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The Modern State and "Death of god": Absurdity and Chaos in Ibuse's Black Rain

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Abstract: The birth of modern state with her technological advancements was hailed as a new dawn for humankind. The merits of enlightenment had finally been realized and the ensuing scientific inventions would finally perpetuate the entry of humanity towards a universal culture. The problems such as disease, ignorance and poverty that had perennially affected humanity would be forgotten given that science and industrialization had heightened human reason and production. In spite of this grand narrative, emerging voices have singled out the failures of modernism and the narrative project. They have decried modernist tendencies to mechanize humanity and eradicate the individual's creativity and morality. Through coercion and conformity, the modern state replaces individual revaluation of culture and perpetuates violence and intellectual passivity hence the demise of progress. This article is a postmodernist critique of modernism and her grand narrative with reference to Ibuse (1970), Black Rain. It shows how the ideals of modernism can only lead humanity to inhumanity, violence and chaos. The ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger will form a theoretical basis of interpretation. This is an analytical study that proceeds through close textual reading of primary and secondary texts.

Keywords: *Black Rain; Friedrich Nietzsche; The Death of God; Postmodernism.*

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Introduction

> The beauty of Nuclear Fission is the ability to derive so much from so little. The energy density of nuclear fuel far exceeds that of any other energy source.
>
> Max Schulz, 2006 p.60.

> Looking back over the past three decades of academic work on the educational and social aspects of young people and technology, it could be argued that technology itself has been decidedly under-theorised
>
> Selwyne N., 2008, p. 19

The novelties of the modern age have no doubt promised better life for humankind in all sectors of life. So far, no branch of society has outrightly expressed disquiet about the inventions of this epoch. Religion, education, industry and economy, the family and politics have expressed their gratitude to the modern age for the ingenuous invention of the state and technological inventions which have revolutionized our lives. Scholars from different fields have also underscored the potential of the modern state and technology to improve the lives of humankind.

The invention of the modern political state is hailed as an apt prescription to the chaos that pervaded the pre-modern age. The state can allocate values such as education, economic opportunities, health, rights and freedoms and justice for the wellbeing of the citizens. Willard Gatewood (1992) avers that most scholars acknowledge the pertinent role of Theodore Roosevelt in his determined modernisation of the United States. Gatewood writes:

> Even if Roosevelt sometimes gave voice loudest to convince himself and invoked moralistic rhetoric that obscured mundane objectives of his exhortations, he functioned superbly as an educator who cherished the "bully pulpit" of the White House as a forum for lecturing the American public on topics ranging from civil liberty, social efficiency and "orderly liberty" to corporate regulation and America's leadership role in international affairs (p. 512).

Engrossed in the modernist dream, Roosevelt hailed the dawn of the new epoch in the United States through incessant lectures on civil liberty

and "orderly liberty" to bolster the position of the United States at the centre of world politics. The concept of "orderly liberty" is a reference to modernist attribute that creates high and low culture. High culture is associated with conventions that establish order in every aspect of life. Roosevelt's tendency to lecture the public demonstrates his higher stave in the cultural hierarchy that empowers him to read the riots act at the "ignorant" citizens about order and social efficiency. As a beneficiary of modern education, Roosevelt cherished its mechanizing aspects that purport to establish order at the expense of creativity. He therefore relishes imposing his opinions hence Gatewood's description, "bully pulpit of the Whitehouse." Indeed historians, including Gatewood, agree that Roosevelt was successful in turning the United States into a modern state with industrial and technological advancements. His greatest influence however, was in the promotion of research on uranium which culminated in nuclear and atomic energy development and use.

According to Hawley and Turner (1994) and Schulz (2006), nuclear energy has been touted as the power for the future. It is instrumental in limiting the CO2 emissions and lowering the greenhouse effect. It is also less detrimental to the environment compared to the traditional fuels of coal and electricity. Very little is needed to produce so much provided the infrastructural investment is on the ground. Max Schulz (2006) summarises the perspectives of the 34th American president on nuclear energy based on the Atoms for Peace speech delivered before the United Nations assembly on December 8th, 1953:

> And it is why president Dwight D. Eisenhower, an early proponent of commercial nuclear power, could argue that the atomic energy, might transform medicine, Agriculture, and, in particular, electricity generation. It succeeded in all counts (p. 60).

The 'modern energy' that is nuclear power has been 'quite successful' in transforming the way things are done in many counts according to Schulz. Whereas the merits of modernity have been pointed out, its demerits have simply been glanced at. Indeed, Selwyne contends that "technology itself has been decidedly undertheorized" (p. 19), which suggests that its negative impacts on the individual and society have been neglected.

Divergent voices such as Nietzsche (2013) and Heidegger (1954) point out the negative effects of the modern state and modern technology. These demerits of technology are underscored by Martin Heidegger in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology". Heidegger observes that

technology tends to dehumanize humankind such that human persons are just arranged and organized like objects. He writes:

> Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by to be immediately at hand to indeed stand there just so that it may be on call for further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it a standing reserve (p. 17).

Heidegger in this passage suggests that humanity in the modern age tends to view human persons as "supplies in the storeroom" or pieces of inventory to be ordered, conscripted or assembled. Everything is viewed as a source of energy; human persons are just a means to technological procedures. Workers are viewed as instruments for production and it is not surprising for managers to refer to people as "human resources to be arranged, re-arranged and disposed. Such treatment of humankind results in loss of independence among human persons.

Whereas in Livingstone (2008) perspective technology has been utilised for the common good particularly in the education sector (p. 7), Heidegger contends that technology is a means to no end. He points out that the essence of technology is not anything technological, but should be understood as a "way of revealing" (p. 12). According to Heidegger, "revealing" is a reference to a perception of reality, and reality is not absolute but relative. He expounds that everything we perceive or think of "emerges out of concealment into unconcealment" (p. 26). When one enters into a particular relation with reality, their reality is "revealed" in a specific way. For Heidegger, it is a way of revealing one's present world to enable them overcome that reality. Whereas ancient Greeks invented things as a means to an end, modern technology is "...forcing into being" (p. 26), to mean it changes the world into a raw material, available for production and manipulation. This study will interrogate how modern states invent and employ technology for their selfish imperial expansions.

Similarly, Nietzsche (2013) views technology and the modernist grand narrative as the cause of the demise of culture. Nietzsche's reference to "the death of god" is a snide reference to the destruction of Western culture which stems from the attempt of the modern state to use culture to advance its interests. For Nietzsche, the modern state is:

> State organised immorality−internally as police, penal law, classes, commerce, family, externally as will to power to war, to conquest, to revenge. How does it happen that the state will do a host of things

> that the individual will never countenance? − through division of responsibility, of command, and of execution (p. 382).

Through the grand narrative that is bolstered by science and technology, the modern state has selected some cultural elements and imposed them on citizens hence destroying their creativity and revaluation of culture. The above quote reiterates Heidegger's mechanization of humanity because the state now turns the army and civil service into automatons that work under a command. The individual can no longer think about cultural elements such as mercy or forgiveness and they have to obey the orders of their seniors. The materialization of humankind through the modern state constitute the central concerns of the primary text in this study.

Ibuse's *Black Rain* is a documentary novel about the atomic bomb in Japan towards the end of the Second World War. The novelist describes the violent destruction of Hiroshima by the Americans using a bomb that was invented for the purpose of subjugating Japan. The choice of words suggest that the novel is a protest against the bomb, which is a result of the modernist dream. Indeed, with deliberate evasion of moralizing, Ibuse appeals to postmodernist attributes that enable him relate the negative effects of the bomb to our everyday experience.

The novel is told through five private journals. The first is Yasuko's journal being re-written by her uncle Shigematsu. He wants to pass it to her prospective fiancé who plans to jilt her after getting hint of her presence at Hiroshima when the bomb fell on 6th August 1945. The second private journal is written by Shigematsu, Yasuko's uncle in which he details the terrifying effects of the bomb. The third journal is written by the character Shigeko to show the wartime food security followed by Yasuko's diary that focuses on her sickness, which she got from exposure to the nuclear radiations. The fifth private journal is written by Iwatake in which he reveals the struggles he faced to recover from the atomic disease. In short, *Black Rain* is heart rending novel about the demerits of the modern state and technology.

This article is a postmodernist critique of modernism and her grand narrative with reference to Ibuse's *Black Rain*. It delves into how the tenets of modernism pave the way for inhumanity, violence and chaos. The ideas of Nietzsche and Heidegger will form a theoretical basis of interpretation.

This is an analytical study that proceeds through close textual reading of primary and secondary texts.

Technology, the Modern State and the Death of Culture: A Postmodernist Reading of *Black Rain*

> State organised immorality—internally as police, penal law, classes, commerce, family, externally as will to power to war, to conquest, to revenge. How does it happen that the state will do a host of things that the individual will never countenance? - through division of responsibility, of command, and of execution (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 382).

The modern state is humankind's invention that has enabled human persons to orchestrate acts that they cannot execute as individuals. Behind the mask of the political state, billions of dollars are set aside for investment in destructive technologies to commit acts that transgress moral values. This section demonstrates this claim from *Black Rain* using two modern states in the novel: Japan and the United States of America.

The predicament of the Japanese people begins after the formation of the modern state, in which "organised immorality" reaches its pinnacle with emperor Hirohito at the helm. Ibuse accuses the emperor of having expansionist aspirations that bring disaster and destruction to the society. One of the minor characters, Ueda says, "[t]hat is what happens when you chase after ideals like Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" (1969, p.130). Swan (1996) avers that GEACP was a blue print of the Japanese state to expel Western powers from East Asia and establish a self-sufficient protectorate (p. 139). As Nietzsche contends with regards to the demerits of the modern state, the Japanese state demands absolute obedience and support for its policies. Indeed after Ueda's criticism in *Black Rain*, some characters in the audience reprimand him saying, "[y]ou ought to keep defeatist talk like that to yourself" (p. 130). The citizens, as Nietzsche says, believe and depend on the state in spite of its weaknesses. The Japanese state shows first signs of "collective immorality" when it comes up with the Tanaka Memorial in 1927. Crow (1942) observes that Japan demonstrated her ambition of establishing a world empire by first taking Manchuria, China, Asia and to conquer the Western powers (p. 8-9). Between 1927 and 1934, Japan launches a series of military campaigns that cause untold suffering to Chinese citizens to gratify her vain desire for glory.

Japan's solid hatred for Western countries is revealed in the Tanaka Memorial when the premier writes, "[f]urthermore, the restrictions of the Nine Power Treaty signed at the Washington Conference have reduced our special rights and privileges in Manchuria and Mongolia to such an extent that there is no freedom left for us. The very existence of our country is endangered" (Crow, 1942, p. 8). Crow's assertion gives a hint into Japanese destruction of British colonies such as Singapore. In Ibuse's *Black Rain,* Shigematsu sees a photograph of the Japanese conquest of Singapore and writes:

> I remembered a photograph of oil tanks burning in Singapore […]. It had been after the Japanese army had brought about the fall of the city, and the scene was so horrifying that I wondered at the time whether such things were really justified. The smoke climbed higher, even higher into the sky and put out a horizontal bank of cloud around it, forming a great umbrella shaped mass that loomed over everything like some top-heavy monster (p. 22).

As Nietzsche argues, the Japanese empire commits atrocities behind the mask of the modern state that individual Japanese such as Shigematsu cannot do. In a group denoted "Japanese empire" they muster odd boldness to transgress moral principles such as the sanctity of life and respect for the other's property and aspects of the grand narrative like social progress and universal truths. As a group, the Japanese exhibit mob psychology by attacking British spheres of influence in Asia such that Shigematsu is confounded. Underlying the conflict are the cultural differences between Japanese Buddhist tradition and British Western secular thinking. The West had begun stigmatisation of Japanese immigrants since the onset of Japanese migration to the United States before the First World War. In spite of Japanese support for the Allies in the First World War, the Japanese were segregated against in Western countries. This demonstrates the futility of the modernist narrative of universal culture and bolsters postmodernist claim to difference.

Behind the mask of imperial expansion, the Japanese state fights the West to retaliate against racial othering of her citizens in these countries hence confirming the vanity of universalisation of culture. Indeed, throughout *Black Rain*, Ibuse underscores aspects that uphold the uniqueness of Asian culture to deconstruct modernist ideals. Unlike the Western tradition of burying the dead after Christian rituals, the victims of the bomb in the novel are cremated after customary prayers (p. 130).

Shigematsu writes his journal at a time when they have had a number of Japanese festivals: mass of dead insects, the rice planting festival and Iris festival. On 15th there was the River Imp festival and 20th, the bamboo cutting festival.

To maintain the momentum of the war, the Japanese state controls food supplies and uses propaganda to deceive the public about her noble aspirations with regards to the war effort. Ibuse says, "[u]nder control of ordinances in force at the time, rice, rice substitutes, fish and vegetables were all rationed" (p. 63). The citizenry are forced through a calculating propaganda system to support the state in its violent campaign against fellow human beings. The state uses notices on district noticeboards and artists to produce plays and songs to inculcate its destructive agenda. In Nietzsche's view, the modern Japanese state, by using artists to support the war effort has hijacked culture and placed it on the guillotine. The high inflation, the scarcity of commodities and the bombing of Hiroshima symbolize the disintegration and collapse of the modernist dream in Japan.

The modern state also takes away the rights of citizens, and particularly the right to freedom of expression, to ensure there is public support for all state policies. Mrs Miyaji who criticizes the state for changing student textbooks to change the number of meals from four to three is interrogated by police and reminded to "keep a curb on her irresponsible talk," (p. 66). According to Nietzsche, the modern state encourages paranoia, conformity, intellectual sleepiness…and general mediocrity to preserve power" (p. 1665). Mrs Miyaji is perceived as a rogue citizen because she is exercising her critical faculty to unearth the decadence and mediocrity of the Japanese state. The intellectually passive citizen who reports Miyaji after she has started the conversation is appraised as responsible and noble. Mrs Miyaji's defense of four meals per day is associated with contraband and warned that she risks punishment for violating the National General Mobilisation Law. The moral question of plagiarizing and doctoring Kenji Miyazawa's poem to reduce meals from "four go" to "three go" is brought to halt by invoking the law. This episode echoes Nietzsche's "death of god," as the state "institutionalises myths and prohibits revaluation of culture" (p. 1664). By invoking the law, Mrs Miyanji cannot carry on with the cultural conversation hence the death of Japanese culture.

The Japanese barracks treat army officers like automatons, which reiterates Heidegger's "forcing of being" or mechanization of humanity. The

armed forces become mere human resources to be used at a command by the modern state. Iwatake, a Japanese army officer, describes the inhumane treatment of soldiers by superiors:

> It was more of a forced labour camp than a training unit. Often in the mornings, partly for the fun of it, they would give us what they called an 'emergency call' which meant running two or three miles through the morning mist at the crack of dawn. […] the thing that really soaked your uniform with sweat was crawling course. If you stuck up too much at the rear, you got a heavy boot at your backside; if your rifle was pointing too low, you got jabbed in the shoulder with a parade sword (p. 241).

In this passage, Ibuse suggests that the modern concept of "disciplined forces" is a deliberate attempt to destroy self-esteem and reason in the soldiers to obey all orders like machines to facilitate Nieztschellean "collective Immorality". With automaton obedience to those in authority, the wicked leaders of the modern state have the ability to achieve their selfish ambitions. It is interesting how the military superiors transgress moral values such as respect for the aged in Iwatake's barracks. Lieutenant Yoshikawa, though young, persistently kicks constable Nakamura in the belly in spite of his old age. Iwatake observes, "[i]t was as though a man were to be kicked by his own offspring, somehow transformed into an unmanageable ruffian" (p. 241). Nakamura cannot report Yoshikawa's cruel acts of immorality because the modern state recognizes Yoshikawa's seniority and hence the right to oppress a man old enough to be his father. The choice of the term "ruffian" aptly demonstrates Nietzsche's description of the modern state's debilitation of culture and "death of god". The soldier who should protect and maintain law and morality is turned into a bandit to attain (in Nietzsche's terms) "will for power."

Ibuse also brings out the failures of modernism with reference to the United States of America. First, he demonstrates Heidegger's concept of "revealing of being" (12) with reference to technology. The United States armed forces are so mechanized that they cannot question an order from the president to use the nuclear bomb. They are mere "human resources" (as Heidegger asserts) that act as automatons because of the modernist dream. As expounded in the introduction, Nietzsche refers to this condition as "state organised immorality−internally as police, penal law, classes, commerce, family, externally as will to power to war, to conquest, to

revenge" (p. 382). The United States of America has armed her forces with sole aim of avenging Japanese attacks in the Pacific. Furthermore, as much as many modern scientists claim that scientific inventions (including nuclear power) are meant for public good, Heidegger contends that such inventions are "revealing of being", that is they serve subjective purposes. Indeed, scientists in the United States invented nuclear power to manufacture weapons to destroy their enemy, Japan. Ibuse writes:

> It is said the enemy used what is referred to as a new weapon on his attack of Hiroshima, which instantly plunged hundreds of thousands of blameless residents of the city into a hell of unspeakable torments. A member of the Patriotic Service Corps who escaped with his life from Hiroshima has told me that at that moment when the new weapon wiped out the city, he heard countless cries for succour−the voice of those hundreds of thousands of souls−seemingly welling up from beneath the earth (p. 12).

This passage is in league with Heidegger's concept of the subjectivity of technological inventions, particularly as illustrated by use of the phrase "new weapon". Ibuse suggests that the technology was specifically invented to manufacture a lethal weapon to be used against Japan. A witness (member of Patriotic Service Corps) avers that the "new weapon" wipes out Hiroshima leaving thousands of innocent citizens wailing "beneath the earth". Although scholars such as Hore-Lacy (2007) argue that "fission/atomic bomb concept was provided in 1939 by Francis Perrin who introduced the concept of the critical mass of uranium required to produce a self-sustaining release of energy" as sheer scientific discovery, Heidegger through the concept of "revealing of being" suggests there was a secret craving to use the technology in war. Indeed 1939 was the year Hitler declared war against Poland and Western scientists had to use their scientific knowledge to support the War effort. The deliberate relegation of Perrin's project in 1939 owed to lack of real political threats. But as Japan and Germany made advances in Asia and Europe respectively, a committee was set up to examine the viability of the nuclear project. Hore-Lacy observes:

> The final outcome of the MAUD Committee was two summary reports in July 1941. One was on 'Use of Uranium for a Bomb' and the other was on 'Use of Uranium as a Source of Power'. The first report concluded that a bomb was feasible and that one containing some 12 kg of active material would be equivalent to 1,800 tons of

> TNT and would release large quantities of radioactive substances which would make places near the explosion site dangerous to humans for a long period (p. 7).

This passage gives the order of priority in the invention of nuclear from Uranium: first, 'use of Uranium for a bomb' hence confirmation of Heidegger's contention that the objectives of modern science and technology are relative or rather subjective and its findings can be undesirable. Dar-Khalil and Al-Shetawi (2020) in their critique of *Black rain* associate modern technology and nuclear weapons with "global toxicity and trauma that is transmitted to the coming generations" (p. 41). According to Nietzsche, the modern state perpetuates the "global toxicity" through what he refers to as "collective immorality" (p. 382). What Americans could not do individually, the United States "collectively" commits acts of wickedness against the Japanese. In Iwatake's private journal, Ibuse writes:

For a moment, I had a glimpse of something that looked like a captive balloon drifting

> lazily downwards in the sky beyond the barracks roof. The next moment there was a white flash like lightning or the light from a great mass of magnesium ignited all at once. I felt a wave of searing heat. At the same time a terrifying roar. And that was all I knew. What happened after that, or how much time passed, I do not know. Struck down by the blast, I may actually have lost consciousness. Someone else stirring and planting an army boot on my neck and head in the effort to get up, restored me to consciousness. [...] Everything had been flattened and scattered in disorder […]. The destructive power was fantastic (p. 242-244).

In this extract, Ibuse shows the perils brought by advancements in science and technology to the so called "enemy" of the United States. The soldiers were celebrating in the barracks at Hiroshima when the atomic bomb fell. The illumination of the bomb was blinding as the terrifying roar and high temperatures lessened the pressure to instigate building collapse. Struck down by the bomb, Iwatake loses consciousness until a fellow soldier steps on his neck. Two clauses that sum up the demerits of modernity and technological advancements are "[e]verything had been flattened and scattered in disorder […]. The destructive power was fantastic" (p. 244). Ibuse at this point reiterates Nietzsche's view that the modern world is

chaotic [my emphasis] and going by the bombing of Hiroshima, science and technology are yet to introduce order.

Throughout the novel, Ibuse demonstrates the futility of the modernist dream through candid exploration of the chaos and destruction meted out on the innocent Japanese individuals. First, there is massive loss of life to a scale that had not been witnessed in history. Ibuse clearly backs Nietzsche's critique of the modern state. Ibuse writes "Hiroshima is a burnt out city, a city of ashes, a city of death, a city of destruction, the heaps of corpses a mute protest against the inhumanity of war" (p. 18). The city, which was vibrant with life turns into "a city of death" with "heaps of corpses" on every street because of modern states carrying out acts of vengeance that (in Nietzsche's view) individual persons would not do. The reader wonders how a Western nation would commit such an atrocity with persistent lectures on respect for human rights, particularly the right to life. Nietzsche describes this as the nihilism that stems from the modern state—the cessation of myths, the death of values, the enfeeblement of the spirit and the will to power" (p. 12). Indeed, the United States of America's pursuit for power in the world blinds her to all culture and morality.

While Yasuko (one of the main characters) walks around Hiroshima, she stumbles on something only to realize it is a corpse clasping a dead baby in its arms (p. 98). Whichever way she looks are corpses she describes as "completely naked and scorched black, buttocks of each rested in a great pool of faeces. The hair of their heads and elsewhere was burnt, it was only the contours of breasts that could distinguish man and woman" (p. 99). The lives of these Japanese citizens are brutally terminated just because they are citizens of the state of Japan. The readers cannot be persuaded to recount any benefits of nuclear power with such perilous effects on the society.

Underlying these aggressive acts are the creeds of difference and othering. Rorty (1992) contends, "[e]verything turns on who counts as a fellow human, as a rational agent in the only relevant sense—the sense in which rational agency is synonymous with membership of our moral community" (p. 124). Just because the Japanese are of a different race from the Caucasians, they are not fellow human beings and deserve to die like animals. For example, Yasuko sees a sentry with his rifle at order, but is dead. "his back propped against the embarkment, his eyes wide, staring" (p. 105). Shigematsu sees a young man still on his bicycle carrying a wooden box as though on his way to deliver an order from a restaurant, but is a dead

corpse (p. 105). The high temperatures at which the bomb burns vaporize every fluid from theses people and leave roast carcasses in their positions.

Ibuse further demonstrates Nietzsche's "collective immorality" as appertains the modern state by showing the burns and injuries the bomb leaves on the Japanses citizens. Iwatake says the heat burnt him such that "his face swelled up more and more until it was as round as a water melon and his eyes closed up almost completely" (p. 246). At Hesaka Town, the narrator gives a macabre description of the injured, "[t]he bodies were crammed in classrooms and sportsgrounds. The bodies were laid out in a heap at one end of the sportsground. With nightfall, the moans became still more anguished . Those with brain fever leapt out of the window and started walking through paddy fields" (p. 251). As the casualties trudge out of Hesaka, Iwatake describes them as "sad, shambling procession of ghosts" (p. 251).

Ibuse singles out terrible crimes committed against the japanese citizentry to such an extent that the reader becomes sceptical of the modernist dream. Would Theodore Roosevelt have incorporated this in his modernist vision of civil liberty, social efficiency and "orderly liberty" to corporate regulation and America's leadership role in international affairs? (Gatewood, 1992, p. 512). The bombing of Japanese civilians and turning them into "sad, procession of ghosts" is absolutely alienated from "civil liberty, social efficiency and orderly liberty" that Roosevelt cited to herald the modern era under the United States. It is absurd how Truman gave unfounded justification for the "collective immorality" and chaos: "[t]hose attacks saved half a million lives of American soldiers, marines and prevented numerous British fatalities and Japanese deaths" (Rufus, 1985, p. 121). The order of persons saved in Truman's suggestion recaps Rorty's claims on othering of different subjects. The bombing was meant to save American soldiers first, British people and Japanese, last because they are the *other*. What has the death of a baby (p. 98) under an atomic blast to do with saving American lives? Why would Truman and his military advisors spare emperor Hirohito and army generals and instead kill a youngman …on his bicycle carrying a wooden box as though on his way to deliver an order from a restaurant? (p. 105).

The United States also fails to consider the impact of the bomb on the natural environment. Kamanzi (2011) contends that modernity, instead of liberating humanity, as a basic premise of reason, submerges humans into environmental chaos" (p. 204). Kamanzi therefore reiterates Heiddegger's

sentiments on the relativity of the technological advancements such that as Americans celebrate the impact of the bomb, the Japanese bear its consequences on their natural environment. In *Black Rain,* the smoke generated by the bomb mingles with water vapour and produces a black rain that confounds the people of Hiroshima. The rain is so shocking that Ibuse makes it the title of the novel. The rain is an oddity; it fell in the Western districts of Japan (p. 93) and all citizens who came in contact with it suffered from radiation sickness (p. 236). Yasuko becomes a victim of the disease, whose symptoms include ringing in the ears, lack of appetite, falling off of hair, red parches on the gums, bouts of pain once a day, abscesses on her buttocks and falling of teeth (p. 235). The disease becomes a terrible obstacle to Yasuko's proposed marriage.

The radioactive ash is not only a pollutant but a health risk to many Japanese citizens. When it gains entry into Yasuko's body through a small blister, it causes the radiation sickness (p. 236). After the fall of the bomb, the water in Nakamachi River is tainted by nuclear material and becomes dark purplish (p. 179). In Temma River, the fish were still dying two years after the bomb. Ibuse says "[t]hey weakened and floated to the surface, belly uppermost, and if you took them in your hand the scales came off and the dorsal fins fell out" (p. 294). Ibuse suggests that these are the side effects of mechanization of humanity and development of technology with little regard for *the other*.

Finally, the United States' bombing of Hiroshima results in violent destruction of property through description of characters such as Iwatake . He says "[t]he two story buildings of the infirmatory and education unit no longer rose against the sky. Everything had been flattened and scattered in disorder" (p. 243). Any individual who excutes such an act is described as a terrorrist and this is what the United States President George Walker Bush described Osama Bin Laden after bombing the Twin Towers in 2001 (Jerrold, 2002, p.19). But why should it be described as an act of self defense when a state excutes it against another state? The answer is in Nietzsche's "modern state" as "collective immorality". While walking around Hiroshima on the fateful day, Shigematsu says "all houses about had collapsed and fire tanks used to store water for firefighting were buried under collapsed walls" (p. 47). The bomb's flame set oildrums ablaze and they "explode in earth shaking roars" (p. 56). The flames set many houses ablaze (p 81). Around Miyuku Bridge "there was no longer a single house where ours had stood" (90). Shigematsu becomes homeless at the fall of the bomb. The

Hiroshima castle is instantly "blown away" and everyhouse adjacent to it is "knocked flat" (p. 38). These atrocities committed by a modern state echoe Nietzsche's assertions: "[n]one of you has the courage to kill a man or even whip him […]but tremendous machine of the state overpowers the individual , so he repudiates responsibility for what he does" (2013 p. 383).

At an individual level, Harry Truman is possibly very kind, but behind the mask of the modern states of America, he sanctions the murder of more than one hundred and twenty thousand Japanese citizens. Emperor Hirohito is no exception to this "collective immorality" with regards to bombing of the Pearl Harbour and Japanese conquests in Asia.

Conclusion

This paper set out to critique modernism using postmodernist voices such as Martin Heiddeigger and Freidrich Nietzche with reference to Ibuse's *Black Rain*. Inspite of the grand narrative that modernists present with the glamour of technological advancements, there are many shortcomings eveident in the theory, particularly with regards to the modern state. In the light of the two proponents of postmodernism (Heiddegger and Nietzche), the American and Japanese states debilitate their citizens, mechanize them and personalize the technological inventions. Although most citizens naively believe in the objective intentions of nuclear power, it is evident that it was invented specifically to meet Western military conquest of Japan. It is also evident that although the modern state claims to bolster aspects of culture, it deals a death blow to its practise, something Nietzsche refers to as "collective immorality" by committing evils that individual Japanese and American citizens are incapable of. The state offers for an opportunity for individuals to violate cultural norms and taboos. Any evils can be committed as long as they are legalised by the state.

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