografije. Ukrštajući kulturalne i filozofske modele Istoka i Zapada, fokus ovog rada je na različitim aspektima percepcije tela zastupljenih u Japanu.

Ovaj istraživački rad predstavlja prvi pokušaj sagledavanja korpocentrične perspektive japanskog identiteta i njenog predstavljanja kroz medij japanske kinematografije u domenu srpske akademske zajednice. Prvi deo rada bavi se detaljnom analizom japanskih kulturoloških modela koji ukazuju na pitanja odnosa tela i jezika, tišine i vizuelnog prostora. Iako se rad zasniva na određenju nacionalno definisane kulture, izbegava se izvođenje zaključaka o japanskoj "posebnosti" prisutnih u *Nihonđinron* diskursu o homogenosti. Tačnije, fokus je na pitanjima heterogene taksonomije koja bi mogla omogućiti platformu za bolje razumevanje japanske kulture, kao i stanovište sa kog je moguće ukazati na sličnosti i razlike drugih, ne nužno nacionalnih identiteta. Bez namere upuštanja u kulturološki esencijalizam, ideja ovog rada je da se istakne *visceralna percepcija* kao ključna tačka u procesu japanskog doživljaja filma zasnovanog na specifičnim karakteristikama i pojedinostima japanskog jezika, kao i na čvrsto utemeljenim komunikološkim praksama, što upućuje na intuitivno razumevanje koje prevazilazi modus reči i

govora.

Drugi deo rada predstavlja analizu odabranih filmova iz opusa istaknutih japanskih sineasta. Preciznije, rad predlaže model originalne sistematizacije tih filmskih dela, baziran na nevidljivim aspektima tela u kontekstu japanske kinematografije.

Odabrani filmski stvaraoci, čija se dela ovde reinterpretiraju poznati su i izvan granica Japana, ali je njihov rad smešten na krajnje granice mejnstrima, čime zauzimaju donekle autsajdersku poziciju. Od izuzetnog je značaja činjenica da se poetike ovih filmskih autora snažno opiru imagologiji "zvaničnog" Japana koji fiksira određeni, poželjni korpus znanja namenjenog prevashodno strancima. Nasuprot tome, njihova dela stvaraju efektivne komunikološke strategije koja omogućavaju kaleidoskopske i slojevite uvide o Japanu.

Ključne reči: Japan, film, fenomenologija, *Nihonđinron*, tišina, *viscerocepcija*, nevidljivo

Note of Japanese names:

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Japanese names are written in the usual Japanese style, the surname followed by first name. Long Japanese vowels are not marked with macrons but instead with vowels used in Japanese language except in the case of common words (such as topographies). Japanese terms are generally italicised (e.g. *haragei*).

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What is so ghastly about exposed intestines? Why, when we see the insides of a human being, do we have to cover our eyes in terror? Why are people so shocked at the sight of blood pouring out? Why are a man's intestines ugly? Is it not exactly the same in quality as the beauty of youthful, glossy skin? [...] Why does there seem to be something inhuman about regarding human beings like roses and refusing to make any distinction between the inside of their bodies and the outside? If only human beings could reverse their spirits and their bodies, could gracefully turn them inside out like rose petals and expose them to the spring breeze and to the sun...

Mishima Yukio, *Temple of the Golden Pavilion*

Introduction

The more he thought about it, the less sure he was about where the world inside the film ended and where the world outside the film began. But that's how it had to be with moving pictures, they should have such an intimate connection with actual life....

Tanizaki Junichiro, *The Lump of Flesh*

Positioning oneself seems to be not only the distinguishing trait of the human condition but also an inevitable task always set before us. The expectations of others, various sets of rules and instructions posed to abide, unavoidably determine our posture even when we chose to diverge from them. One's body of work never appears to be liberated from "legitimate" questions of its orientation. This is particularly accurate when dealing with the type of writing you are currently taking part in. Hence, let us imagine a curious reader wondering what is the orientation when considering the Orient[1] (as this thesis

[1] Sara Ahmed explores this issue in *Queer Phenomenology – Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006) stressing the significance of orientation as a state in which the bodies are being turned or directed toward and around the objects. Even though this thesis does not draw on queer or feminist approach and is not concerned with the questions of gender, sexuality or race which are central in Ahmed's work, the certain phenomenological articulations of this author are rather essential. Ahmed invites us to re-evaluate the "phenomenality of space" (intimate bodily inhabitance), proposing the notion of "migrant bodies" who are dislocated from their place of origin. This "migrant orientation" presumes the "double point" of view, directed toward a home that has been lost and to a location that yet has to become one. Thus, are not we always leaving a home, and searching for and creating a new one when conducting a research? A body of knowledge one previously acquired morphs with new findings that the subject of inspection imposes itself on us. Therefore, in a line with Ahmed's idea that "perception [...] involves orientation, what is perceived depends on where we are located" (p. 27), this thesis should be read as one "out of place". There is a significant lack of discourses on Japan from the environment that I belong to, that I must draw from those whose proximity is reachable.

does)?

From the Western (Euro-American) perspective, the answer to this question could be relatively uncomplicated one – situating the work within postcolonial discourses, employing the critical theories in various disciplines from humanities – philosophy, anthropology, sociology, political science etc. But, regardless of indispensable contributions of primarily feminist theory demanding the unveiling of the taken interpretative positions, Western models of critical thinking still dominate in the domain of global culture. Even when employing Michel Foucault's power/knowledge notion or Edward Said's critique of eurocentrism, the discourses of the West prove its well established centrality and dominance. This position supposes the West as an initiator of the research or quest for understanding other cultures. The very position, from which the body of knowledge is produced, regardless of the variety of perspectives and approaches, is nevertheless essential.

In spite of criticism of the Western centrism, certain linguistic models which refer to this type of "gravity" still remain persistent even in the third millennium. Ever since 12th century, Far East paradigm along with those of Near East and Middle East, supposes an implication of Europe as the center of the civilized world. The proposed term definitely exceeds its geographical dispositions and evokes the cultural disjunction, having in mind that Australia has never been perceived through this pattern. From the 13th century's brief

comments in *The Travels of Marco Polo* (mentioned as island Cipangu), over Portuguese Jesuits "discovery" three centuries later, to this day Japan has been described as exotic and distant Other.

On the other hand, topography of this author, the Balkans is also marked and defined within Orientalist paradigm, despite being set within European borders. No matter how "close" it is, the East is reduced to inferior opposition of the progressive and rational West. The European discourses continue to proclaim the Balkans as horrifying, wild, barbarian place, almost as an alien organism in their own belly.[2]

Further, as the distance of the inspected Other becomes more profound, it becomes evident that this "undomesticated" determination and naming slightly fades away. However, being the "furthers away", Japan is expounded beyond absolute recognition. Even Said seldom mentions Japan (or East Asia in matter of fact) in *Orientalism* (1978) and his other writings on postcolonial theory. Here comes to mind Arthur Koestler's rhyme – *if East is East and West is West, where will Japan come to rest?* – proving the outsider's dilemma when engaged in conducting a research on Japan.

Therefore, it is even more challenging to inspect Japan from what has already been proclaimed as an "off position", that is – to entangle in kind of

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[2] For further reading on this subject: Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

dual otherness – from dissociated Balkans to incomprehensible Japan. What direction one takes when it has to appropriate the orientations of those who have already established their own? How can the Other touch another Other? Is the connecting tissue, skin that enwraps our bodies destined to be grafted (affirmed and conditioned) by the West? Is it possible and should we neglect those imposed discourses at all?

In his text "The Nation's Dream Work", Stathis Gourgouris asserts that "we cannot *read* a nation – nor *write* it, of course. We can only traverse it, traverse its fantasy as (its) history, in the same way that history traverses us as thinking, reading, writing, *living* subjects"[3].

This transversal trope liberates us from all fixed proscriptions of Japan and allows us to consider and imagine it in diverse configuration of the vast network of discourses. Japan's own *self-othering* has been massive and continuous process in the production of identity discourses (*Nihonjinron*) which will be closely analyzed in the latter chapters. This strategy of self-representation therefore supports the Western essentialism through the set of domestic discourses declaring the Japanese uniqueness.

My own position as the "other European" unbinds this writing from the discourses that indicate Western centrality or the present-day attempts to

[3] Stathis Gourgouris, "The Nation's Dream Work", *Spectre of Nation*, Belgrade: Belgrade Circle, 1997, p. 224.

radically distance oneself from its grasp. I draw upon the arguments that are produced in both Japan and the West, from a position that does not belong to neither of those locations. On that account, let us explore the sparse discourses oriented towards Japan that have been established in my own cultural environment.

In Serbia, great admiration and publicly displayed respect towards Japan and its people is fairly common. Preserving the traditional values and customs while constantly upgrading on technological level, impeccable bureaucratic system and probably above all, the ability of its population to act united seem to be the ideals impossible to achieve in Serbian society. In accordance, unanimous people of Japan, the whole nation seen as one autonomous body presents a strong opposite to Serbian everlasting discord in political and societal issues. Four S letters on a Serbian national emblem standing for a popular slogan (Samo sloga Srbina spasava/ Only unity saves the Serbs) symbolizing an unreachable solution to all Serbian problems through unity is an ideal already achieved in Japanese society – a strong ability to rise above great misfortunes and ordeals (Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Fukushima) due to Japan's harmonious and cooperative homogeneity. Even the nationalist phrase "Serbia to Tokyo" marks Japan's capital as the ultimate border of Serbian longing for territorial dominance. Here, Tokyo stands as an unattainable paradigm for ulterior point of the world where even insatiable Serbian lust for conquest grinds to a halt.

Moreover, this perspective goes along with somewhat omnipresent, (typically Western) perception in which Japan is seen as a different, imagined planet on Earth. If we accept Benedict Anderson's perspective that "communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined"[4], then it is reasonable to claim that we are always dealing with phantasmal and fabricated when investigating culture(s). Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" was further expounded by Homi Bhabha who claims that

> nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the nation – or narration – might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west.[5]

Having said this, within dominant Western discourses, it still seems that Japan has been, more than any other state, identified as the one "less real". Probing Japan's *empire of signs*, Roland Barthes imagines the fictive system called Japan, isolated somewhere faraway in the world. In addition, Oscar Wilde cunningly observes that one does not understand Japanese art at all if (s)he imagines Japanese people in the same manner as they are depicted in art and presented to us. "The Japanese people are the deliberate self-conscious creation of certain

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[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London & New York: Verso, 2006, p. 6.

[5] Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London & New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 1.

individual artists. In fact, the whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people."[6] Even in a domain of western fiction, Japan manifests as fantastic and unreal – a third part "A voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib and Japan" in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's travels* (1726) differentiates Japan as an imaginary land. Precisely, among those fantastic islands that Gulliver visits, Japan is the only real, existent place. Curiously, it is the one region where main character does not make an effort to learn the language.

Thus, how does one investigate and understand this "fabricated" or "nonexistent" country? It is conceivably more effective to explore the realm of the imaginary that the Japanese themselves emerge in, than to engage in analysis of nation's actual occurrences.

In the recent decades, reality in Japan has been intrinsically intertwined with fantasy and this sense of divergence seems to be especially appealing to non-Japanese youth.[7] Japan offers theme cafés with video game ambience (such as *Final Fantasy* Eorzea cafe) or with waitresses dressed in manga or anime characters, and love hotels with vast array of settings – from the UFO space-shuttle to Hello Kitty S&M rooms. Figurines of half- or completely naked

[6] Oscar Wilde, *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, Richard Ellman (ed.), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 315.

[7] See more in Alison Anne, "The Japan Fad in Global", *Mechademia: Emerging Worlds of Anime and Manga*, no. 1, 2006: 11-21.

adolescent girl characters from manga or anime are expensive collectors' items, producing insatiable desires among salarymen wandering through corridors of the Tokyo Akihabara district.

Cool Japan[8] awakens the world's interest in this culture and its history but also marks today's Japan as a strange liminal space between the real and the phantasmal.

In the line with this argument, Japan seems to bear a striking resemblance to the cinema medium itself as it also effortlessly blends reality and fantasy into an autonomous and eclectic universe.

In the context of the above-mentioned attitudes regarding Japan, ranging from strong appreciation of Japanese tradition to a certain fascination towards the presence of imaginative realms in everyday life, Japanese culture has also been perceived in Serbian society. Popularity of Murakami Haruki is undeniable, and so are endorsed, to a lesser degree, *haiku* poetry and classic Japanese literature. Even manga and cost-play[9] have their dedicated fans among Serbian youth. However, the interest in Japanese culture rarely extends

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[8] Japanese content industry (*kontentsu sangyo*) refers to production and distribution of manga, anime, video games, music and other "soft power" products. These industries have been supported by Japanese ministries in order to promote Japan globally and boost the economy. The term *cool Japan* was introduced by American journalist Douglas McGray who marked Japan as cultural superpower which is more influential in the beginning of the third millennium than it was in the 1980s, when Japan's economy was at its strongest.

[9] Subculture of role-playing; fans wearing costumes of certain characters, usually from Japanese comics, animation or video-games.

the need for its consummation and the significant analytical reflection of what's been consumed is barely visible.

Same *modus operandi* has been applied to Japanese cinema as serious critical analysis and research is almost accidental. Apart from *Režija: Akira Kurosava* by Nikola Stojanović (2006) and *Krugovi i kletve – vodič kroz japanski i J-horor* (2010) by Dragan Jovićević (bizarre title differentiating Japanese horror from J-horror[10]) there is a significant absence of published work on the subject. If interested in the field of Japanese cinema, one must browse through the library archives for Miroljub Stojanović's insightful reviews in ex-Yu journal "Sineast" or search Dejan Ognjanović's online blog for Japanese horror. Japanese cinema was integral part of cult TV-show "Shock corridor" (2003-2008) where screenwriter/film critic duo – Aleksandar Radivojević and Nenad Bekvalac shed the light on unsettling and rarely illuminated areas of the silver screen. Having stated the apparent deficiency of critical thinking of Japan within Serbian scholarship, it is necessary to offer the examination from our culturally specific environment with the approaches and techniques implementing both Western

[10] J-horror is a popular Western term for the new wave of Japanese horror. Therefore, it remains unclear why are the two terms (Japanese and J-horror) treated separately in the title when the author only briefly mentions films such as *Onibaba* (1964) and *Kwaidan* (1964) and focuses on the film series that belong to J-horror genre – *Ringu*, *Ju-on*, *One Missed Call*. Moreover, *Krugovi i Kletve* seems to offer several highly disputable theoretical conclusions, such as one implying that in the case of Hollywood remakes, the absence of misogyny (apparent in original Japanese films?) has been established though casting of "highly attractive actresses" (p. 107) or ill-founded overall reasoning suggesting that the issues of contemporary society (unemployment, long working hours, pregnancy, domestic violence) make *Ju-on* (2002) "more scary than it actually is" (p. 103).

and Eastern perspectives.

The idea of this thesis is to leave a door for analysis and dialogue with Japanese culture ajar. In close proximity to reasoning of Jelena J. Dimitrijević (1862-1945), one of the first Serbian feminist authors, known for her travelogues, that Japan is to be seen as a film which unfolds "not on the screen but in [my] mind"[11], the text before you should be understood as mere flickering of what Japan is or has been. As regarding to methodology, constructivist and interdisciplinary approach of this thesis devises from sources within and outside film and performance theory, including phenomenology, neuroscience, anthropology, linguistics, cultural and communication studies. In examining the body of Japan and Japanese cinema, it is necessary to avoid Orientalist perspectives. As mentioned above, the difficulties of such avoidance come from the very position of this author as an outsider. Not being able to breathe with lungs, see with eyes or use any other organ as embedded in culture of Japanese body, one can only attempt to listen to its breathing of or touch its surface.

Accordingly, we must apply Claude Lévi-Strauss's perspective that even though the cultures are "incommensurable" (for those who are not born and bred in culture that is a subject of their study), certain advantages are possible for non-native researchers:

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[11] Jelena J. Dimitrijević, "Na Tihom okeanu (beleške s puta)", *Bagdala*, 499, 2014, p. 54. (trans.aut.)

> Destined to observe only from a far, incapable to notice particularity, an anthropologist became sensitive, perhaps precisely because of those shortcomings, to immutable characteristics which persist and uphold in several cultural aspects and blur the differences that evade him.[12]

In this sense, this work offers a specific and unique "touching" which is sometimes in accordance but often in discordance with those who already laid their fingers on Japanese body or examined its particular "organs". If one finds traces of Orientalism or exoticism in this study, it should only be considered as bodily fluids/excretion, released in order to purify author's own body. The purpose of this writing is to be found in creating the new meanings which would emerge from bodily topographies of the contact zones of cinema and Japan.

In *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (2009) Jennifer M. Barker demonstrates that "touch is 'a style of being' shared by both film and the viewer, and that the particular structures of human touch correspond to particular structures of the cinematic experience"[13]. According to Barker, touch should not be solemnly associated to the organ of skin, but the whole body in which it produces various manifestations – tension, rhythm, lassitude, and balance. Furthermore, as tactility is a mode of both bodily expression (of

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[12] Klod Levi-Stros, *Druga strana meseca, Antropologija i problemi modernog sveta*, Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2013, p. 14. (trans.aut.)

[13] Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*, Berkley: University of California Press, 2009, p. 2.

oneself) and perception (of the world), we are bound to engage in the cross-cultural and transdisciplinary contact with Japan. Therefore, apart from being grounded on the various discourses on Japanese identity, this study also builds on the framework of aesthetics and phenomenology, drawing substantially on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Yuasa Yasuo. Setting aside feminist, psychoanalytic and semiotic film theory, along with Barker, I turn to "bodily oriented" theorists such as Vivian Sobchack, Steven Shaviro, Laura U. Marks.

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> Exploring cinema's tactility thus opens up the possibility of cinema as an *intimate* experience and of our relationship with cinema as a *close* connection, rather that as a distant experience of observation, which the notion of cinema as a purely visual medium presumes.[14]

Therefore, if we take a standpoint that cinema surpasses "real" geographical and "expectant" cultural distances, it is thinkable to approach even "the furthest location" through intimate cinematic experience of the perceiver's body. The validity of investigating Japan through its cinema, is confirmed in the following quote by Vivian Sobchack:

> When the film breaks a cultural taboo and tries to get a better look at something we regard as visually forbidden or disgusting, when it violates or looks upon the violation of another body-subject with prurience and pleasure, we may turn our own "eyes/I" away from the "eyes/I" of the "other." But then again, we may not. We may share the film's anthropological vision or feel titillated by its forbidden activity. […] And of course, as the film calls attention to itself […], we also become consciously aware that the Here on the screen is distinctly different from our own Here and that the

[14] Ibid.

> invisible "other" implied by the movement is engaged in intentional projects that are marked off from, although included in, our own, and not completely disclosed to us in their purpose and significance.[15]

As stated above, not writing nor reading a nation is possible, but I argue that we can *see* a vision of nation while in the process of film viewing – constantly traversing from real to imaginary, on the liminal line, somewhere between *in* and *out side* of the cinema.

Precisely, my interest here is Japanese narrative cinema (rather than documentary) for it submerges into imaginary realm that does not make demands for factual descriptions but equally emanates the true knowledge about Japan. One of the most remarkable figures of modern Japanese literature, Tanizaki Junichiro showed his interest in cinema throughout his fiction and essays:

> I can't escape the feeling that the you who lives here is an image, and what moves in the film is your true substance. If I may stretch the point, could it be that the entire universe and all the phenomena of this world are like film, from moment to moment everything continues to change, yet the past remains spooled up somewhere? And so we here are but images, soon to vanish without a trace, while our true substance lives properly within the film of the universe? The dreams and fantasies that we see are actually light cast in our heads from the film of these pasts, and not mere illusions at all. All in all, in images appears the true substances of things that were once seen somewhere, in previous lives or in childhood

[15] Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 288.

years.[16]

In a same manner as silence (well appreciated in Japan) serves as an effective strategy that communicates what is chosen to be left unsaid, the imposed illusions of the screen forced us to see what escapes our sight when dealing with the "desert of the real". Given the thought that the experience of perception is often understated before epistemological concerns, we should exactly focus on the cinematic experience in context of Japanese spectatorship and projected narratives. Without any intention of cultural essentialism, I argue that due to distinctive attributes and specificity of Japanese language and in addition, firmly established communicative practices that indicate intuitive understanding that goes beyond spoken words, the Japanese audience reacts viscerally to the images on the screen. Being a part of a culture that inconvertibly differentiates the true feelings and desires and their public display, the Japanese are disposed to keep hidden their veracious sentiment in the inner parts of the body. I argue, notably, that due to distinctive attributes and specificity of Japanese language and in addition, firmly established communicative practices that indicate intuitive understanding that goes beyond spoken words, the visceral perception is the crucial point of the Japanese film

[16] Junichiro Tanizaki, (*A Lump of Flesh*) quoted in Thomas Lamarre, *Shadows on the Screen: Tanizaki Junichiro and "Oriental" Aesthetics*, Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2005.

viewing. My dissertation further attempts to outline the significance and currency of the body-cinema relation.

It is necessary to mention that the first Japanese film was shown in the late 1897, depicting sights in Tokyo. The following year, Japanese audience had a chance to encounter with the ghosts transpiring from the short movies by Asano Shiro – *Bake Jizo (Jizo the Spook)* and *Shinin no sosei (Resurrection of a Corpse)*. Accordingly, we could argue that Japanese cineastes fairly quickly made a transition from the scenes of reality to the abstract moving images that haunted the spectators. Drawing on Jacques Derrida's hauntology (homonymic to term "ontology" in original French) which minimizes the "priority of being and presence", it appears that from the early beginnings, almost ironically, Japanese cinema dwells in the images which are "neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive"[17].

> Attending to the ghost is an ethical injunction insofar as it occupies the place of the Levinasian Other: a wholly irrecuperable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving.[18]

Already from the quote above, it is visible that this thesis contributes to preserving of Japan's otherness. From the late 19th century to this day, filmed

[17] Colin Davis, "Ét at Présent-Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms", *French Studies*, Vol. LIX, no. 3, p. 373.

[18] Ibid.

"resurrected corpse" of Japan turned to be respectively – *potent*, *energetic* and *animated* body whose celluloid anatomy we should inspect.

There is no intention of dissecting the whole Japanese body, nor would I suggest the possibility that such examiner exists, but instead, this work proposes the reading of acquired data and conclusions which came from curious investigation of certain body parts instead. In some of the cases not even an organ was inspected but its tissues and cells only. At first glance, it can be said that this study is *divided* in two parts – theoretical overlook of Japanese notion of the body in domain of culture, society, linguistics and cinema and analytical explorations of selected cinematic instances observed through corpocentric terminology. These representative exemplifications consist of three corporeal aspects:

– first dealing with questions of creation, origin and family, stands for lower parts of the body, and implicitly genetic material DNA (all present in the works of Immamura Shohei and Miike Takashi),

– second exposes unnamed diseases, sickness and pain, making the phantom limbs visible (omnipresent in the vast *Godzilla* filmography), and

– third examining the navel knot which tightens the viscera and media extensions (found in Kon Satoshi's anime).

The proposed taxonomy deals with invisible aspects of the body in Japanese cinema. The first segment explores the cinematic works with a focus

on those body parts that remain unseen as a result of general societal norms, such as covered genitals, or by biological limitation of the naked eye – genetic code. Following chapter investigates phantasmal manifestations of the amputated limbs – that which are no longer possible to see and therefore, occur to be persistent over several cinematic decades. Inside of the body is not visible without the eye of the camera, thus the relation between (visual) media and Japanese inner self is inspected in the last section. All three parts engage in looking into invisible realms set into a medium of cinema. Our task is to probe those cinematic aspects *in_visible* Japan.

For that reason, I do not intend to present historical overview of Japanese cinema, a tremendous archive of one of the oldest and largest film industries in the world. Great contribution to study of Japanese cinema has been done by Sato Tadao, Donald Richie, David Desser, Noel Burch, Keiko I. McDonald, Isolde Standish, Susan J. Napier, Thomas Lamarre, Tom Mes, Jasper Sharp and others. Despite the range of scholarship on Japanese cinema, I can only hope that this work will make a small contribution to understanding of Japan in and outside Serbian academic community. The films that will be discussed in this thesis can only indicate specific stylistic and narrative patterns within broad domain of Japanese cinema that deal with issues of body and Japanese identity. Having in mind that selected films cannot be representative for Japanese cinema as whole nor including all Japanese perspectives towards the body, I

would encourage the more extensive future research on the subject. This thesis differs from other works in the field of Japanese cinema because it approaches this specific subject of "unique" culture from the uncommon position (and a "safe distance") with an intention to reveal the less visible (inspected) in the discourses of those who generate the knowledge (Japan as self-explanatory and West through *othering*).

The Blind Beast, 1969 film adaptation of Rampo Edogawa novel, depicts a blind sculptor who abducts a young model in a quest for perfect body parts which he will transcend into a piece of art. In the darkness of his basement studio, walls are covered with oversized body parts – eyes, nose, lips, arms, legs and breasts – while male and female nude sculptures occupy its center. Blind sculptor professes sense of touch as superior to all the others, pioneering the implementation of "art of touching". He is devoted to a creation of a new art form and genre that only blind are able to fully conduct and appreciate. Due to long captivity in the dark claustrophobic studio, model gradually loses her sight but develops more refined tactile sense that allows her to feel as if she is in "the womb of human creation". Through tactile fixation on the body, the perpetrator and the victim engage in sado-masochistic relationship that ends with fulfillment of her request to be dismembered. Their ecstasy of caress leads them to discovery of feelings ("unrelenting natural laws") that are lying beyond words. In essentially claustrophobic framework of discourses, we position

ourselves as those unable to *see* Other cultures, or to be almost equally blind as they are when considering their own culture. But, without the need for mutilation of Japanese body, in a tactile world of cinema, the invisible objects, sights and phenomena become acute and impossible to be left un*regard*ed.

Instead of discerning the divide, the binary setting (theoretical and analytical parts) of the writing before you should be considered in terms of following dichotomies – upper and lower, front and back, left and right, inner and outer part of one particular body of work. In general, this corpus should also be read by reader's preferences, in no particular order but led by reader's own desire and tactile urge. Surely, the standpoint from which this work was written upon takes Clive Barker's perspective that "every body is a book [of blood], wherever we're opened, we're red"[19]. These selected celluloid bodies, unified by Japan's bloodstream, are projected on reader's epidermis. Therefore, it is possible for a sensitive reader to experience an itch, a burning rash or even cuts, bruises and teeth marks while stumbling upon parts which stir his/her nerve endings. For others, this body of work could provoke the sensation of soft, smooth skin touched by distant Other.

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> The intimate and close contact between touching and touched, as well as the relationship of mutual, reciprocal significance that exists between them, are universal structures. Within those general structures, tactility contains the possibility for an infinite variety of

[19] Red = read, Clive Barker, *Books of Blood*. I-III vols., London: Sphere, 2008, p. iii.

particular themes or patterns.[20]

Therefore, this intimate touching of Japan proves to be just one of the boundless opportunities to leave a mark in a world that perpetuates the abundance of constructs that as communicative processes protect the living bodies from destined and limiting isolation and death of the world of nature. [21]

When engaged in writing about cinema, the following quote from Jacques Derrida calls in mind:

> But precisely, when my gaze meets yours, I see *both* your *gaze and* your eyes, love in fascination – and your eyes are not only seeing but also visible. And since they are *visible* (things or objects in the world) as much as *seeing* (at the origin of the world), I could precisely touch them, with my finger, lips or even eyes, lashes and lids, by approaching you – if I dared come near to you in this way, if I one day dared. [22]

With this writing, I take the risk touching the vision of Japanese filmmakers, what they selected to see, as well as the invisibility that emerges between those two perceptions. Therefore, the title of this thesis could be extended – *The Body and Japanese Cinema: Towards Visceroceptiveness and Invisible Touching*.

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[20] Barker, *The Tactile Eye*, p. 3.

[21] Vilem Flusser suggests that human communication is "negatively entropic", artificial phenomenon which produces interpretative codes. (Look further in *Writings*, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) This thesis intends to employ this notion of communication theory as an interpretative discipline, instead of being explanatory.

[22] Jacque Derrida, *On Touching*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 3.

Against homogeneity – Empire of Nihonjinron

When we construct a "theory" with Japan as its center and also raise the "theory" to a level where we do not confine ourselves to Japan alone, the possibility grows that the discrepancy between this "theory" and the "reality" in countries outside Japan will not occur in the "periphery" but in a "critical part". The theory of Japanese culture seems to symbolize Japan's international isolation. It is no one else than the Japanese themselves who emphasize the "affirmative peculiarities" of Japan and the situation on which this isolation is increasingly deepened due to this emphasis is critical. To analyze Japan in front of theory, there is, however, nothing else to do than to depart from the Japanese "reality".

Sonoda Hidehiro, *The Theory of Japanese Culture and the Theory of Reverse Absence*

It is not unusual for a non-Japanese to be perplexed in an encounter with both real and imaginary Japan. The congested signs, variety of seemingly randomized elements, arbitrariness in their selection and their sheer amount enhance the disparity usually felt by foreign observers. How is this abundance of symbols and its systems communicated and understood? The answer could be found in a premise that the body is installed in a place of Japanese language, as Roland Barthes cunningly demonstrates in the following, unavoidably lengthy quotation from *The Empire of Signs*.

> Now it happens that in this country (Japan) the empire of signifiers is so immense, so in excess of speech, that the exchange of signs remains of a fascinating richness, mobility, and subtlety, despite the opacity of the language, sometimes even as a consequence of that opacity. The reason for this is that in Japan the body exists, acts, shows itself, gives itself, without hysteria, without narcissism, but according to a pure – though subtly discontinuous – erotic project.

> It is not the voice (with which we identify the "rights" of the person) which communicates (communicates what? our – necessarily beautiful – soul? our sincerity? our prestige?), but the whole body (eyes, smile, hair, gestures, clothing) which sustains with you a sort of babble that the perfect domination of the codes strips of all regressive, infantile character. To make a date (by gestures, drawings on paper, proper names) may take an hour, but during that hour, for a message which would be abolished in an instant if it were to be spoken (simultaneously quite essential and quite insignificant), it is the other's entire body which has been known, savored, received, and which has displayed (to no real purpose) its own narrative, its own text.[23]

This body challenges the ideological constructions and forms the narratives, and pushes them away from the linguistic constraints. Barthes' reflective work on Japan suggests the lack or more precisely, the *elusiveness* of a meaning when dealing with such distant Other. All the knowledge foreigner desires to have about Japan has already been filtered and framed by one's corpus of ethnocentric understandings. The notion that the West cannot refrain from a production of meanings and mythologizing the foreign cultures, Barthes destabilizes through his methodological instrument of empty signs. In order not to contribute to a history of texts which classify Japan as exotic, he "invents" the devoid one, that without ontology or grand narratives. In that manner, Japan could be rendered as both empty and full of contradictions at the same time, through its immense possibilities of comprehension.

In spite of that being said, *The Empire of Signs* has been characterized as

[23] Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, New York: Hill and Wand, The Noonday Press, 1992, p. 9-10.

somewhat supportive of the Orientalist discourse with a "desire not to compromise the 'otherness' of the East by the symbolic nomenclature and projective categories of Western cognition"[24] and a strategy of not writing about Japan but about a country he has chosen to name "Japan". In addition, Barthes' work is labeled as ignorant concerning the "Japanese historical explanations" of the addressed phenomena marked by the signs "filled with 'invisible' weight of a cultural investment determined by a specific history"[25]. However, this type of argument also overlooks the fact that these "empty signs" are also located in Japan's own imposing discourses. What remains "invisible" is also the specific knowledge that Japan itself stimulates in others, directing it towards exoticism as well. In a number of decades, self-orientalism has been a prevailing strategy among the Japanese. Therefore, balancing between the mythologies and discourses carried out on the both sides seems to be a strenuous task.

Japan's identity has been a subject of a particular array of discourses called *Nihonjinron* generated primarily in its native environment in order to profess its "uniquely unique" culture.[26] The emergence of those discourses could be traced in the 19th century and Japan's "transformance" into a modern state,

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[24] Peter N. Dale, *Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 4.

[25] Maureen Turim, *The Films of Oshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 128.

[26] Mika Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness*, New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 11.

but they were especially dominant in the postwar period and often marked as a result of national quest for reconstructing its identity after a devastating defeat. This "cultural exceptionalism" does not presume the standpoint "only-we-the-Japanese-know-what-Japan-is", but is partly a result of a self-defending strategy against foreign criticism of Japan in terms of racism, ethnocentrism and "narrow-mindedness".[27] Still today, questions such as "What is Japan?", "Who are we, the Japanese?", "What is Japanese society?" remain to be significant in Japanese mind, resulting in continuous (re)publishing of the works on this subject matter in post-millennial era. Cultural determinism of Japan as a postmodern society is also a categorization that is supported in and outside of Japanese borders, which sustains the primacy of accumulative mythologizing to reality.

Even in the late Tokugawa period (1603-1868), a Confucian scholar Aizawa Seishisai wrote a collection of political essays entitled *New Theses (Shinron)* (1825) which insisted on Japanese eminence in the world and their self-sufficiency. Aizawa introduced a term *kokutai* (国 *koku* – country、体 *tai* – body, substance, style) in order to justify the policy of national isolation and to emphasize both ethnic and cultural superiority. Promoting Japanese predominance, the origin of Japanese emperor has been directly linked with

[27] Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron*, Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001, p. 1.

sun goddess Amaterasu (Aizawa mentions that many emperors saw her in their reflection in the mirror) and universal superiority of its people has been unquestionable through many bodily metaphors ("our Divine Realm rightly constitutes the head and shoulders of the world and controls all nations", Western "barbarians" are positioned as "lower extremities of the world", the emperor is seen as Amaterasu's own "flesh and blood"[28]). Based on a relative disinformation about the Western governing success through Christianity, he proclaims that the "essence of a nation" is only to be found in the unity of government and religion where "all people in the realm are of one heart and mind"[29]. Inclining to corpocentric logic, this indicative homogeneity of Japanese nation has been underpinned with a conviction that relation between the ruler and its people is of the same importance and intensity as parent-child bond and affection, which leads to securing a strong nation through the strategy of unquestionable loyalty.

This perspective is further developed during the Meiji Restoration when the efforts to transform almost all aspects of Japan were increasingly present. By adoption of Western technology and values, everything from political system and industry to culture and society, was subject to a radical shift.

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[28] Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-foreignism and Western Learning in Early-modern Japan, The New Theses of 1825*. Harvar, East Asian monographs, 1999, p. 149, 157.

[29] Ibid., p. 152.

> With this framework, the *kazoku kokka* (family state) was projected as an enduring essence, which provided the state with an elevated iconography of consanguineous unity, enhanced the legitimacy of new economic, social and political relations, and provided the Japanese people with a new sense of national purpose and identity.[30]

During this period, in transcendence of modernity, the birth of a nation-state has been reinforced, as Michael Weiner states, by *minzoku* (ethnicity, nation) paradigm which supposes that "both race and nation were regarded as naturally occurring phenomena"[31]. Pointing to the authors such as Takakusu Junjiro and Kada Tetsuji and their notions of "culture of Japanese blood" and superiority of *ketsuzokushugi* (the ideology of the blood family), Weiner identifies the process of "the naturalization of culture" when biological determinants support the homogeneity of Japanese nation. On the other hand, when questioning complexity of traditional/modern dichotomy in Japan and searching for ways to "improve" Japanese race, certain intellectuals supported the ideas of mixing Japanese and "Caucasian blood" through institution of marriage with Europeans.[32]

It is argued that in the pre-war discourse, national culture has been regarded in a same manner as biological/genetic configuration of Japanese race

[30] Michael Weiner, "'Self' and 'other' in imperial Japan", *Japan's Minorities – The Illusion of Homogeneity*, Michael Weiner (ed.), London & New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 1.

[31] Ibid., p. 2.

[32] Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, p. 126.

– as "the manifestation of a primordial or innate essence"[33] which enabled the Japanese alleged superiority among the rest of the nations.[34] Noteworthy in this context, in "Making Sense of Nihonjinron", Sugimoto Yoshio proposes the *n=e=c* equation which defines interchangeability of the concepts of nation, ethnicity and culture in the realm of *Nihonjinron*. The Japanese term *nihon minzoku* stands for both "biologically racial" and "culturally defined ethnic group", revealing the linguistic and ideological "vastness" in favor of aforementioned equation. Thus, culture in Japanese context seems to be a part of an organic entity which unified and intellectually molded its people.

Many premises of *Nihonjinron* can perplex those readers who are not well informed of these discourses. The examination of Japanese cultural characterization comprises the vast body of work – from scholarly writing to an "impressionistic essay on Japan without any methodological or scientific rigor"[35]. Such seemingly broad specter of discourses is conceivable due to terminology of word *ron* which translates as "theory", "doctrine", "interpretation", "argument", "standpoint", "comment", "essay" etc. Methodology that *Nihonjinron* writers often employ is comparative dissimilarity that Japan shares with other

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[33] Ibid., p. 4.

[34] The victorious outcome of Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) theoretician Kato Hiroyuki "explained" pertaining social Darwinism; in 1869 Fukizawa Yukichi ranked countries and nations on an evolutionary scale inevitably resulting in the primacy of Japanese racial and cultural qualities.

[35] Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, p. 2.

countries; hence those discourses generate "the facts" about other cultures as well. This cross-cultural approach inevitably pushes those discourses in a hierarchal classification. On the other hand, indifferent to a method of the applied generalization and declarative descriptive style, Japan welcomes foreign participation in *Nihonjinron*, proving that the Japanese "are keenly interested in the Otherness of themselves"[36]. American anthropologist Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) (a study which was commissioned by American government in order to provide a better understanding of people whose territory they would soon occupy) was on a best-seller list in Japan, selling more than two million copies after its first translation.[37]

Through this cacophony of divergent and sometimes contradictory perspectives, the core of *Nihonjinron* is based on ethnicity discourses which proclaim archetypal exclusivism and homogeneity of the Japanese people through their relation with the emperor with whom they share their blood. Ranging from various fields of study, from linguistics, philosophy, sociology to geography and biology, *Nihonjinron* rhetoric implements the singularity of Japan and its people by insisting on particularity of Japanese race and blood which enables mutual understanding (among the Japanese) and positions the

[36] Ibid., p. 56.

[37] Benedict did not visit and conduct research in Japan, but based her work on interviews with Japanese-Americans and Japanese experts.

foreigners as "culturally incompetent" to fully apprehend their culture or completely master their language because the "comprehension of these unique features supposedly requires not rational or logical understanding but intuitive insight [...] only natives can achieve"[38]. More precisely, these theories recognize that the fluency in Japanese language and correct usage of honorific and polite expressions could be achieved by foreigners, but not to the degree of "complete thinking" in Japanese which could only be regulated by the patterns of their nativeness and mother tongue.[39] Does this standpoint suggest that the true meaning, understanding and communication actually go beyond language? If so, then we should explore the realms that produce the meanings away from conventional linguistic system and towards taxonomy of bodily comprehension.

However consistent Japanese blood might be (as proposed by numerous *Nihonjinron* theories), their bodies are undeniably different. Precisely this discrepancy of the bodies is to be recognized in the work of Japanese filmmakers and their "unique" aesthetics and politics. In *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film*, Darrell Davis explores the works of famous directors of wartime period who reconstructed the national identity under imposed Western influences. By defining "monumental style" of these films through celebration of the Japanese tradition, Davis notes that

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[38] Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, p. 67.

[39] Look further the work of Tsunoda Tadanobu.

> films in the monumental style do not just preach the gospel of Japaneseness, they integrate *kokutai* – the body of the nation – into the technical design of the films to produce a work with a somatic, palpable flavor of Japan rather than a mere exhortation.[40]

There are two essential points that *Nihonjinron* discourses draw attention to in the context of this writing. First, I would like to propose the perspective that surpasses the limitation of Japaneseness as oneness, namely that which is characterized solemnly through elements of traditional culture and collective/unified spirit. Therefore, I argue against rigid critical categorization of collectiveness and uniformity of the Japanese (people and artists) and incline to give prominence to heterogeneous groupings, each unveiling their own "universalities" through bodily representation. In the second part of the thesis, the emphasis is placed on the work of selected authors, who challenge the idea of Japanese collectiveness through the characters whose individuality has confronted the assumptions and expectations of the Japanese majority.

On the other hand, allegedly paradoxical, the discourses on Japanese uniqueness could be employed without dismissing their position of national exceptionality. In *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (2001), famous Japanese anthropologist Harumi Befu who engaged in investigating the "uniqueness" of Japan's national identity over the years,

[40] Darrell William Davis, *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 113.

outlines the methodology of not undermining the extreme and overly disputable claims of Japaneseness discourses. Instead, he takes them as a platform which can deepen one's knowledge in terms of "form and function" of this particular "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm). Opposed to Andrew Miller's and Peter Dale's perspective of critical evaluation of *Nihonjinron*, Befu's non-judgmental attitude allows analyzing Japanese culture by implementing various discourses (in a range from mundane to knowledgeable) that the Japanese produce in order to (re)invent their identity. If we take Zygmunt Bauman's notion that all communities are not realities but constructed projects, and in addition, Michael Foucault's critical standpoint that only within discourse it is possible to generate the truth[41], the "falsity" of *Nihonjinron* perfectly encapsulates the cinematic frame where fiction always emanates the various truths.

When dealing with Japan, the terms such as "originality", "adaptation", "copying" and "reinventing" (of the language, but which often go further from the linguistic field and are applied to Japanese cinema, art and technology in general) appear to be frequent. Influences of Chinese political, religious and cultural elements during the 7th century, and certainly technological advances of the West in the 19th century have been singled out as "borrowings" which mark

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[41] See more Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Vintage, 1994 and *The Archeology of Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

both Japanese curiosity and inferiority.

Within my research, such phrases are not used to enforce the discourses that position Japan and rest of the world in dichotomies of favored and underprivileged, or to suggest that Japan's identity is an aberration of others'. Equally important, even though this is a study on nationally determined culture, as previously mentioned, it opposes to draw the conclusions on the Japanese uniqueness following the *Nihonjinron* discourses on homogeneity, but rather identifies the issues that are more lucidly displayed in this specific cultural context and which could provide a perspective that breaks its self-contained scholarship and offers the new approach towards world cinema and national identities in general. Even more so, I question the possibility of using *Nihonjinron* discourse in order to support the argument of Japanese *visceroceptive* understanding of cinema as opposed to the comprehension dependent on loquacity which will be addressed in further chapters. Should the arguments of the self-orientalist perspective be overly dismissed, or could they be used as a tool which substantiates ideas that differ from the original discourse?

According to Befu, Japanese *Nihonjinron* writers engage in process of creating a "self-portrait" – with all artistic liberty – distortion of the facts, unrestricted imagination and creative interpretation of their society and culture. We are interested in examining to which degree the chosen filmmakers in this

work deviate from "official" modes of self-observation, and is it achievable, to any extent, to tear the unifying tissue of Japanese national idiosyncrasy. Moreover, *Nihonjinron* theories could be enforced in cinematic readings in order to turn against its own self-alienating, constricted aspect and provide more liberal attitude in communicating cinema.

Hence, this chapter outlines the complexity of generating a body of knowledge about Japan based on the discourses that proclaim its extraordinariness. Furthermore, it offers the two approaches to *Nihonjinron* utilization despite its intensive assertion of Japanese homogeneity.

Corpocentric Japan

The body's an envelope: and so it serves to contain what it then has to develop. The development is interminable. The finite body contains the infinite, which is neither soul nor spirit, but in fact the development of the body.

A body is a difference. Since it is a difference from every other body – while minds are identical – it's never done with differing.

A body, bodies: there can't be just one body, and the body bears the difference. They are forces, placed and stretched one against the other. "Against" (in opposition, encountering, "right up against") is major category of the body. This implies a play of differences, contrasts, resistances, graspings, penetrations, repulsions, densities, weights, and measures. My body exists against the fabric of its clothing, the vapors of the air it breathes, the brightness of lights or the brushings of shadows.

Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*

This chapter aims to foreground the discourse on human embodiment and the significance of the body in Japanese culture, as well as to outline the contrasting positions of Japanese thinkers against Western Cartesian tradition. Before discussing the theoretical approaches to the issues of embodied subjectivity, I will briefly indicate the magnitude of bodily oriented aspects of Japanese socio-cultural environment.

The human body was a topic of interest among the Japanese people since ancient times. As a part of nature, the Japanese consider the body as an avatar (temporary manifestation) of Shinto gods and hence, have an obligation to recognize and give prominence to its significance. In Shinto shrines, a circular mirror stands on the altar as representation of the divine, forcing a visitor to see

his own reflection (not as an egoistic practice but as a path to recognition of divinity inside oneself). Here, the mirror serves as a mediator of spiritual and physical realms, affirming the perspective of Eastern thought that negates Cartesian dualism.

Whether the bodies are naked or concealed under the heavy make-up or layers of clothes, the expressiveness, movement and appearance of the body perpetuate to have a distinguished value in Japanese society. Geisha's face remains hidden under the whiteness of her skin, redness of her lips and specific hairstyle, revealing only three triangles of her bare skin on the neck as a seductive invitation to her sensual world. From the beginning of the Heian period (794-1185) to the second half of the 19th century when it was prohibited, (probably as a governmental corrective not to disturb lastly welcomed yet unaccustomed foreigners) the practice of blackening the teeth was common among the Japanese, especially women marking their marital status or just differentiating them from "slaves or animals". Covering almost the whole body with tattoos – engraving the skin, dominant convention among the yakuza, reveals the stamina and fortitude of the wearer, his belief in the power of the image and also the artistry of highly respected tattooers.

"Although the word kimono means 'thing to be worn', conceptually it has more to do with the realm of emptiness, since the body it contains has no

existence of its own."[42] Long, wide sleeves, accentuated collar and knotted *obi* hide the body shape but wearing kimono is not an effortless task, it commands certain discipline, a body posture beneath weightily layers which enable certain signification – diversity of emotions, suggestive invitations or instigating the imagination of beholder.

Samurai warrior, fully committed to *bushido* – code of moral principles, has to discipline both physical and psychological aspects of his persona. The body and the mind should be equally trained in order to enable a warrior the respected values – loyalty, martial arts mastery, honorable death. The command and control of the body, regardless of the severeness of the circumstances, were highly respected; used in a same manner as clothes, to cover the essence as the body was samurai's main instrument for the work. Some samurai clans (Nabeshima) even firmly rejected the saying that "the arts aid the body", believing that it can only ruin the body and should be left to artists to practice it.[43] Further, in martial arts and sports such as *sumo,* the Japanese have a tradition of concentrating on *hara* (lower *tanden*) – which is located in the inner abdomen, below the navel. It is considered to be the central point of the body, and if one's attention is directed towards it, the mind establishes tranquility and the outer distractions disappear. The unity of the body and the spirit is

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[42] Dominique Buisson, *Japan Unveiled: Understanding Japanese Body Culture*, London: Hachette Illustrated UK, Octopus Publishing Group, 2003, p. 67.

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[43] Stephen Turnbull, *Samurai – The World of the Warrior*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003, p. 71.

especially evident due to *hara* strength which manifests through entire embodied subject.

Seemingly simple aesthetics of make-up, costumes and masks are not in the service of expressionless attribution but contrariwise, of ambiguity and conversion of the body into an abstraction. "The body is a figment of the imagination, a fiction. Each time it is portrayed, in words or images, we constantly reinvent it."[44] On the stage, in classical Japanese theatre – *noh*, *bunraku*, *kabuki*, the masks, the puppets or the make-up subvert the "ordinary" body into a presence born in the liminal space of the real and dreamlike state where the body emanates a divine manifestation that reveals to the audience a transgression of time and space. In addition, a noteworthy demand for alteration of characteristics of one's body is evident in case of *onnagata*, male performers conveying female roles. Decadence is often attributed to Japanese culture, and in such art sexual morality has no value, thus here gender issue only allows a performer to demonstrate his artistry and skill in transcending the "limits of his body" while masterfully proclaiming femininity. In manga and anime, gender-bending theme (as in *Ranma ½, Sailor Moon* or *Soul Eater*) goes beyond mere advocacy of identity politics and resonates a lengthily tradition of gender metamorphosis.

Discipline and control of immensely conventionalized bodily movements

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[44] Ibid., p. 107.

is of utmost importance in traditional imperial dance form – *bugaku* where dancers wear masks, as well as in postmodern dance form, *butoh* which brings into action often completely naked bodies exploring primal sexuality, nature and shamanistic trance in grotesque, dark ambience.

In a densely populated Japan, nurturing a distance between the bodies gives prominence to the culture of bowing and withholds the direct act of touching. However, *kinbaku* or *shibari* is bondage practice dating from late Edo period (1603-1868) that became widely popular in 1950s when aesthetic value of rope masters work began to be appreciated. Through a set of specific rules and forms, audience is lured to be involved in a communicative act between the bound person and ropes which are extensions of *nawashi*'s hands.

The body and its parts are integral segments of numerous festivals called *matsuri,* whether it is a display of strength of unified bodies that pull giant wooden cart in shape of a temple as in *Danjiri matsuri* or carry a *mikoshi* – divine palaquin during *Sanja matsuri*, or as a celebration of large wooden phallus in fertility festival *Honen matsuri* and steel one of *Kanamara matsuri* (with a tradition of nearly forty years) in a prayer for protection from the sexually transmitted diseases.

In spite of long tradition of sex images in Japanese art, predominantly *shunga* – woodblock prints depicting various sexual acts, often going beyond standard conceptions and featuring also animals and demons, in a domain of

pornography, the topography of Japanese body meets its limitations. Namely, regulated by Japanese law, genitals of the porn actors must remain hidden and are heavily censored. Pixelized and blurred genitals perplex the audience outside Japan by falsely providing somewhat romantic suggestion that certain sights have to be left invisible on the screen, only to be properly enjoyed in real life. However, pornography proves to be a significantly powerful factor in Japan's economy, being an integral part of a larger sex industry with an estimated annual earn of 24 billion yen (environ 175 million euro). The aforementioned romantic suggestions get totally sideswiped by the mere fact that blurred genitals provide an original image within the porn industry that debilitates the foreign competition and brings the focus on the domestic product.

From delicate hints of geisha's body to hierarchal differences in body figure of professional *sumo* wrestlers, the human body acquires prominent position in Japanese culture, offering numerous perspectives to decode and revise its notable interpretations. Even Japanese linguistic domain proves that the body is perceived as a powerful factor – *Kenkyusha Luminous Dictionary* (2001) offers numerous entries on the subject: (体) *karada* relating to physical body, as well as (身) *mi* – bodily position/place, whole body or joined together in synonymous (身体) *shintai,* marking its materiality and mostly used in phenomenological discourse, opposed to above-mentioned (肉体) *nikutai* which

demonstrates carnality of the flesh. Anatomical aspect of the body is accentuated in (胴体) *doutai*, whereas (物体) *buttai* calls attention to physical objects. However, *shintai* seems to be the most suitable term in this study, since it incorporates both personality (精神 *seishin*) and the flesh, along with (国体) *kokutai* – political imagery of the body as a nation. The variance of the bodily terms implicates the overall importance of corporeality in Japanese culture.

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As previously mentioned, in regard to mind-body problem, the Eastern philosophical tradition does not share the same perspective with Descartes' orientation, which was essential for the development of modern Western thought. Although Western philosophy was introduced to Japan in the later decades of 19th century, Descartes' work became known after *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations* was translated in 1904. The crucial point of difference between Japanese thought and Cartesian standpoint is found in intuitive knowledge which is not inherent to the latter approach. Notwithstanding anti-Cartesianism, the work of many Japanese thinkers has been inspired by philosophies of their Western counterparts.

Famous Japanese philosopher and prominent figure of Japan's influential philosophical movement known as Kyoto school, Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945) (whose theoretical standpoint on the body will be discussed later) established a new horizon of philosophical thinking which employed both Western and

Eastern ideas, especially visible in his *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911). Another distinguished scholar, Watsuji Tetsuro (1889-1960) who began his career with writings on Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, combined Eastern and Western notions in the field of ethics – devising philosophical term *aidagara*, "betweenness" which denounces Western individualism and Confucian collectivism, and positions a person in a network of social relations where the ethics emerges from navigating between self and environment.

In the light of phenomenological approach of this study which foregrounds the unity of dichotomies, it is necessary to address that European phenomenology was highly welcomed in Japan ever since Meiji Period (1868-1912). Translated work of phenomenological thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty inspired and influenced the work of Japanese philosophers such as Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990) or left a mark in literature of *nikutai bungaku* (literature of the body) writers such as Ango Sakaguchi (1906-1955) and Tamura Taijiro (1911-1983).

Douglas N. Slaymaker's seminal work *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction* (2004) thoroughly examines the body as "an obsessive object of focus in Japanese fiction"[45] in postwar period, analyzing ideological and historical state of affairs which led to redefining the concepts of corporeal images and

[45] Douglas N. Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2004, p. i.

narratives of that time.

The body as a central point in the writings of the "flesh writers", Slaymaker observes, is a consequence of several circumstances: (1) bodily preoccupation of a daily life – need for food and shelter in ruined urban environment among the population in weakened health, (2) liberated carnality of an individual which stands as opposing force to militaristic ideology of wartime and (3) as a reaction to governmental censorship of writings denouncing the politics of war and its devastating outcome.

The fundamental standpoint that addresses these issues and proposes the notion of a body as a tool of revolution, protest and subversion is to be found in Tamura Taijiro's claim:

> "Thought" [*shiso*] is, at this time threatening to push us down; it does nothing else. "Thought" has, for a long time, been draped with the authoritarian robes of a despotic government, but now the body is rising up in opposition. The distrust of "thought" is complete. We now believe in nothing but our own bodies. Only the body is real [*jijitsu*]. The body's weariness, the body's desires, the body's anger, the body's intoxications, the body's confusion, the body fatigue – only these are real. It is because of all these things that we realize, for the first time, that we are alive.[46]

Following this type of conclusion, and going beyond the postwar context, it seems that conversely, the world of today's heightened technological web communication, became overly discursive, omnipresently "opinionated" and

[46] Quoted in ibid., p. 3.

extensively theorizing. I accept the risk for this thesis to be read as paradoxical in essence, having in mind that a production of meanings keeps us away from "our" own and *other* bodies. Observing and listening to the "silent" needs, demands and temper of Japanese cinematic body, can pave a way to transnational understanding which strays away from apparent directions based on essentialism or mere announcing the "truths" that are meant to be accepted.

Following Slaymaker standpoint, one could assert that the freedom that body proclaims could be acquired in two dissimilar settings – in a post-militarist state of Japan as the means of democratization and liberation of an individual, and in a "democratic" globally interconnected presence, as a device that subverts all that has been said, known and represented.

In context of Japanese bodily orientation, Slaymaker emphasizes the influence of Sartre's work, in particular his short story "Intimité" which has been praised by postwar writers Ango Sakaguchi and Noma Hiroshi. This approval comes from the assertions that Sartre's characters "think only through their bodies, that they are only *nikutai*"[47] and that the body *thinks and speaks*. Sartrean freedom occurs without excluding, but on contrary, involving the physical [*nikutai*]. This could be accomplished because "he turned inside out the language of the Symbolists and their hold on the internalized consciousness,

[47] Ibid., p. 25.

and pushed on to a place where he could grasp the *nikutai* internally"[48].

Further, the connections between Japan and France regarding the postwar inclination towards existentialism are explored – state of despair propelled the angst of generation which decided to defy the traditional ideals. Interestingly, Sartre's "existentialism" was perceived in Japan through his fiction which was translated before his philosophical work. Such attentiveness to Sartre's work, "quite different from that in any other country"[49] could lead to an erroneous reasoning that the body, flesh and carnality became the object of Japanese philosophical interest by foreign influence. Instead, it is a case of sharing a mutual interest for the issue of embodiment, which has never been undisclosed in Japan.

Accordingly, Maurice Pinguet drew attention to the utter difference between a Japanese man and his Western counterpart, comparing both attitudes towards the world:

> Western man is led to believe that in the name of the good, it is his duty to demonstrate alertness towards the world. Japanese man is closely related with his world, which is his overall good: his only task could be to manifest alertness to himself, in the name of all the good of this world. [...] Japanese culture proved to be lenient in two domains – with ideas and with senses – creating a two-fold playground, beyond good and evil. Precisely at the point where Christianity nurtures double recoil – sin of pride and sin of carnal

[48] Quoted in ibid., p. 29.

[49] Ibid., p. 27.

lust... [50]

Such viewpoint seems to be well grounded, as Japanese philosophical orientation demonstrates the equal acceptance of both mind and body.

The prominent figures of Japanese philosophy – Yuasa Yasuo and Ichikawa Hiroshi provide additional significant insights on corporeal issues which diverge from Cartesian dualism. The mind-body paradigm is rather understood as a unity instead of a divide, thus any implications of *cogito* dominance in Eastern philosophy are not tenable. The work of these authors has been characterized as "borderline" *Nihonjinron* as it indicates Japanese "uniqueness opposed to the West as 'other'"[51]. My objective is to outline the notions of aforementioned thinkers that challenge the fundamental axis of Western philosophy of the body.

Yuasa Yasuo strongly opposes Cartesian dualism which by privileging *cogito* sets humans to observe the nature from the outside position, and instead offers an approach of "mind-body integration". Such perspective is innate in Japanese discourse, as illustrated by word *kokoro* (心) which has a double meaning – heart and mind, referring to an attribute of recognition and

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[50] Moris Penge, *Dobrovoljna smrt u Japanu*, Novi Sad: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 2009, p. 78. (trans.aut.)

[51] Louella Matsunaga, "Bodies in question: narrating the body in contemporary Japan", *Contemporary Japan*, Vol. 27, no. 1, 2015, p. 5.

perception that comes from within the body, unlike Descartes' rigid dichotomy. The verb *omou* (思う) – to think, etymologically referring to the words *hiding* and *surface*, suggests that the true feelings are to be found *beneath* the realm of visible. As the thinking act establishes itself inside the *kokoro*, in Japanese context *cogito, ergo sum* has been conditioned by perceptiveness which unveils the certain emotional reflex.[52] Further, as a poetic expression, this notion has been recognized as inner, creative subjectivity, a domain of pre-articulation, from which the thoughts spontaneously emerge. Unlike *kokoro* which lies "beyond all conscious activity"[53], Western logical thinking allows the strategy of exclusion, dividing the one (whole/being) in two parts. This separation has become a methodological tool when investigating all material phenomena. According to Yuasa, in the Eastern worldview, human understanding of its environment emerges from intimate connection between them, and with no inclinations towards the knowledge that provides power and control over the nature. This Eastern notion of inseparability of mind and body enables considerable spontaneity of reaction, greater than the one which has to go through immediate process of "reunification" of the distinguished traits of human being, which Western rationalistic perspective proclaims. Even in the environment of such recognized integration, the Eastern theories observe the

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[52] James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis and John C. Maraldo (eds.), *Japanese Philosophy – A Sourcebook*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011, p. 1168.

[53] Ibid., p. 1224.

change in mind-body unity that occurs through the different sets of practices and training.

Yuasa's somatic theory, presented in *The Body – Toward an Eastern Mind Theory* explores the difference between Eastern and Western perspectives of mind-body issue. The fundamental distinction between these philosophies, Yuasa finds in Western limitation to theoretical speculation, whereas Eastern standpoint confirms the aspect through "practical, lived experience"[54]. His cross-cultural dialectical reasoning has been grounded in Buddhism, the work of modern Japanese thinkers Watsuji Tetsuro and Nishida Kitaro, and Merleau-Ponty's theory. As a response to Heidegger's notion of temporality, Watsuji's spatial philosophy interconnects the individual and society in order to explicate what it means to exist in the world. In Japanese language, the word *ningen* (人間) which literally means "between person and person" is used to describe a human being. To exist in *betweeness*, "as a human being by virtue of one's body"[55] denotes being in the world through the spatio-relational aspects. Yuasa contrasts Watsuji's standpoint on the body to Cartesian *res extensa* which presumes "the spatial experience appearing to the self"[56]. The space is *pre-*subjective, argues Yuasa, and as such it enables different *structural*

[54] Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body – Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1987, p. 18.

[55] Ibid., p. 39.

[56] Ibid., p. 40.

interconnections through which one *becomes* a human subject. Drawing on ancient Japanese folklore, Watsuji claims that the Japanese never separated the mind from the body, and this type of harmony has been reflected to the relation between the subject and the object, the self and nature. Buddhist principle of the "oneness of body-mind" (*shinjin ichinyo* 神人一如) has also been detect by Yuasa in Watsuji's *carnal body* whose attractiveness to other bodies enables interconnection which is neither purely physical nor psychological.

Similarly, Nishida defines reality as self-unification of subject and object ("unity of opposites"). In order to explain Nishida's concept of "acting intuition" (*kouiteki chokkan* 行為的直観) as a basic principle of a being, Yuasa draws attention to a body that *is seen* and that *sees.* In spite of being comparable to Merleau-Ponty's interpretation, Nishida's embodied *visibility* refers to objectivity "which is seen from the outside"[57] by others, and not by the subject itself. A privileged position of the body that *sees* and the one being *seen* cannot be found in Nishida's philosophy. Yuasa understands acting intuition primarily as a "bodily relation to that world-space"[58]; Watsuji and Nishida agree on a standpoint that the being is defined through its location[59] – the things in one's environment condition the "subject ego-consciousness".

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[57] Ibid., p. 51.

[58] Ibid., p. 55.

[59] By "location", I refer to Japanese philosophical term *basho* (place) which Yuasa explicates as "fundamental restriction on beings's existence" (ibid., p. 57).

Nishida's *unity of opposites* is not reduced to the self-environment binary, but is recognized in the very *logic of the subject*. Namely, criticizing the limitations of the Western philosophical subjectivism, Nishida asserts that mediation between two opposite standpoints – privileging the consciousness or the instinct, is necessary, instead of enforcing the one-sidedness of each approach. [60] His notion of *self-contradictory identity* outlines the relatable oppositions, and as such should be understood as a theoretical approach which insists on interconnecting the mutable counter-stands.

Yuasa's significant contribution to the idea of "unified contradictory subject" is disclosed in the notion of "bright" and "dark" consciousness. "Bright consciousness" has been classified as that which is aware of the self and the object (in its everyday life-space), whereas "dark *cogito*" refers to its concealed layer of impulse and perception.

> Behind this dark consciousness lurks a capacity unifying all acts of consciousness, such as thinking, willing, emotion, and perception in their differentiating development. […] As they enter into the layer of dark consciousness, the general forms of conscious acts like thinking, willing and emoting, converge into, and are reduced to, the "unifying force" of the undifferentiated interiority of experience. This is probably what is meant by immersion of "what is general at the bottom of what is general." The self in this manner advances from the various acts of consciousness toward the deeper and more general (undifferentiated) unifying force.[61]

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[60] See more, Matteo Cestari, "The Knowing Body – Nishida's Philosophy of Active Intuition", *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. 31, no. 2, 1998: 179-208.

[61] Yuasa, *The Body*, p. 62.

Drawing on the title of Nishida's book *From That Which Functions to That Which Sees,* Yuasa suggests that knowing of the world could not be reached through the active functioning of *cogito*, but "one has to deny the subsistent modality of the ego-consciousness qua functioning, and as it were, immerse oneself retrogressively into interiority of the self itself"[62]. Therefore, the *visceral perception* establishes as a focal point for understanding the other. The layer of "dark cogito", neglected in the Western philosophy, proves to be essential for Japanese understanding of the world. Nishida's active intuition presumes the act of a body whose (passive) perception manifests as an intuition. The preceding state of self-awareness, that which is immediate, and not differentiating subject and object is what Nishida marks as *pure experience*. According to Yuasa, this concept, influenced by Henri Bergson and William James's philosophical thinking, delineates the "immediate apodicticity" of practical correlation to the world.[63] Borrowing the concepts of Watsuji and Nishida, Yuasa indicates that the fundamental aspect of a being is to be found in an integration of the opposites as they are bound by complementary positions. Yuasa detects matching approach of the Eastern somatic theory in the work of Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre who attempt to overcome Cartesian dualism.

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[62] Ibid., p. 63.

[63] Ibid., p. 65.

Despite theoretical differences between Bergson and Merleau-Ponty on the issue of external and internal perception[64], Yuasa acknowledges their path to interiority of self-consciousness, and proposes a further inspection of inner realms as a subversive strategy of diverging the route of modern Western philosophy.

Another consequential figure of Japanese somatic theory is phenomenologist Ichikawa Hiroshi whose work is fairly unknown to the Western audience. In *Seishin toshite no shintai (The Body as Spirit)* (1975) and *Mi no kouzou: shintairon wo koete (The Structure of Incarnate Body: Beyond the Theories of the Body)* (1993), Ichikawa insists on materiality, but equally highlights that the "spirit" is another aspect of the lived body. Contrasting Descartes' mind-body divide as well, Ichikawa argues that it is "wrong to see the spirit and the body as two existential principles, and to grasp reality in their intersection and separation, [but instead one should] consider this unique structure as itself fundamental"[65], with both spirit and body being its "abstracted" aspects. Ichikawa's taxonomy of the body is rather elaborate – it is inspected as a

[64] Opposing to Bergsonian reduced concept of body as object being perceived as an image through "inner feeling", Merleau-Ponty outlines the notion of "deep sensitivity" beneath the skin which enables the "contact with the external world" (Ibid., p. 171)

[65] Quoted in Chikako Ozawa-De Silva, "Beyond the Body/Mind? Japanese Contemporary Thinkers on Alternative Sociologies of the Body", *Body & Society*, Vol. 8, no. 2, 2002, p. 24. (Ichikawa's work has not yet been translated in English, but many of his passages were translated and introduced to Western audience by Nagatomo Shigenori and his *Attunement Through the Body*, as well as through Ozawa-De Silva's text.)

phenomena (the subject body, the object body, the body I perceive as my body perceived by another, the body of the other, the body as *Implexe* –the intricate body) and as a structure (structure as functioning, orientational structure, intentional structure, the mine-ness of the body, the self and the other, the formation of structure, the body as spirit). [66] Additionally, Ichikawa differentiates fourteen divergent meanings of the word (身) *mi* – as whole existence, heart, social status, socialized self, multiple individual selves, life, garments on the body, the way of the body, a whole body, living flesh, dead flesh, a living plant. Without consideration of each mentioned facet of Ichikawa's body philosophy, I will focus on the body *qua* subject as it offers Japanese insight to the inner horizons of embodied subjectivity. Ichikawa asserts that

> We live it from within, grasping it immediately. This body is a basis for our action, penetrating through a bright horizon of consciousness to an obscure, hazy horizon. It is always present with us. In spite of this, or because of this, it in itself remains without being brought to awareness. In this sense, we should say we do not *have* the body, we *are* the body.[67]

The immediacy of living *from within*, and with a bodily established as necessary for *cogito*, originates a standpoint that disregards any implication of *possessive* structure. The body is not an object one *has*, but a determinant that *is*, and as

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Quoted in Shigenori Nagatomo, "Ichikawa's View of the Body", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 36, no. 4, October 1986, p. 376.

such, it is a subjective agency. Therefore, Nagatomo suggests, Ichikawa's philosophy of the body *qua* subject negates a possibility of *external perception* as a key element of subject formation.[68] Ichikawa exemplifies this through phenomenology of pain, that is, by our ability to determine "its position *prior* to a visual or tactile replacement"[69]. The proposed standpoint implies that the *introceptiveness* defines the body subject as its perception is not limited to external feature.

Further, Ichikawa introduces the notion of "bodily dialogue" which occurs between the perceiver and the perceived object, conversely not through the "*surface* of the perceptual organs"[70] but rather through preconscious recognition. Similar to Merleau-Ponty, he also emphasizes the interdependence between the body and its environment, asserting that "a deepening of inner understanding with regard to the objectivity of objects is at the same time a deepening of understanding of self"[71]. Such claim offers a perspective of inspecting other cultures (Japan) without postcolonial anxieties of who proclaims knowledge and from which position. The idea that we are producing the knowledge about ourselves when examining the Other, is not innovative, nor radical. However, these identity constructs derive from the juxtaposition of

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., p. 378.

[71] Ibid., p. 380.

striking distinctions which are (inevitably) hierarchal, whereas in this case, one should rather think in terms of mutability that provokes self-understanding.

Another aspect that relates proposed argument is Ichikawa's concept of "the body I perceive as my body perceived by another" which presumes "double sensation". By external factor the body is prompted "to return to the self"[72], and this self-reflexivity fundamentally expresses the experience of the interchangeability. The state of transversal experiencing is illustrated as "'intuition of identity' between that which does the touching and that which is touched"[73]. This affirms that somatic relation, the one between the body as subject and the body as object, establishes itself as preconscious. Further, the environment of the living body, both internal and external, presumes *directionality* and, according to Ichikawa, such "devisable whole" (living body) operates through active process which the body is not conscious of – *orientational structure,* and of which it is – *intentional structure.* The aspect of *orientational* structure which I would like to draw attention to, as relevant in terms of visceroceptivness (examined in latter chapter), is Ichikawa's point that self-functional activities of the body (autonomic nervous system, internal secretions) which we are usually unaware of, provide and regulate the

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., p. 381.

conditions for conscious activities.[74] The activities of the body are thus dependable on "closely integrated" state of *orientational* and *intentional* structures. As consciousness is directed towards something, "it cannot be, a the the same time, thetically aware of itself" but it does conceal "a prereflective conscious from the self".[75] Interestingly, having in mind that we are "hiding" certain aspects of our own body, or that our bodies are "so close to us, [that it] is difficult to grasp what the body actually is"[76], it is reasonable to suggest that the great distance from the body we inspect, reversely, implies that our knowledge is quite accurate. This thesis should be read as an attempt to illuminate the inner, *invisible* and prereflective aspects of the body positioned at a long distance from *my own* body whose preconsciousness *I* perpetually neglect. The unity of the body that Ichikawa presumes, could be understood through the encounter of *my intentional* structure with the *orientational* structure of the body *I* inspect. Ichikawa's argument that "meaning is that which the living body bestows upon the ambiance, at the same time meaning is given to the living body by the ambiance"[77], highlights mutability and interchangeability between the bodies in question. The ambiance and the living body are co-relatable

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[74] Ibid., p. 383.

[75] Ibid., p. 386-387.

[76] Quoted in Ozawa-De Silva, "Beyond the Body/Mind?", p. 24.

[77] Quoted in Shigenori Nagatomo, *Attunement Through the Body*, Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1992, p. 30.

elements that indicate the ambiguity of meaning and hence, multitude of understandings is expectable. Orientalism or *Nihonjinron* discourses, or any nuanced standing between them, are fragmented interpretations that would have more solid outlook if intersected with their oppositional correlative, or if enforced from their distanced (op)position.

As noted by Aaaron L. Miller, placing Japan and the West as counterparts in regard to their philosophies of the body (mind-body unity against mind-body divide) proves to be a dangerous approach, being mindful of Socrates or Spinoza's "integrative" mind-body theory. In point of fact, Japanese thinkers discussed above, share their orientation with, and often draw from the Western phenomenologists. Nevertheless, generalization set aside, Japanese and Western somatic philosophical thinking significantly differs, if we consider the dominant currents within each environment. One cannot neglect such cultural distinctions, in spite of the sparse exceptions that contradict the prevalent orientation. Precisely through unifying the apparent differences, the meaning could be acquired.

250 This chapter provided an overview of the Japanese discourse on the embodiment, which would be further discussed in the following chapters. The next chapter aims to outline the issue of language in the Japanese context, implying the crucial role of silent, visual aspects of the body in communicative practices.

Surpassing the Language

Although the body depends on language to be known, the body also exceeds every possible linguistic effort of capture. It would be tempting to conclude that this means that the body exists outside of language, that it has an ontology separable from any linguistic one, and that we might be able to describe this separable ontology.

Judith Butler, *How Can I Deny That These Hands and This Body Are Mine?*

Japanese language is a complex system of three different scripts – *hiragana* (basic Japanese syllabary of 46 characters used for native words that are not written in ideogram, as well as verb and adjective inflections and particles), *katakana* (phonetically same as hiragana, used for transcriptions of foreign language words, loan words, onomatopoeia, scientific terms)[78] and *kanji* (adopted Chinese characters used in writing one or more words with at least one of from each categories of two readings: *on yomi* – Chinese "sound reading" and *kun yomi* – Japanese "meaning reading"). Also, *romaji* – an application of Latin script in Japanese language is an inherent segment of Japanese writing system. This specifically complex writing system enforces the individual to "maintain throughout his or her lifetime a continually growing relationship with the written language, one which moves constantly towards a great

[78] Hiragana and katakana are often referred collectively as kana.

mastery of the non-phonetic"[79]. Noel Burch claims that Japanese language is the only such in the world that practiced equal usage of a phonetic and a non-phonetic writing system which enabled the Japanese to effectively deal with Western technology, far better than those who kept non-phonetic system to this day. Following Jacques Derrida's premises on logocentrism and "a hypothetical grapho-centrism" as opposite ideologies, he further concludes that linear and non-linear writing modes supported the radicalization of Chinese thought in Japanese aesthetics and art.[80]

One of the most recognizable names in *Nihonjinron* discourse is Kindaichi Haruhiko who wrote *Nippongo (The Japanese Language)* (1957)[81] – a book known

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[79] Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979, p. 36.

[80] Ibid., p. 41.

[81] During the postwar period, within commanding self-orientalist discourse, Japanese language was also a subject of extreme criticism. It was considered "limited" facilitating only emotional instances and not providing any logical communicative agency. In 1946, famous Japanese writer Shiga Naoya published an essay titled "Japanese Language Problems" in influential journal *Kaizo* in which he proposed replacing Japanese language with another language such as French. Such suggestions were also visible in the past when Mori Arinori recommended to appoint English as the national language. Mori defended his position with an attitude that the Japanese were eager to modernize their nation but such task would be unfruitful with a weak tool such as Japanese language (which was actually derivative from Chinese and therefore never autonomous). He proclaims a strategy of abandoning the linguistic amalgam of Japanese and Chinese, that is – a "weak medium of communication", and infusing English language as a language of Japan which has had and will continue to have a great use outside Japanese territory. In Japanese language and its "incompleteness", Shiga found great danger to national prospects, arguing that possibly the war could have been avoided, had this replacement occurred sooner. Shiga's radical proposal motivated Kindaichi to write *Nippongo* which leads to conclusion that Japanese language has been a subject of both empowering and disempowering ideologies.

as a classic defense of the national language and the nation itself, following the logic of "supposedly perfect isomorphism"[82]. Kindaichi promotes the "unique position" of Japanese language among the languages of "civilized countries", insisting that Japanese was not influenced by other languages due to its both geographical and linguistic isolation. He acknowledges direct Chinese influence – especially on vocabulary but then lessens it in a way by reminding us that this influence happened "hundreds of years ago, and that there has been no such influence since".[83] Although Chinese influence has been acknowledged to some extent, in *Nihonjinron* discourse it is often rendered as peripheral since it is a matter of antiquity.

The problem of Japanese language and "lack of its originality" has been a topic in Tze-Yue G. Hue's *Frames of Anime – Culture and Image-Building* (2010) where she singles out the Japanese complex of "borrowed language" and elaborates a viewpoint that "constant national 'desire' to seek a referential space for self-understanding, self-projection and self-expression led to discovery and application of a new medium [Japanese animation] in the twentieth century".[84] This argument could be supported by famous Japanese professor and cultural

[82] Referring to a relation between speaker of the Japanese language and carrier of Japanese culture opposite from those par example of English or French domain differencing various cultures and nations. See more: Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*.

[83] Haruhoko Kindaichi, *The Japanese Language*, Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2010, p. 33.

[84] Tze-Yue G. Hu, *Frames of Anime*, Hong Kong University Press, 2010, p. 18.

theorist, Kato Shuichi's work which implies that Japan's profound sensibility to aesthetic results as a consequence of the country's long-lasting isolation politics. "Japanese culture became structured with its aesthetic values at its center. Aesthetic concerns prevailed even over religious beliefs and duties"[85].

Hu proposes the method of "preframing of reality and truth" in Japan in the context of visual forms where phenomena are free of "already pre-arranged or pre-classified by an existing organized language"[86]. Author supports this thesis with the notions of both Eastern and Western philosophical explorations of language limitations, starting from Zen Buddhism *Lankavatara Sutra* (translated in English by famous Japanese author Suzuki Daisetz T.) which diminishes the spoken and written words:

- "the truth is beyond the words",
- "words are not the highest reality, nor is what is expressed in the words the highest reality",
- "the attachment to words as having self-nature takes place owing to one's clinging to [...] false imaginings since beginningless time",
- "even when there are no [corresponding] objects there are words, Mahamati; for instance, the hare's horns, the tortoise's hair, a barren woman's child, etc. —they are not at all visible in the world but the

[85] Quoted in Dani Cavallaro, *Japanese Aesthetics and Anime*, Jefferson, NC & London: McFarland & Company, 2013, p. 47.

[86] Ibid., p. 16.

words are; Mahamati, they are neither entities nor nonentities but expressed in words. If, Mahamati, you say that because of the reality of words the objects are, this talk lacks in sense. Words are not known in all the Buddha-lands; words, Mahamati, are an artificial creation. In some Buddha-lands ideas are indicated by looking steadily, in others by gestures, in still others by a frown, by the movement of the eyes, by laughing, by yawning, or by the clearing of the throat, or by recollection, or by trembling." [87]

This standpoint could be accompanied with Heidegger's conviction that the problem with Japanese language is that "it lacks the delimiting power to represent objects related in an unequivocal order above and below each other"[88]. Not only that the words are beyond reality (Zen) but it seems that Japanese language evades the principles of rational order or categorization. In Heidegger's *On the Way to the Language* (1956), a dialogue takes place between an "inquirer" and a certain Japanese, mediating on questions of language, hermeneutics and possibility of communicative interchange between the interlocutors coming from different cultures. Reminiscing of the prominent Japanese philosopher, Kuki Shuzo (with whom Heidegger had contact) and his attempt to examine the essence of Japanese art through European aesthetic

[87] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (trans.), *Lankavatara Sutra: A Mahayana Text*, Motilal Banarsidass, 2009.

[88] Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, New York: Harper & Row, 1982, p. 2.

concepts, the inquirer asserts the certain danger that arises from the language of the dialogue – not of *what*, nor the *way* it was discussed but the radically different "nature of language" or, we should add, the variance of the bodies that produce it. The further critical issue emerges when defining or speaking about something which then conforms the object of a discussion. The hidden nature of language and "house of Being" (which implies the essence of language) cannot be fully comprehended by European (metaphysical) conceptualizations. Aware of different concepts of the East and the West, Heidegger uses the inquirer to ask the Japanese "what does the Japanese world experience or understand by language" in European sense. Interestingly, after a silent pause the response comes in the following manner – "there is a Japanese word that says the essential being of language, rather than being of use as a name for speaking and for language"[89]. This is further articulated through cohering the notion that "the essential being of language cannot be anything linguistic"[90] with the "house of Being". Heidegger then proposes that the certain hints and gestures (visible in *noh* drama when, for example on the empty stage, actor uses his open hand and positions it in the eyebrow level to depict mountain scenery) touch upon the nature of language "without doing it inquiry". This conclusion is similar to Japanese psychologist Sasaki Masao's reasoning on formation of the

[89] Ibid., p. 23.

[90] Ibid., p. 24.

images and what he names "empty writing" – practice of using forefinger to write kanji on the palm or in the air, "in order to bring the required form […] into consciousness"[91]. In both instances, the body enables the imaginary appearances. Could it be that Heidegger's articulation of the language problem suggests the same notion as *Nihonjinron* theories of foreign inadequacy to comprehend the Japanese? Is it, therefore, possible to achieve deeper understanding through the images of the bodies as they bypass the structural and discursive differences of the languages, sharing the same biological patterns and conditionality?

Barthes writes about knowing the foreign language without understanding it –

> to descend to untranslatable, to experience its shock without ever muffling it, until everything Occidental in us totters and the rights of the 'father tongue' vacillate – that tongue which comes to us from our fathers and which makes us, in our turn, fathers and proprietors of a culture which, precisely, history transforms into 'nature'.[92]

Perhaps it is possible to grasp the kind of language Barthes dreams about – that which does not assume the words that came from the mouths of "our or their" fathers, but which is instantly produced and comprehended through bodies

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[91] Burt C. Hopkins (ed.) *Phenomenology: Japanese and American* Perspectives, Springer Science, 1999, p. 174.

[92] Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, p. 6.

which show resistance to ideology.

Consequently, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the language serves as congruous and highly applicable when dealing with the questions of art and culture in Japan. In his conception of language, the body is a vessel that enables thoughts and ideas, for "the ideas we are speaking of would not be better known if we had no body and no sensibility; it is then that they would be inaccessible to us"[93].

In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), he critically evaluates both empiricist and intellectualist theories of language, noting that language accomplishes thought and not presumes it, that is – speech only completes the thought and does not translate a "ready-made thought".

The primacy of perception in Merleau-Ponty's term, refers to a body as a base for experiencing the world, because "every perception is a communication" by "coupling of our body with the things"[94], that is to say that the perceived object can never be separated from the one who perceives it.

Later in his posthumously published work, *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964), the notion of embodiment diverted his attention from phenomenology to "flesh of the world" which stands for intertwining and reversibility of the

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[93] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 150.

[94] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London & New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 332.

sensate and the sensible. Presuming that communication is always pre-established, Merleau-Ponty suggests that in order to

> understand language as an originating operation, we must pretend to have never spoken, [...], look at it as deaf people look at those who are speaking, compare the art of language to other arts of expression, and try to see it as one of those mute arts.[95]

J. B. Pontails observes that Merleau-Ponty always relates language "to forms of pre-linguistic expression, like painting, where he sees meaning emerge, but in a less articulated way"[96].

By "secreting its own signification", art without words – such as music and painting – communicates with its audience on the level of idea exchange demonstrating Merleau-Ponty assertion that "the fact is that we have the power to understand beyond what we could have spontaneously thought"[97]. In Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of language, thought and language are not absolutely relatable, language is not considered as a sign of thinking.

The matter of language is closely related to the notion of silence. Thought and language are joined in a certain transformative process which then leads to differentiating of *thinking language* and *speaking thought*. As silence envelops the

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[95] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964, p. 46.

[96] Quoted in M.C. Dillon, "The Unconscious: Language and World", *Merleau-Ponty in Contemporary Perspectives*, Patrick Burke & Jan Van Der Veken (eds.), Springer-Science, 1993, p. 80.

[97] Mearleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 219.

language on the level of "thinking language" or is required before and after "speaking thoughts", Merleau-Ponty suggests that "language lives only from silence"[98] . The meaning which signs of language enable emerges from the interval that comes between the words. Merleau-Ponty uses metaphor of footprint as a mark of body movement in order to imply the meaning of thought that language carries. Acknowledging his classification of two languages – empirical and creative, we should address the importance of silence in terms of creative language which "frees the meaning captive in the thing"[99], allowing us to probe the uninspected meanings that come from the unvoiced bodies of Japanese cinema. Film director's position stands in the same platform as writer's or painter's, only to be installed in their fine middle – not on the "wrong side"[100] of the writer who only has to deal with language, nor in the "silent world of lines and colors" of painter's expression. Merleau-Ponty suggests that "we must uncover the threads of silence with which speech is intertwined" [101] and the medium of both cinema and body appear to be appropriately the most suitable for this task. Not just that silence enables the comprehension of what has been said but it offers communicative strategies

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[98] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 233.

[99] Galen A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993, p. 82.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., p. 83-84.

which produce the meaning in equally ambiguous ambience. "There is no choice to be made between the world and art, or between 'our senses' and absolute painting, for they blend into one another."[102]

In this study, the same precondition follows – cinema and body are raveled to the degree that they should not be inspected separately. Drawing on Federic Jameson's notion that the visual is "*essentially* pornographic" and that the films in general "ask us to stare at the world as though it were a naked body"[103], we are bound to uncover all the layers which conceal Japan's body and silently look at its undisguised flesh.

As Susan Sontag remarks, Barthes views Japan as "aesthete's utopia", a "culture where aesthete goals are central" which "liberates" the prosperity of signs. The comprehension of the affluence of signs does not occur firstly through language but, I argue, through *visceral perception*. The body is the base that contrives the formation of the contact with the (outer) world. In this sense, we should explore the *visceroceptive* spectatorship which implies that communication and transgression of ideas occur through body images on the screen and in the "real" bodies of audience.

The human dissection has not been a frequent practice among the Japanese, due to Confucian doctrines which abandon the idea of damaging the

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[102] Ibid., p. 86.

[103] Frederic Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*, New York & London: Routledge, 1992, p. 1.

wholeness of the body. Furthermore, Shinto belief of impurity, associated to those dealing with the dead, resulted with irregular autopsies conducted by the "invisible technicians", lowest class – *eta*, the only ones willing to deal with dead humans and animals, while the regular physicians enjoyed the "spectacle" of such performance.[104] The curiosity for seeing what is usually hidden, has been apparent among the Japanese, and especially palpable if mediated through art.

The first European book, printed and published in Japan was an illustrated five volume collection entitled *Kaitai shinsho (A New Book of Anatomy)* (1774). This anatomical atlas by German author Johann Adam Kulmus has been considered as an inferior writing in Europe of that time, but Japanese physicians Maeno and Sugita were extremely impressed with detailed, "real" portrayal of the internal organs and skeletal system.[105] Borrowing Witgenstein's notion that a picture is a fact, in order to explain this Japanese fascination, Morris F. Low suggests that Western "precise depictions of human anatomy introduced a naturalism which the Japanese found new, a visual discourse which led to a shift towards realism in Japanese art as well, a different way of imagining the world"[106].

On a track of Tanaka Katsuhiko's impression that "the habit of pessimism

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[104] Moris F. Low, "Medical representations of the body in Japan: Gender, class, and discourse in the eighteenth century", *Annals of Science*, Vol. 53, no. 4, 1996, p. 347.

[105] Ibid., p. 351.

[106] Ibid., p. 354.

towards the mother tongue"[107] is unquestionable trait of Japan's cultural identity, and acknowledging the fact that Japanese language has never been used (written) without the aid of the Chinese, it is viable to suggest that in Japan, apart from (spoken) language, the other communicative practices are expected and desired. Before I expound the term *visceral perception* in the context of Japan and its cinema, it is necessary to first elaborate the issue of silence in the context of Japanese culture.

[107] Quoted in Lee Yeounsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*, Hononlulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996, p. 14.

I: Certainly–because the one thing that matters is whether this dialogue, be it written or spoken or neither, remains constantly coming.
J: The course of such a dialogue would have a character all its own, with more silence than talk.
I: Who could simply be silent of silence?
J: That would be authentic saying...
I: and would remain the constant prologue to the authentic dialogue of language
I: Above all, silence about silence...
J:Because to talk and write about silence is what produces the most obnoxious chatter...

Martin Heidegger,
A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer

Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and so long as we do not describe the action which breaks the silence. The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning the world.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty,
Phenomenology of Perception

Following two quotations above, writing about silence appears to be unappealing yet mandatory task. Overly repeated, John Cage's assumption that "there is no such thing as silence" has almost been canonized and continues to echo in the Western discourses. On the other hand, Michel Foucault's *archeology and plurality of silence* have been equally prominent. In order to understand the term *visceral perception,* we need to explore silence in the context of Japanese cultural practices. It is first necessary to address a topic of nonverbal transmission and an implicit way of communication existent in Japanese society. This chapter suggests that enforced silence in the domain of Japanese film and

performing arts evokes the intuitive reaction among the audience. Accustomed to taciturnity which is highly appreciated in Japanese culture, the spectators effectively correspond to the performance and "complete" it as a result of implemented silence. Without any intention of cultural essentialism, I argue that due to distinctive attributes and specificities of firmly established communicative practices in Japan, non-verbal expressions operate as significant aspects in perception of Japanese art.

Anatomy of silence

Although there are scholars who suggest that silence is a form of speech (Matarazzo, Hess, Saslow, Saville-Troike) and not its unambiguous opposition, it is possibly the most suitable reasoning not to offer a definitive inference when engaged with a subject of such intricate features. Nevertheless, its social and communicative dimensions remain undeniable, regardless of various approaches and perspectives.

When dealing with the employment and meaning of silence in Japanese culture, literature often examines the context of cross-cultural communication and (mis)understanding. Edward S. Hall's contribution to the field of intercultural communication is indisputable, as well as his influence on

theorists interested in nonverbal communication in Japan (Ishii, Miike)[108]. In his book *Beyond Culture* (1976), Hall differentiates high and low context cultures, marking Japan's tendency towards high context messages in communication. "A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. "[109]

This perspective allows us to acknowledge the prominence of the body itself in message conveying process. It can be also said that in high-context cultures spoken language exists only as a fragment of communication activity, and that its explicitness presuming definitive meanings is often referred to as an unwelcomed mode of transmission. Therefore, silence of the body enounces the meanings which could solely emerge beyond the reach of the words.

Various Japanese scholars pointed out the importance of silence as a feature of national expression. Toyama Shigehiko's concept of Japanese *point logic* resonates idea that intimacy does not need verbalization of the details[110], while Kindaichi Haruhiko embraces indirectness of the Japanese speaker and elliptical and concise speech. Proclaiming that Japanese arguments can only seem illogical due to a lack of its' explicit premises, logician Oide Akira also

[108] See more in Everett M. Rogers, William B. Hart, Yoshitaka Miike, "Edward T. Hall and The History of Intercultural Communication: The United States and Japan", *Keio Communication Review* No. 24, 2002 http://www.mediacom.keio.ac.jp/publication/pdf2002/review24/2.pdf

[109] Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, New York: Anchor Books, 1976, p. 91.

[110] Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, p. 38.

maintains the attitude of commemorating silence.[111] In general, for the Japanese the public discussion indicates certain "thrusting one's opinion upon audience"[112].

Many Japanese proverbs such as *kuchi wa wazawai no moto* (the mouth is the origin of disasters), *iwanu ga hana* (not saying is the flower), *kiji mo nakazuba utaremai* (the pheasant would not be caught but for its cries), *naku neko nezumi torazu* (a mewing cat will not catch a mouse) indicate the social and political threat of loquacity and the encouragement of silence. Tsujimura Akira finds the reasons for this "silence prerogative" in the historical fact that the Japanese "subjected themselves to restraint during a long feudal era and to the regulation of speech under totalitarian regimes"[113]. Tsujimura's perspective could only be taken partially, in the light of the other totalitarian societies which did not develop the understanding that emerged from silence and taciturnity. This silent comprehension, quite common among the Japanese is complemented by the attitude which equates truthfulness with silence. Considering *uchi – soto* (inner–outer) dichotomy of Japanese communication system which is reflected directly in the Japanese language (honorific language – *keigo* differentiating

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Alexander Prasol, *Modern Japan: Origins of the Mind*, Hackensack, New Jersey & London: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010, p. 71.

[113] Akira Tsujimura, "Some Characteristics of the Japanese Way of Communication", *Communication Theory - Eastern and Western Perspectives*, D. Lawrence Kincaid (ed.), San Diego: Academic Press, INC. 1987, p. 120.

respectful, polite and humble form) and is also a primordial part of a social apparatus, the verbal expression relates to a field of one's outer body while truthfulness, manifested in silence is located in inner realm. [114] Many of the concepts that privilege this way of communication are to be found in ancient philosophies and religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. As marked in previous chapter, inadequacy of the language is also transparent in Zen Buddhism where "true" communication is established through experience. In addition, the Confucian code of conduct loquacity of individual thoughts could lead to disharmony of the group. Also valuing collectivism, Taoist perspective prefers quietness of the non-interference along with enforcement of the interdependence.

Ishin – denshin has been the factor of the utmost importance in traditional Japanese culture. In Zen Buddhist tradition, this term outlines the communication between the master and his pupil toward the initiation of the truth. Also, in everyday terminology it marks an unspoken mutual understanding, which is considered to be more than telepathy. This concept recognizes the immediate transmission of thoughts, a mutual sensation for which the spoken words are unnecessary. *Ishin–denshin* is found in the story of disciple who accomplished the truth by faintly smiling while looking at Buddha

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[114] Seneko K. Maynard, *Japanese Communication: Language and Thought in Context*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, p. 154.

admiring a white flower in his hand. The enlightenment was not prompted through listening to Buddha's preaching but through ordinary action of smiling. This intuitive, wordless communication is possible due to acquired experience and training.

Another Japanese concept that exempts silence is *haragei* which literally translates as "belly art". This corporeal notion assumes an implicit way of communicating, non-verbal mutual understanding and a "technique requiring sensitivity, experience and keen knowledge of others"[115].

Examining the significance of the silence, Takie S. Lebra notes that the Japanese

> believe that the truth lies only in the inner realm as symbolically located in the heart or belly. Components of the outer self, such as face, mouth, spoken words, are in contrast, associated with cognitive and moral falsity. Truthfulness, sincerity, straightforwardness, or reliability are allied to reticence. Thus a man of few words is trusted more than a man of many words. [116]

Viscera are therefore marked as a center of intuition, instinct and real intention. Japanese saying – *kuchi to hara ga hantai da* (the mouth is the opposite of belly – one's real intention) and *hara no naka de hidoku okoru* (belly is the container of the emotion) prove that true emotions are not openly displayed and that close

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[115] Michael L. Maynard, Senko K. Maynard, *101 Japanese idioms: Understanding Japanese Language and Culture Through Popular Phrases*, Lincolnwood, IL: Passport Books, 1994, p. 111.

[116] Takie S. Lebra, "The cultural significance of silence in Japanese communication," *Multilingua* 6-4, 1987, p. 345.

communication occurs through atmosphere of silence rather than the usage of words. Needless to say, silence is also integral part of the traditional form of ritual suicide – *seppuku,* when the abdominal cut categorically fractures the border between a true, instinctive inner realm and an outside world, terminating life in a wordless act.

Haragei is often related with another complex concept of Japanese communication pattern – *amae* which encourages nonverbal ambivalence and reluctance of self-expression. Famous Japanese psychoanalyst, Doi Takeo frames "the role of *amae* as an expectation that one's interlocutor can understand oneself without having to verbalize one's needs and feelings"[117]. Doi's work on the subject of *amae*, especially his book *The Anatomy of Dependence* (1973) insists on this uniquely Japanese configuration of "indulgent dependency" entrenched in mother–child relationship which later forms other social relationships, has been almost compulsory for scholars interested in the field of Japanese interpersonal and intercultural communication. [118] *Amae* operates as a corresponding relation between "concerned" and "dependent" communicator establishing idealized, mutual reliance. [119] Further, it serves as a key to

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[117] Takeo Doi, quoted in Yoshitaka Miike, "Japanese *Enryo-Sasshi* Communication and Psychology of Amae: Reconsideration and Reconceptualization", *Keio Communication Review*, no. 25, 2003, p. 95.

[118] For further reading see Miike.

[119] *Amae* is a noun from intransitive verb *amaeru* – to depend on another's benevolence. It derives

understanding Japanese culture in terms of highly valuated collectivism and group harmony which can be accomplished by, as suggested by Doi, subduing verbosity and activating another mechanism as a communicative strategy, that of *enryo* and *sasshi*.

Miike Yoshitaka's entry on *enryo–sasshi* theory in *Encyclopedia of Identity* vindicates the importance of nonverbal messages in Japanese social interaction. Naming Ishii Satoshi as a "Japanese pioneer in interpersonal and intercultural communication research"[120] who linked these two concepts[121], Miike asserts that *sasshi* "demands that one should be very perceptive and receptive in order to understand what others mean or to sense of what others want or need"[122]. I argue that this type of silent communication could find its ideal point of transference inside a film medium, spontaneously demanding of its audience to be sensitive, "guessing" the director's vision. Japanese film-making, born in the environment accustomed to such style of silent communication presupposes

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from the same root as adjective *amai* – sweet, forming a correlation between "sweetening" and "being sweetened". Doi strengthens *Nihonjinron* discourse by asserting that such word does not exist in other languages (see more: Takeo Doi, "Amae: A Key Concept for Understanding Japanese Personality Structure" in *Japanese Culture: Its Development and Characteristics*, Robert John Smith and Richard King Besrdsley (eds.), London & New York: Routledge, 2004 p. 134).

[120] Ronald L. Jackson II and Michael A. Hogg (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Identity*, Vol. I, SAGE Publications, 2010, p. 250.

[121] *enryo* refering to a restrain, not expressing true feelings in order to be considerate, and *sasshi* applying to a guess work capability to understand vague messages, a "mind reading".

[122] Jackson II and Hogg (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Identity*, p. 250.

spectators' susceptibility to others' desideratum. This type of understanding goes beyond semiotic film theory towards more personal, inner – "gut" comprehension, one that entails subtle relation between film director and his audience. Director's aesthetic relies on viewers' perceptiveness and competence to establish and conclude the message – his *enryo* activates the spectators' *sasshi* initiating a certain integrating process. Therefore, the collectiveness of Japanese national body could be seen not in terms of omnipresent unification and homogeneity but of insightful, supplemental communication practice. The magnitude of being "capable of accurately tuning into the faintest of signals"[123] allows silence to be Japan's own style of expression, developing verbal moderation and anticipatory inference which implores the artistic vision to be recognized on a visceral level.

Performing silence

Sociolinguist Naruse Takeshi's assertion that "verbosity kills aesthetics; it is vulgar to say aloud what can be clear without words..." [124] supports the attitude of desirable artistic use of silence.

In traditional Japanese theatrical performance, such as *noh*, words are

[123] Ryoichi Okabe, "Cultural assumptions East and West: Japan and the United States", *Intercultural communication theory: Current perspectives*, W. Gudykunst (ed.), Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983, p. 36.

[124] Quoted in Prasol, *Modern Japan: Origins of the Mind*, p. 140.

often inadequate to convey emotion and therefore the aesthetics of emptiness, understatement and abstraction is transcended by the masks with "non-moving lips". Even the craftsmen who make the masks try to emanate neutrality of the facial expression, leaving the actor to convey the certain feeling with his body language. On the stage, in classical Japanese theatre – *noh*, *bunraku*, *kabuki*, the masks, the puppets or the make-up subvert the "ordinary" body into a presence born in the liminal space of the real and dreamlike state where the body emanates a divine manifestation that reveals to the audience a transgression of time and space.

In *noh* drama, the entire performance is devoted to emitting the *ma* – an empty space, a gap, a pause, an interval or space between two movements or structural parts. This concept is inherent to other types of Japanese theater and different art forms – *kabuki*, *butoh*[125], music, painting and calligraphy. An appreciation of traditional Japanese theatre does not derive from the notion of mimesis as a mirror of reality, but through the artist's ability to emanate emotions with "formulaic and repetitive patterns of motion" even in the still performative occurrences in the setting of an empty space. "Concomitantly,

[125] Judith Hamera in "Silence That Reflects: Buthoh, *Ma*, and a Crosscultural Gaze" argues that *butoh* favours the "extreme images of deformity and insanity" in order to depart from restrains of traditional forms of Japanese theatre. Moreover, Hamera's text offers an insightful understanding of notion of *ma* as a "space between" which has been differently established and manifested in *noh* and *butoh*.

both the practitioner and the audience must feel engaged in the enactment of a particular embodied event."[126] This is particularly evident in *noh* which gives prominence to abstract, figurative expression instead of literal, and heavily relies on silence on a stage. *Ma* serves as an aesthetic principal with an emphasis on a distance between two things. The balance between *ma* and sound is most apparent in *noh itchō* – a recital followed by a single percussion instrument. "To the sensitive Japanese listener who appreciates this refined sound, the unique idea of *ma* – the unsounded part of this experience – has at the same time a deep, powerful, and rich resonance that can stand up to the sound."[127] One of the most influential Japanese architects Isozaki Arata and his exhibition "Ma: Space–Time in Japan" (1978–1981) shed the light on this concept to the Western audience.

> To sense something invisible is an essence of Japanese art. [...] In painting, the focus has often been on the margin rather than on a shape, in music on silence rather than the notes and in dance on stillness rather than a movement. [128]

Hence, the invisible and inaudible have been intrinsic aspects of Japanese culture, notably allowing *body thinking* and communicative practices which focus on the aspects that are usually neglected or undermined.

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[126] Cavallero, *Japanese Aesthetics and Anime*, p. 71.

[127] Toru Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence – Selected Writings*, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1995, p. 51.

[128] Arata Isozaki and Ken Tadashi Oshima, *Arata Isozaki*, London: Phaidon Press, 2009, p. 158.

Defining *butoh* seems to be a complex task as its emanated contradictions (unpleasant-poetic, distant-direct) leave the spectators "compelled to verbal contortions to articulate what they see"[129]. Hijikata Tatsumi has been the founder of this performance art which represents and simultaneously challenges traditional Japanese aesthetics and the body. From the late 1950s Hijikata's aesthetical movement problematized the communicative strategies that would evade deterministic concepts and customs. One of Hijikata's aims was to use the performing body as a means of rebellion against societal and cultural conventions, often inducing shock among the audience.

Butoh frequently employs a silent scream trope as it effectively contributes to elusiveness of this art form that paradoxically tries to free the body from control while being dependent on the response of spectators' body. In *Pensée du corps La philosphie à l'epreuve des arts gestuels japonais (dance, théâtre, arts martiaux)* (2012), Basil Dogains compares *butoh* dancer to a puppet:

> If the body, in its most primary manifestation and its mere existence, presents more intensity and depth than a conscious artistic intention, then we would have to seek the minimal degree of intention of a particularity, of a personal will. However, since a part of consciousness and will always remains in action, the regulatory ideal will consist in "being dead" while being alive or, at least, in giving to the body some properties based on pure inertia. For Hijikata in *butoh*, as we saw, the will to dance always includes surprising desire of dispossession and handicap. Handicap is like a limit where the body is silent and refuses any principle of will and

[129] Bruce Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh – Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 1.

> control. The dancer chooses to progressively give up all his ordinary capacities so as to become only an instrument, a tool, a mere support through which an uncontrollable intensity acts. [130]

In the early years of his performance, Hijikata's influential work *Forbidden Colors (Kinjiki)* (1959) revolved around the dance performed either in complete silence or to a recorded track of mixed sounds of harmonica, moaning and heavy breathing. Despite the sounds it produces, the *butoh* body should be understood as fundamentally silent as it is juxtaposed to verbosity of the classic narrative forms.

Contrasting various binaries – human-animal, male-female, young-old, healthy-disabled, East-West in influential solo performance – *Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese People: Rebellion of the Body* (1968), this artist addresses the issues of Japanese identity and a bodily disobedience to authority and confirmed societal norms. Bruce Baird relates Hijikata's work to Artaud's theatre of cruelty and suggests that, being inspired by German expressionist dance (especially Rudolf Laban), this prominent figure of *butoh* performed in order to demonstrate that the body had language that could confront the spoken and written language(s) of Japan, already "beset by conventions and limitations".[131] Hijikata developed the "techniques of the self" which Baird summarized in the following quote:

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[130] Quoted in Leopold Lambert (ed.), *The Funambulist Pamphlets: Spinoza*, New York: Punctum Books, 2013, p. 62.

[131] Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh*, p. 9.

> self-understanding (including an understanding of all of the conventions and practices that formed the self in an attempt to neutralize them), bodily ability, mental ability, communicative ability. Hijikata and his fellow artists came to these techniques, in part, while rebelling against that which constrains the body, including national, ethnic, or regional identity. And they came to the realization that the rebellion would not be easy, nor would it be accomplished singly. Thus, they recognized the need to communicate with others about their viewpoints, and the need to not be overwhelmed by competing ideas or elements but rather to hold them in their minds and allow them to remain in tension. [132]

Furthermore, motivated by Mishima Yukio's standpoint that the body is significantly more restricted in comparison to language, Hijikata experimented with a body on a stage – bending joints and the back in an opposite, "wrong" direction, relying on audience's (provoked) reaction which would offset the lack of determined narrative.

> Flesh splits and sears. Muscles give, weight sags. Noses wrinkle in disgust. Throats gag. These reactions by the audience to stimuli of the performance satisfy the demands of phenomenology. In the process, the audience engages with the pain of the demands of experience (while of course leaving other demands unmet), and in this way experience and the phenomenological search for actuality come together. [133]

His method of defragmentation of the body, allowing the "independence" of each body part has been fully embodied in the environment in which he could exploit the audience by enforcing their response to images of decontextualized violence or sexuality. Defamiliarization with *what is seen* and *experienced*, holds

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[132] Ibid., p. 10.

[133] Ibid., p. 67.

the viewer's attention and ultimately generates the conditions for his/her contribution to the work itself. In a search for new movements, Hijikata instructed the dancers not just to imagine a certain situation that they had never experienced (walking on razor blades) but to be aware that they are being observed from multiple perspectives while transferring the "occurrence" felt in one part of the body (e.g., finger cut) into a different one.[134] Abstraction is, accordingly, essential for both the performer and the audience. Hijikata explored the modes of expression that enabled the unconscious or the body to "spontaneously produce modifications in art that the conscious mind cannot produce"[135]. As the artist on a stage manifests the *distortion* of what the body is presumed to be and *becoming of* something else, the spectator's body is *entangled* in a performative act. The provoked reaction, in terms of observers' physical responses, enabled further "continuation" of the performance as Hijikata did not rely on fixed narratives. Thus, silent bodies of the performers and the spectators are engaged in an "exchangeable" creative act, even more that in standardized performing practices.

> For art lovers, it is that space between oneself while perceiving, and what is being perceived in the flow of time. This space is sensory because it determines how our senses are solicited and it is...'sensual' because of how our minds will respond to what is

[134] Ibid., p. 166.

[135] Ibid., p. 176.

aesthetically being perceived or expressed by artists.[136]

This type of "silence" both temporal and spatial, invites audience to participate in the artistic act; to use its own experience (and the body) in a certain imaginative process which takes place on the blurred line between dream and reality. As demonstrated in the case of *butoh* performance, anticipating the audience response as a means of completion of artistic vision, has been an established practice in a domain of Japanese art. Therefore, it is an aesthetic attribution which allows the multiplicity of perceptions. However, the purpose of this attribution of silence is only to mark the comprehension of the artistic intention that surpasses the language and which operates at the intuitive, corporeal altitude.

Reflecting silence

Apart from acknowledging that cinema in Japan is an extension of stage and not of photography as it is in the West, Donald Richie claims that there was no influence of the *noh* drama on the Japanese cinematic medium.[137] What seems to evade this type of conclusion is precisely the silent interdependence of director–audience relation. Keiko I. McDonald seminal work *Japanese Classical*

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[136] Quoted in Cavallero, *Japanese Aesthetics and Anime*, p. 26.

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[137] Donald Richie, *Japanese Cinema – Film Style and National Character*, New York: Anchor Books, 1971, p. xx.

Theatre in Film (1994) in detail explores the theatrical influences on Japanese cinema, many adaptations of famous Japanese plays to the screen, and formal properties of traditional Japanese theatre engaged in stylistic aspects in filmmaking of the notable directors.

During the early beginnings of film viewing, Japanese audience showed immense interest in mechanism of screen projection, which resulted in incorporating necessary explanation in the performance itself, similar to the practice of changing of scenography in front of the audience in *kabuki*. Another characteristic of classical theatre performance that cinema "borrowed" from was the active role of narrator exposed to the audience.

When dealing with the domain of Japanese cinema, silence functions as a communicative act, although, paradoxically, from the very beginning of the motion pictures showing in Japan (1896), cinema was never "silent". Namely, watching movies in theaters was always accompanied with the figure of *benshi* – a narrator or group of narrators "explaining" what was projected on a silver screen and whose role was "educational" as they enlightened the audience on matters of Western culture.[138] The popularity of such "explainer" was greater in Japan than in other countries and the reason for this extreme influence and

[138] Along with *benshi*, there were also *kowairo* who imitated the voices of the actors on the screen. I have further explored the role of *benshi* in "Bemusing the Audience: Probing the Narrative Diversions in *Symbol*", *Ekphrasis*, Vol. 15, no. 1, 2016: 75-85.

prestige is found in "Japanese enthusiasm for self-improvement"[139]. Thus, full experience of moving pictures could not be achieved in silent era and *benshi*'s role was fundamental, whereas today silence in sound films emphasizes the impact of the visual. Even though the first sound film appeared in 1926 (*Reimai, Dawn*), *benshi* impact has not faded away until mid- 1930s, bringing the silence into the visual experience of the sound movies and leaving audience to intuitively complement the moving images.

Japanese understanding of experience differs from Western – it is rather culturally specific and "shared" than universal phenomenon. As previously discussed, according to Nishida Kitaro's view, experience does not separate subject and object, nor is it material, individual and psychological but is viable as a domain of "intersubjective" meanings.[140]

Yuasa Yasuo's *Overcoming Modernity – Synchonicity and Image-Thinking* offers a perspective of mind-body integration as a philosophical foundation of thinking paradigm which integrates image-experience within it. The underlying principle of relation between self and world, Yuasa finds in visual expressions, in correlation from "seeing" to "seen" when "embodied subject (*shutai*) sees the

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[139] Richie, *Japanese Cinema*, p. 6.

[140] For further reading: Andrew Feenberg, "The Problem of Modernity in the Philosophy of Nishida", *Rude Awakenings*, J. Heising and J. Maralado (eds.), Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

world *in the midst of silence*"[141]. Yuasa suggests the path of "overcoming modernity"[142] by rectifying the beliefs in superiority of human ratio that professes infinite progress, dominant in philosophical claims of Descartes and Kant. According to Yuasa, differences in Western phonetic and Eastern pictograph communicative systems prove the assumption of language impact on the ideas and philosophies of certain culture. Emphasis on grammatical rules and sentence structures in Western languages, leads to development of logic and ontology that East lacks.

In the Eastern thought, visual perception is fundamental in cognition of the world, whereas auditory discernment is secondary to "image-thinking". Self-expression through images is a crucial point in the Eastern realm where verbal linguistic expression renders as subordinate. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, in a wordless state, the body

> is not a collection of particles, each one remaining in itself, nor yet a network of processes defined once and for all – it is not where it is or what it is – since we see it secreting in itself a 'significance' that comes to it from nowhere, projecting that significance on to its

[141] Yasuo Yuasa, *Overcoming Modernity – Synchonicity and Image-Thinking*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2008, p. 78.

[142] "Kindai no chokoku" was famous symposium held in 1942 in Kyoto where prominent intellectuals gathered to discuss issues of Japan's identity, cultural originality and transformative changes which occurred in cultural and technological domains through process of modernization. Insisting on an authenticity and originality of Japan's culture, the participants rejected the idea of European exclusivity to define modernity for the entire world.

material surrounding, and communicating it to other embodied subjects.[143]

We could argue that silence is more "tolerated" in the environment which gives prominence to visual perception. The noticeable dissonance between Japan and the West, especially on the subject of "silence appreciation" can be traced in Adachi Reito's informative text "Dubbing of silences in Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*: A comparison of Japanese and English language versions". Adachi points out that in general, Japanese animated movies have significantly more silences per 10 minutes that US animated films, and that the US translation of *anime* considerably tends to avoid silences of the original. Putting aside the variables of the dialogue styles in Japanese and English, Adachi claims that Japanese silences are reduced, along with narrative taboos – such as sexuality and violence[144], for "the purpose of explicitness, domestication, and avoidance of awkwardness"[145]. Interestingly, the US dubbing enforces "acoustic adaptations to a greater extent than linguistic modifications to fill the

[143] Mearleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 229.

[144] Adachi refers to the following avoidance in US version of Miyazaki's Oscar-winning *anime* fantasy - *Spirited Away:* the expression "torn from limb to limb", which resulted in extension of the dialogue for several seconds, and a "dramatic silence" of the scene in which a character finds himself in the dark and desolated backstreets which was modified with added voices and noise in the background, in order to spare US audience of feeling "uncomfortable" and thus, diminishing the director's intended vision of intense atmosphere and suspense.

[145] Reito Adachi, "Dubbing of silences in Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*: A comparison of Japanese and English language versions." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, Vol. 24, no. 1, 2016, p. 146.

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silences in the original Japanese version"[146]. Therefore, localizing silence and its use in the art forms reveals the possible communicative glitches which are usually neglected when encountering the foreign cultures.

In a culture with a long tradition of acknowledged mind-body unity, and as a being-inside-the-world, one's image experience can only be intuitively apprehended. As stated in this chapter, silence is an intermediary agent in corporeal production of meanings, also affirming the notion of Japanese aesthetics that more values suggestive over the explicit. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from both East and West, it seems justifiable to suggest that the silent bodies operate as deliberate and integral determinants of Japanese non-silent art forms – especially in cinema and theatrical performances. In a culture which highly values taciturnity, silence is a significant aspect of the performance as it provokes the audience to complement the perceived work of art.

[146] Ibid., p. 149.

Visceral Perception & Cinema

Art comes from a visceral need and is usually generated by something I have seen.

E.L. Konigsburg

You will never persuade my heart that it is wrong to tremble or my viscera that they are wrong in being moved.

Denis Diderot

The whole process of making movies and writing screenplays is visceral and intuitive.

Ridley Scott

The probing of the body in a relation to cinema has always been an integral part of film theory. In addition, the body in cinema has also been examined through different disciplines – philosophy, anthropology, social sciences, media and cultural studies. This cinema-body analysis has been two-folded; the body has been inspected as both image on the screen (representation) and as the subject which perceives the film (the viewer).

The occularcentric perspective which favors the eye (gaze, scopophilia, voyeurism) is predominant in psychoanalytic and feminist film theory and as such is still immensely employed. The precedence of the sense of vision has been found in the theoretical thinking of Andre Bazin, Bela Balazs, Dziga Vertov, Laura Mulvey, Slavoj Žižek *et al*. Understandably, given the fact that the film is a visual medium, the film theory gives significantly lesser prominence to the soundscape of film perception.

Although in the course of *gazing* at the distant *Other*, it seems reasonable

to employ the psychoanalytic approach, which consistently deals with the issues of constructing the identity and the relation between the Self and the Other, I have rather intentionally set this approach aside. As psychoanalytic perspective is still dominant in Serbian scholarship, it is expectable to think that in the conditions of such echoing discourses, adding another work of the same orientation lessens the contribution to academic community in terms of originality. Even more so, employing such theories in the analysis of the selected films for the purpose of this thesis, bears a risk of imposing the one-sided Western principle onto an object which could not be read exclusively through such fundamentally limited prism resulting *ad nauseam* in the same type of expected (and predictable) conclusions. Furthermore, even if we consider Japanese film through transnational paradigm while drawing on such perspective, there is a chance of categorically neglecting certain cultural specificities.

As Merleau-Ponty suggests, "the movies are particularly suited to make manifest the union of mind and body, mind and world, and the expression of one in the other", and they appeal to audience's ability "to decipher the world or men and to coexist with them", hence the openness of phenomenological approach proves to be the most suitable when exploring Japan and its cinema.[147]

[147] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology", *Sense and Non-Sense*, Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1992. p. 58.

Accordingly, the body in the context of Japanese cinema is examined by theoretical framework of both phenomenology and film philosophy.[148] In recent decades (especially from mid- 1990s), the film theorists have displayed an equal interest to such approaches as to those which previously dominated film studies – semiotic, narrative, psychoanalytic and feminist.

Nevertheless, the term *film phenomenology* is rather complex to define. Christian Ferencz-Flatz and Julian Hanich propose both broad and narrow determination of film phenomenology, primarily delineating the difficulties of comprehension of the term phenomenology itself, with plethora of varying theoretical positions, and also mark a prevalent tendency in film studies to utilize the qualifier "phenomenological" to a viewer's experience, regardless of theoretical conclusions being conducted in fairly subjective manner. In a broader but fundamentally indefinite sense, film phenomenology should be understood as an overall intersection of both terms. Moreover, film phenomenology supports interdisciplinary approach which allows cross-section of diverse, possibly conflicting positions within film theory, additionally generating confusion in the understanding of such lax and diachronic outlook. To illustrate another difficulty – the feminist or queer film phenomenologist who would insist on gender aspects and fail to consider the shared experience

[148] Even though many film-phenomenologist draw on Deleuze's work, due to his own (rather unfavorable) standpoint on phenomenology, in such occurrences, the term film philosophy renders as more precise.

of film viewing regardless of identity variables, complicates this matter to a greater degree.

The more preferable, yet normative exposition refers to "*invariant structures* of the film viewer's *lived experience* […] [with the focus] on *film*-as-intentional-object or *viewer*-as experiencing-subject"[149]. This chapter primarily outlines these phenomenological approaches to film medium and also focuses on co-relating such perspectives to the concepts deriving from neurophenomenological discourses and notions coded in Japanese culture, addressed in previous chapters. My aim is also to show how Merleau-Ponty's and other authors' phenomenological articulation of cinematic experience could be employed in exploration of "distant" cultures.

Merleau-Ponty & Phenomenological Touch(ing) of Cinema

Merleau-Ponty's main contribution to phenomenological aspect of the film theory is to be found in his Institute des Hautes Études Cinématographiques (IDHEC) 1945 lecture, "The Film and the New Psychology". At the very start, Merleau-Ponty dismisses an argument of mosaic structure of human vision, pointing out to a non-homogeneity of retina which is

[149] Christian Ferencz-Flatz and Julian Hanich, "What Is Film Phenomenology?", *Studia Phaenomenologica*, Vol. 16, 2016, p. 3.

rather blind to the certain observational parts, but due to perceptional reorganization of the retinal stimuli, the field of vision still establishes itself as coherent and congruent. Significantly, the invisible aspects of things also affect our perception, and as Merleau-Ponty asserts – we would live in a completely different realm if we could see the "intervals between things" as (actual) objects.

According to Merleau-Ponty, perception is not comprised of different (fragmented) sensory experiences but instead emerges from the wholeness of the body, as all senses are simultaneously activated. Drawing on *gestalt* theory, Merleau-Ponty disregards the approach of differentiating the "signs and their significance, between what is sensed and what is judged"[150], and applies the same conclusions on film medium. His logic of total corporeal perception registers identically in the cinematic form; the purpose of the fragmented part of a film (e.g. spoken words) is not to add ideas or sentiments to other parts (e.g. images), nor such ensemble emanates a "thought [n]or a reminder of sentiments we felt in our own lives"[151]. This claim suggests that the cinematic elements operate on different levels with no purpose of inter-transversal accumulation of already established ideas which generate single, secluded denotation. The film-viewing is rather a case of synesthetic experience, giving that film "speaks to all

[150] Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology", p. 50-51.

[151] Ibid., p. 56.

my senses at once"[152] and is not merely a sum of visual and audible certainties. Merleau-Ponty's notion of the film is essential to this thesis as it embodies the perspective most suitable for exploring the films of selected Japanese authors:

> Ideas and facts are just the raw materials of art: the art of the novel lies in the choice of what one says and what one does not say, in the choice of perspectives (this chapter will be written from the point of view of this character, that chapter from another's point of view), in the varying tempo of the narrative; the essence of the art of poetry is not the didactic description of things or the exposition of ideas but the creation of a machine of language which almost without fail puts the reader in a certain poetic state. [...B]ut the function of the film is not to make these facts or ideas known to us. Kant's remark that, in knowledge imagination serves the understanding, whereas in art the understanding serves the imagination, is a profound one. In other words, ideas or prosaic facts are only there to give the creator an opportunity to seek out their palpable symbols and to trace their visible and sonorous monogram. The meaning of a film is incorporated into its rhythm just as the meaning of a gesture may immediately be read in that gesture: the film does not mean anything but itself. The idea is presented in a nascent state and emerges from the temporal structure of the film as it does from the coexistence of the parts of a painting. The joy of art lies in its showing how something takes on meaning-not by referring to already established and acquired ideas but by the temporal or spatial arrangement of elements. As we saw above, a movie has meaning in the same way that a thing does : neither of them speaks to an isolated understanding; rather, both appeal to our power tacitly to decipher the world or men and to coexist with them.[153]

I have quoted Merleau-Ponty at length here to outline the inadequacies of drawing exclusively on one perspective, but such standpoint is particularly

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[152] Ibid., p. 50.

[153] Ibid., p. 57-58.

relevant in case of this study (dealing with distant Other), as it is exemplified through opposing the psychoanalytic or feminist paradigms of film theory in general, which enforce the meaning of "already established ideas". I will further discuss the standpoints of film phenomenologists who argue against such unilateral theoretical approach. But firstly, it is necessary to discuss the universal point of accessibility which Merleau-Ponty's film phenomenology provides.

Orna Raviv asserts that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach initiates a notion of cinematic point of view, which transcends the chasm between the spectator and the seen, external and internal, personal and impersonal.[154] Negating the various dichotomies upon which other viewpoints rely on, Merleau-Ponty envisions cinema as an organic tissue that connects the world, and ultimately stitches a whole specter of distinctions. When dealing with nationally determined cinema which inevitably carries the abundance of disparate aesthetical and ideological interpretations (of both filmmaker and spectator), one should understand them in the similar manner as Merleau-Ponty does with point of view in cinema –"not in terms of separate perspectives but as a 'counterpoint' a multiplicity of perspectives"[155]. The openness towards

[154] Orna Raviv, "The Cinemtic Point of View: Thinking Film with Merleau-Ponty", *Studia Phaenomenologica*, Vol. 16, 2016, p. 164.

[155] Ibid., p. 167.

the world, and the Other derives from the model which film implements through changes of perspective and editing.

> The ability to see the world from multiple points of view not only allows film viewers to *see* the same scene from more than one perspective, to see from near and far, or from around and behind as well as frontally, and thus to achieve a more varied and visually imaginative cinematic experience, but also implies an openness to the world and to other people.[156]

Raviv points out to the significant aspect of Merleau-Ponty's *structure of viewing* which denotes that the act of being viewed is incorporated in the seeing process. Gazing upon things, reveals to the active viewer "the 'other side' of his seeing power"[157].

As we are dealing with embodied subjectivity in Merleau-Ponty's theory, Raviv claims that the inside-outside divide is "irrelevant".[158] Conversely, I argue that both sides are comparably relevant, giving the common precedence that the outer realm acquires. The visible (what is seen and displayed) is notably dominant segment of majority of discourses, whereas the inner realms (what is not shown) become the objects of inspection either as things (deliberately) concealed or as marginal and subsidiary elements. Multifaceted point of view in cinema provides the conditions for equal prominence of the invisible.

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[156] Ibid., p. 168.

[157] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind", *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (eds.), Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007, p. 354.

[158] Raviv, "The Cinemtic Point of View", p. 172.

"Extraordinarily intense presence of what is not made explicit […]: look toward…<horrible> spectacle"[159] which viewer does not see but character witnesses, affects and moves the perceiving body. Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty in *The Visible and the Invisible*, conceptualizes *visibility* as dimension which has inner and outer side and accentuates the differences between things.[160] This stress on distinctions is also found in his concept of *flesh* (which is not mind nor a matter) as "*the unitary texture in which each body and each thing manifests itself only as difference from other bodies and other things*"[161]. The implication of interchangeability of Merleau-Ponty's notions of *visibility* and *flesh* is emphasized by Mauro Carbone – "the characterization of 'Visibility' as 'flesh' nods to such a general conception of vision – each epoch has its own – and, through it, to attempt to express the 'relationship between humanity and Being' at work in our time"[162].

This Merleau-Pontian unifying tissue of differences is immensely relevant as a methodological tool as it allows inconsistences within one framework. With a regard to the issues addressed in previous chapters (cacophony of *Nihonjinron* discourses on one side and Western production of

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[159] Merleau-Ponty's 1953 lecture quoted in ibid., p.174.

[160] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p.132.

[161] Mauro Carbone, *The Flesh of Images – Merleau-Ponty between Painting and Cinema*, New York: SUNY Press, 2015, p. 7. (emphasis in the original)

[162] Ibid., p. 13.

knowledge about Japan on the other) or in the following text (discrepancy between perspectives in film theory), it is relevant to affirm the possibility of *visible* contradictions.[163] Merleau-Ponty questions the difference between the visible things and the world:

> They are always behind what I see of them, as horizons, and what we call visibility is this very transcendence. No thing, no side of a thing, shows itself except by actively hiding the others, denouncing them in the act of masking them. To see is, in principle, to see farther than one sees, to reach a being of latency. The invisible is the relief and the depth of the visible.[164]

Thus, it is preferable to seek the answers in silent places, away from the noise of discourses that vehemently proclaim what (Japan) is, simultaneously and unavoidably hiding its totality. As Merleau-Ponty asserts, the scientific thinking should be evoked by perceiving subjectivity – "this actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing silently under my words and my acts"[165]. The sole process of inspecting awakens the *associated bodies*, "'others,' who are not my congeners, as zoologist says, but others who haunt me and whom I haunt; 'others' along with whom I haunt a single, present, and actual Being as no animal has ever haunted

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[163] The question of dissonance within Merleau-Ponty's work, Carbone foregrounds through Sartre's perplexity and commentaries that in Merleau-Ponty "contradictory truths never fight one another" (ibid., p.16-17)

[164] Merleau-Ponty, "Prefece to *Signs*", p. 335.

[165] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind", p. 352.

the others of his own species, territory, or habitat"[166]. Further, the interrogation is not an operation between the two parties which differ in knowledge, but the unknowledgeable and "a vision that knows everything, a vision that we do not make but that is made *in* us"[167].

In the following section I discuss in details a necessity to inspect the work of the authors whose "real" Japan counters the "official" stream which insists on Japan's subtleties that are plainly visible. If we are oriented towards the "official" vision, then we are drifting further away from the *haunting* process, left to associate with no actual reversibility. Previously quoted passage focusing on the visible things and the world continues as following:

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> As for the very source of thoughts, we know that, in order to find it, we must seek beneath statements, and especially the famous statements of Descartes. Its logical truth ("in order to think it is necessary to be") and its stated meaning betray it in principle, since they relate to an object of thought at the moment when it is necessary to find access to the one who thinks and to his native cohesion, for which the being of things and the being of the ideas are the replica. Descartes' spoken word is a gesture which shows in each of us that thinking thought to be discovered; it is the "open sesame" of fundamental thought.[168]

As we are obliged, according to Merleau-Ponty, to inspect what is beneath the statements, we must then draw attention to the masked, invisible reactions –

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[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid., p. 358. (emphasis mine)

[168] Merleau-Ponty, "Prefece to *Signs"*, p. 335-336.

Japanese visceral perception which has not yet been closely explored. In the same manner as Merleau-Ponty suggests that the remarks on the perception in general could be applied "to perception of a film", I argue that his contribution of phenomenological film theory could be implemented as a general epistemological approach. Namely, Carbone highlights the similarities of Merleau-Ponty and Henri Bergson's understanding of cinema and perception, (in spite of their *reversing premises*) – "our spontaneous perception is not analytic, but synthetic and *precisely for this reason* it can be considered 'cinematographical' by nature"[169]. The "*truth* of our perception" derives from the dynamic and consonance of various elements, as recognized in film sequences.

Borrowing Goethe's line "what is inside is also outside", Merleau-Ponty situates the philosopher and the filmmaker on the same axis, establishing the path for the emergence of film philosophy.[170]

Toward Sensuous Cinematic Phenomenologies

Given that Eastern philosophies do not recognize mind-body divide, when dealing with Japanese cinema it seems appropriate to employ Gilles Deleuze's "natural history of cinema" which determines the movement-image and the

[169] Carbone, *The Flesh of Images*, p. 45.

[170] Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology", p. 59.

time-image. His theory of moving images overcomes Cartesian concept of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, for it suggests that in cinema both mind and body are united in an inseparable whole.

> For Deleuze, [however,] the time-image cinema does not abandon the body. Indeed, it is in the moments that the body is freed to its own gestures that perception is freed from the usual round of action, enabling us to think anew. "Not that the body thinks, but, obstinate and stubborn, it forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought, life". [...] A certain kind of time-image, then, is both experienced in the body and invites a direct experience of time. [...] These are not simple acts of displacement: they also reveal knowledge that has been stored only in the memory of the body. When the verbal and visual archives are silent, information is revealed that was never verbal or visual to begin with.[171]

On the other hand, the movement-image provokes perceptions and actions in the human body, as such in the case of cinematic action scenes which depict sensory-motor movement. According to Deleuze, no body is solid or completely real but rather a temporary assemblage that we perceive, and all the things in the world are to be understood as images, hence the whole universe is seen as cinema.[172]

Film phenomenologists such as Vivan Sobchack, Steven Shaviro and

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[171] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000, p. 74, 76.

[172] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Laura U. Marks draw on Deleuze's film philosophy in order to emphasize the importance of body-as-whole and not its fragmentation as seen in the case of ocularcentric theories. This thesis relies significantly less on Delueze's film theory than on the work of film phenomenologists who focus on "corporeal" conflation of cinema and spectator.

According to Sobchack whose work is influenced by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the film and the body work as a close-circuit of the "expression of perception" and "perception of expression" as the film is an expression of the experience which generates the experience in the process of film watching. In order to contemplate cinematic experience, Sobchack felt "constrained" by frameworks which have been imposed by psychoanalytic and Marxist theory – focusing on "the sexual and material economy of the sign and the signifying subject"[173]. In highly influential *The Address of the Eye* (1992), Sobchack marks psychoanalytic emphasis and "objectification" of particular body parts through fetishization and sexual difference as a fallacy. The same goes for shadowing of irrational, prereflective and sensuous materiality of the embodied subjectivity in materialist criticism. Her point of view draws attention to bodily perception that establishes relation with "conscious experience", and as such is indispensable for cinematic experience. Film viewing as a direct experience enables the interchange between the invisible

[173] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, p. xvi.

subjective state and the visible, public display of sociability.

> As viewers, not only do we spontaneously and invisibly perform these existential acts directly for and as ourselves in relation *to* the film before us, but these same acts are coterminously given to us *as* the film, […] we watch them as a *visible performance* distinguishable from, yet included in, our own.[174]

Thus, cinema promotes the system of communication between the visible and the invisible, the world and the individual, the Other and *me*. Sobchack insists on the system which unifies the filmmaker, film and spectator through invisible exchange of expression and perception.

What is particularly relevant in her approach is reasoning that the film and the viewer occupy the "*two* quite distinctly located visual acts that meet on shared ground but never identically occupy it. "[175] The same logic of *shared but never the same* experience is apparent in the encounter of different cultures. As previously discussed in relation to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, here again, the focus is not on a *difference* but on the amalgamation of diverse dichotomies. This point of view also abandons the concept of detecting the hierarchal structure between the binary aspects, and consequently, as well as the interpretation that advocates the "endangered subaltern". Instead, "a *transitive relationship* between two or more objective body-subjects, each materially

[174] Ibid., p. 10-11.

[175] Ibid., p. 23.

embodied and distinctly situated, yet each mutually enworlded"[176], that Sobchack recognizes in the film experience, paves a way for critical evaluation of the Other. Moreover, giving the (duplicated) *double* layering of lived-body – as *both* subject and object of *both* expression and perception, Sobchack emphasizes the *simultaneously subjective and objective modality*[177] upon which any theoretical writing (dealing with investigation of different culture) is based. With such methodology, the cultural and ideological dissimilarities could be understood as instances of "subjective modality", while universal truths which we are pursuing, could resonate with its "objective" counterpart.

This approach of unified polarities is also noticeable in the work of other film phenomenologists – Harald A. Stadler and Jenny Chamarette. Stadler's proposed "postmodern" film theory which employs a variety of specific *phenomenologies* offers a suitable methodological freedom when dealing with Japanese cinema. Parallel to Sobchack's theory, with a *film as experience* paradigm, Stadler stands against both interpretation of postmodernism as "anything goes" plethora of discourses and set of metaphors such as film as dream, mirror, frame, language, or text.[178] "A number of culturally learned cognitive skills (a general social as well as film-specific competence) are

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[176] Ibid., p. 25.

[177] Ibid., p. 41.

[178] Harald A. Stadler, "Film as experience: Phenomenological concepts in cinema and television studies", *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 12, no. 3, 1990: 39.

required for and activated in the viewing process."[179] According to Stadler, film viewing is an active process and therefore, psychoanalytical film theory's insistence on unconsciousness and refusal to give equal prominence to conscious aspects, establishes as a fundamentally limiting approach. Firmly opposing the fact-fiction binary, Stadler's perceptual film experience allows interactive relation with other (non-cinematic) experiences, assigning a viewer with a task "to interpret an interpretation". Thus, film phenomenology supposes interrelation and "sparring" of interpretations.

Following the post-millennial current of embodiment and sense theory in film studies, Jenny Chamarette's *Phenomenology and the Future of Film: Rethinking Subjectivity beyond French Cinema* (2012) engages with film phenomenology in remarkable fashion. Exploring the issues of cinema, subjectivity and temporality, Chamarette, like Sobchack, perceives a film as an object of both experience and interpretation, and foregrounds the need for inspecting the "intersubjective" relations of the viewers in an encounter with cinematic bodies. Chamarette's approach of acknowledging the certain aspects of psychoanalytic film theory (identifying the desire and gaze in patriarchal film) and cultural criticism (unveiling the socio-political issues which relate to the world outside the film itself) provides thinking that does not "privilege one particular form of

[179] Ibid., p. 41.

embodied cinematic experience"[180] and refrains from proclaiming a theory of fixed subjectivity. However, as the psychoanalytical perspective denotes the passivity of the viewer, the power relations generated by directional vision and overall significance of unconsciousness, Chamarette argues that these aspects hierarchically structure subjectivity and cinema in terms of othering. Following Sobchack and Jennifer M. Barker's argumentative position, Chamarette points out that

> psychoanalytic criticism seems less responsive [to] the fact that cinema is at the very least an audio-visual experience that extends into other bodily senses, not to mention that it also involves the spatial positioning of a body with a relation to another, and a series of spatial and sensuous re-positionings according to our bodies' responses to the cinematic image.[181]

Encouraging further inspection of multifaceted, contradictory, fragmented, and collective cinematic experiences, Chamarette's phenomenological approach extends theoretical interpretation of cinema beyond limiting psychoanalytic frame of voyeurism and scopofilia. Her contribution goes further from film studies towards wider fields of cultural and communications studies as the focus is on co-relations between self and the other/ subject and object, on an "subjective encounter, which is not dyadic, but which founds itself upon the multiple, *sensuous*, sometimes *pre-cognitive*, sometimes deeply *contextual contacts*

[180] Jenny Chamarette, *Phenomenology and the Future of Film: Rethinking Subjectivity beyond French Cinema*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 19.

[181] Ibid., p. 43.

with the world (and the cinematic world) dependent on an embodied, not screened mediation with that world"[182].

On the other hand, it is necessary to illuminate Chamarette's standpoint on cultural materialistic criticism. Drawing on Stuart Hall's insight of paradoxical *decentrality* of "culture medium" (in terms of ever-evading attempt to directly link "textuality and signification" to other formations and simultaneously their *invisible* intertextuality and correlation), Chamarette stresses the problem of cultural studies prioritizing the cultural circumstances of that art object rather than the object itself. In fact, Chamaratte associates psychoanalytic and cultural materialist perspective as fundamentally same but oriented to opposite directions in regard to notion of body.

> While psychoanalytic film theory privileges self-presence in the abstracted sensory processes of identification and desire (effectively a presence without a body), cultural materialist criticism posits a body without presence, removed from itself and the textuality of the 'text' or 'art object' with which is it confronted.[183]

Restricting body to identity interpretation generates a production of meanings articulated through essentially symbolic rather than concrete corporeal instance.

> Cultural materialism and cultural studies cannot tell us where the cinema and the film object begin and end; they can only describe the contours of that cinematic relation to the world, rather than

[182] Ibid., p. 46, emphasis mine.

[183] Ibid., p. 50.

> inhabit it. Cultural materialist film theory attempts to create too rigid a set of temporal and spatial boundaries for the cinema film object, rather than allowing for its fluidities and plural inhabitations of the experiential present, a memorial past, and a shared, intersubjective sense of futurity.[184]

However, Chamarette's standpoint should not be understood in terms of overall rejection of cultural materialism but rather as one perspective that would obtain its relevance (only) if adjoined with other, not necessarily compatible, approaches. In the light of this argument, it is worth quoting Sobchack again:

> Much as we may understand the embodied experience of the film as being structured like our own, because both the film and spectator are uniquely situated in the world, discontinuity and intentional conflict inevitably and commonly arise. The need to question and interpret a difference in interest, in focus, in perspective, in intentional projects, in the modes of prospecting the world, leads to the dynamic adjustments, movements, and negotiation in the film experience that also essentially characterize the shifts and reversals of existential consciousness as it engages a world and others.[185]

The fluidity generates from the interrelatedness of disparate attitudes which are assembled, and as such, is quite unfeasible in the homogeneous environment which promotes one-sided vision.

This theoretical conjunction is also found in the work of feminist film

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[184] Ibid., p. 52.

[185] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, p. 287.

phenomenologist, Laura U. Marks[186] whose contribution to film studies is consequential.

Haptic visuality that Marks proposes, relates to embodied spectatorship and materiality of film; a synesthetic criticism where eye takes over the function of an organ of touch. In addition, the metaphor *skin of the film* concretizes the materiality of cinematic body that touches the perceiver's body. Again, by theoretical model of film phenomenology, the body and the cinema are seen in a specific kind of contact – not based on hierarchical divergence or binary opposition; hence, the film serves as a tool of touching the Other.

But, we should not halt, observe and reveal our interest only to the peripheral surfaces of sensory experience, for the invisible and the unseen prove to be equally significant. Investigating the layers beyond the depth of film skin directs us further towards the phenomenology of the internal body, and offers an entirely fresh platform where, borrowing Mark C. Taylor's terminology, "the under-standing becomes inter-standing"[187]. Namely, Taylor asserts that understanding is no longer possible as everything occurs on a surface, and to which the inter-standing becomes a proper substitute as it is concerned with what stands "between". This "betweenness" among the inner

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[186] Marks has also been perceived as a feminist theorist within phenomenological approach as she sets Merleau-Ponty's notion of lived body as an alternative opposition to masculine, occularcentric perspective.

[187] Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen, *Imagologies – Media Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1996, Interstanding: p. 1.

and the outer, the film and the audience, Japan and the West, the Other and *me* is unavoidable and demands to be explored. The meaning emerges from the invisible stitches that connect all visible disparities.

Japan & Visceral Cinematic Experience

Field of visceral perception has still not been systematically examined in the domain of medicine, psychology or philosophy. Research on cognitive perception remains to be the most frequent and prominent one, ranging from ancient Greeks who explored the mind processes, through Cartesian mind-body dualism, to mid-20th century's behaviorism and information theory. However, a fairly recent discipline – neurophenomenology, offers a compelling interdisciplinary approach to a greater understanding of perception in terms of the whole body system. Acclaimed figure of research that interrelates neuro and cognitive science with philosophy is Francisco Varela (1946-2001) who proposed an outlook of inspecting relational axes of these disciplines:

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> The key point here is that emphasizing a *codetermination* of both accounts one can explore the bridges, challenges, insights, and contradictions between them. Both domains of phenomena have equal status in demanding full attention and respect for their

specificity.[188]

Along with fellow Chilean biologist Humerto Maturana, he introduced the term *autopoiesis* (biology of cognition) referring to a self-contained network system capable of reproducing itself. This provocative notion of living systems that are not objects of observation or interactive relations, provides a perspective which does not insist on the purpose of this system, "or of organism-environment relations, or of casual interactions with external world, or even in terms of information, coding or transmission" but "a topology in which elements and their relations constitute a closed system, or more radically still, one which from 'point of view' of the system itself, is entirely self referential and has no 'outside' ".[189] In this account, let us consider insular Japan as this type of closed system topology, and explore it as if it has "no outside", through the notion of visceral perception. By all means, certain theoretical deviation of *autopoiesis* is binding, since no thesis is liberated from observational task.

In previous chapters, we have addressed the signification of the inner realm in Japan. Japanese *body thinking* has to engage the viscera, which has often been rendered as a deficient determinant of the theory of perception

[188] Francisco Varela, "A Science of Consciousness as If Experience Mattered", *Toward a Science of Consciousness II: The Second Tucson Discussions and Debates*, Stuart R. Hameroff, Alfred W. Kaszniak and Alwyn Scott (eds.), Vol. 2, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998, p. 40.

[189] Robert S. Cohen, Marx W. Wartofsky preface, Humerto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980, p. v.

among social and psychological researchers.

Gyorgy Adam's *Visceral Perception: Understanding Internal Cognition* (1998) provides seminal insight into this untended subject matter. Starting from a fact that only in times of pain or emergency, the phenomena of the body-inside gets attention, Adam points to the influences of hidden, inner occurrences that affect our behavior. His research on heartbeat detection and dominance of non-verbal right-brain leads to a conclusion that language carries certain distortion factor while analyzing internal states, that which occur in visceral perception process. "If we were alone or without language we might naturally regulate our own behavior based on visceral feedback without ever labeling our internal state – even to ourselves."[190] Therefore, cognition and verbalization are two separate functions, where conscious awareness in information processing is not imperative for cognition. It is apparent that Adam is in accordance with Varela's standpoint that the mind is not located in the head but "in the body as a whole and also in the extended environment where the organism finds itself"[191]. Stripped from definitive semiotics of a brain, and demonstrating vague, yet intuitive counter-operation, visceral perception as Adam defines it, is the synthesis of "present and past, unconscious and

[190] James W. Pennebaker, Foreword, *Visceral Perception: Understanding Internal Cognition*, Gyorgy Adam, New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 1998, p. ix.

[191] Francisco Varela, "The Cosmos Letter: Why the Mind is Not in the Head", 1998. http://www.expo-cosmos.or.jp/letter/letter12e.html. Accessed April 14th, 2016.

conscious mental sensory events"[192].

Cinema embodies the same type of mental sensory events, inducing the *visceroceptive* activity of the spectators. Vitorio Gallese and Michele Guerra argue that *embodied simulation* (ES) is essential for both receptive and creative aspects of film domain. ES forms the fundamental brain mechanism "by means of which actions, emotions and sensations of others are mapped onto the observer's own sensory-motor and viscero-motor neural representations"[193]. Gallese and Guerra's assumptions coincide with Merleau-Ponty's idea of reversibility, that between I and the world, and interrelatedness of the spectator, film and filmmaker. Moreover, drawing on Siegfried Kracauer's notion that cinema images trigger the viewer's physiological reaction that precedes his intellectual response, the authors introduce the term *liberated* ES denoting the distance between the spectator and the film which allows the "unburdening" from forming the "actual presence in daily life"[194]. Following Gallese and Guerra's theory, Jane Studler points out to the significance of pre-verbal, embodied responses that differ from cognitive reactions, also illuminating the new interpretative possibilities of selfhood, which derive from "the experiential

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[192] Gyorgy Adam, *Visceral Perception: Understanding Internal Cognition*, New York: Springer Science + Business Media, 1998, p. 15.

[193] Vitorio Gallese and Michele Guerra, "Embodying Movies: Embodied Simulation and Film Studies", *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image*, no. 3, 2012, p. 184.

[194] Ibid., p. 196.

realism of visceral cinema"[195]. The gestures of moving bodies on a screen, presented through specific point of view, sound and editing process, generate the corporeal experience which exceeds the mere identification with characters, and increases the viewer's awareness of a present moment.

> Seeing, moving, hearing, sensually experiencing sensible and material being, imaging, remembering, dreaming, thinking, theorizing–all are the acts of a lived-body living its intentional existence in the world not only visibly for others but also invisibly for itself. Although the lived-body can reflect upon itself and "see" how it objectively appears as visible in the world, as it prereflectively lives and conducts its activity in the world and before others, it does not experience its conduct in terms of its objective visibility. It lives its behavior subjectively, invisibly, *introceptively*–as a body-subject engaging the world always and primarily as *my* experiencing of existence.[196]

Could it be possible that spectatorship in a certain environment, the one that nurtures profound implicitness in aesthetics and culture, is more predisposed to *viscероceptiveness*? If there is a shared *invisibility* and reservedness for displaying one's true self in certain cultures, we should inspect whether the perceptiveness is more vital in the hidden spheres of embodied subjects than among those who openly demonstrate their cognitive experiences?

In order to deal with such questions, we first need to outline the

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[195] Jane Studler, "Realism and Motion Pictures: A Neurophenomenological Approach", *Studia Phaenomenologica*, Vol. 16, 2016, p. 460.

[196] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, p. 297.

theoretical position of yet another film phenomenologist. Rejecting obsessive employment of Freud's and Lacan's work in film studies, Steven Shaviro in his *The Cinematic Body* (1993) polemically states that such "stultifying orthodoxy" should be discarded because it does not provide any fresh or compelling insights.

Since in Serbian film scholarship, Laura Mulvey's theoretical approach still seems to be substantial, we should single out the analytic sharpness of Shaviro's critique. The problematic instances of fetishism and scopophilia that Mulvey detects in cinema, he destabilizes by reflecting on totalizing sadism upon film viewing that "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" pleads.

> The psychoanalytic theorist's need for control, his or her fear of giving way to the insidious blandishments of visual fascination, or his or her consequent construction of a theoretical edifice as a defense against a threatening pleasure – all this tends uncannily to resemble the very drama of trauma and disavowal that psychoanalytic film theory attributes to the normative male spectator.[197]

Mindful of subtle variations in the works of psychoanalytic theorists (Doane, Silverman, Williams, Clover), Shaviro detects general panic and disfavor of being affected by images, which has, in effect, been well established in Western thought.

Ever since ancient Greek philosophy, "metaphysics prefers the verbal to

[197] Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, p. 13.

the visual, the intelligible to the sensible, the text to the picture, and the rigorous articulations of signification to the ambiguities of untutored perception"[198]. Quite opposite, Eastern philosophy commends visual forms, their reflective features and shadows. In Japanese aesthetics both sensory perception and focus on the materiality of the object and the perceiver are predominant. *Kanseigaku* is a Japanese concept that relates to Wolfgang Welsch's determination of the term *aisthetics*[199] – study of sensory perception through aesthetics. According to Nakamura Tomoe who offered a thorough genealogy of the term *kansei*, it is not a "passive reception of sensory stimuli" nor is it "independent of intellect or will"[200] but an active agency of awareness that reflects individual, group and universal principle. Through Japanese aestheticians' restructuring, the term *kansei*, distanced from its usage as a translation of Kantian term *Sinnlichkeit* (receptive sensibility), now has been widely accepted as a "conscious manipulation of unconscious sensory experience"[201]. Nakamura's intriguing interpretation of comparative aesthetics methodology of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Japanese aesthetician Tsugami Eisuke, deserves attention as an argument that supports intuitive

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[198] Ibid., p. 15.

[199] The emphasis is on understanding Greek word aisthesis as combination of sensation and perception.

[200] Tomoe Nakamura, "The Scope of Aisthetics for Comparative Aesthetics", *Aesthetics*, Vol. 23, no. 1, Jun 2013, p. 141.

[201] Ibid., p. 142.

characteristic of aesthetic experience. In Baumgarten's view of aesthetic phenomena, the perfection in synthesis of various parts of the perceived object is of less importance than the excellence of the sensual cognition. "Tsugami argues that this elimination of 'unity in multiplicity' and the emphasis on the phrase 'sensory cognition 'as such' (qua talis)' demonstrates Baumgarten's intention to define perception of perfection as completion of sensory perception"[202]. Dynamical process of aesthetic experience, leading from sensory perception to deduction, establishes subjective intuition, *aisthetisation* which does not focus exclusively on questions of beauty or art as universal values (in European philosophical discourses), but instead proposes a wider scope of particularities that can vary upon different time-space conditions.

Explicitness, logic and rationality are less valued in Japanese aesthetics, for it derives from Zen Buddhist proclivity of appreciating suggestive, intuitive and equivocal. Zen perspective tolerates the word usage only to disturb strict abstract conceptualization which essentially dissociates from the perceived object. In *haiku* poetry, the words which usually point to images of nature are triggers for emanating the feelings that are not directly expressed, in order to engage the intuition of readers.

Aesthetic concept *yugen* (*yu* – shadow-filled, *gen* – darkness) refers to something mysterious, concealed too deep to be visible and comprehended.

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[202] Ibid., p. 145- 146.

Through cinematic images, *yugen* as "the ideal of an artistic effect both mysterious and ineffable, of a subtle, complex tone achieved by emphasizing the unspoken connotations of words"[203] is said to be invoked in the bodies of Japanese spectators. *Yugen* is recognized in the body movements and unvoiced attitudes of the actors, but also as a concept that "means what lies beneath the surface"[204]. As such, it is deeply connected to the *visceroceptiveness* of the spectators. Nurturing the values of the implicit, yet visually potent communication, Japanese aesthetics provokes the more delicate responsiveness of the perceivers.

In addition to aforementioned notions of taciturnity and *body thinking*, *muga* is another Japanese concept that translates as "selflessness" which is achieved through a "thoughtless" practice and coordination of physical movements that lead to mastery of one's skill (often found among various professions – samurai, artists, musicians, sportsmen etc.). Boye Lafayette De Mente recognizes *muga* in the artistry of spontaneous movements, made possible through a long process of training. He explains *muga* as "a state in which the mind did not interfere with the actions of their trained bodies"[205],

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[203] Quoted in Donald Richie, *A Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics*, Stone Bridge Press, 2007, p. 31.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Boye Lafayette De Mente, "MUGA: A Japanese Word You Should Know" http://boyelafayettedemente.blogspot.rs/2007/03/muga-moo-gah-japanese-word-you-should.html Accessed May 30th, 2016.

evoking Descartes' observation of flute-player's "mind-forgetfulness". However, the same argument, on one hand, proves Cartesian divide and on the other, in spite of mind "non-interference", Japanese mind-body unity. Trained bodies of Japanese spectatorship (in terms of cinematic tradition of corporeal images being equally engaging as verbal aspects of the narrative) establish *muga* by movements of their inner organs. Relation between viscera and film, summarized here by Jennifer M. Barker, reminds us to look beneath representational concerns of the screen bodies:

> The inner body is a secret, hidden by layers of muscle and flesh, our attention diverted from it by our daily engagement with the "world at hand". The visceral body makes itself known to us only in the most dramatic situations, of which [...] the film experience is one. Although the viscera rarely factor into our perceptual field, they are awakened and summoned through the surface body's engagement with the shapes and textures of cinema. [...] As with the skin and the musculature, the idea of the viscera as something common to both viewer and the film hinges more on function than on biology or mechanics, and if the film can be said to have a body, it can be said to have viscera, too. The viscera, be they cinematic or human, serve a similar function: they sustain life, animate us, and regulate themselves without our notice in order to maintain the continuity of our movement and activities at the middle and surface of the body. For us, this role is played by the heart, lungs, liver, and other vital organs.
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> The film's viscera consists of those "organs" or structures that enable its conscious activities but are not, except in extraordinary circumstances, under its direct control. [...] The power source, light source, sprocket holes, projector's gate, and other parts of the mechanism keep light and celluloid moving through the camera and projector in the same way that our viscera keep blood and other vital fluids moving through our bodies. And just as we cannot

> ordinarily control the rhythm of our heartbeat or circulation, the film doesn't have access to these things except in a few cases (film projection speed, for example) and special circumstances, as when experimental filmmakers turn their attention inward, meditating on the inner mechanisms of cinema...[206]

The immediacy of *muga* calls in mind Japanese concept *haragei*, elaborated in a previous chapter, which also supposes the instant reaction denoting that the other (in this study Japan and its cinema) is always touched in a present moment. Marshall McLuhan detects a tendency of inscribing the historical values in the work of art.

> It [art] creates attention; it creates perception. And the role of the artist as a creator of perceptual models and perceptual means is perhaps misunderstood by those who think of art as primarily a blood bank of stored human values. In our time there are a great many unhappy people who see the great art treasures of the past being polluted by corrupt new vulgar environment. It never occurs to them that perhaps their job is the penetration and exploration of these new environments, and that the mere accumulation of past human experience in blood banks called art does not really contribute very much toward the perception of our current environment.[207]

Momentary reaction, apparent in both *muga* and *haragei*, implies the necessity of embodied subject's direct involvement in current temporal-spatial environment, without being conditioned by accumulation of past valuing system that would

[206] Barker, *The Tactile Eye*, p. 123-127.

[207] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding me - the Medium is Massage*, Toronto: MIT Press, 2005, p. 81-82.

affect our perception.

In a self-proclaimed "unique" study "Culture and the Body: East-West Differences in Visceral Perception", Christine Ma-Kellams and Jim Blascovich investigate the cultural differences in interoception. Through a set of four empirical studies, the authors come to the conclusion that East Asians are "less accurate in their visceral self-perception"[208]. Such reasoning is further explained by Asian high context culture. The problem with this study is that it was conducted with participants who were at least first generation of Asian Americans. Thus, the participants were actually native to American culture even though they were minorities. I argue that the culture one belongs to also nurtures the aspects of perception, and therefore the presented results are conditioned by the broader environment (American culture) rather than the specificities of the local communities (or their race).

In Japanese society double codes of behavior are being used: *honne* – true feelings, the real self and *tatemae* – facade, a public face. Despite this type of conduct being common in other cultures as well, the Japanese insist on this divide as a national trait which often results in foreign misunderstanding of them and their being labeled as "hypocritical". From Japanese perspective, their own displayed behavior which the non-Japanese consider as reservedness,

[208] Christine Ma-Kellams and Jim Blascovich, "Culture and the Body: East-West Differences in Visceral Perception", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 102, no. 4, 2012, p. 726.

deceit or coldness – is misinterpreted due to outsiders' lack of understanding of *tatemae* concept.

I argue that accustomed to find appreciation and nurture in concealing their true sentiments, all in order of maintaining group harmony (*wa*), the Japanese indulge in visceral activity rather considerably. In the realm of cinema, the contained emotions, feelings and intuition affect the insides of Japanese spectators' bodies in "silent", public and collective film viewing, suppressed by enforced *tatemae*. Unnoticeable visceral reaction, the secretive movements intensified by moving images do not disrupt collective harmony. Noting that Japanese directors come from the same culture of restrained expressiveness of emotions and dynamic inner-body activities, their methodological and aesthetic use of the on-screen bodies, often in extreme, violent conditions (particularly noticeable in the work of Miike Takashi and wide range of anime which will be addressed in detail in the following chapters) provokes dramatic, intimate experience in the viewers. Flesh of the screen engages the viewers' viscera, drawing the attention to the invisible textures and patterns of Japan's body. The uncertain, apocryphal features of *honne* complement unpredictable visceral responses.

We can also draw a connection between this social categorization, *tatemae-honne,* and cinematic taxonomy related to Japan which Donald Richie mentions. *Tatemae* refers to idealization, as what should be said (or left unsaid)

and displayed in front of others (outsiders). It is evoked "before important people who must be impressed or lesser beings who do not have access to the inside dope"[209]. Turning to the insights of directors Kawashima Yuzo and Imamura Shohei, Richie points out to "official-real" opposition of Japan's displayed characteristics. Namely, what is preferable to be shown is an official version of Japan –"noh, tea ceremony, Mizoguchi, Ozu, late Kurosawa, along with the approval of high-class virtues of fidelity and devotion"[210]. On the other hand, *real* Japan depicted in the films of forementioned directors such as Kawashima and Imamura, was brimming with ignored lower class which was anything but refined and subtle. Those films could be considered as rude and improper *honne* of Japanese cinema. The *tatemae-honne* division, between the *official* and *real* perspectives of Japanese filmmakers, points us towards those auteurs whose work propels looking beyond what we *should,* in order to be impressed. Cinematic images of *real* Japan correspondingly presume perceptiveness which should not be limited to cognitive interpretation, but are rather appealing to *honne* of the spectators.

According to Shaviro, the persistent juggle between the search for the *truth* and the warning of image deception in psychoanalytic and semiotic paradigms, dismantles film theory and regulates the visual. Defining images as

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[209] Jon Woronoff, *Japan As Anything But Number One,* Amornk, NY: M.E.Sharpe, 1990, p. 16.

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[210] Donald Richie, *Hundred Years Japanese Cinema,* Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005, p. 184.

empty simulacra that request the gaze (contrary to assumption that gaze demands images) and not "symptom of lack", Shaviro renders visual fascination as a "precondition for cinematic construction of subjectivity"[211]. This author subsequently uses Michel Foucault's (following Gilles Deleuze) concept of *events* as *incorporeal* materialism in articulation of cinematic images, instead of perceiving the images as representations. Therefore, these *events* engage the body of the spectator in a way that precedes his interpretation of representations. Immediacy of projecting moving images provokes visceral response in the spectator, taking a stand *against interpretation* and towards the *erotics of art* (Sontag).

Shaviro rightly criticizes paring down cinematic images only to its ideological and representational aspects, asserting that cinema is both a form of perception and material perceived. Reversing the model of powerful gaze into "powerless not to see" spectator, Shaviro's input allows us to broad the corpus of involuntary actions of our body against which our consciousness remains helpless. Brought to the "point of automatism", voyeuristic passivity of the subject is perceived as uncontrollable, similar to spasmodic visceral reactions.

These cinematic events produce effect that is body-oriented, and imprinted images in spectator's retina generate the reactions "*in* the viewer,

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[211] Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, p. 19.

rather than merely presenting phantasmic reflections *to* the viewer"[212].

Fifteen years after its first publication, *The Cinematic Body* was revised by the author in somewhat lessening tone towards its polemical drive where he professes dissatisfaction of his strong binary opposition to psychoanalytic theory. Apart from naming the "numerous flaws" of his influential work that are less relevant in this context, Shaviro admits his lack of knowledge in developments in the field of neurobiology. Research studies that show complexities of body processes in terms of vision and sound (especially the work of Antonio Damasio and Joseph LeDoux emphasizing primarily emotional, not cognitive aspect of these activities), prove that Shaviro's method of body/affect theory as a direct opposition to the psychoanalytic, is still relevant. Although the author himself asserts that *The Cinematic Body* has been reduced to argumentation of what "cinematic perception is not", instead of defining what it is, it offers an alternative to theories which valued exclusively the cognitive aspect of embodied subjectivity.[213]

As discussed in this chapter, *cross-cutting* the various phenomenologies allows us to explore the issues of Japanese body and cinema escaping the binarism, evident in certain theories which generate the knowledge through dichotomous view of the world. As neurophenomenology recognizes many

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[212] Ibid., p. 50.

[213] Steven Shaviro, "*The Cinematic Body* Redux." http://www.shaviro.com/Othertexts/Cinematic.pdf Accessed December 27th, 2014.

different worlds of experienced, lived body, surpassing the predominance of cortex in areas of visual awareness, perception or (one's) sense of self, the film theory can be generated and read through *enactive*[214] notion.

The *enactive* approach of embodied mind proclaims the idea that cognition is the enactment of mind and a world based on historical actions and performances of a certain being in the world and not a certain pregiven representation. Hence, *enactive* view that probes unity of mind and the world which is not arbitrary, helps to remind us of previously mentioned "Japanese" equation n=e=c and the falseness of implication of biological and cultural opposition.[215]

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate the suitability of *film phenomenologies* for examining other cultures, and to outline the relation and reversibility between bodily and cultural matter within Japanese communication system.

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[214] For further reading look *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, Francisco J. Varela, Eleanor Rosch and Evan Thompson (eds.), The MIT Press, 1992.

[215] This argument of erroneous biological-cultural divide corresponds to Shaviro's analysis of Gaylyn Studler's and Kaja Silverman's work (p. 56-60).

17

If I want to imagine a fictive nation, I can give it an invented name, treat it decaratively as a novelistic object, create a new Garabagne, so as to compromise no real country by my fantasy (though it is then that fantasy itself I compromise by the signs of literature). I can also – though in no way claiming to represent or to analyze reality itself (these being the major gestures of Western discourse) – isolate somewhere in the world (faraway) a certain number of features (a term employed in linguistics), and out of these features deliberately form a system. It is this system which I shall call: Japan.

Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*

For every turned cheek, a hand to stroke it; for every pursed mouth, another to kiss it; for every bared back, a whip to stripe it... for every desire, fulfillment, and for every act of every kind, eyes to watch it.

Brian Hodge, *Madame Babylon*

Rediscovering National Identity though the Erotic: Incestuous and Orgiastic in the Films of Imamura and Miike

As proposed in previous chapter, the invisible viscera has a prominent function in Japanese cinema spectatorship. Given that this thesis inspects the invisible aspects in relation to media and Japan, we should examine certain less visible particularities of Japanese identity.

In the third chapter, it is stated that there is no place for sexual morality in Japanese art; therefore the same attitude applies to Japanese cinema. The Japanese *pinku eiga* (*pink film)* genre, dealing primarily with nudity and sex, does not have its entirely analogous Western counterpart. From 1960s, these films have been immensely popular and they were produced both independently and through major studios such as Nikkatsu and Toei. The remarkable film directors such as Wakamtsu Koji, Suzuki Norifumi and Morita Yoshimitsu have contributed to this genre as well. From the late 1950s, the carnal body has also been in the focus of the filmmakers who belong to the Sun Tribe (*taiyozoku*) movement and the Japanese New Wave. In that period, the films by notable Nakahira Ko, Shinoda Masahiro, Yoshida Yoshishige and Oshima Nagisa caused a stir among the officials. Nakahira's *Crazed Fruit* (1956) provoked the picketer protest, while Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976) brought director to trial for obscenity and still remains to be censored in Japan.

Often depicting the marginalized people in the Japanese postwar society, these cinematic explorations were ironic, potent and subversive political commentaries. The prominent auteur of the New Wave was also Imamura Shohei (1926-2006) whose work will be discussed in this chapter. The Second New Wave of Japanese cinema refers to the films of 1990s and new millennia in which the body is often a subject of extreme violence and unusual sexual practices reflecting postmodern nihilism. The veteran directors such as Imamura and Fukasaku Kinji, joined the new directors such as Kitano Takeshi, Miike Takashi, Tsukamoto Shinya to meditate on thematic subjects that corresponded to contemporary Japan's frustrations and worries.

As understood from the above, the invisible which is the focus of this writing does not refer to an image of the carnal body, but rather relates to the practice of covering the genital organs. Here, the proposed term "the genital organs" stands for the issues of national identity, Japanese creation myths and incestuous practices.

Through *Nihonjinron* discourses it becomes evident that the self-examination is a central concern of Japanese culture. The New Wave cinema of the 1960s focused on the individual, which was already a subversive act in the context of society that was established through collectivism.

Imamura Shohei stated that he had been interested "in the relationship of the lower part of the human body and the lower part of the social structure on

which the reality of daily Japanese life supports itself"[216]. For him, those invisible parts of both the body and community are key aspects in understanding Japanese identity. Therefore, considering the thematic and visual choices of this director, many critics refer to Imamura as an anthropologist which he, in point of fact, always tried to lessen by stating that he himself is (just) an observer.

This emphasis on the hidden also plays a significant role in Imamura's aesthetic sensibility and attitude towards (cinematic) reality. Moreover, the *hikisoto* (from the outside) camera shot – filming through the windows and open doors emphasizes Imamura's strategy to reveal the images that could have been left unseen, or precisely those which are intentionally concealed in the work of other Japanese directors. Documentary style of *A Man Vanishes* (1967) is deconstructed not just by visibility of the director himself, but also in a scene where audience is shown that the small restaurant (where the main characters prove their innocence/guilt) starts to collapse revealing that it was a part of film studio.

In *The Pornographers* (1966) Imamura uses a film-within-a-film structure in order to emphasize "the nature of pornography whose appeal to its audience clearly rests on a foundation of voyeurism. [...] We are also voyeurs to more

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[216] Donald Richie, "Notes for a Study on Shohei Imamura", *Shohei Imamura*, James Quandt (ed.), Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival Group, 1997, p. 17.

prosaic goings-on, especially the interaction of family members."[217] As the outcast protagonist is engaged in adult film industry, the audience is lured to reflect upon the various sex related practices and desires. However, Imamura leaves the sexual activities *unfilmed*, and instead focuses on the reactions of the characters that are watching the pornographic content. Imamura's attention is pointed to the production of the movies and director's role, rather than the content itself; this is overly highlighted in a scene where at the set of a pornographic film, instead of watching the sexual act, the audience is encountered with the close-up of the main character's face – one eye closed and the other behind the camera and its lenses. The transposition of "what is supposed to be seen" indicates Imamura's preoccupation with both illusionary aspects of *cinéma vérité* and the self-reflexive necessity of displaying those who are marginalized yet essential part of Japanese identity.

Apart from a reflection on the cinema itself, the central point of *The Pornographers* is the portrayal of a (dysfunctional) Japanese family. The issue of incest is addressed through mother-son relation, as well as through portraying the father who is determined to rape his retarded daughter on camera. Moreover, one of the key points of the film is the quasi-incestuous relationship between the main character and his step-daughter. David Desser accordingly

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[217] David Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, p. 83.

points out – the problem of Japanese family is not rooted in incestuous practice but in "society which places so many obstacles in the way of fulfilling basic needs"[218]. As stated in the film, the societal taboos prevent people to be free as they once were in ancient times; the protagonists feel guilt for surrendering to their carnal desires (which are regulated through social ethics) and that leads them to the state of delusion. After his partner's death in a mental institution, the main character hosts an orgy in which he does not participate in, but which inspires him to construct a sex doll that can serve as his partner. Years later, he is so obsessed with his creation that he fails to notice that his houseboat drifts away from the shore, leaving the society behind in his phantasmal world. In director's vision of contemporary Japan, "a real encounter with another person is an impossible ideal that cannot be achieved, except maybe through an ironic artistic reproduction of the ideal image of an encounter"[219].

Imamura uses the method of blurring the lines between memory and fantasy, fiction and documentary, in a same manner as Kon Satoshi whose work will be addressed later. In *The Pornographers*, it seems that Imamura legitimizes pornography as a practice which does not solemnly serves the individual but helps Japan's economic recovery, borrowing the main character's words; it is a "social welfare". Let us engage in the issues of rediscovering the national

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[218] Ibid., p. 84.

[219] Steve Corbeil, "Imamura Shohei's adaptation of Nosaka Akiyuki's *The Pornographers*: Ethical Representations of Translating the Unwritten", 翻訳の文化/文化の翻訳. 10 別冊, 2015, p. 161.

identity in Imamura's next (live-action) film.

"Please grant me the part of my body that I lack."
Amazed, the God of Heaven asked: "What part of your body do you lack?"
The part of my body...that I lack to be complete...is the body...of a woman.
The body of a woman is all I long for.

The Profound Desire of the Gods

Foucault perceives Japanese society as one which is endowed with an *ars erotica.*

> In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul. [220]

This Foucauldian perspective can be the standpoint for the "original" Japanese *eros,* or core of Japaneseness.

In this chapter I would like to investigate the erotic as the means of transcending the national and multicultural in the films of Japanese authors Imamura Shohei and Miike Takashi. The erotic is seen through incestuous and orgiastic relationships which metaphorically portray the political anxieties and

[220] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* New York: Pantheon Books, 1978, p. 57.

identity crises of Japanese society and culture. These erotic performances of characters in Imamura and Miike's films represent a core from which it is possible to rebuild and reassemble Japan's identity.

Two Japanese directors – Imamura Shohei and Miike Takashi can both be categorized as those belonging to what Donald Richie names *real* Japan. Opposite to *official* Japan, represented by cinema of Ozu Yasujiro and virtues of fidelity, loyalty and the subservient woman – exported versions of how Japanese society likes to see itself, Imamura stands as the one who ignores it, in the same manner as today Miike critically explores the realms within and far beyond contemporary *kawaii* and high-tech Japan.

As James Quandt notices:

> Imamura's anarchic sensibility and energetic visual style, clearly inherited from Kawashima, celebrate everything that is excluded from Ozu's refined world: the irrational, the instinctual, the carnal, squalid, violent and superstitious life of Japan's underclass, which Imamura insists has remained immutable over thousands of years.[221]

Asserting that these "official" images are "the real" illusions, Imamura strives to display *other* Japan. Besides exposing that the documentary can turn out to be fictional, Imamura declares that Japan's reality is far more multi-faceted and irrational than it appears to be in Japan's "official" cinematic

[221] James Quandt (ed.), *Shohei Imamura,* Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival Group, 1997, p. 2-3.

imagology.

The year 1968 held global importance with regard to social and political change, and also stood as a pivotal year, when Japan's GNP was the second largest in the world. "Japan was cruising on one of the most rapid growth trajectories, but it was anticipating the shade of future changes."[222] *The Profound Desire of Gods* (1968) was released the same year and one could argue that it is Imamura's attempt to reflect on the Japanese society and its future. The same year is the centennial year of the Meiji Restoration which marked Japan's opening towards the West after two centuries of the isolationist foreign policies of Edo period, and establishing of a modern state. *The Profound Desire of the Gods* questions the Japanese identity positioning the inhabitants of the small southern island of Kuragejima between tradition and progress.

Imamura chooses to open and close his film with a song of the Japanese creation myth of Izanagi and Izanami. The interesting point of this myth can be found in not just the emphasis on the carnal bodies of gods but in their incestuous relationship from which Japan is formed. Opposite of the Christian dogma of the immaculate conception, these Japanese gods, brother and sister, Izanagi and Izanami, are aware of their bodies and reproductive organs – she notices that one part of her body had not grown, as well as he notices the

[222] Koichi Hamada, *Japan 1968: A Reflection Point During the Era of the Economic Miracle,* Yale University, 1996, p. 1.

part of his body which had grown to excess. Izanagi then proposes to join together by placing his excess in her not completed part in order to form a new land. But awareness of human anatomy, sexual intercourse between brother and sister is also followed by social order – after creating deformed, leech island – Hiruko, the sibling gods were advised by other gods that the male should be the one who takes the initiative (who should first compliment the female, as opposed to what they did at the beginning) and the female should be the one who waits to be seduced. The product of many islands and numerous deities – Japan is possible only with right social order. Then, following this myth, the essence of Japanese identity can be found in the idea that every act should respect the form and order of things.

During the period of Japan's postwar rebuilding, reinventing, positioning and opening towards the West and impressive economic growth, Imamura's most significant films compel Japanese society to return to its taboo-free roots in unbound nature and spontaneous desire. The plot of *The Profound Desire of the Gods* evolves around Kariya, Tokyo engineer who comes to a remote island assigned to digging a well to provide water for sugar mill, and his encounter with the local Futori family. The island inhabitants show somewhat ambiguous relationship towards the Futori family. Embarrassed by incestuous practices between brother and sister, Nekichi and Uma, the islanders believe that the gods punished Nekichi by putting a giant rock in his

rice paddy. They mock Nekichi anytime they get the chance and set him a task of removing the rock. On the other hand, Uma is being treated with respect as a *noro* – a shaman priestess. In fact, the islanders seem to be on a crossroad between the Futori family as the oldest family on the island and the engineer – the outsider who comes to modernize and bring prosperity to the island. More precisely, the islanders are caught between a westernized outsider who comes from the distant capital and enjoys drinking coca-cola, representing the technologically equipped Other and the local family with several incestuous relationships (father-daughter, brother-sister), respectful to the gods and the land. Isolde Standish explains that Imamura saw problem not only as

> the importation of Western political and social ideals but in economic and cultural divisions between the city and the country. In the city, immigrants from the countryside were cut off from their roots and left lonely and isolated in uniform urban apartment blocks.[223]

Therefore, one can presume the logic in the engineer establishing the closest connections with members of Futori family. As David Kehr notices, the remote island bears different meanings for the main characters – for the engineer it is a place of freedom, irrational and forgotten, while for Nekichi "it is a microcosm of Japan, where primitive impulses are punished and rechanneled into

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[223] Isolde Standish, *Politics, Porn and Protest: Japanese Avant-Garde Cinema in the 1960s and 1970s*, New York & London: Continuum, 2011, p. 86.

meaningless work in the name of progress"[224].

Katori Shunsuke points out that:

> there were certain people who claimed that under the lead of American "democracy" Japan had changed, but Imamura thought that if the consciousness of the common people which is constructed from the base part of society did not change, then Japanese people would not change.[225]

On the contrary, it seems that Imamura was well aware of the changing process of Japanese identity and losing of its own creative force. Nekichi and Uma are ready and willing to leave the soon-to-be completely modernized island with land being sold for an airport and turned into a touristic location, in order to find a new island and create a new Japan as gods. In the name of justice, mistakenly sure that Nekichi killed his sister's "patron" and his comrade Ryugen, the islanders hunt the couple. Cruel deaths find them, with Nekichi being beaten with the oars by unstoppable islanders who wore menacing masks in honor of the Shinto gods and Uma left on the open sea tied to the pole of the boat. The islanders do not allow the incestuous relationship to continue and the revival of ancestors' practices is prevented for good. The new Japan is already there along with the islanders who chose their path to progress and away from their origins.

If for more than a century the West has displayed such a strong

[224] Dave Kehr, "The Last Rising Sun", *Shohei Imamura*, James Quandt (ed.), Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival Group, 1997, p. 80.

[225] Quoted in Standish, *Politics, Porn and Protest.*, p. 85.

> interest in the prohibition of incest, if more or less by common accord it has been seen as a social universal and one of the points through which every society is obliged to pass on the way to becoming a culture, perhaps this is because it was found to be a means of self-defense, not against an incestuous desire, but against the expansion and the implications of this deployment of sexuality which had been set up, but which, among its its many benefits, had the disadvantage of ignoring the laws and juridical forms of alliance. By asserting that all societies without exception, and consequently our own, were subject to this rule of rules, one guaranteed that this deployment of sexuality, whose strange effects were beginning to be felt – among them, the affective intensification of the family space – would not be able to escape from the grand and ancient system of alliance. [226]

If creating a culture means establishing the taboos in order to extract the primitive impulses from the civilized behavior, and taking into consideration Nietzsche's idea that we have art in order not to die of the truth, then themes of the Imamura's *The Profound Desire of the Gods* point to a universal problem which surpasses the Japanese society.

An interesting character in Imamura's allegory of Japan's identity crisis can be found in Toriko, Nekichi's daughter. It remains unclear whether she is the offspring of an incestual relationship with Uma but after being "deserted by gods", Toriko is encouraged by Uma to be the new *noro*. She is wild, mentally disabled and highly sexually driven young woman. In spite of her openly expressed libidinal desires, often fulfilled with local men, she falls in love with the engineer. A brief happiness between the untamed, "uncivilized"

[226] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 109.

woman of nature (Japan's authentic identity) and modernized outsider (West or America) is possible.

Their mutual fascination is undoubted and evident, but short lasting. Kuriya was ready to leave his wife in the city and enjoy the life with pregnant Toriko, but years later he came back to the island with his wife to discover the new local legend about the girl who turned into a rock while waiting for her lover. Kametaro, Toriko's brother who returned to the island disappointed by his life in the city, rides the train with Kuriya and other tourists. From the bushes along the rail he sees Toriko running freely. The spirit of unfettered sexuality will haunt the westernized, technological Japanese oblivious of their true selves.

Here, instinctual drive represents the forbidden urge to reconnect with one's national self and its own ancestors, in spite of being ashamed and forced to live by foreign standards and lose its authenticity in society of consumption. The dichotomy of Japanese postwar thought stated in "uncritical acceptance of Western influences and emotional return to the domestic essence" was explored by Maruyama Masao in *The Japanese Mind* (1961).

> The tendency of pre-modern relations to dissolve difference in the "eternal embrace" of emotionally unified community only enhanced the intellectuals' regression to the imaginary Japanese past, pictured as an emotional and aesthetic totality.[227]

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[227] Midori Matsui, *Consuming Bodies: Sex and Contemporary Japanese Art*, Fran Lloyd (ed.), London: Reaktion Books, 2002, p. 142.

It is apparent that Imamura's perspective illuminates the eternal schism between foreign influences and native cultural impulses.

Have you ever done it with your dad?

Visitor Q

A few decades later, one of Imamura's students and also an assistant director on two of his films, Miike Takashi, the most prolific filmmaker of his era (directing more than twenty films in the years 2000 and 2002 alone), confronts (and attempts to cure) Japan's millennial apathy via the unrelenting sexual deviance of his terminally frustrated characters. Considering the abundance of Miike's films and their thematic diversity, even if exploring only the notion of body alone, one should propose a new, relevant taxonomy that would match his artistic vision. This director considers himself rather a professional – a person who has a job, than an artist. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of his cinematic bodily imageries is irrefutable – from a scene where a woman immediately after sexual intercourse, trying to detach herself from a partner gives birth to her full grown adult brother, who previously disappeared (*Gozu*), to a deformed prostitute with a little twin sister attached to her head as an offspring of their parents' incestuous relationship (*Imprint*). The prominence of Miike's corporeal symbols is especially noticeable in a portrayal of a samurai

who transcends time and space as he runs on the DNA chain as if on a treadmill (*Izo*).

Our concern is the film where Miike takes to extremes Western cultural imperative of psychoanalysis as a tool of preserving national sanity by purging it out through orgiastic sexual practice. The erotic becomes a unifying tissue to mend dysfunctional family units and reinforce shaken belief in Japanese societal structure, the obscenity, therefore, becomes the key to unlock and rediscover one's own true identity. In *Visitor Q* (2001), reunification of a broken family comes with the help of an outsider who forces family members to acknowledge their own feelings, regain their unity and reconstruct the disordered social formation. Unlike the outsider from *The Profound Desire of the Gods*, who marks the end of essential Japaneseness, the outsider in *Visitor Q* stands as "a spirit of the past" revoking and reassembling the true identities.

The most apparent determinant of multiculturalism that Miike employs in this film is the plot itself. *Visitor Q* is the Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* of the new millennium – reversed in its essence: a stranger who seduces and essentially destabilizes the wealthy family unit in 1968 film, in the 21st century comes as a rescuer of a bullied, harmed, degraded, economically and sexually frustrated lower mid-class family. Or one could say, the stranger in *Visitor Q* destroys an already damaged family and reunites it. Miike mirrors contemporary Japanese society using several questions posed directly to the

audience (*Have you ever done it with your dad? Have you ever been hit on the head? Have you ever hit your mom?*) and using the main character's occupation as a reporter for dismal TV program on the themes such as "youth today" or "bullied son and his father" suggested by the character himself.

Low-budget aesthetics of *Visitor Q* emulate amateur porn and the fake documentary style of reality shows. Furthermore, in *Agitator: The Cinema of Takashi Miike*, Tom Mes asserts that "the perception of the video image as being closer to reality than film is something the director deliberately appeals to, employing it to draw the audience closer to the events portrayed"[228].

On the one hand, the opening scene depicts the father who films his intercourse with his runaway prostitute daughter. The father, already humiliated at work and forced to take a leave of absence by showing his superiors a footage of him being violated by group of teenagers, gets mocked for his lack of sexual longevity and his genital shortcomings. To his list of failures, he adds an inability to pay the full price for his daughter's sexual services. On the other hand, the mother also prostitutes herself and spends her earnings on drugs, but her social persona of a polite, average middle-aged wife is present only to hide the fact that she's been constantly beaten up by her bullied son. Tom Mes notes that the characters

> have conformed *in extremis* to the roles they are expected

[228] Tom Mes, *Agitator: The Cinema of Takashi Miike*, London: FAB Press, 2003, p. 207.

> to fulfill, those of the provider (father) and the domestic caretaker (mother). Their devotion to their duties have become excuses for not having to face emotions and feeling. In fact this devotion has repressed all emotion.[229]

The visitor awakens the maternal instinct of the mother by confronting her with her runaway daughter's empty room. His method of making her lactate in excessive amounts provokes her to express feelings which were repressed by the system of societal duties that she had to fulfill. Her realization that she is "neither pathetic nor special, but an ordinary woman" leads to her standing up to her son. The father's re-establishing of his identity and reunification with his wife comes after raping and killing his female superior Asako. His long repressed desire for sex is finally fulfilled and while trying to disattach himself genitally from the stiffening corpse due to *rigor mortis,* with the help of his wife, he admits to her that he had not seen her so reliable since the beginning of their marriage. Reunited, the couple is then stronger and able to defend their son and their home from the bullies and kill them. After drinking his mother's milk, the son shares his thoughts with the visitor, promising him that he would devote himself to studying for the entrance exam. Moreover, the estranged daughter finds her way back home after being hit in the head by the visitor, in the same manner as her father at the beginning of the film. The final scene – ironic to a degree, depicts the father and daughter being collectively breastfed in the arms

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[229] Ibid.

of the mother.

While in 1968 Imamura was trying to point out that Japan's authenticity was slowly fading away, through Pasolini's *Teorema* Miike reinterprets the foreign model made in the same turbulent year. Pasolini destabilizes and destroys the bourgeois family, marking the end of the tyranny of the upper class. Uniquely, Miike reconstructs the Japanese family through orgiastic and deviant behavior which becomes a revolutionary force. The European model of "cinematic political revolution" happens outside the family and comes in the form of a seductive anarchist. In Miike's film the visitor is not a force of anarchy but a reassembling agent who puts the family back together. It is a sharp inversion of an original idea in order to re-affirm all members of the family.

As Imamura finds "the potential for revolutionary change from within the deepest roots of Japanese tradition"[230], Miike re-establishes the conformist social order by awakening the repressed emotions in a society that worships duty as deity. Modern Japanese society has been haunted by the invisible past in *The Profound Desire of Gods,* only to evolve into a present-day community with acutely visible lack of communication in *Visitor Q.* In Miike's film the body emerges as a crucial factor that enables the change *within* and *among* the characters – in the final act, the mother's breasts set each member to a "right track" and reunite them as a family. Undeniably, the idea that mother herself

[230] Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre,* p. 88.

needed a help from the Other (the visitor) to realize her own position within the family unit, correlates with a point of view I have attempted to outline in the previous chapters. The Other as an intruder into a realm of intimate (mis)communication should not be understood as a threatening or destabilizing determinant, but one which re-imagines established system and consequently offers a new perspective.

Godzilla's Body: Reviving Memories through Collective Flesh

In a year celebrating the 60th anniversary of the original *Godzilla* by Honda Ishiro, famous Japanese pop culture symbol re-emerges from the silver screen in its second Hollywood blockbuster film version. Over the last six decades, Godzilla appeared in total of 30 films, positioning itself as the most prominent monster character in the world of cinema. Through three Japanese eras of *Godzilla* series – Showa (1954-1975), Hesei (1984-1995) and Shinsei (1999-2004) and two American films, Godzilla's identity shifts from terrifying invading force meant to reflect on a national trauma, morphing to a benevolent protector of Japan from foreign intruders, and then into a global phenomenon preying on the Western audience. Even the original 1954 *Godzilla* has been a subject of transmogrification, turned into *Godzilla: King of The Monsters* for US audience by adaptation and sound editing. Borrowing Deleuze and Guattari's term, Godzilla franchise is a perfect example of cinematic "de-territorialization", maintaining consistency without repetition of the sameness in meaning, aesthetics and politics. "A multiplicity is defined by the number of dimensions it has, it is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a dimension without changing its nature" [231]. For more than a half of century, different scholars, film critics and

[231] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 249.

Godzilla fans tried to define and inevitably limit the scope of possible conclusions of what Godzilla represents. Nevertheless, even if the rest of 29 films were to be neglected, the original *Godzilla* resists the unambiguous interpretative limitations and provides diverse dimensions on the meaning of its nature, therefore imposing heterogeneous readings. These diversified interpretations could be gathered in two corporeal sections – *mnemonic body* and *phantom limbs*. In Godzilla discourse, mnemonic body refers to a vast multitude of meanings that could be inscribed into and manifested through the monster's body, while phantom limbs indicate this creature's continual presence and perseverance through decades and its many incarnations in pop cultural domain.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty states that "body takes possession of time and makes a past and a future exist for a present; it is not a thing, rather than suffering time, my body creates it"[232]. It could be said that Godzilla's mnemonic body revives the past and its phantom limb figures as an indicator of the looming future anxieties brought into a cinematic present.

[232] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 249.

Mnemonic Body

The notion of a body as a place of memory has already been conceptualized by many scholars in the fields of philosophy and psychology. Curiously, even Descartes whose concept of mind-body separation has been established as a fundamental paradigm of Western thought, acknowledged the presence of a memory in a body part of a flute player. This procedural memory is installed in his hands and fingers through regular practice of playing the instrument, allowing "mind forgetfulness" to be an integral part of one's identity, overcoming mental dominance in terms of perception. Investigating the case of brain-dead patient whose cardiovascular functions always stabilized in his father presence (illustrated as a result of provoking the reminiscence in the absence of channels of communication which are typically used), Christian Steineck suggests to renounce the exclusiveness of brain as a recollection "cerberus", a certified guardian of memory, and accept that "the body is a memorial continuing a person's past into present"[233]. At the same time, clinically dead patient remains to be "a part of intercorporeal exchange" – reacting to those who marked his personal history and provoking the memories in those around him.[234] Therefore, taking perspective of the body as a medium of

[233] Christian Steineck, "The Body as a Medium of Memory", *Time and Memory*, Jo Alyson Parker, Michael Crawford and Paul Harrish (eds.), Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2006, p. 51.

[234] Ibid., p. 43.

memory, we should examine Godzilla´s body in terms of mnemonic variety.

Undoubtedly, Godzilla reflected postwar nuclear anxieties that were not only prompted by Hiroshima and Nagasaki incidents but also by 1954 US detonation of 15-megaton hydrogen bomb on Bikini Atoll in the Pacific, when several Japanese tuna boat fishermen were exposed to lethal doses of radiation. Producer Tanaka Tomoyuki's reflections that "mankind had created the Bomb, and now nature was going to take revenge on mankind"[235] offer apparent notions of Godzilla's origin. However, merely probing Godzilla's physical characteristics, the polyphony of different understandings becomes vivid. Godzilla's dark, scaly skin is often referred as of those of the atom bomb survivors, and its gigantic size calls attention to numerous Japanese casualties of war. On the other hand, its dimensions and radioactive breath symbolize the Bomb itself and its massive impact on Japan. Igarashi Yoshikuni in his book *Bodies of Memory* draws a compelling assumption of "a circular referential relationship between the bomb and the emperor: the bomb was special because it shocked the emperor into accepting the terms of surrender; the emperor accepted the peace because he realized the bomb was special"[236]. This paradoxical "unique" signification of both the emperor and the bomb is also recurrent in Godzilla – the monster does not speak (although it later occurs in

[235] Quoted in William Tsutsui, *Godzilla on My Mind*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 18.

[236] Yoshikuni Iragashi, *Bodies of Memory – Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture 1945-1970*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 24-25.

1972 *Godzilla vs. Gigan* with the sounds it makes, translated into Japanese) and the (apolitical) voicelessness of Japanese emperor Hirohito was only to be disrupted by his speech broadcasted on the radio on August 15th 1945. For many Japanese, the emperor – "a god, the authority of the nation, the organizing principle of reality" – silent over the years became human the moment he spoke his famous words of "bearing the unbearable and enduring the unendurable"[237]. By employing the anti-war theory of famous Japanese folklorist Yanagita Kunio and his notion that Japanese people have to die only in their homeland in order to rest peacefully, Yomota Inuhiko constructs Godzilla's body out of the dead Imperial soldiers who met their deaths in the battles of the South Seas. Even the path which Godzilla takes in the destruction of Tokyo, evading the Imperial Palace in spite of it being on its route, supports aforementioned inscriptions of the emperor or soldiers into the Godzilla's body.

In Godzilla narrative, Merleau-Ponty's statement that "I am my Body" can be extended to "we are other's Body" by transcending Japanese collective entity into its monstrous embodiment. Positioning Godzilla's body as a site of remembrance, a walking monument, the memories of nuclear attack and its victims, as well as fallen soldiers in South Seas, become alive. Variety of those memories in flesh is followed by the abundance of consistently popular

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[237] Kenzaburo Oe, "The Day the Emperor Spoke in Human Voice", *New York Times*, May 1995, http://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/07/magazine/the-day-the-emperor-spoke-in-a-human-voice.html?src=pm&pagewanted=1 Accessed June 27th, 2014.

Godzilla films which could be understood by Deleuze's argument "that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis, and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities"[238]. David Deamer's inspiring *Deleuze, Japanese Cinema and The Atom Bomb* stands against overproduction of discourses on Japanese victimology on screen, marking the monstrosity of the atom bomb to be "not just experienced, not just survived, but resolved"[239]. Employing Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body on this cinematic behemoth born in the specific historical conditions of postwar Japan and countlessly (re)generated ever since, both domestically and internationally, we have to accept the understanding which emphasizes the possibility of "truthfulness" of seemingly contradictory interpretations and discourses.

Relentless Phantom Limbs

Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the body in his theory of perception has been often denounced as a type of relativism, especially concerning his standpoint on human understanding of the world only through "lived-body" which cannot be assigned as a carrier of objective thought or totality in

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[238] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 249.

[239] David Deamer, *Deleuze, Japanese Cinema, and the Atom Bomb*, New York & London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 31.

reasoning. Opposed to both empiricist and intellectual theories, Merleau-Ponty's concept of the human body as a "being in the world" assumes "ordinary intuitive point of view from which we understand ourselves as neither disembodied intellects nor physical mechanisms, but living bodily subjects" [240]. He proclaims the importance of the visual experience and underlines the complexity of perception which is immanent to the nature of bodily intentionality and spontaneous efficacy. Reflecting the ambiguity of the phantom limb, and comparing it to a syndrome of anosognosia (patient's refusal to accept the existence of a disability or disease) in which a body part becomes "a bit of forgetfulness and failure to perceive", Merleau-Ponty marks it as "a memory, a positive judgement or a perception"[241].

Let us consider one of the most recognizable characters of Japanese pop culture as a symbolic phantom limb which incorporates fear, desire, anxiety and fantasy of a Japanese collective body. For this purpose, we first need to address Mark Anderson's text *Mobilizing Gojira: Mourning Modernity as Monstrosity* which relates *Godzilla* with Japanese media system and phantom limbs. Anderson has been influenced by Samuel Weber's assertions that television employs a simultaneity of transmission which actually marks a division of place,

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[240] Taylor Carman, *Merleau-Ponty*, London and New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 132.

[241] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 82.

bodies and subjects' unity by allowing multiple perceptions, not subordinated to spatial limitations (of a body). This leads to an apt observation that in *Godzilla*, Japanese collective body is assembled through the medium of both television and radio. Namely, *Godzilla* depicts numerous scenes of radio and television broadcasting, direct filming of the actions from TV-camera perspective and its viewing where "this unsettling migration of the camera registers the effects of the multiplication of sites of the viewers' perception even as the perceptual unity of the individual's body itself split by way of various media prosthetics that the film camera jumps back and forth between"[242]. Here, through framing and editing techniques, we witness the process of assembling the Japanese collective body, consisting of numerous spectators as well as the recording staff, as one expanding mediated entity. It is clear that bodies of individual recipients become virtually dismembered by different media vessels, but are reassembled into an entirely new mediated organism.

On the other hand, according to Anderson, Japanese media system is "amputated" from its colonial attribution which was prevalent during the war, now reduced to its domestic proportions with Godzilla serving as an imperial vessel that announces "ghosted messages from an outside that was formerly

[242] Mark Anderson, 'Mobilizing *Gojira*: Mourning Modernity as Monstrosity', *Godzilla's Footsteps – Japanese Pop Culture Icons on the Global Stage*, William M. Tsutsui and Michiko Ito (eds.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 26.

inside"[243]. As if those imperial tendencies came back to haunt the Japanese in the form of a gigantic outsider.

Situating Godzilla as a phantom limb we should concede its spectral meaning. Based on ancient Greek word *phantasma,* English term *phantom* offers several meanings – an illusion, a ghost, a figment of the imagination. In addition to these meanings, in Japanese language *maboroshi* (幻) refers also to a vision or a dream. Having these meanings considered, it is apparent that phantom presupposes "inherent tension between supernatural phenomena and psychic or mental phenomena" [244]. That said and acknowledging McLuhanian perspective of technology as an extension of the central nervous system, we draw attention to Aura Satz who points out that invention of new media in the 19th century – telegraph, radio, telephone and gramophone (with their variety of "disembodied voices") as well as photography (and its images of the absent) and neuroscience all share the same notion – that of spirituality. American neurologist Silas Weir Mitchell often indicated the phantasmal accounts of amputee patients, relating phantom limbs to "spirit members" or "dead souls" and patient himself as "being haunted, as it were, by a constant or inconstant fractional phantom of so much of himself as was lopped away – an unseen

[243] Ibid.

[244] Aura Satz, "'The Conviction of its Existence': Silas Weir Mitchell, Phantom Limbs and Phantom Bodies in Neurology and Spiritualism", *Neurology and Modernity – A Cultural History of Nervous Systems, 1800-1950,* Laura Salisbury and Andrew Shail (eds.), London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 114.

ghost of the lost part"[245]. Indestructibility and perpetual reemergence of Godzilla, both as a character and a cinematic franchise, suggest its haunting nature. Akin to a restless, unorthodox ghost, Godzilla haunts the Japanese in a such an obsessive manner that it progressively infested the rest of the world, too. Satz concludes that phantom limbs are simultaneously fiction, scientific occurrence and sometimes even supernatural manifestation – obviously, Godzilla can be recognized in all three categories.

I suggest that Merleau-Ponty's perspective that "the phantom arm is not representation of the arm, but the ambivalent presence of an arm"[246], could indicate not to a specific reading of particular Godzilla film, but to its complete filmography. The societal changes in the course of six decades reflect the need for specificity of a particular limb, its pain and necessity to be "visible". The fact that none other than Japanese generated a character which relentlessly and continuously emerges from the international silver screen could be reflected through the words of globally influential Japanese designer Murakami Takashi.

> We [Japanese] don't have both arms, yet we imagine that we feel the presence of two normal limbs. [...]The fingers of that nonexistent arm throb with pain. It's impossible to get rid of it, because no one understands why or how. At the height of the bubble economy, hoping to eliminate our lost arm, we held drunken orgies, the equivalent of orthopedic surgery. But our pain persisted. Its source was our forced remediation to Westernization

[245] Quoted in ibid., p. 122.

[246] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 83.

> and our predicament as a nation situated in the ambiguous environment that followed defeat in the Pacific War.[247]

In the line with this quote, we can surmise that Japan's urge to overcome a lack of numerous limbs amputated by the outside forces in the aftermath of the war, resulted in the creation of an eternal fictional entity which would restore the fragmented national body.

In famous Ramachandran's mirror box experiment, through optical illusion a patient with a missing arm sees both of his hands receiving "positive visual feedback informing his brain that his phantom arm is moving correctly" in response to his command[248]. The constant pain that was actually never there is relieved by visual illusions and brain deceptiveness. Since the experience of a phantom limb is intrinsically related to a first person perspective, in our case, the array of missing limbs is vast, allowing different visual feedbacks within the collective body. Thus, Godzilla's body becomes a fictional missing organ that "completes" the ever mutable hybrid identity. American Civil War physician Mitchell describing amputees' "vivid hallucinations" states that "nearly every man who loses a limb, carries about with him a constant or inconstant phantom

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[247] Takashi Murakami, "Earth in My Window", *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture*, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 139.

[248] V.S. Ramachandran and William Hirstein, "The Perception of phantom limbs", *Brain*, Oxford Univesity Press, 1998, p. 1620.

of the missing member, a sensory ghost of that much of himself"[249]. The ghosts of the postwar repression of Japan's defeat – strong roar of discriminated *hibakusha,* restless spirits of solders or/and outraged emperor being forced to decline into a form of a human being – kept haunting the audience from the big screens. Although in some of the sequels Godzilla remains to be a menace threatening to ruin Japan, in several others – it represents a protector from the hostile outsiders, adamant to bring suffering and fragmentation of Japanese national body. Merleau-Ponty approached the subject of phantoms as a philosopher whose real concern is with the body as a vehicle of being in the world. He concludes:

> In the evidentness of this complete world in which manipulable objects still figure, in the impulse of movement that goes toward it and where the project of writing or of playing the piano still finds figures, the patient finds the certainty of his [bodily] integrity. But at the very moment that the world hides his deficiency from him, the world cannot help but to reveal it to him. For if it is true that I am conscious of my body through the world and if my body is the unperceived term at the center of the world toward which every object turns its face, then it is true for the same reason that my body is the pivot of the world.[250]

Godzilla's body serves as a motif for uncovering a deeper understanding of the Japanese world. Instead of just mourning what has been lost and keeping the melancholic memory of what used to be a "useful" body part, Godzilla as a

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[249] Quoted in Gaby Wood, "Not a Happy Fraction of a Man", *Cabinet,* 22, summer 2006.

[250] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 111.

phantom limb serves a proactive purpose of celebrating the profusion of brain commands subduing the pain due to mirror images. The complete franchise operates as both a painful phantom limb and its own successful amputation through the cinematic medium.

However, the descriptions of phantom limb pain could only be partially understood because that discomfort is largely unfelt by those outside of the inflicted body. Character of Dr. Yamane in original *Godzilla* states that Godzilla provides "unique opportunity to *only those in Japan*" to study it. Therefore, we can never fully understand Godzilla franchise as it is a phantom limb of a Japanese body and not of our own.

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One of the most compelling aspects of animation is its power to remind audiences of the importance of play and imagination in a world that increasingly sidelines such necessities...animation is one of the most popular forms in which the spirit of true anarchy and the antic spirit live on. [...] [It] is a liberating force that free associates like crazy and makes audiences see the world afresh and, clichéd through it sounds, with the eyes of a child again.

James Clarke

In the early 1970s, after the end of Golden period, Japanese cinema faces stagnation and, as a result of it, comes the flourishing of Japanese animation – *anime*. In recent decades, anime proved to be a significant cultural and economic factor which brought Japan a global dominance in visual media through – what is often referred as – "invisible colonization". This visual "imperialism" is made possible due to anime's attractive hybridity of styles, genres and themes, its post-modernity making this format an inexhaustible source for academic research. Many scholars suggest that unique position of Japanese animation in global culture and its attractiveness to the audience outside Japan, derives from depiction of abstract, culturally "indefinable" surrounding – *mukokuseki*, populated with human characters whose appearance is not considered Japanese. Conversely, the approach of "de-Japanization" allows Japanese audience to escape from the burden of known reality (and history) to a different, fictitious world. In cases of both Japanese and international audience, anime

phenomenon is accurately described as "constant chatter of the collective unconscious and articulation of a dream world"[251].

Drawing on Deleuze's standpoint "that cinema not only 'puts movement in the image' but also 'puts movement in the mind', tracing the circuits of the brain – the brain-as-screen", Steven T. Brown proposes that the movement of the images in anime "also traces the brain circuits of anime viewers around the world and their transnational relations to abstract machines". [252]

In addition, Norman McLaren notes:

> Animation is not the art of drawings that move but the art of movements that are drawn; what happens between each frame is much more important than what exists on each frame; animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible interstices that lie between frames.[253]

Trying to evade the slipping into cultural determinism when dealing with a subject of anime, Thomas Lamarre uses Guattari's concept of *machine* and its heterogenesis to propose a multiplanar concept that "defies neat divisions and hierarchies between inside and outside, or between technology and value"[254]. The "animetic machine" resists structural composing of the images but, without totalizing the outcome, offers abstract existence of variety of images and their

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[251] Quoted in Mark McWilliams (ed.), *Japanese Visual Culture*, Armonik: M.E. Sharpe, 2005, p. 5.

[252] Steven T. Brown, *Cinema Anime*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 6.

[253] Quoted in Thomas Lamarre, *Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. xxiv.

[254] Ibid., p. xxxii.

compositions that come before any technology that produces them. The key point here is to analyze the occurrence of the movements within images and not just the trajectory of motion (from frame to frame). The "animetic interval" stands for "an interval that is experienced in a state of movement" [255] and therefore, radically forms a distinction from movement of cinematic images. Cartesian, one-point perspective of monocular film camera (emphasized in apparatus theory) limits the sense of movement and depth because it is fixed, opposite to "animetism" in which the layering of the image supersedes the camera. Thus, Lamarre proposes the notion of "animetically thinking technology" which he closely examines through the work of Miyazaki Hayao, with a focus on movement of the bodies that fly. Multilayered and multiperspectival image of Japanese animation directs perceiver's attention to the experience of technology itself which frees us "from our compulsion to force all things into one efficient order"[256].

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> We need to flatten the notion that the virtual fantasy is separate from the real, that the fantasy is not a transcendent wholly removed space, but only a transcendental, heterotopic threshold that allows us to fantasize about some impossible, entirely other space.[257]

Japanese artist Murakami Takashi conceptualized the Superflat art movement

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[255] Ibid., p. 18.

[256] Quoted in ibid., p. 83.

[257] 109 Jonathan Abel, "Can Cool Japan Save Post-Disaster Japan? On the Possibilities and Impossibilities of a Cool Japanology", *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 20, 2011, p. 70.

based on "flattened" form of Japanese animation, manga and Edo wood-block art and its specific way of controlling "the speed of observer's gaze".[258] Contrary to Western single point perspective, multiperspectivism and several viewpoints within the same image of Japanese graphic art foreground the layering which enables heterogeneity and dehierarchizing. Considering that our focus is on the body, it is necessary to examine the multiperspectivism of anime and particularly the viewpoint from within the body that visual medium of Japanese animation often relies on.

One of the most notable characteristics of the body in anime is metamorphosis. Human body in the process of transformation is a reoccurring trope in Japanese mythology, literature and art, pointing to Buddhist teaching that the universe is in constant change, as well as, to the issues of unstable human identity. In Japanese folklore, shape-shifting animal figures such as *kitsune* (fox), *tanuki* (racoon dog), dragon or spider possess the power of transformation into seductive male and female forms in order to tempt and deceive people. They are classified as *henge, obake* or *bakemono* – a thing that changes, supporting Shintoist belief that all entities, whether godly or humane, are never characterized by one absolute trait, but could rather be assigned, depending on circumstances, the opposite attribute. Both positive and negative aspects are intrinsic features of an individual entity, thus mutations and

[258] Takashi Murakami, *Superflat*, Tokyo: MADRA Publishing, 2000, p. 9.

morphing are tools for displaying same entity's transition from one aspect to another.

In anime, the drama of the very act of transformation is enhanced by technical possibilities of the animation itself. "Metamorphosis [in animation]...legitimizes the process of connecting apparently unrelated images, forging original relationships between lines, objects etc., and disrupting established notion of classical story-telling."[259]

Although there are diverse narratives of anime in which such corporeal transformation occurs, certain general classification is recognized – gender-bending, pornographic, horror-grotesque and technologized bodies. Susan J. Napier's groundbreaking book *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (2005) [260] offers deeper understanding of above-mentioned themes explored in anime through detailed analysis of films and serials that made a cultural impact among the audience outside Japan as well.

Based on a popular manga by Takahashi Rumiko, *Ranma ½* is martial arts comedy with a main protagonist shifting gender when in contact with water (cold water turns him into a female, warm transforms him back into male). *Ranma ½* has often been read (Napier 2005, Newitz 1995) through

[259] Quoted in Susan Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 36.

[260] Updated edition of *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke* (2001)

feminist perspective; transformation into female "state" is followed by weaknesses and lack of skill in martial arts, rendering this anime as conservative or as the one leading to emasculation of male spectators.

What usually creates a common misunderstanding and enforces the judgmental perspective towards the Japanese is the "unconstrained" freedom in depicting the issues of pedophilia, incest and different sexual practices in manga, but also literature, cinema, or Japanese art in general. It would be inaccurate to consider Japanese society as taboo-free but one must acknowledge the loose censorship in the domain of fiction concerning these subjects. Often labeled in the West as outstandingly bizarre, the pornographic anime (*hentai*) developed its unique setting conditioned by domestic restrictions and censorship.

Ero guro nansensu (erotic grotesque nonsense) is Japanese artistic movement which foregrounds decadence, deviant eroticism and ridiculousness of everyday life. From mid- 1920s this cultural phenomenon focuses attention to the bizarre imageries, celebrating nonsensical as a means of satirical provocation. Maruyama Masao, probing the questions of Japanese modernity and societal transformations of that period, refers to a rapid change of architecture of the cities with excessive growth of mass gathering locales (bars, cafes, department stores, subway) which has been followed by the flourishing

of mass culture (literature, advertising ,etc.).[261] This change left Japanese youth with two options – to oppose consumerism as leftist revolutionaries, or to indulge in *ero guro* absurdities. Following Maruyama's conclusion, Miriam Silverberg (2009) closely examines the Japanese prewar society and perceives erotic grotesque nonsense as a cultural device that challenged the state ideology.

However, the Japanese, also accustomed to explicit erotic images present in *shunga* wood-block prints and paintings, had to restrain their freedom of expression under the Western influence, in order to satisfy the criteria of newly established public morals. Contradictorily, the infamous Article 175 of Criminal Code – the law against the obscenity which prohibits the realistic depiction of genitalia (pubic hair) – made it possible to view various sexual acts that are considered in other societies as extreme, perverse and unsuitable for public display, precisely due to subject's fantastical character.

Bypassing these rules, manga and anime artists enforced all advantages of fantastic in the images, usually changing characters' genitalia into tentacles, snakes, eels or eggplants.[262] Using the variety of non-standard color palette for illustrating female private parts, the artists gave prominence to unreality of

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[261] Masao Maruyama, "Patterns of Individuation and the Case of Japan: A Conceptual Scheme," *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*, Marius Jansen (ed.), Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965, p. 489-531.

[262] Pioneer in erotic grotesque genre in anime and manga is Maeda Toshio, widely known for his *hentai* work – *Urotsukidoji (Legend of the Overfiend)* and *La Blue Girl* series which embarked on the visual grammar of tentacles allowing graphic display of multiple penetration renouncing the censorship restriction.

these fairly graphic and explicit images.[263] These visual metaphors emanated equally powerful effect while abiding the law.

Consequently, the great number of *hentai* anime narratives is set in fantasy, science-fiction and horror genres portraying females usually being violently raped by characters who transform into demons, beasts, aliens and other supernatural beings. Nonetheless, female transformations also establish the image of a threatening force; a female body is often disposed to metamorphosis – in the work of Kawajiri Yoshiaki tattooed snakes on a women's skin become alive and ready to attack, seductive female body turns into a fearsome spider, or into an oversized devouring *vagina dentata*.

Regardless of gender, the body in *hentai* anime is portrayed as powerful, yet inconstant, reflecting the ever-shifting identity of Japanese society. "Both the powerful demonic male figures and the transforming female figures also offer a form of resistance to the oppressive social order."[264]

Additionally, pornographic anime close-up scenes provide uncommon

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[263] Same reasoning applies to *lolicon* (Lolita complex) and *shotacon* genres depicting (pre)pubescent female and male characters in an erotic manner. By Japanese "obscenity edict" children are not considered to be sexual beings, thus this type of fetishization is possible as a clear demonstration of artistic imaginarium. Steven Smet notes that popularity of this genre is conditioned by "discovered" feminism in Japanese society and that *lolicon* as a "exorcism of fantasies" contributes to low sex crime rate in Japan. (for further reading Helen McCarthy & Jonathan Clements, *The Erotic Anime Movie Guide*, London: Titan Books, 1998) Moreover, early beginnings of *lolicon* are found in the "magic girl" genre which allows a little girl to become full grown woman and experience and enjoy adult life without being scared or making mistakes typical for puberty.

[264] Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, p. 81.

"interior view". The excitement is being built through visually unconventional perspective – outside and inside the body. Hyperrealism of live-action pornography where close-ups add "a dimension to a space of sex", that of being more real than real – showing "from up close what one has never seen before" (the impossible visibility of one's own genitals in action) [265], is enhanced and furthered in anime by attaching one more dimension, where subject's perspective is from within the body itself. Jean Baudrillard points to the lack of illusion and phantasy in pornography that is overly true and real:

> Consequent to the anatomical zoom, the dimension of the real is abolished, the distance implied by the gaze gives way to an instantaneous, exacerbated representation, that of sex in its pure state, stripped not just of all seduction, but of its image's very potentiality. Sex so close that it merges with its own representation: the end of perspectival space, and therefore, that of the imaginary and of phantasy – end of the scene, end of an illusion.[266]

Noting that Baudrillard differentiates pornography from obscenity which "still contains an element of transgression, provocation" and "plays on repression, with phantasies of violence"[267], we could assume that *hentai* images actually prove to be obscene, rather than merely pornographic. In anime, primarily through visual device of multiperspectivism the stress is on imagery which allows the conjunction of sex and violence. Prominence of bodily

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[265] Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, Montreal: New World Perspectives & CTheory, 2001, p. 28.

[266] Ibid., p. 29.

[267] Ibid.

transformation in pornographic anime brings the state's interference in creative expression through censorship to a paradoxical turn – regulation of the obscene generates more prominent visibility of salacious images.

Body-horror and grotesque transmutations often occur in apocalyptic anime, reflecting equally the monstrosity of collective past or anxieties of possible near future. In Otomo Katsuhiro's *Akira* (1988), set in Neo-Tokyo in the aftermath of World War III, teenage boy Tetsuo goes through a series of mutations after being captive by government scientists. In what is usually described as a mesmerizing and terrifying scene, Tetsuo first loses his arm, then telekinetically constructs a new one, only to realize that the process of corporeal mutation is unstoppable. The boundaries of his body are no longer defined by skin, and progressively Tetsuo embarks on, in Susan Napier's words, "frenzy of metamorphosis". This intense metaphorical image signifies the consequences of the idea of constant (bio-scientific) progress and indicates essentially uncontrollable power of technology and its uncertainty. The turmoil of horrific disfigurement of Tetsuo's body ends with his physical disappearance, only his voice left revealing "I am Tetsuo". Consequently, this disembodied voice seems to affirm Descartes' proposition of mind-body divide which became a fundamental part of Western philosophy, thus it is not unexpected that *Akira* gained such widespread acclamation in the West.

239 On the other hand, exploring the cybernetic body in Japanese animation

is a task which exceeds the scope of this study and should be investigated separately. In spite of that, it is necessary to mention some ontological issues of the relation between the human and the machine, humanity and technology evident in critically acclaimed anime *Ghost in the Shell* by Oshii Mamoru. It is still quite popular among the Western audience[268] for it effortlessly synthesizes the sophisticated animation with complex narrative. The central questions of subjectivity, Cartesian dualism, notion of soul in technological society, potentness of new artificial identities in postmodern era, in addition to concerns dealing with gender issues and the problem of posthuman reproduction have already been widely explored by scholars.

Biological body is perceived as obsolete; it is especially apparent in the scene when the main character, female cyborg Kusanagi Motoko (nearly hundred percent artificial, only with brain cells being "naturally" human) is attacked by armored tank machines in a setting which resembles a deserted museum of natural history. Apart from fossil specimen being completely destroyed, a picture of a tree of life on a museum wall is being hit by the hail of bullets, coming to a stop just an inch close to the evolutional treetop which is labeled "hominis". It subtly announces that technology will soon have enough ammunition to complete the task of overcoming biological determinism. Kusanagi's technological body is ripped to shreds during a fight with the tank,

[268] Hollywood live-action remake is set for a release in 2017.

only to be saved by her partner Batou who enables the merging of her consciousness with the self-aware computer program, Puppet Master. In the end, her body is replaced with the mechanical one in the form of a young girl. This resulting entity represents an entirely novel conception; it is neither Puppet Master's data body which desired the biological one in order to reproduce, nor Kusanagi's artificial body distressed by (human) identity crisis. Nonetheless, the film's ending line – "the net is vast and limitless" suggests that cyrborg's mechanical body is soon to be expendable as well. That being said, N. Katherine Hayeles (*How We Became Posthuman*) argument that consciousness is conditioned by embodiment is still applicable to this film since the freedom of even this new, "informational" being is rather affected by the shell and not established through escape from the body form.

Oshii Mamoru's concerns about the human body in technological society are further explored in the sequel *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* where the focus is on an empty body of a doll or a puppet (*ningyo*). Explaining the ideas behind the film, director draws a distinction between functionless "cold body" (*tsumetai shintai*) and "body that smells" (*niou shitai*).[269]

> This "cold body" is the state toward which humans are inexorably moving, he says, whether as cyborgs with increasing numbers of mechanical parts or as human "terminals", sentient nodes on the networks that make up urban, computerized life. The only

[269] Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Emotional Infectivity: Cyborg Affect and the Limits of the Human", *Mechademia*, Vol. 3, 2008, p. 159-160.

> creatures for whom the body does preexist language and thought are animals, [...] [a creatures] for whom body and selfhood are identical.[270]

However, Oshii proposes optimistic attitude towards the future of humanity which should embrace "turning into dolls, into intended artifice"[271] instead of pursuing to adjust an organic human body to technological modernity and urbanization of contemporary world, and/or accept the transformative process of "becoming-animal". In addition to Deleuzian (Deleuzo-Guattarian)[272] concept of animality – a (philosopher's) task "to becoming-other", demonstrating power of an impersonal life, that is having similar reactions as an animal has to its environment, we should call attention to the work of one of Japan's leading cultural critics, Azuma Hiroki. In *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (2001) Azuma examines contemporary consumer society through the phenomenon of Japanese *otaku* culture. *Otaku* is the term which refers to obsessive Japanese fans that primarily consume, but also produce manga and anime, and their

[270] Ibid., p. 160.

[271] Steven T. Brown, "Machinic Desires: Hans Bellmer's Dolls and the Technological Uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*", *Mechademia*, Vol. 3, 2008, p. 159-160.

[272] According to Deleuze, involuntary action of becoming takes place in the domain of real; it has no relation to imitation or history. "To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or indifferentiation where one can no longer be distinguished from a woman, an animal, or a molecule – neither imprecise nor general, but unforeseen and non-preexistent, singularized out of a population rather than determination in a form" (Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p.1) Also, it is worth noting that in Deleuze and Guattari's work art is not considered humanistic form of communication but also an integral part of animal life (bird-artist in *What is Philosophy*, New York: Columbia University Press: New York).

derivative merchandise. Diverting from Alexandre Kojève's differentiation between posthistorical Western (American) animality and Japanese "snobbish" civilization[273], Azuma pioneers a model of "database animal", marking Japanese *otaku* as animalistic – immediately gratifying their consumer needs in database system which takes the place of absent grand narratives. Becoming-animal, thus, presupposes the process of abandoning the "desire structure" denoted in today's consumer societies in which the needs are instantly satisfied.

> The objects of desire that previously could not be had without social communication, such as everyday meals and sexual partners, can now be obtained very easily, without all that troublesome communication, through fast food or the sex industry.[274]

The notion of *moe* plays an important role here. This slang word denotes a strong affection towards characters in manga, anime and video-games. *Moe* elements predominately refer to the visual domain[275] and since 1990s they have become vital in the *otaku* market production, in a sense that character setting

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[273] In *Introduction to Reading Hegel*, proposing the interpretation of Hegelian human as the one who negates his own environment (nature), Kojève defines postwar Japanese society as "snobbish" (human) because it devoted itself to ceremonial and ritual practices for their *historical*, formal values. On the other hand, American consumers are perceived as animalistic, living in a classless society that complements Marxist thought as they can appropriate the products which satisfy their consumer needs. According to Kojève, humans have intersubjective desires (that which relate to the *other*), whereas animals only experience the needs.

[274] Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japanese Database Animals*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 87.

[275] Azuma mentions the "TINAMI" web engine which provides a search of the illustrations database by a variety of categorized character traits – cat's ears, hair style and color, maid uniform, etc. This generated a practice of classification and registration of every newly developed character or continuous enlargement of the database by adding a new category in case of an "original" element.

creates the narrative, as opposed to the previous approach in which the narrative defined the character. This strategy can be easily understood through the following example – a character from anime proposal sparks interest among the *otaku* which then leads to the production of a spin-off video game that gets a release before the anime itself.

According to Azuma, *otaku* culture is based on narrative consummation of omnipresent simulacra; only instead of rhizome model (with signs linked in diverse patterns) he regards the postmodern world as a database which is established through *double-layered structure*. The outer-layer consists of the simulacra (the work) and the deep inner layer attached to the database (settings).

> In otaku culture ruled by narrative consumption, products have no independent value; they are judged by quality of the database in the background. So, as these databases display various expressions depending on the differing modes of "reading up" by users, consumers, once they are able to possess the settings, can produce any number of derivative works that differ from the originals. If we think of this situation as occurring only in the surface outer layer, the original product or work can seem swallowed by the chaos of a sea of simulacra. However, in reality, it is better to assume the prior existence of a database (i.e., settings) that enables both an original and the works derived from it, depending on how on "reads up" the database. [276]

Accordingly, what is perpetually consumed is the *moe* element or the combination of the database elements, and the satisfaction of the *otaku* needs is

[276] Ibid., p. 33.

both mechanical and immediate. In today's world, the human is replaced by the *otaku* who has gone through an animalization process and now participates "in depthless communication based on the symbolic exchanges and self-image that is barely maintained within the limited information space"[277].

The issues concerning the art(media product)-artist(creator)-fan relation set in the ambience of the sustained interflowing of reality and fiction are reoccurring in the self-referential work of innovative anime director Kon Satoshi ,which will be examined in the following chapter.

[277] Quoted in ibid., p. 91.

Corporeal Mediascapes of Kon Satoshi's Anime

This chapter examines the relation between visual media and Japanese inner self (*honne*) in the body of work of Kon Satoshi. Although Kon's anime opus[278] analyzed in this study offers itself as an inexhaustible source for both psychoanalytical and feminist theoretical readings (which are already dominant regarding this auteur), our concern is solely focused on inspecting the sinister invisibility of media extensions and the distorting effect it has on the body. In the light of today's technologically interconnected world, the media saturated individuals constantly being wired, with their proximity to the medium itself closer than ever, the examined anime, some dating nearly twenty years, proved to be especially relevant, even prophetic, outside Japan as well. Considering the technological advances of Japan, Kon's preoccupations were predominately centered towards *otaku* culture and media influences in postmodern world. Blurring the lines between actual and fictional, real and mediated, past and present, Kon's work reflects nonlinear and non-temporal environment of the Web.

As stated in previous chapters, in this thesis the notion of the body is perceived mainly through Eastern perspectives which are not based on the

[278] *Tokyo Godfathers* (2003) is purposely left out of this study as (like no other Kon's anime) it does not deal with the issues relating to media.

mind-body divide, and thus Kon's reoccurring theme of embodied contradictory identity in the environment also manifested in terms of dichotomies (real and dream, public and private), establishes itself as immensely relevant.

Running into an Illusion

Unlike any other Japanese anime director, Kon Satoshi (1963-2010) has often been compared to Western filmmakers such as Alfred Hitchcock, Brian De Palma and David Lynch.[279] His first full-length directorial debut, *Perfect Blue* (1997) deals with a young pop idol Mima being a victim of stalking after taking a turn in her career and becoming an actress. This anime thriller was based on Takeuchi Yoshikazu's novel *Perfect Blue: Complete Metamorphosis* whose second part of the title unveils the identity crisis of the main character, as well as constant alternation of illusion and reality.

Moreover, like most of his work, this film engages in the issues of spectatorship and self-reflexive investigation of artist and his/her work. His "use of animation and unreality creates a unique viewing experience, forcing

[279] Susann Napier, "'Excuse Me, Who Are You?': Performance, the Gaze, and the Female in the Works of Kon Satoshi", *Cinema Anime*, Steven T. Brown (ed.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 24. (See more: Dani Cavallaro, *Anime and Memory*, Jefferson, NC & London: McFarland & Company, 2009, p. 18.)

viewer to question not only the protagonist's perceptions but his or her own as he/she follows the protagonist into surreal world of madness and illusion."[280] The same applies to his second feature, *Millennium Actress* (2001) in which the protagonist, Fujiwara Chiyoko dwells in memories of her acting career and long lost love. Fluctuation of her memories, films and "real" characters making a documentary about her, occupies spectators' attention and actively challenges their perception. In addition to identity crisis and nightmares (Mima) or evoking of the past (Chiyoko), the movie scenes (whether segments of a completed film or still work-in-progress) starring both actresses interweave with reality, bringing the viewer in a position of uncertainty of what has been seen. "Kon sets the viewer up, sometimes by showing what appears to be a real sequence, [...], only to subsequently reveal that [the actions in the sequence] are hallucinations, dreams, or paranoid projections."[281] The director's choice to constantly shift from reality to showing the fiction as real, or revealing the "illusion within illusion", demonstrates the method of pointing to the very essence of the media itself and to the decisions made by media workers to keep certain realities hidden. Kon outlines the invisible trajectories of reality left out in media space, only to be unfolded in time of creator's choice.

The aforementioned type of viewers' involvement is equally supported

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[280] Ibid., p. 28.

[281] Ibid., p. 29.

by the motifs of running bodies. These bodies try to escape both literal and symbolic threats; on one hand, the chase is prompted by the obsessive stalker, rivals or the authorities, and on the other, by expectations of their mothers, managers, fans etc. These running figures call in mind Deleuze's notion that forms do not transform but that is a matter that changes the form (from one to another).

Although the act of running is motivated by relatively disparate reasons, it nevertheless mechanically triggers the suspense and participatory reaction among the viewers, as a cinematic device based on an image of a hasty moving body. Both films deal with the relation between the artist and fandom. The gender issue concerning this subject will be deliberately left aside as our interest lies in phenomenon of *otaku* consummation as explained in previous chapter.

From the opening scene and throughout *Perfect Blue,* Kon depicts *otaku* and their obsessive behavior – the need of fanboys to possess both Mima's voice (recording) and body (new photographs in a magazine) or extreme measures taken by those who felt betrayed by her decision to leave her pop idol career behind.

When Mima discovers a web-site "Mima's Room" with accurate reports of her daily activities and thoughts, her anxiety activates phantasmagoria of other (idol) Mima looking back at her from a computer screen and declaring "the real Mima is writing this". This other Mima also previously appeared as a

reflection in the subway window disagreeing with the real one's decision to film a scene of violent rape. Through a parallel editing of real and illusionary Mima and stalker Mimania who actually writes the web-site entries, Kon suggests "that the threat is both real – Mimania is clearly deranged – and within her head, a projection of her guilt and shame onto the Mima in the computer"[282].

However, the real menace proves to be the former pop idol Rumi, Mima's mentor who is actually behind the series of murderous attacks on Mima and her managers; she overidentifies with idol Mima and progressively loses the sense of reality (and her post-idol identity). After escaping a murder attempt by stalker Mimania, Mima wakes up in a room that imitates her own, only to encounter Rumi disguised as idol Mima. The scene in which Rumi, dissatisfied with her own overweight body, sees her own reflection in the mirror as of idol Mima, demonstrates the absolute fan identification with the subject of his/her obsession. Rumi's line – "an idol is always protected by her fans" reveals the essence of *otaku* consummation, as argued in previous chapter, a creative role of fandom and here, the gratification of their animalistic needs are crucial. Certain *moe* elements of the database (i.e. Mima's idol appearance – its physical manifestation, her body itself) have to be actively in use, and *otaku* commitment and devotion seem to be indisputable.

It is noteworthy to examine what finally stops Rumi's forceful chase of

[282] Ibid., p. 31.

Mima. When she gets the abdominal cut by Rumi, Mima looks herself at the mirror and finally loudly declares to Rumi her identity – "I am Mima. I am me!". Therefore, through the ventral puncture, Mima's viscera reacts and brings her back to her real identity. The new, confident Mima, with viscerally affirmed persona, pushes back Rumi, still entangled in her illusionary identity. Mima also gets impaled through the stomach as she stumbles on shattered mirror. Still in kneeling position, with pierced viscera, reflection of Rumi's smiling face gazes back at the viewer from the several pieces of a broken mirror. Kon uses multifaceted surface image of the *otaku* to emphasize their fictional identity based on fragmented narratives; the mirror pieces represent the assemblage of different media simulacra which form the body of a postmodern human. At the end, Kon again uses the same aesthetic trope – Mima's reflection from a rear mirror stares back at the audience and proclaims "I am real". This somewhat cynical ending, only proclaims that the illusions emanated from the screen construct the postmodern identity more than reality itself. Only when the prominence is given to viscera, the Japanese are ready to accept and show their real selves.

The boundary crossing between reality and media is even more underscored in *Millennium Actress*. Personal reminiscences of famous actress are literally set in motion by the documentary filmmaker Tachibana Genya, who brings her the long lost key which opens "the box of memories". Unfolding the

narrative of her life-story – Chiyoko's endless pursuit for love and rich acting career, Kon delivers the portrait of Japan's past and present. The documentary meant to commemorate the film studio that is about to be demolished, covers the variety of moments in time that marked Japan's (and world) history: from 1923 Great Tokyo Earthquake (Chiyoko's birth year), over the period of Manchuria occupation, Japan in ruins after World War II, 1969 landing on the moon to today's Japan. Moreover, through profusion of different roles – geisha, ninja, princess, nurse and astronaut, Chiyoko brings to focus Japan's historical timeline from 15th and 16th century Sengoku Period, over Edo and Meiji, to Showa Period (1926-1989). Kon's perspective towards History is in accordance with those that imply that it is always imaginary, similar to all grand narratives.

> This approach resulted largely from Kon's awareness that "many modern Japanese have specific images" of distinct epochs in their history that have more to do with a consensual imaginary bred by the media than recorded facts. For example, people tend to harbor certain images of the "Edo Period, which are not necessarily the actual Edo Period. Television and movies have created these particular images".[283]

Kon engages in seemingly individual stories of his characters, only to accentuate the irrationalities and ever-morphing discernment of the collective flesh. *Millennium Actress* references many films and figures of Japanese cinema history – *Throne of Blood* (1957), *Rickshaw Man* (1958), *What is Your Name?* (1953), Zatoichi, Tengu Kurama and Godzilla. These cinematic resonances prove to

[283] Cavallaro, *Anime and Memory*, p. 16-17.

indicate how fictional worlds define both personal and collective histories. When caught in a vortex of Chiyoko's memories and cinema, in which the borders of reality and fiction completely blur and "present-day" characters find themselves inside the Chiyoko's films, dumbfounded documentary cameraman asks – "What are we filming? Wasn't this supposed to be a documentary?". The answer to this last question would definitively be affirmative since Kon repeatedly professes that there is no reality that can be filmed which has not already been intertwined with fantasy. The characters are drawn into a world of joint individual and collective memories, past and present, dreams and materiality, everyday life and media and Kon suggests that all those segments cannot be separated and they remain indistinguishable in the future as well.

Embodied Delusion

In anime series *Paranoia Agent* (2004), Kon Satoshi continues to share his insights of the intricacies of media and reality. The original title of the series is *Mousou dairinin* which rather refers to delusion than to paranoia and directly addresses the state of contemporary Japan's population.

In most of the episodes, the characters are being attacked by a teenager with a bat, Shonen Batto who turns out to be fictional. As seen in the previous segment, the central figures in *Perfect Blue* and *Millennium Actress* were actresses,

whereas in *Paranoia Agent* Kon gives prominence to "common people" affected by the media. Among them there are *otaku* but also those "passively" involved in consumer society, overwhelmed by media induced numbness. The cyclic structure on anime brings back the opening scene to the series' ending – crowds of people on the busy city streets, using their cell phones and headphones, heads sunk into newspapers, immersed in the static of communication.

Throughout the series' narrative, Kon compels the viewers to witness the struggles of an entire population of Japan – a designer (known for her previous work – popular Hello Kitty look-alike pink dog Maromi) under pressure to create another *kawaii* character, a school boy struggling to retain his top position in the class, a women working as both university assistant and prostitute, corrupted policeman with incestuous tendencies towards his daughter, otaku teenager whose perception of reality is completely distorted etc. All mentioned characters were the victims of Shonen Batto who always appears before the person "who's been driven to a corner and has nowhere to go". In particularly self-reflexive episode, the boy with a bat attacks crew working on the anime TV-series production.

Kon reflects on Japan's past – allowing disappointed and nostalgic detective to indulge in his fantasy of chasing the thief in two-dimensional world of 1950s Japan, while the real Tokyo gets engulfed in a black whirlwind. Smashing his own illusions of a two-dimensional world, detective only finds

himself in a devastated city, completely covered with Maromi toys.

The series meditates on the paradox of dysfunctional communication in the "easily accessible" network society. In addition, Kon indicates that hysteria of generating fantasy (product) equals the one of consuming it. The extremities of hyper-production and massive consumption are reflected in the otaku character who is making the toy of himself wearing Maromi logo T-shirt.

In the postmodern world, the invisible monster (Shonen Batto) operates in the same manner as Maromi does, through media uniformity and commodification. However, the illusions of *otaku* virtual worlds (as seen through teenager referring to himself as a hero from a video game or manga/anime dolls stating that their owner is not capable of "doing anything, unless [they]'re watching him") profoundly correspond to those of nostalgic past (detective's two-dimensional world). "In suggesting that the past is no more authentic than the present, *Paranoia Agent* offers a defense of anime itself."[284]

Here, we should again address Murakami Takashi's Superflat movement. His "theory of art in two-dimensions" proclaims the absence of depth where all the differences of cultural, social, historical (temporal) contexts operate as comparable and equal. In fact, not just that the detective's anachronic two-dimensional world is indistinguishable from those of young generations', but

[284] Andrew Osmond, *Satoshi Kon – The Illusionist*, Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2009, p. 100.

they both belong to the realm of Superflat. The Superflat visual language draws the viewer to the surface of the art; *kawaii* Marumi or any other "real" design of contemporary commercial expressions is related to the Japanese paintings of the Edo period. Murakami stresses that new commercial art represents the continuation of the original Japanese art, just as it was created before the process of accommodation to the Western standards during the Meiji period. Consequently, we could add one more binary opposition – art/commodity to those already mentioned as Kon's preoccupations.

Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that *Paranoia Agent* is in line with Azuma's notions of *hypervisuality*. Namely, Azuma points out to the turn in relation between the visible and the invisible in postmodern world. Printed page implies the trajectory from the visible (printed words) to the invisible (meaning of the words), whereas in case of Web, HTML language takes a different direction. "The screen a user confronts exists as nothing more than an 'interpretation ' by the user environment – that is, by operating system, the browser, the monitor, and the video chip."[285] Therefore, today's world proclaims that the value of the seen is influenced by not just what is visible, but by fluctuant multi-invisibilities.

According to Azuma the logic of the Web structure fully matches the model of database consumption. "The body of work is understood as a database

[285] Azuma, *Otaku*, p. 99.

(the invisible), while the simulacra (the visibles) are extracted from it based on the preferences of the consumer."[286] Therefore, *Paranoia Agent,* more than the rest of Kon's anime, examines the *otaku* culture and postmodern world; the characters preferences to be attacked by Shonen Batto or to "pick their own illusion" (the visibles) and omnipresent media (invisible), function as simulacra and the database.

Dream(ing) Bodies

The idea of this final segment is to investigate the notion of body and bodily metamorphosis in Kon's anime *Paprika* (2006) which reveals different layers of fantasy in an attempt to explore interchangeable imaginary worlds of dreams, cinema and chaotic reality. Bursting through the boundaries of reality and dreams, blurring the states of awakeness and sleep, Kon reveals a unique space generated by merging of individual and collective hidden desires and anxieties. Moreover, *Paprika* also operates as an auto-reflexive insight into the film-maker's perspective towards the world of cinema and its audience.

The film's narrative deals with a team of scientific researchers who developed a specific device – *DC mini* – capable of penetrating dreams in order to heal their patients' psychological damages. Dr Chiba uses her virtual alter-

[286] Ibid., p.102.

ego, Paprika, in order to identify a culprit who stole the DC mini and subsequently initiated the chaotic conjunction of reality and dreams, shifting from individual incidents and turning into a collective turmoil that finally degenerates the waking world into a global dream state.

There are three different points through which the body in *Paprika* is directly addressed – *Idealized Body* (of oneself), *Desired Body* (of the other) and *Reflective Body* (that display character's true trait).

Inui, the wheelchair bound chairman of Foundation for Psychiatric Research is a sophistically nuanced character working in defense of dreams – the last bastion of individual freedom, an oasis in the desert of technologically manipulated realms of human activity. Even though he halts the further development of DC mini, positioning himself in an essentially different direction from the idea of "sharing a dream together", Inui demonstrates somewhat altruistic attitude by acknowledging that "the dreams are horrified that their safe refuge is destroyed by technology that has lost its philosophy". The former statement can be taken as an auteur's own intertextual comment on the modern mainstream cinema's utter dependence on technology and special effects at the cost of true imagination. By the end, it is clear that Inui acts from his own frustrating condition of being unable to walk, yearning to achieve dominance over the dreamstate. This is a character which clearly represents the *Idealized Body* – limitations of his own body are transgressed in an oneiric state

of dark carnevalesque disorder. Here, I argue that Inui symbolizes the spectator's body – that who is sitting in the dark seemingly passive, watching and longing to be proactive in a fictitious reality where he could himself contribute to narrative development and character direction. The desire to transpose himself into agency of movement frustratingly unreachable for him in the real life (a position similar to a spectator's, also riveted to his seat), could be read through Steven Shaviro's perspective on the process of film viewing.

> Sitting in the dark, watching the play of images across a screen, any detachment from "raw phenomena", from the immediacy of sensation or from the speeds and delays of temporal duration, is radically impossible. Cinema invites me, or forces me, to stay within the orbit of the senses. [...] I am violently, viscerally affected by *this* image and *this* sound, without being able to have recourse to any frame of reference, any form of transcendental reflection.[287]

At the point where reality and dreams are intertwined, Inui indulges himself into a performative "rampage", clearly reflecting viewer's own desire to participate in onscreen activity. Moreover, walking through fantastical scenery of his own dreamstate does not seem to be entirely satisfying for Inui, so he seeks other spectators, potential witnesses to his deliverance from the passivity of his handicap. Shaviro's emphasis that "cinematic perception is primordial to the very extent that it is monstrously prosthetic"[288] conspicuously manifests as

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[287] Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, p. 31.

[288] Ibid., p. 30.

Inui transforms his rigid legs into a set of tentacles, now allowing him to be a figure of dominance.

As referred in previous chapters, opposed to well-rooted Cartesian dualism found in Western philosophies, Eastern theories provide different approach to mind-body relation. As discussed in third chapter, by overcoming this "commonsensical" divide, Japanese scholar Yuasa Yasuo offers the perspective which unifies different systems of thought – idealism and materialism. Drawing on concepts delineated in Nishida's philosophy, Yuasa's notion of dual-layered ("bright" and "dark") consciousness could be enforced within *Paprika*. To summarize, Yuasa identifies *cogito* as a reflective "bright" consciousness while the knowledge of spontaneous body acts is defined as "dark". Positioning bright as "reflective, which takes time to develop" and dark as spontaneous and impulsive, a "purely responsive act", Yuasa's standpoint could be referred to as a cinematic perception. In reality, Inui's bright consciousness operates by emphasizing a man's responsibility to control science and technology in the protection of dreams as "the only humane sanctuary left (in inhumane reality)". On the other hand, in dreams he acts from the unconstrained dark consciousness in order to gain limitless personal freedom. In correspondence with Inui's mind-body unity, the audience's *cogito* reflects and t(h)e(o)r/ror/izes the film while its collective body is in an imprudent absorption of the image.

Now we can address the *Desired Body* which is demonstrated through Paprika's rape by Osanai who's been acting for Inui. Osanai's desire for Paprika is effectively displayed by his plunging into her body and tearing her skin to reveal Chiba inside.

By showing the sinking of a hand into a body in a rape scene, and positioning it literally onto a movie screen, Kon's *Paprika* could be understood as a study of cinematic *visceroception*. Joining the perspective of film scholars such as Shaviro, Barker, Sobchack, the proposed term *visceroception* in the context of Japanese cinema, finds its absolute implementation in such radical visual representation of the internal contact with one's viscera on the screen.

Brian Massumi argues that "the immediacy of visceral perception is so radical that it can be said without exaggeration, to precede the exteroceptive sense perception. It anticipates the translation of the sight or sound or touch perception into 'something recognizable' a quality (or property)"[289]. This brings to mind an already examined notion of *haragei* and other Japanese intuitive modes of communication. Therefore, *visceroception* would represent a specific psycho-physical mode through which the Japanese absorb, and decipher the numerous impulses and various ideas that the world around them emanates. The art, culture and, in this instance, cinema is also perceived and understood

[289] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Duke University Press, 2000, p. 60.

through viscera and not merely logical apparatus.

In the addressed segment, the character of Konakawa is seen penetrating through the screen with his entire body in the similar manner as Osanai forcibly took Chiba's character out from Paprika's body with his hand. Konakawa is the detective who seeks Paprika's assistance, in dealing with his repetitious dreams of a homicide he currently investigates. His dreams contain direct references to Hollywood cinema – curiously he presents himself as a person with no interest for cinema, and yet in a dreamstate he is always playing a lead character in movies ranging from the *James Bond* serial to *Roman Holiday* etc. Konakawa is revealed to be a frustrated person who once dreamed of directing movies but whose insecurity led to a different profession and accordingly, repetitive production of nightmares in which all the protagonists, except the crime victim, wear his face. Only when he literally plunges into a screen, he contrives his active role, "directing" the course of action. With that being said, Konakawa embodies Viven Sobchack's idea of the cinesthetic subject which

> names the film viewer (and, for that matter, also the filmmaker) who not only *has* a body but *is* a body and, through an embodied vision in-formed by the knowledge of the other senses, "makes sense" of what it is to "see" a movie–both "in the flesh" and as it "matters." [290]

This leads us to *Reflective Body* as the third aspect in the proposed

[290] Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts – Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*, Berkley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 70.

assessment of the notion of the body in *Paprika*. Depicting the dreamstate, Kon molds and displays the prominent character traits and displays them as bodily metamorphed features – high-school students with the heads shaped into cell-phones, musicians morphed into their instruments, religious activists into the sculptures of their worship, a gay scientist Himura into a traditional Japanese doll, Tokita – an obese geek scientist as a huge robot toy (who could be linked to the Web/technology as a huge all-encompassing system with the constant need to enlarge itself) and Osanai as a "half of a man", his servitude to his superior directly manifested through Inui's physically emanating out of his servant's body.

In *Paprika,* the corporeal manifestations are intrinsically connected with various types of media (by characters' preferences), while particular scenes of direct plunging into characters' bodies point out Kon's interpretations of the cinematic perception, both of the viewer's and author's perspective.

In accordance with Yuasa's theory of the body, being able to "act as a self without being a self, to be guided by creative intuition" finds its cinematic extension in Kon's anime demonstrated through actions of his characters as they literally become their dreaming bodies.

Kon's concerns and fascinations of the postmodern world and his approach to animation are summarized in the following paragraph:

> The multiple layers of Kon's universe – dreams and nightmares; memories; fantasies; solipsistic scenarios; theatrical performances;

> social role-playing; mediated constructions, references to other visual sources, etc – are readily facilitated by the ontological equivalence of the animated image. All animated imagery, however imitative, mimetic or quasi-realist, foregrounds its constructedness and illusionism.[291]

Kon Satoshi grounds his work in popular genres – thriller, romance, drama, comedy, only to modify them through his unique animation into what is legitimate to call *Kon genre*. *Trompe l'oeil* (French – to deceive the eye) is an art technique that creates the optical illusion that images are real, which Andrew Osmond (2009) attributes to Kon's filmmaking. For Kon a human is put in the world of mixed realities and fantasies, and stressing the divisions between them is futile because "the unreal comes from the real and there's a dialectic between them". [292] Thus, in Kon's self-referential framing of anime, the delusion is not just a symbolic thematic trope but also an aesthetical tool of engaging the viewers in his fantasy. As for distinctiveness of his anime narrative constructions, he remarks:

> Speaking of nonlinear storytelling, I don't think people's communication between each other relies only on a linear time frame. [...]The human brain is mysterious; we can't share the time axis in our memory with other people. I'm interested in trying to visualize those nonlinear ways of thinking in my work.[293]

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[291] Paul Wells, "Playing the Kon Trick: Between Dates, Dimensions and Daring in the films of Satoshi Kon, *Cinephile* – *The University of British Columbia's Film Journal*, Vol. 7, no.1, Spring 2011, p.6.

[292] Osmond, *Satoshi Kon*, p. 22.

[293] Quoted in ibid., p. 18.

More than live-action cinema, restricted by the real world's "visual texture, color and extra information to take in"[294], medium of animation allows Kon the liberty to control the amount of "unneeded" information while efficiently communicating his inner realm to the spectatorship.

[294] Ibid., p. 24.

Conclusion

The question from the beginning remains – how can we understand the distant Other, when we are also marked with the same attribution of otherness? If we explore only the visible, the one that is intended to be seen, then we inescapably risk proclaiming knowledge that would always remain partial. As seen from the previous chapters, mind-body duality has never been established in Japan. However, other corporeal dichotomies such as *tatemae-honne, enryo–sasshi* have been deemed relevant and determinate for the Japanese society. In a culture where silence and implicit communication are inherently appreciated, and intuitive thinking highly supported, the prominence is given to the visual expression.

The point of my interest has been to investigate the relational aspects between the inner realms of Japan's body and visual medium of cinema – or to borrow Patricia Pisters' term – "machine of the invisible". As mentioned in the introduction, drawing on the notion that a nation is an imaginary construct, I have chosen to explore the "factual" descriptions of Japan reinterpreted in narrative (rather than documentary) cinema. The double-layered structure of this dissertation has been established through duplicated *othering* position and fictional counterparts of nation and cinema.

Through a notion of *visceral perception,* I have attempted to demonstrate

the less visible of what Richie describes as "real" Japan. In a culture that often emanates "pessimistic" attitude towards mother tongue, the *viscероception* implies that communication and transgression of ideas occur through body images on the screen and in the "real" bodies of audience.

The proposed term – *visceroceptiveness,* discussed in the context of Japanese spectatorship, can be further implemented in other cultural forms and environments. The identity issues of Japanese collective body, explored in the works of selected prominent cineastes, indicate the permanence and universality of human preoccupations.

Noting the popularity of genetic explanations for social behavior, Teresa Brennan foregrounds an unusual concept of *the transmission of affect*. The affect does not occur only inside the body, but rather moves between inside and out of the anatomical figure. Acknowledging the contribution of various theories which announce that the individual (and its thinking) is historically, culturally and socially constructed, Brennan points to a certain general reluctance to accept the same reasoning and to apply it to the emotions one has. "The fact is that the taken-for-grantedness of the emotionally contained subject is a residual bastion of Eurocentrism in critical thinking, the last outpost of the subject's belief in the superiority of its own worldview over the other cultures."[295] Thus,

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[295] Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, Ithaka & London: Cornell University Press, 2004. p. 3.

Brennan's notion of the transmission of affect is in line with Eastern thinking of interconnectiveness of the self-contained body and its environment.

Borrowing a term from neurology – the *entainment (*penetration of the material substance from outside the body (e.g. smell) which provokes the change inside the body), Brennan suggests that the visual images instigate the same neurological reaction as these transmissions blur the lines between the individual and the environment. Brennan's theory stands as an opposite to psychoanalytic as it predicates that the affects are independent from the person experiencing them.

> These affects come from the other, but we deny them. Or they come from us, but we pretend (habitually) that they come from the other. Envy, anger, aggressive behavior – these are the problems of the other. Overtolerance, overgenerosity – these are our problems.[296]

By employing both Western and *Nihonjinron* discourses, this writing is in transmission of affect, for it is inseparable from the environment of the topography I belong to. The seemingly disparate categories of West and East are intentionally enforced as a methodological tool of situating this thesis within the realm of transnational cinema. The visceral body does not evade the external guidance of media, but instead functions as a transmutable automation in the flux. If the question from the beginning actually does have an answer, one should look for it *inside* heterotopias, hidden behind all the theoretical

[296] Ibid., p. 13.

chatter.

Japanese sayings *karada de oboeru* (体で覚える) – to remember with the body, and *mi ni tsukeru* (身に着ける) – to stick something to the body, refer to a discipline of embodied practice, of learning through a body. In the polyphony of discourses, the approach of *visceroceptive* silence enables the understanding of the Other and rarely visible fragments. Hijikata's confessional statement – "I was raised in a manner of clouding the kind of body that will be parceled out through observations of the kind like I was told."[297], illuminates the veiling of the body through enforced system arguments and conclusions, bound by their orientations. Inescapably, this thesis does not differ either – it is positioned as distanced enough to perceive Japan as the Other, but might also be seen as the Other from the Western perspective. As such, through unifying tissue of Western film phenomenologies and Japanese bodily philosophies, this corpus encourages the examination of the recondite, inner layers of Japan's body, considering the fact that the ones immensely visible only provide fragmented understanding.

[297] Quoted in Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh*, p. 187.

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