Hiroshima and Job

Contrasted "Repetition" in Duras's *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and Kierkegaard's Religious Philosophy

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Introduction: Traumatic Memory and Repetition Phenomenon

IN the history of humanity, Hiroshima is a name that signals both the eventual liberation from the Second World War and the painful memory of the unprecedented devastation of the first atomic bomb. In such a paradoxical context of Hiroshima—as the end and also the beginning of the war trauma, the 1959 French film *Hiroshima Mon Amour* presents, according to the scriptwriter Marguerite Duras, a "false documentary" "that will probe the lessons of Hiroshima more deeply" (Duras 10). The prominent feature of Duras's film-text lies in juxtaposing the collective memory of the horrible monstrosity of Hiroshima with a postwar love tale in Hiroshima. This "banal tale" (Duras 9) of a hopeless love enlivens and parallels some personal history of trauma of a killed love in a French village named Nevers during the Occupation. The recalling of the war trauma vehemently kindles the second level of personalized horror—the long-buried, or repressed, truth that not only the war-time loves but also the trauma-inflicted mind has been devastated by the painful history as well as the

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personal memory of "Hiroshima." As astutely noted by Ned Lukacher, "the horrors of the war and the anguish of the love story were in parallel montage, ambiguously and indirectly interrelated" (174). Intrigued by this Hiroshima film's ambiguous parallels between the war memory of horror and the traumatic memory effected on the love story, this study takes seriously the interrelationship between Hiroshima and personal love and how it has to do with the problem of memory. Interpolated through a series of montage shots, the memories of Hiroshima's trauma, public and private, are recalled with a deep sense of "horror of oblivion" (Duras 68), revealing the awkward impossibility of either remembering or forgetting about "Hiroshima." Furthermore, endowed with the conscious "delusion" of representing/speaking of the unrepresentable, unspeakable, and painful memory, Duras's film-text bears on a distinct edge of unconsciousness, which can be associated with its ingenious parallels between the collective and the personal, the past and the present, memory and forgetting, and also Hiroshima and love.

The recognition that the film is invested with the unconscious bonding of trauma, memory and love renders psychoanalytic explanations both relevant and plausible; however, to think of the film as imparting psychotherapeutic promises might be nothing but a hasty and naïve view. Cathy Caruth, for instance, holds that the Hiroshima film underlines forgetting not just as "a necessary part of understanding" (32) but also as an indispensable channel of "freedom" that allows the heroine to liberate herself from the neurotic, indeed, mad tie with the lover's death. Michael Roth too strikes a similar note, commenting that the primary concern of the film is "to construct a past with which one can live" (202), based on the Freudian prescription of making meaning out of memory to enable the victim of trauma to grasp and live with the past. On the intertwined problem with love and the past, Roger Luckhurst goes even farther to disrupt the pattern of parallel in the love tale of the film. He argues that in spite of the heroine's memory of the death of her first love, this Frenchwoman, falling in love with the Japanese yet at last terminating their relationship, actually struggles "to forget and avoid *repeating* the annihilating, mad intensity of that [first] love" (Luckhurst 186, emphasis added). Against these positive receptions of the film, which similarly acknowledge the heroine's coming to terms with her traumatic past, the present study argues that the film's complicated parallelism involved in living with traumatic memory actually represents a negative and shattering reality of living Hiroshima *repetitiously*. In fact, it is attestable that without looking closely into the film's discernible phenomenon of repetition so as to scrutinize how memory and oblivion, love and death, Hiroshima and love are intermingled, we could not truly grasp how the hopeless love in the film is interrelated with the memory of Hiroshima.

The centrality of the subject of repetition can be discerned in the beginning part of the film, specifically in an ambiguous but meaningful voice-over of the heroine: “Listen to me. … It will begin all over again” (Duras 24). This puzzling incantation invites us viewers to guess if certain hidden truth is suggested in these few words. Does the prediction of repetition bear an overtone of existential pessimism, disclosing that repetition could be something like an existential curse? This question is most crucial to the well-beings of any human individual, under the premise that repetition is something predicable and inevitable in life. Thus, we are intrigued to make these relevant and existentially important inquiries: What does it mean to live repetition? Must “repetition” refer to the eternal bondage of the past, or quite the opposite, the hopeful revival that a merely rebuilt city of Hiroshima has already demonstrated, despite the imprint of death and horror in its history? Moreover, if the historical Hiroshima, the city, could recover and be renewed out of the traumatic past, could the same experience of liberation possibly fall on, to borrow the term of Kristeva, the “personal Hiroshima”?

According to Kristeva, the so-called “personal Hiroshima” is privately harbored by the survivors, “the living dead” who survived death but not the memory of death. In other words, such “survivors” could not help indulging themselves in the memory of death instead of embracing the new life of freedom from the devastation of trauma repeated “all over again.” The predicament of becoming entrapped by sorrowful memory is coined by Kristeva as the phenomenon of “blocked repetition.” In Kristeva’s definition, in contrast to the “repetition which extends in time,” “blocked repetition,” or “(re)duplication, is outside of time, … a game of mirrors with no perspective, no duration.” Moreover, what is perpetually repeated is embodied in “the double,” i.e., “the unconscious depth of the same, that which threatens it, can engulf it” (Kristeva, 138-152, 147). From this definition of Kristeva’s, we can infer that the predicament of “blocked repetition” designates an unconsciously fixated point of living, more precisely, living death, manifested by the existential incapacity to move forward in time due to the threat of the horror of destruction. According to Kristeva, this is the destructive outcome of the phenomenon of “blocked repetition” perceivable in the Durasian characters, including the heroine of the Hiroshima film. Indeed, the Frenchwoman’s “love objects” (the Japanese man and the German soldier) are overlapped in the sense of such reduplication; with it comes the devastating force to the woman and her experience of love. In the terms of Kristeva, this is how the ever-present, doubled, and incurable trauma of the woman’s first love makes her a real victim of “blocked repetition.”

Poignantly convincing as Kristeva’s contra-psychotherapeutic understanding of Dura’s Hiroshima writing is, the present study, nevertheless,

attempts to seek for a different route of rethinking the problem of repetition. More specifically, this study aims to look beyond Kristeva's perspective for an alternative conception of repetition, one that may possibly take the victim of "blocked repetition" out of its pathetic bondage and promise a liberated way of living. It is basically for such a goal that the different conception of "repetition" offered by Kierkegaard the Christian existential thinker, along with his understanding of the biblical Job as its "living" model, will be referenced as the significant alternative perspective against the contra-therapeutic phenomenon of repetition in the Hiroshima film. Why Kierkegaard and Job? What kind of contrast can be made between "Hiroshima" in Duras's film-text and Job, the Old Testament figure, the target of demonic temptation as well as God's trial in order to test out the authenticity of his faith, who falls prey to the sudden undeserved ill fortune and devastation of almost everything—his beloved children, wealth, health, good name, trust and respect of friends etc.—and yet still holds on to his integrity and faith in God?

According to Kierkegaard's interpretation, Job represents the prototype of a trauma-stricken sufferer who chooses "repetition" as his way of living and ultimately ends up as a healed, double-blessed, and free man of God. This understanding of Kierkegaard's is based on his psychological and profoundly Christian conception of what "repetition" means to human existence. This particular sense of repetition as exemplified by the biblical Job, at the core, is the idea of passion for freedom, possibility, and life. Therefore, through revisiting the phenomenon of repetition in *Hiroshima Mon Amour* side by side with Kierkegaard's religious-existential philosophy of repetition, we would be able to perceive how "Hiroshima" and Job typify two different, indeed contrasted situations of experiencing repetition in the predicament of trauma.

To make such a contrastive examination, with no intent either to prioritize one model of "repetition" over the other or to do any Kierkegaardian reading of Duras's Hiroshima story, the following discussion includes firstly a close reading and interpretation of the repetition phenomenon in *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. Special attention is paid to how the phenomenon of repetition serves to make "Hiroshima," the emblem of the traumatic past, a metaphor of victimhood of the hopelessly eternal return of trauma. Next, the focus of investigation will be shifted to Kierkegaard's understanding of the biblical Job as the model of the liberating kind of repetition, thereby proving Job to be a substantial counterpart of "Hiroshima." Via examining the phenomenon and concept of repetition in terms of two different lived situations demonstrated in the film about Hiroshima and in Kierkegaard's interpretation of Job, this comparative and paralleled study ultimately looks to reflect on the existential possibilities when "repetition" becomes an unavoidable, not necessarily entrapped but possibly liberating way

of living for a death-impinged heart of pain.

Phenomenon of Repetition in *Hiroshima, My Love*

FOR perceiving the phenomenon of repetition in *Hiroshima Mon Amo*ur, both the plot and the film's cinematic effects are profoundly informing. In the frame of a love tale, the plot is centered on the extramarital love affair between a married Japanese and a French actress in her early thirties who shortly stays in Hiroshima for shooting a propaganda film of peace. As their affair goes on, extremely brief as it is, they irresistibly fall in love with each other. Also, with the growing intensity of their relationship, the man's interest in the woman's past also grows, especially her memory of the first love murdered in her hometown, Nevers, in France. Through the opening love scenes of their naked sweaty embrace which are overlapped with the white-hot images of atomic "mushrooms" and the terrible shots of the empty-faced survivors' devastated bodies, the film immediately and significantly presents the deliberate overlapping of the love affair and the horrible history of Hiroshima. As the storyline progresses, viewers gradually get to know how this short affair is, exactly like Hiroshima, overshadowed by the memory of a traumatic past. The traumatic memory belongs to the Frenchwoman in particular, as she was once happily but tragically in love with the enemy of her country, a German soldier, during the Occupation; the tragic ending is that right before the Liberation he got murdered and she turned mad for a time, after the double blow of the loss of her love and the public humiliation to punish her "collaboration" with the enemy. The failed plan of getting away to be together forever with the German lover became her memory of a not just murdered but always *impossible love*. With this personal memory of trauma in the background, the analogy between Hiroshima and love is presented in a complicated manner, as it is involved with the two incidents of impossible love in the heroine's life, then at Nevers and now at Hiroshima.

At first, all such parallels in the film—between Hiroshima and the one-night love affair and between the past and present experiences of impossible love—appear rather opaque to the audience. Yet, the shots of the camera and the progress of the two lovers' relationship serve to guide us viewers to see how both the place Hiroshima and the person in love cherish memories of madness and pain. Besides the perception of the overlapped memories of "Hiroshima" in the collective and personal experiences, we may come to an even more profound observation that the historical Hiroshima and the personal "Hiroshima" actually share also the same fate and paradox of impossible remembering and forgetting of either the collective or the personal past.

Right in the dreamily effected beginning of the film, we are drawn into some subtle but strong hints about memories invested with repetition and paradox. Specifically, along with the paralleled images of the love bodies and the bombarded Hiroshima, we can overhear the two protagonists' incantational but contradictory words addressed in off-screen voices—with the female voice relating what she saw in Hiroshima and how she personally knows all about the memory of its pain because it is "just as in love," while the male one insistently denies whatever she says:

> She: I saw the newsreels.
> On the second day, History tells, I'm not making it up, . . .
> Dogs were photographed.
> For all eternity.
> I saw them. . . .
>
> He: (interrupting her): You saw nothing. Nothing.
>
> She: . . . I didn't make anything up.
>
> He: You made it all up.
>
> She: *Nothing.*
> Just as in love this illusion exists, this illusion of being able never to forget, …
> Just as in love.
>
> She: I also saw the survivors . . .
> I know *everything*.
>
> He: Nothing. You know nothing.
>
> She (softly): . . . Listen to me.
> Like you, I know what it is to forget. …
> Like you, I have a memory. I know what it is to forget.
>
> He: No, you don't have a memory. (Duras 18-21)

These soul incantations that we overhear foreshadow the later disclosure of the true and tragic story behind the woman's words and beyond the man's understanding or imagination, which may explain why he insists on disaffirming the truthfulness of her remarks. Given his ignorance of her past, the Hiroshima-grown man's persistent denial may be understood as addressing two *impossible* situations: the impossibility of the outsider's understanding of the painful memory of Hiroshima and that of the possession of (authentic) memory itself. The dual impossibility is, in fact, echoed by Duras's explanatory line in the

synopsis: “All one can do is talk about the impossibility of talking about Hiroshima” (Duras 9). To read this line with what is recited by the woman and the man, we may further infer that the impossibility in question is importantly related to the coincidence of memory and forgetting, or forgetting in memory. After all, the two voices actually agree that the memory of Hiroshima, like the memory of love, is but “the illusion” of never forgetting. By virtue of the fact that to genuinely remember is a mission impossible, perhaps the heroine is right in saying that to know by living the memory is a way to really remember Hiroshima. And her way of living the memory of Hiroshima, as we shall consider later, is precisely “in love.” Her memory of “Hiroshima” is “just in love.”

After the beginning montaged scenes of Hiroshima and love making as well as the incantations regarding the memory of “Hiroshima” being only a shared illusion, the film dedicates itself to presenting vividly and subtly the repetition of impossible love experienced by the woman without her knowing it—consciously. The intricate shot of the subconscious parallel between the Hiroshima lover and her German lover dead at Nevers is given very briefly with the woman gazing silently at the man’s hands jerking in sleep; suddenly the image is replaced by the body of another dying man who also “has beautiful hands, strikingly like those of the Japanese” and whose hands used to “jerk violently” as well because of the “approach of death” (Duras 29). Apparently, within this brief moment of fantasy, we are given a strong hint of the overlapped image/identity of the two men in this woman’s life of love, which reinforces our inference that ultimately her love is identifiable with Hiroshima.

That Hiroshima’s impossible memory of pain is truly shared by the woman from Nevers is coming to light through the intense conversation between the two chance lovers, who, out of the growing love between them, cannot help staying together in a café before the woman’s departure on the next day. From their dramatic dialogue we can see more clearly that the Japanese is definitely identifiable as the double of the woman’s dead German lover. To her, they become two lovers in one, so to speak. What really interests us is the significance of such a repetition phenomenon in the woman’s love life. More precisely, we wonder if the phenomenon bespeaks her way of reliving the memory of “Hiroshima.” If so, then what does such a way of living repetition mean to her life?

In their café conversation, encouraged by the Japanese’s inquisitions, the Frenchwoman starts recollecting what happened at Nevers, especially her painful memory of the German soldier’s death and her madness afterwards. This recollective conversation takes place about sixteen hours before the woman’s flight. The length of time, at first, is felt like “a terribly long time” to her. This reaction indicates that the time left before her leaving Hiroshima and the

Japanese man *parallels* "the terribly long time" she once felt before the German soldier at Nevers finally died. The identification of the Japanese and the dead soldier is tremendously vivified while the woman, under the guidance of the Japanese's encouraging words, appears hypnotized and plunges herself deeper and deeper into the memory of that happy but tragic love and her being mad and confined in the cellar after her lover's death. More intriguingly, in the midst of her diving into the overwhelming ocean of memory, the Japanese lover suddenly becomes her dead lover in their dialogue throughout her recollection, which becomes a process of his living the traumatic memory together with her—all over again. As the following abridged quotation shows, the Japanese takes on the identity of the German soldier to co-live with the woman the "miraculous" moment of the "resurrection of Nevers," "as if they were somehow possessed by Nevers" (Duras 6, 55). Meanwhile, within their "trance-like" conversation about the woman's madness at Nevers, there are shots of Nevers (explained in the script in parentheses) interpolated into the conversation scene:

> He: When you are in the cellar, am I dead?
>
> She: You are dead . . .
>
> (Nevers: the German is dying very slowly on the quay.)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> (Room at Nevers. Lying down, one leg raised, filled with desire.)
>
> She: I want you so badly I can't bear it any more.
>
> He: Are you afraid?
>
> She: I'm afraid. Everywhere. In the cellar. In my room.
>
> He: of what?
>
> (Spots on the ceiling of the room at Nevers, terrifying objects at Nevers.)
>
> She: Of not ever seeing you again. Ever, ever.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> She: Afterwards, I don't remember any more.
>
> He: How long?
>
> She (still in a trancelike state): Eternity.
>
> . . . . . .

She: Oh! What pain. What pain in my heart. It's unbelievable. Everyone in the city they're singing the Marseillaise. Night falls. My dead love is an enemy of France. …

(Scene of the square at Nevers. She screams, not words …)

. . . . . .

(A pause. Hiroshima. She is trembling. She moves away from his face.)

She: Oh! It's horrible. I'm beginning to remember you less clearly.

(He holds the glass and makes her drink. She's horrified by herself.)

She: . . . I'm beginning to forget you. I tremble at the thought of having forgotten so much love . . . (Duras 57-59, 62-64)

Rethinking the Frenchwoman's recognition during her trance-like recollection that the time of forgetting such unforgettable love feels like "eternity," we are not sure, at least in this context, whether this sense of eternity experienced in the forgetting of her remembrance, or her remembering forgetting, is a key factor that drives her to live a love life of repetition. What we can be certain, however, is that the consciousness of eternity in forgetting the memory is something as horrifying to her as the "terribly long time" of death.

Indeed, just as what is most horrible in the memory of Hiroshima is not the memory itself but the "horror of oblivion," she too is consciously obsessed with the same horror, which can be seen both in the conversation above and in the woman's interior monologue full of anguish addressing her ghost lover, after relating their memory to the Japanese:

I told our story.
I was *unfaithful* to you tonight with this stranger.
I told our story.
It was, you see, *a story that could be told*.
For fourteen years I hadn't found … the taste of an impossible love again.
Since Nevers.
Look how I'm forgetting you. …
Look how I've forgotten you.
Look at me. (Duras 73, emphases added)

Besides her sense of forgetfulness as a kind of "sacrilege" of the impossible love, in this address to the living ghost within her, or, in her memory, we are informed

of her self-consciousness of unfaithfulness to the dead lover for the reason that the memory of their love ought to be both unforgettable and unspeakable. This double impossibility explains why talking about the impossible love can bring forth a hopeless consciousness of “sacrilege” in her deep mind. Meanwhile, from these confessional words, “For fourteen years I *hadn’t found* … the taste of an impossible love again. Since Nevers” (emphases added), it is lucidly clear that she is saying what she feels and knows—the very fact that once again in the Japanese she has the taste of the same “impossible love.” This serves to justify her consciousness of sacrilege in love because now she has had a new object of impossible love at Hiroshima.

But, if reconsidered from the psychoanalytic perspective or Kristeva’s contra-therapeutic point of view, this is not necessarily unfaithfulness to be guilty of but a substantial proof of her victimhood either of repetition neurosis, caused by the unconsciously repressed and consciously resisted pain and desire for impossible love, or of “blocked repetition” that makes her unavoidably relive the desire and pain all over again. According to Freud, the patient in such victimhood “is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of … remembering it as something belong to the past. These reproductions … are invariably acted out in the sphere of the … ‘transference neurosis’” (Freud 289). In “Durasian (Pre)Occupations,” Lukacher addresses a similar idea that “the erotic relationship in the framing story,” i.e., between the Frenchwoman and the Japanese as “enacts or represents one that is remembered … in the manner of the psychoanalytic transference” (Lukacher 174). Psychoanalytically speaking, repetition, enacted unconsciously, is the expression of the resistance to remembering, or the opposite of memory, and transference is just living out this compulsion (to repeat). This Freudian explanation of the phenomenon of repetition and the entailed transference seems fittingly applicable to the case of the Frenchwoman. In psychoanalytic terms, she is actually saying something true without knowing it: her forgetting is key to the possibility of tasting *over again* the same impossible love that is supposed to be remembered and “worked through,” and her object of transference is, no doubt, the Japanese lover, the double of the dead soldier at Nevers.

Indeed, as a victim of such repetition, the Frenchwoman is really a stranger to the truth behind her conscious problem of her forgetting, i.e., the hidden fact that her “unfaithfulness” is a manifestation of her repetition, and her forgetting is precisely her inability to voluntarily forget, and as Freud would add, voluntarily remember. Consequently, it is inevitable for the Frenchwoman to relive the same impossible love which presumably lives forever both in memory and reality. In this sense, we may also hold that she is indeed situated in the predicament of “blocked repetition,” as termed by Kristeva. The only thing that

differentiates the Freudian concept of repetition and Kristeva's is whether or not such a victim might be able to step into the sphere of freedom by "working through" the horror of memory in the unconsciousness. Is this neurotic woman ever undergoing her psychotherapeutic working-through process at all? To answer this question, we may firstly turn to the following passage in which Freud explains how to "work through" the neurotic repetition and transference so as to achieve the therapeutic success. The working-through process is dependent on

> the physician's endeavor to force [this transference neurosis] as much as possible into the channel of memory and to allow as little as possible to emerge as repetition. . . . He must get him [the patient] to re-experience some portion of his forgotten life, but must see to it, on the other hand, that the patient retains some degree of aloofness which will enable him, in spite of everything, to recognize that what appears to be reality is in fact only a reflection of a forgotten past. (Freud 289)

In the light of this therapeutic process, it is unquestionable that the woman in the film does not really go through the process at all. Even if she does re-experience, or repeat the taste of, her "forgotten life"/love, she actually never comes to "recognize" that the fresh experience is nothing but a reflection, or replication. Furthermore, if we recall the scene of the recollective conversation between the woman and the Japanese, we seem able to identify the man at Hiroshima as playing the part of "physician" to her, at least in the role of "hypnotizing" her for retrieving her memory of the past. However, the Japanese actually plays no authentic physician after all. He is, at best, an involuntary actor, just like her, in the scenario of her repetition neurosis.

This understanding of their "complicity" in reliving the woman's past makes a climactic sense when we come to the last scene of the film. When they are at her hotel room once again right before the Frenchwoman's departure, it becomes all the more observable that the impossible love the woman once possessed at Nevers is exactly *repeated* at Hiroshima. When the "approach of death" seems to come to their relationship of love, she becomes so depressingly overwhelmed by the repeated taste of such love and by the same experience of the impending end/death coming to it that she bursts out *repetitiously* the same sacrilege-conscious words to her lover:

> She: I'll forget you! I'm forgetting you already! Look how I'm forgetting you! Look at me!
>
> (… He looks at her she at him, as she would look at the city, and suddenly, very softly, she calls him. She calls him from afar, lost in

> wonder. She has succeeded in drowning him in universal oblivion. And it is a source of amazement to her.)
>
> She: Hi-ro-shi-ma.
> Hi-ro-shi-ma. That's your name.
>
> (*They look at each other without seeing each other. Forever.*)
>
> He: That's my name. Yes. Your name is Nevers. Ne-vers-in France. (Duras 83)

Hysterically conscious of the horror of oblivion and sacrilege of memory, the same feelings she has had toward her first and eternal love lost at Nevers, the Frenchwoman at this despairing moment seems to get closest to the truth that this man at Hiroshima is once again in her life her impossible lover. But, why giving the nameless Japanese the identity of Hiroshima? No doubt, the act of naming her impossible lover as "Hiroshima" is tremendously meaningful. For one thing, the phenomenon of repetition as her way of re-living impossible love bespeaks the paradoxical predicament of her love life: it is simply impossible both to love and not to love. This phenomenon of repeating the double impossibility of love entails the situation of doubling of memory, as pointedly analyzed by Deleuze: "for the woman, Hiroshima will be the present of Nevers, but for the man, Nevers will be the present of Hiroshima" (Deleuze 122).

In fact, more than taking the Japanese of Hiroshima as a mere repetition of the German lover at Nevers, we can further infer that for this lost and neurotic woman who cannot help drowning herself with her lover "in universal oblivion," her love is truly a Hiroshima, or, a repetition of Hiroshima. Just like impossible love, Hiroshima is equal to impossible memory, as it is equally impossible to forget and to remember Hiroshima. In other words, the impossible memory of Hiroshima cannot but get "drown(ed) in eternal oblivion," which means to be eternalized in memory and in the horror of oblivion simultaneously. "Just as in love," which we have been told in the incantation at the beginning of the film. That is to say, the dead German and the Japanese ultimately given the name of Hiroshima are both equally eternalized in the woman's memory of oblivion. Just like Hiroshima. Maybe by virtue of such a clear-cut analogy between (impossible) love and Hiroshima, Duras the scriptwriter rings perfectly true in the conclusive remark that "What is really sacrilegious … is Hiroshima itself" (Duras 9).

In this sense, this film about Hiroshima and love bound together in the same history of trauma and sacrilege of memory profoundly and realistically presents an existential phenomenon of inevitable repetition of "Hiroshima." However, the manifested reality, tinged with a sense of hopelessness, prompts us

viewers to rethink: Is it ultimately the only truth that the history of pain and death always returns and so there is really no *exiting to freedom*, i.e., becoming free (again) to remember and forget without the repeated post-trauma syndrome? Psychologically, this problem of obsession with and repetition of the past is treated as a neurosis, and according to psychoanalysis, not impossible to cure. The psychoanalytic method promises to heal via prompting the patient to remember the forgotten/repressed past. Indeed, the very momentum of the Freudian "healing process," "remembering, repeating, and working through" involved, lies in *remembering*, which "unlike its avoidance, repetition, allows for working through: clarifying, and integrating into the fabric of the mind, something previously warded off," as well put by Marcia Cavell (43). In light of Freud's psychotherapeutic method, the healed subject is someone who encounters with the genuine truth of the self within, which refers to a kind of self-understanding through bringing the past (back) to light and grasping it to the extent that both the past as well as the subject will be freed. When this happens, goodbye to the pathological repetition. In *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, however, such psychotherapeutic promise, unfortunately, never truly happens.

To rethink the heroine's problem of the psychic life, we ought to keep in perspective that the phenomenon of repetition of the remembered and forgotten part of her love life has a great deal to do with the problem of memory. The heroine is explicitly subject to the tendency to *sacralize* memory and accordingly be obsessed by the horror of the interfused memory and oblivion. The problem of memory as such may not be simply the problem of unconsciousness, or "refusal illness," as termed by Lacan, who paraphrases the Freudian conception of unconsciousness as "constituted essentially … by that which is, essentially, refused" (Lacan 2018: 43) by the consciousness. In other words, the heroine's pathetic obsession with the past may not be simply a neurotic, or unconscious, action of embracing and reliving the past. After all, she is perfectly conscious of her despair at "eternal oblivion," and out of such despair she becomes understandably indulged in the return of the past. Thus, we may infer that her addiction, conscious or unconscious, to the repetition of the past is for her a weapon to fight the impossible battle against "eternal oblivion." Seeing that the heroine is doubly trapped in the correlated problem of memory and phenomenon of repetition—what is inevitably and irresistibly repeated is impossibly remembered and forgotten at the same time, it seems that we cannot but agree to Kristeva's uncathartic interpretation of the traumatic memory of Hiroshima and its hopeless repetition documented by Duras's film-text.

Yet, this understanding leads us to wonder whether there can be another kind of "repetition" one that brings hope instead of despair, even the hope of cure for the disaster of the mind like the heroine's situation in the Hiroshima film. To

investigate what can get back to us *eternally* yet would not make us prisoners of the painful past, we find in the religious philosophy of Kierkegaard, the early nineteenth-century Christian thinker, the possibility of such an alternative repetition—liberating and hopeful, in contrast to the hopeless repetition of "Hiroshima." The very attempt to find an *alternative* way of living repetition may be the only way to get out of the blocked repetition so as to embrace a *new*, or *re-newed*, life.

Job, the Model of Repetition in Kierkegaard's Religious Philosophy

FOCUSED on Kierkegaard's interpretation of Job as exemplary for his paradigm of repetition, this part of discussion aims to explicate firstly why Kierkegaard's thinking about "repetition" offers some substantial promise to the disburdening of traumatic memory and secondly how the biblical Job can be treated as a counterpart of "Hiroshima"—the representative of love overshadowed by the horror of memory. Opposite to Hiroshima's imprisonment within traumatic memory and the obsessive return of the past, the repetition of Job, as defined by Kierkegaard, bears on a totally different significance for (psychic) life, for it means exactly a blissful kind of flight from, not return to, the past for the sake of the present and the future. Interestingly, as there are two different kinds of "repetition," so are there two corresponding types of "piety."

According to the psychoanalytic critic Michael Roth, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* is a film which "remembers forgetting and shows us that the acknowledgment of trauma and forgetting is also a condition of *piety*, of the caring attention one can provide to parts of one's past" (Roth 211, emphasis added). Psychotherapeutically speaking, this notion of "piety" refers to an essential condition on which a victim of trauma can be healed and retain *freedom*, namely, liberation of the ego from the bondage of the past. However, in the Hiroshima film, even if there is some trace of such "piety," the promise of either healing or freedom is ultimately not fulfilled. In other words, the psychoanalytic "piety," be it remembering forgetting or caring for the past, may not play the pathway to channel freedom back to the mind, or liberation from the repetition of historical pain. This unfulfilled promise is understandable, seeing that it is extremely difficult to bridge the gap between memory and forgetting, a task inevitably complicated by the intertwined and paradoxical co-existence of memory and forgetting in the subjective mind. To the mind falling victim to the phenomenon of "blocked repetition," in particular, the promise of freedom is evidently out of the question.

Contrary to the failing "piety" in the hopeless sufferer of "repetition" in the

Hiroshima film, in Kierkegaard we find a relatively positive and truly promising picture of living "repetition" for sufferers of trauma; most importantly, the "piety" that Kierkegaard's conception of repetition involves has a totally different sense. According to Kierkegaard, one perfect model of living such positive and liberating repetition is the pious Job in the Old Testament. In Kierkegaard's interpretation, the "repetition" chosen by Job and serving to disburden his trauma is not a matter of psychology per se. Instead, it is significantly rooted in a Kierkegaardian, indeed Christian, ontology. Fundamentally different from the psychoanalytic notion of repetition as the symptom of im-possibility of not re-living the past because of the bondage of trauma, the Kierkegaardian, Christian idea of repetition, by contrast, signifies the passion for the possible, freedom, and life. Besides, it points to the power of creation, rather than destruction, that comes back over and over again into existence. Kierkegaard's thinking on the idea of repetition is mainly developed in a small book entitled *Repetition: A Psychological Experiment*,[1] in which Kierkegaard apparently wrestles with the possibility of repeating/reliving the past, but his ultimate purpose is to look beyond a literal as well as psychological sense of such possibility. His basic but profound understanding of repetition is established, at the outset, through distinguishing it from another similar notion, recollection. Interestingly, somewhat like Freud, who treats repetition and recollection as related but different categories, Kierkegaard too attempts to differentiate the two terms, only to a far greater extent. In terms of Freud, to deal with the problem of compulsive repetition caused by the traumatic past, the patient is supposed to *recollect*, or remember, what is repressed and "forgotten" about the past. Here, repetition is termed as a sign of neurosis to be tackled via the means of recollection. Noticeably, Kierkegaard's way of distinguishing the two concepts involves a completely distinctive approach—at least more philosophical than psychological. Kierkegaard underscores how they contrast each other in terms of the divergence between the ancient (Greek) metaphysics and the modern philosophy concerning the "movement" of humans as epistemic beings or mere beings.

As deliberated in the quotation below, "recollection" is identified by Kierkegaard as a metaphysical category originating in ancient Greek (Platonic) philosophy about the way to (self-)knowledge and reality; whereas, repetition is a new idea pertaining to modern philosophy on life, which is existentially progressive rather than retrospective, indeed an idea in contradistinction to the Greek concept:

> Just as they [the Greeks] taught that all knowing is a recollecting, modern philosophy will teach that all life is a repetition. …

> Repetition and recollection are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backward, whereas *genuine repetition is recollected forward*. Repetition, therefore, if it is possible, makes a person happy, whereas recollection makes him unhappy—assuming, of course, that …he has forgotten something. (Kierkegaard 1983:131, emphases added)

That is to say, insofar as recollection is attributed to the desire to recall or repeat the same experience of the past, it is, by definition, doomed to failure and unhappiness and must be deemed as the passion for the impossible. Such a passion or doomed desire, in a sense, indeed underlies the unhappiness of the heroine in *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and may also explain why she is both obsessed with and upset by the impossible memory of the impossible love once at Nevers and then at Hiroshima. In the light of Kierkegaard's explanation of recollection, the woman's failure to really recall or to forget the memory of her first love together with her total surrender to the repeated trauma and the same taste of impossible love, which is explainable as the phenomenon of neurotic repetition, is actually resulted from being stranded in the *backward* life, i.e., the life of recollection. Contrary to recollection signaled by the desire for the forgotten and impossible-to-be-relived past and its transformation into the unconscious impulse for (neurotic) repetition, Kierkegaardian repetition designates a *forward* movement for the sake of experiencing the immediacy of consciousness, i.e., *the instant*.

As a key notion in Kierkegaard's philosophy of repetition, "the instant" signifies "an 'infinite beginning,' … a beginning that cannot be interiorized, appropriated, recollected, represented, or possessed. It is not a work of self-consciousness, not mediation, but rather the event which self-consciousness is first enabled. The instant is the gift or *birth* of presence" (Kangas 4). In this sense, the event of the instant is equivalent to the beginning of life and existence. If relating this equation with Kierkegaard's analogous thinking that "[i]f God himself had not willed repetition, the world would not have come into existence" (Kierkegaard 1983:133), we can further grasp the existential truth in terms of Kierkegaard's philosophical ideas: as there could be no creation without repetition, so would there be no *existence* without the repetitious event of the instant. Furthermore, based on the ideas of identifying repetition as creation and equating the instant with the birth and possibility of existence, the contrast between repetition and recollection in terms of Kierkegaard is rendered even more lucidly clear. That is, opposite to the conception of recollection as the passion for the impossible, repetition as creation speaks for the passion for the possible and also for life. Ontologically speaking, repetition is precisely the very

event that makes a human being (continuously) come into existence.

Seeing that existence always takes place in repetition which pertains to the eternal return not of the past but of the event of the instant and in that sense, resembles God's creation, we can, therefore, perceive with Kierkegaard that repetition signifies also the passion for *freedom*. Concerning the meaning of freedom in the context of Kierkegaard's philosophy on repetition, Kangas offers an insightful deliberation:

> [Freedom] signifies … a freedom from self rather than a freedom for self or a return to self. Freedom will mean breaking the autism of return.
>
> A phenomenological marker for freedom as departure from self, one indicated in the text is joy. Repetition constitutes the "blissful security of the instant" [*Repetition* 132] … One is "lifted out" of the circuit of mundane rotations in an instant that is not substitutable with any other, but singular. Joy is a departure—not toward any telos/ground—but departure simply. (Kangas 95)

The perceptive idea of Kangas— "freedom as departure from self"— is an illuminating point for our understanding of why Kierkegaard refers to the liberation from the passion for the impossible return of the "has-been" as the joy of inhabiting the "blissful security of the instant." From a therapeutic perspective, Kierkegaard's conception of repetition as such a "joy" indeed suggests a way of living in freedom, hope, and blessing. In Kierkegaardian repetition, what one relives is no more the irrecoverable past as well as the hopelessly backward recollection of it. Rather, living repetition means precisely reliving or renewing the event of the instant that created the "has been," i.e., self, and keeps creating the everlasting renewal of the self. It is in this sense of self-renewal that renders repetition as a blessing of freedom or possibility for self. Without doubt, to be blessed with such a gift of existential and past-transcending freedom is also therapeutically promising to the one entrapped by what has been, or, in Kangas's phrase, by "the autism of the return."

In Kierkegaard's pseudonymous and fictional text, *Repetition*, this conception of repetition is reified through the persona of an ordeal-stricken young man's pursuit of relief and liberation. This melancholic and grievous Young Man, a fictive yet considerably autobiographical character in the book, is troubled by his dilemma: he is unable either to return to or to separate himself without guilt from the (past) relationship with a girl he never stops loving. His paradoxical ordeal—that his love for the girl is true and even of an eternal order, and yet he cannot but break their engagement and relationship for good for some

secret reason unexplainable in language—is compared to the ordeal of Job of the Old Testament, the prototype of "the suffering" who are grief-stricken and innocently tormented. Moreover, Job represents the sufferer inevitably pained by the inability to express or understand either his/her trauma or innocence. Ultimately, in Kierkegaard's *Repetition*, it is in the example of Job that this troubled Young Man finds "an ineffable comfort" (Kierkegaard 1983:213), as he sees in Job the foremost model of *transcending* torment and grief by *willing to live repetition* and thereby undergoing what Kagas above mentions— "the departure from self"— and finally embracing the joy of freedom.

Furthermore, signaling both liberation and transcendence, this joy, as lived out by Job, is keenly yearned for by the Young Man, who recognizes it as a "joy grounded in a religious mood, which remains something inward, … a secret he cannot explain" (Kierkegaard 1983:229). Such an inward, secret, and unspeakable sentiment of *religious piety* is exactly what Job's ultimate joy and freedom pertains to. In other words, the blissful life of Job is correlated with his religious faithfulness within. In Kierkegaard's oeuvres, the piety of Job is more than once acclaimed, as seen in the following eulogies that profile Job as

> [t]he voice of the suffering, the cry of the grief-stricken, the shriek of the terrified, and a relief to all who bore their torment in silence, … an unfailing spokesman who dared to lament 'in bitterness of soul' and to strive with God. (Kierkegaard 1983:197)

> Job referred everything to the Lord; he did not retard his soul and extinguish his spirit in reflections or explanations which only engender and nourish doubt, even if the one who dwells on them does not realize it. *In the same instant* that everything was taken from him he knew that it was the Lord who had taken it, and therefore in his loss he remained in understanding with the Lord; in his loss he preserved his confidence in the Lord; he looked upon the Lord and therefore he did not see despair. (Kierkegaard 1958:81-82, emphases added)

Such a Kierkegaardian portrayal of the pious Job in sufferings reveal how Job manages to win a life against despair and loss of faith by maintaining his persistent look upon his God, a posture manifesting a sustained relationship with God, in spite of his profound anguish out of the huge personal crises triggered by a series of undeserved and unexplainable sufferings from the loss of almost everything not only precious to him but also compatible with what he does or is in the world and before God. In fact, Job has all the reasons to be irreparably mired in a despairing state of being and mind, and he indeed cannot help cursing

the day of his birth and challenging not merely his accuser-friends but even God for the sake of justice and defense of his innocence. However, he eventually chooses to live repetition rather than recollection, a choice ultimately key to the "happy ending" of Job's "taking back" all he once lost and most importantly, of his retaining the double blessing of repetition, namely, freedom and piety—despite the trauma he has gone through.

As pointed out by Niels Eriksen, the very title of Kierkegaard's book, "repetition," meaning in Danish "'re-taking' or 'taking back'" (Eriksen 42), perfectly fits with the saying of Job in the midst of the devastating blows and afflictions: "The Lord gave, the Lord took away blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21). These words of Job's are used by Kierkegaard for the title of one of his edifying discourses, in which Kierkegaard elaborates on how Job keeps his confidence in God and thus also the joy and peace in his heart: "The Lord took everything away; then Job collected all his sorrow, as it were, and 'cast it upon the Lord,' and then the Lord took that away from him also, and only praise was left and in it his heart's incorruptible joy" (Kierkegaard 1990:122). Based on this interpretation of Kierkegaard's, Eriksen further suggests that making such a faithful response is exactly Job's "moment of worship," as he remains both acknowledgeable and adherent to "the paradigm of God's giving and taking" (Eriksen 46). Moreover, Eriksen pointedly argues that this "moment of worship" is the very moment for Job to receive the gift of redemption "from the past":

> In the paradigm of God's giving and taking, the present is redeemed from the past, since its fulfilment and completion lies in its 'from where?', rather than in its 'what for?' The present is thus freed from the dominion of the past, not because it has fulfilled the claims of the past, but because the paradigm to which these claims belong, the economy of gain and loss, has been overcome in the moment of worship and repentance. (Eriksen 46)

By connecting Job's praise and acknowledgement of the omniscience and omnipotence of the Lord no matter what, gain or loss, with Job's image as a *free* and consistent worshipper with unshakable faith in God, Eriksen convincingly elucidates for us the importance of Job's piety and freedom, the two essential elements of the "religious repetition" practiced by Job.

Most noteworthy is Eriksen's argument about Job's freedom "from the dominion of the past," which undoubtedly renders Job's "moment of worship," or piety, as a clear sign of his dwelling in freedom. More specifically, the very moment of Job's looking up to praise the Lord is also the moment of his bidding farewell to his past that pulls him down, body and soul, into the mire of trauma and despair. Such a farewell moment, or to use Kangas' term, "departure from

self," is exactly the moment of Job's freedom. In other words, different from the psychoanalytic freedom which is a pursuit, rather than a possession, to be realized by the piety understood as "caring for the past" through recollecting the past, Job's freedom and his piety for God are just like, as it were, the two sides of the same coin. As his piety is performed out of his freedom, so is his freedom begotten by his piety. Then, what does the correlation between piety and freedom simultaneously possessed by Job have to do with the therapeutic meaning of his life of "religious repetition"? To answer this question, we must think more carefully about the ontological significance underlying Kierkegaard's thoughts on repetition.

In terms of Eriksen, the freedom of Job manifests the existential essence of Job as a being of "historicality" (Eriksen 22). This ontological notion of historicality is closely related to Kierkegaard's thought about "coming into existence," which is a fundamental idea in Kierkegaard's ontology and also his conception of repetition. In *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard elucidates this philosophical idea of "coming into existence" and how it is associated with freedom and temporality of existence, including the past, the present, and the future:

> All coming into existence takes place with freedom, not by necessity. … Everything that has come into existence is *eo ipso* historical. …The past has come into existence; coming into existence is the change of actuality brought about by freedom. If the past had become necessary it would no longer belong to freedom, i.e., it would no longer belong to that by which it came into existence. Freedom would then be in a sorry case, … (Kierkegaard 1962:93, 96)

Evidently, the centrality of freedom is underlined by Kierkegaard in developing his ontological notion of "coming into existence." Opposite to the category of "necessity," freedom refers to the possibility without which no "coming into existence" can ever happen to the past or the present or the future. Seeing that any historical moment of existence occurs equally "with freedom, not by necessity," it is, therefore, logically and ontologically impossible to have the past predetermine or define or "prophesize" the present and the future, otherwise either the present or the future would be rid of its own possibility of "coming into existence." In other words, Kierkegaard's rationale behind his disputation against the fallacious relationship between the past and the later "coming into existence" is simple: with the past as their predeterminant, the present and the future will not exist in reality but become merely the shadows or the transfigured ghosts of the past.

Based on this ontological understanding of all historical existence as becoming possible only in freedom, it is thus reasonable to perceive in Kierkegaard's thoughts on repetition the inherent promise of freedom and even "cure" of the mind. According to Kierkegaard, to choose repetition, in effect, means to choose the repeatedly coming into existence of the instant, and such an existential choice means exactly the choice of freedom, together with possibility, life, and transcendence, as pronounced by Kierkegaard: "the person who chose repetition—he lives," and "repetition is and remains a transcendence" (Kierkegaard 1983:132, 186). As to the therapeutic possibility deducible from Kierkegaard's repetition, we can find its demonstration in the supreme model, Job—the godly man who suffers from unjust trauma yet ultimately gets healed and doubly blessed.

Conclusion: Contrasted Repetition and Promise of Hope

IN view of Kierkegaard's understanding of repetition and Job as its exemplar, we may conclude by observing that Job is perceivably a complete contrast to "Hiroshima": one signifies the incurably *repetitious* bondage of painful memory predicated by the *backward* obsession with the past, while the other embodies no such obsession or bondage at all. To put it in another way, the contrast between Job and "Hiroshima" is precisely the opposition between repetition of existential freedom, that referring to possibility of life, and "blocked repetition," that signifying impossible liberation from the past, whether it refers to impossible memory or impossible love. In the case of the heroine in Duras and Renais's film, we have a victim of "Hiroshima" and "blocked repetition" who pathetically remains trapped in her *backward*-looking obsession with the past. This hopeless lover of "Hiroshima" seems to voluntarily as well as neurotically allow herself to be moved, haunted, and controlled by the torment of remembering in forgetting and vice versa. From this perspective, "Hiroshima" signifies not just the emblem of impossible memory of impossible love but also the inescapable site of "blocked repetition," precisely the site that entraps and victimizes this neurotic woman to the extent that the only way she can live her life is moving backward over again to "Hiroshima." On the contrary, Job, the model of Kierkegaard's understanding of "repetition," *chooses* the opposite movement of "recollecting forward" instead of "backward" and is accordingly "saved" from the bondage of the traumatic past. Philosophically speaking, the key to Job's salvation and liberation lies in the fact that Job abides by the "coming into existence" ontology, namely, the principle that "[t]he essential meaning of things lies not in the past but in the future" (Cole 217). In Job, this forward-looking principle is certainly not merely of ontology. Most importantly, his

ontological dwelling is existentially based on the *religious* tendency to "look upon God" in spite of everything.

Still, despite the fact that the psychoanalytic promise of healing thoughts by working through the remembrance of the past is ultimately unfulfilled in the victim of "Hiroshima," we must add that the religious understanding of repetition as actualized by Job in suffering and faith is far from total disavowal of the psychoanalytic "piety" of caring for the past for the sake of healing. In fact, it is worth clarifying that in Kierkegaard's religious-philosophical understanding of repetition, especially in his deliberation of Job as actualizing this religious idea, there is no denying the importance of *(re-)collecting* the pain of the past in order to dispel its haunting or entrapment. This can be evidenced if we recall Kierkegaard's portrayal of Job in the process of struggling with trauma: "Job *collected all his sorrow* … and 'cast it upon the Lord'" (Kierkegaard 1983:122), and he *traces* "everything to the Lord … in his loss he remained in understanding with the Lord" (Kierkegaard 1958:81-82). Noticeably, far from overlooking the significance or even necessity of coping with, or working through, sorrowfulness, Kierkegaard's interpretation of Job as the model of living repetition does not contradict the psychotherapeutic stress on *re-collection* but, rather, acknowledges the important procedure of *collecting* and *tracing* the pain. Certainly, equally true is the fact that to Kierkegaard, (re)collecting the past promises, as it were, only the halfway toward recovery from trauma. The even more crucial and decisive move made by Job is that aside from remembering the traumatic past, Job, as quoted above, "looked upon the Lord and therefore he did not see despair" (Kierkegaard 1958:82).

That Job keeps casting his re-collected sorrows and also his eye upon God bespeaks his religious piety, and it is ultimately this "repetitious" turning to God in spite of trauma that saves Job from being a hopeless victim of "Hiroshima"—the impossible forgetting and memory as well as the eternal repetition of the painful past. Moreover, with this understanding of repetition associated with religious piety and distinguished from the psychoanalytic piety that cares only for the past and feelings but not for the ongoing spiritual relationship with God, the repetition lived by Job is definitely contrasted with the "blocked repetition of "Hiroshima;" simply put, the former—as a religious category— promises, while the latter annuls, the ultimate hope of healing of the spirit and the freedom that transcends traumatic feelings. In this sense, we may further hold that to grasp the contrast between Job and "Hiroshima," we ought to consider seriously the distinction between Kierkegaard's portrayal of the biblical model of "repetition" as a religious category and Duras's representation of (blocked) repetition as a category of pathetic neurosis.

To extend the contrast dealt with in this study to the two writers, one being

a Christian thinker, religious philosopher, and biblical interpreter, and the other, a fiction writer and to use Lacan's idea, bearer of "a myth of the personal soul," may shed certain light on this project of contrasting two possible "repetitions." Concerning Duras's writing on the pain within "the personal soul," Lacan once comments in the conclusion of his interesting essay entitled "Homage to Marguerite Duras on *Le ravissement de Lol V. Stein*":

> You probably couldn't come to the aid of your creations, … Marguerite, bearing a myth of the personal soul. But does not the rather hopeless charity with which you animate them proceed from the faith which you have in such abundance, as you celebrate the taciturn wedding of an empty life with an indescribable object. (Lacan 1987:129)

By underscoring Duras's "faith" in life's emptiness "knotted" with "an object" beyond words or grasp as a kind of "hopeless charity," Lacan's insight lays bare that however "faithful" the storyteller and myth-bearer is, Duras does not write to offer any promise of help or hope. This authorial understanding rings very true indeed, as we definitely find no promise as such in Duras's writing of Hiroshima and "faithful" representation of "blocked repetition." Contrarily, Kierkegaard's presentation of Job, the biblical figure of faith and legendary sufferer of trauma, abounds in hope and promise of freedom—not in "an empty life" but in a religious life's repetition.

Thus, from a psychotherapeutic, or philosophical, or religious perspective, this paralleled reading as well as rethinking of two possible ways of living "repetition" for the sake of healed life free from traumatic memory ultimately brings us to see the radical distinction between Job and "Hiroshima" as that between religious repetition and "blocked repetition" as well as between joy and despair—with the continuum of the event of "the instant." That is to say, what we see in Duras's representation of (personal or collective) Hiroshima as the impossible to heal and Kierkegaard's interpretation of the pious Job as suffering but free, is ultimately the contrasted repetition, which, at the core, is never a mere issue of psychotherapy or philosophy. Rather, the contrast, at the end of the day, is grounded on a religious choice of existence—between the return to the Self, burdened with *the past* and that to the Creator of *the instant*, the crucial giver of life and possibility, i.e., the possibility of a renewed, or healed, life both beyond the past and *forward* into the present as well as the future.

Notes

1. The English version used in this paper is derived from *Fear and Trembling; Repetition: Kierkegaard's Writings, VI*, edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, from p. 177 through p.232.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to contrast two conceptions and phenomena of "repetition" which lead the post-trauma mind into the imprisonment of the eternal return, i.e., "blocked repetition," of the painful past or, alternatively, into the double blessing of freedom and renewal of life. Via revisiting the contra-therapeutic phenomenon of repetition represented in Duras's film-text, Hiroshima Mon Amour, the first target of investigation is set on the despairing type of repetition embodied in the heroine's love life, namely, her "personal Hiroshima." From this perspective, "Hiroshima" is deliberated as not only the emblem of traumatic memory but also a metaphor of victimhood of impossible forgetting/memory and the incurable repetition of historical pain.

Against this problematic kind of repetition, for which either the psychoanalytic approach or the Hiroshima writer, Duras, has no promise of cure, the second part of investigation means to scrutinize a different conception of "repetition" in Kierkegaard's religious philosophy, with the special attention paid to his treatment of the afflicted but pious Job of the Old Testament as its "living" model. To Kierkegaard, Job represents the prototype of a trauma-devastated sufferer but chooses "repetition" as his way of living and becomes a healed, double-blessed, and liberated man of God, which is treated by Kierkegaard as "a principle of guidance to every man." This understanding of Job is based on Kierkegaard's modern, psychological, and profoundly religious and philosophical understanding of what "repetition" means to human existence. At the core of the Kierkegaardian repetition

as exemplified by Job, the biblical man of religious piety, is the idea of passion for freedom, possibility, and life.

Via examining the phenomenon and concept of repetition in terms of two different lived situations demonstrated respectively in the Hiroshima film and in Kierkegaard's interpretation of Job, the whole study looks to reflect on the existential possibilities when "repetition" is unavoidable yet may not be hopelessly pathetic even for a death-preoccupied heart of pain. Ultimately, the study observes that contrary to "Hiroshima," i.e., the "blocked repetition" of the horror of memory, Kierkegaard's Job embodies the religious repetition that promises hope, as Job, out of religious piety, chooses to re-live not the past but "the event of the instant" that creates the present and the future as well as a life of freedom and possibility.

KEYWORDS: Traumatic Memory, Repetition, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, Kierkegaard's Religious Philosophy, Job

廣島和約伯

《廣島之戀》與齊克果宗教哲學中對比之「重覆」現象

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摘　要

此研究嘗試對比兩種「重覆」現象與概念，一為封閉性重覆，致使創傷後心靈受困於苦痛過往和死亡記憶永恆復返之牢籠。一為「瞬間」的自由和生命更新之不斷重覆。前者係根據電影《廣島之戀》結合廣島原爆的災難歷史和戰後愛情故事所呈現的重覆現象，深入探討女主角「廣島式」的愛情經歷如何具現充滿絕望的重覆類型，此類型雖符合佛洛伊德對重覆的定義與分析，卻無法實現精神分析的療癒許諾。依此視角，「廣島」既為歷史創傷的象徵，亦為不可能的遺忘與回憶以及無法療癒的重覆性痛苦之隱喻。後者見諸於齊克果宗教哲學思想，特別聚焦於齊氏重覆概念之典型代表，即飽受創傷打擊卻無改虔誠信仰之舊約人物

約伯。通過「廣島」和約伯體現兩種對比的重覆生活，最終論證，效法約伯擁抱自由、生命與存在可能，將創造現在與未來加倍的祝福，並可為創傷記憶的封閉性重覆所禁錮的生命提供重獲希望的解脫之道。

關鍵詞：創傷記憶、重覆、《廣島之戀》、齊克果宗教哲學、約伯