Makaleler (Tema)

THE JAPANESE CREATION MYTH, THE VIOLATION OF TABOOS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERNITY IN "PROFOUND DESIRES OF THE GODS"

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Abstract

Myths include positive and negative elements, which the concept of modern social life is referred to, even though they seem to be the phenomena of ancient times. With its positive meaning, though it is a type of narrative which handles extraordinary subjects that happen to extraordinary people, the potential of this narrative to create a specific mystification leads myths to be interpreted as a carrier of "false consciousness". Film texts are also a tool that constantly enables this double meaning and the element to the audiences.

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The relationship between mythography and cinema are analyzed within a specific film text in this study. *Profound Desires of the Gods* (Kamigami no fukaki yokubô), which was directed by Shohei Imamura and released in 1968, explicitly addresses the Japanese creation myth. While the incidents experienced by the Futori family due to various crimes and the violations of taboos are handled in the forefront, concerns and fears about Japanese modernization are mentioned in the background. In this context, qualitative, structuralist mythographic analysis is made about this film in terms of the concepts of myth, taboo, violation, and modernization. In this film, which is analyzed under the conceptual opposites and titles such as *nature/culture*, *taboo/violation*, *civilized/uncivilized*, *traditional/modern* with the method of binary oppositions explained by Levi-Strauss, it is seen that the Japanese creation myth is tried to be revived, and the longing to traditional Japan against modern one emerge as a prominent discourse. It is determined that a modernization perspective without modernity becomes a prominent discourse in the film.

Keywords: Japanese creation myth, taboo and violation, modernity, Shohei Imamura, Profound Desires of the Gods

"TANRILARIN DERİN ARZULARI" FİLMİNDE JAPON YARATILIŞ MİTİ, TABULARIN İHLALİ VE MODERNLİĞİN İNŞASI

Öz

Mitler uygarlığın çok eski dönemlerine ait fenomenler gibi görünse de, modern toplumsal yaşam kavramın gönderimde bulunduğu olumlu ve olumsuz iki yönü de içinde barındırmaktadır. Olumlu anlamıyla mit olağanüstü kişilerin başından geçen olağanüstü konuları ele alan bir anlatı türü olsa da bu anlatının belirli bir mistifikasyon üretme potansiyeli, mitlerin olumsuz, birer "yanlış bilinç" taşıyıcısı olarak da anlam kazanmasına neden olmuştur. Sinema metinleri de mitlerin sahip olduğu bu çift anlamlılık ve yönü izleyicilere sürekli sunan bir araçtır.

Bu çalışmada mitografi ve sinema ilişkisi belirli bir sinema metni üzerinden ele alınıp incelenmiştir. Shohei Imamura'nın 1968 tarihli *Tanrıların Derin Arzuları* (Kamigami no fukaki yokubô) adlı eseri açık biçimde Japon kuruluş mitine gönderimde bulunmaktadır. Ön planda Futori ailesinin işlediği çeşitli suçlar ve tabu ihlallerinden dolayı başından geçenleri ele alınırken, arka fonda Japon modernleşmesine dönük endişeler ve korkular dile getirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda ilgili eser mit, tabu, ihlal ve modernleşme kavramları etrafında nitel, yapısalcı mitografik analize tabii tutulmuştur. Levi-Strauss'un ortaya koymuş olduğu ikili karşıtlıklar yöntemiyle *doğa/kültür*, *tabu/ihlal*, *uygar/uygar olmayan*, *geleneksel/modern* gibi kavramsal çiftler ve

başlıklar altında analiz edilen filmde, Japon kuruluş mitinin yeniden canlandırılmaya çalışıldığı, moderne karşıt geleneksel Japonya'ya dönüş özleminin öne çıkan bir söylem olarak belirdiği görülmüştür. Filmde modernitesiz modernleşme perspektifinin öne çıkarılan bir söylem olduğu saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mit, Japon köken miti, tabu ve ihlal, modernleşme, Shohei Imamura, Tanrıların Derin Arzuları.

Introduction

Mankind has tried to explain the universe since ancient times. The effort to maintain their existence in nature, to interpret the cosmos, to exist within specific rules within the social groups related to the person and to determine these rules, the need for meta-narratives, which will make life meaningful individually, have emphasized the need for various kinds of narratives that are constantly renewed and repeated. Consequently, as a social being, the search for solutions to some existential problems based on their sociality has continued. The formation of the universe, living things, communities, what people have to do during their developmental periods, explanations of what they expect in the future have been the subject of religion and myths for a long period of time, even though it is the subject of philosophy and science for two or three thousand years. On the one hand, myth expresses a mystification process as the analysis demonstrated by Barthes (2014) by referring to unreal stories, and on the other hand, it is interpreted as a form of narrative about extraordinary subjects that happen to extraordinary people in the very old times of history. Even though mythical thought in any form mentions a particular phase in the general understanding of the universe, there is no sign that this phase ends and the transition to a whole new phase is completed. In contemporary societies, as in the earliest human communities, myths are constantly created, and many people find these explanations convincing and believe them.

Every society has its own myths and these myths serve as a regulator for social and individual life as well as explanations about the universe. Myths, which are a significant part of human culture, are seen in almost every field of contemporary cultural life, and cinema is one of them. When various mythological figures (*Thor*, *Loki*, *Thanos*, *Zeus*, *Posedion* et al.) can be utilized as actors in films, specific mythological stories can totally be presented them to the audience (for example, *La vendetta di Ercole* (dir. Vittorio Cottafavi, 1960); *Clash of Titans* (dir. Louis Letterier, 2010),). In addition, several representations, symbols, phenomena and processes shown in films are presented to the audience with the potential of cinema to create myths, and contemporary myths are continually created.

There is a quite extensive literature about myths, and researchers have tried to analyze the quality of representation in myths. What do mythological representations mean? What are the functions that these meanings have? Questions such as which thematic highlights these functions presented indicate that mythology has a particular place in understanding the intellectual world of a community or an individual. In this study, the assumption, which myths and their re-representations are significant for contemporary societies as early communities, are handled, and an analysis about the mythological narrative emerged in a contemporary film as well as the meaning resulting from this narrative are aimed. In this context, *a mythical analysis* is made about Shohei Imamura's film, *Profound Desires of the Gods* (Kamigami no fukaki yokubô)

that is explicitly based on a mythological narrative in contemporary Japanese cinema. The questioning of Japanese modernization within the scope of the Japanese creation myth with a nostalgic soul is examined in the study, and the discourse of the resurrection of tradition or mythical retreat through the failure of modernization is analyzed. Considering the nostalgia after great disasters and the continuity of the motivation to retreat to the original Golden Age, it is controversial whether the approaches of the films to modernity (particularly their negative sides) have a nostalgic aspect that seems to be part of modernity.

It is possible to say that Japanese modernization is a late modernization compared to Europe and the USA. Admiral Matthew C. Perry, who was sent to Japan from the USA in 1854, requested a trade agreement between the USA and Japan. Although the Japanese rejected the trade agreement, Admiral Perry came back with a larger fleet, and Japan, which had no means of defending themselves against this fleet, had to accept the agreement (Beasley, 1999, pp. 191-192). This incident demonstrated the Japanese two things; firstly, West is no longer underestimated, they are superior to them both commercially and militarily. Secondly, it is essential to be "like them" to survive in this world system. After about 260 years of feudal rule, *Meiji Restoration* began in 1868. The 29-kilometer train route opened between Shimbashi and Yokohama station in 1872 represents a significant turning point in Japanese modernization (Japangov, 2020). Japan developed in the military field at least with this late modernization effort, and won the war against Tsarist Russia in 1904-1905. Imperialist desire and militarist growth peaked before the Second World War, but the war against the USA and its allies ended with two atomic bombs dropped on Japan. Therefore, modernization, which are tried to be made rapidly, imperialist expansion and its consequences, address to a traumatic period in the mind of Japanese people. Consequently, it is possible to expect the production of highly complex, opposite feelings and thoughts about modernization.

Imamura is one of the significant directors of *Japanese New Wave*. *Japanese New Wave* films utilize the conflict between the old and the new, and reflect the fears and anxieties in the inner world of the people in an era that the society encounters an intense transformation (Teksoy, 2009, p. 533). *Japanese New Wave* films' content and form is "capable of revealing the contradictions within Japanese society and with isolating the culture's increasingly materialist values and its imperialist alliances" (Desser, 1988, p. 4). In this context, *Profound Desires of the Gods* (Kamigami no fukaki yokubô, 1968) makes it possible to understand Japanese (compulsory) modernization; the desires created by the fears of this process, and it also helps to interpret this process with various prominent binary oppositions.

Aim and Methodology

Aim

The aim of this study is to reveal how the creation myth is reproduced in a film handled with a mythological perspective and how it constructs the filmic meaning, and to determine how the director presents Japanese modernization within the framework of Japanese creation myth through various binary oppositions (*nature/culture, taboo/violation, civilized/uncivilized* and *traditional/modern*), and to analyze the discourse that is highlighted in the film. It is possible to regard film texts as myths in the modern period. From this

point of view, a purposeful sampling was used for the analysis of the film, and Shohei Imamura's *Profound Desires of the Gods* (Kamigami no fukaki yokubô, 1968), which reprocessed a mythology obviously based on the creation myth in Japanese cinema, was selected. Levi-Strauss's binary oppositions method was used to analyze the film. This method provides a highly functional framework for examining myths and contemporary cultural products.

Methodology

Rosenberg defined myths as theories about myths as symbolic and psychoanalytic aspects, theories that handle religion and sacred experience, theories that handle economically, and structuralism. Levi-Strauss's structuralist approach identifies myths as abstract constructions. They have a structural integrity and continuity, and the significant thing is to reveal the structure (Rosenberg, 2003, pp. 25-26). Sahlins denotes that structural anthropology is based on binary opposition (2014, p. 13), and Levi-Strauss emphasizes that people see "the universe is represented as a continuum made up of successive oppositions" (1966, p.139). Oppositions such as life/death, male/female, good/bad represent the basic conflicts of human existence for Levi-Strauss (Doty, 2000, p. 277). This approach is also accepted by Jung and he regards man as a complex of these oppositions (Jung, 2009, p. 85). So, this "structure" and opposition, which is immanent in human psyche, also shows itself in cultural products, and according to Fiske and Morris, myths cannot resolve these irreconcilable contradictions, but they eliminate the concerns about them (Fiske, 2003: 160; Morris, 2004, p. 456). Levi-Strauss explains the essence of this method, which is based primarily on *nature/culture* opposition and aims to reveal the structure:

> *Starting from a binary opposition, which affords the simplest possible example of a system, this construction proceeds by the aggregation, at each of the two poles, of new terms, chosen because they stand in relations of opposition, correlation, or analogy to it. It does not, however, follow from this that the relations in question have to be homogeneous. Each 'local' logic exists in its own right. It consists in the intelligibility of the relation between two immediately associated terms and this is not necessarily of the same type for every link in the semantic chain (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 161).*

To Levi-Strauss, binary oppositions do not address to a universally defined conceptual set and list. The important thing is to determine that the society and its myths (cultural products) create oppositions based on what kind of general and specific, natural and cultural oppositions and give priority to some of them. Consequently, every culture conceives the referent, which its cultural contents refer to, with different dimensions. Structuralism highlights that the binary order in this comprehension creates a structure and a reduction that can simplify an analysis. Analysis becomes essential through this reduction and other oppositions. Therefore, this separation continues until the oppositions highlighted by the text end (Levi-Strauss, 1966, pp.66, 135, 217). From this point of view, in the analysis of the film, binary oppositions of the following types were used.

Nature/culture as the main opposition, *taboo/violation* as a violation of the ban that also creates the basic conflict of the film, *civilized/uncivilized* on which the opposition was based between the Futori family and the people of the island, *traditional/modern* in terms of presenting this situation as part of a general

modernization process were identified as main titles and oppositions in the film analysis. However, in order to give further information and reduce each title to a simpler level, oppositions in the sub levels were also used under the title.

Myth, Taboo and Violation

The word, myth, was used in English in the early 19th century, derived from Latin "mythus" and Greek "muthos" (Lexico, Myth, 2020). The Oxford Dictionary gives the first definition of the concept as "a story from ancient times, especially one that was told to explain natural events or to describe the early history of a people". The second definition of the concept refers to "something that many people believe but that does not exist or is false" (Oxford Learners, Myth, 2020). In the subtitles of the definition, myth is "imaginary or fictional person/thing" and "an exaggerated or idealized thought of a person or thing" (Lexico, Myth, 2020). To Segal, myth is a story, moreover, myth may identify itself as a belief or mentality in a broader sense (2004, p. 13). "Mythos" means what cannot really exist or emerge, and in this respect it has been regarded as opposed to "logos" and "historia" (Williams, 2012, p.255). Therefore, myths are an attempt by the uncivilized intelligence comprehending the world to explain nature (Fiske, 2003, p. 34). Eliade mentions that the understanding of the myth in modern society is wrong and makes a different explanation. Eliade understands from the myth "a fact to create a model for human behavior and adding meaning and value to life in this way". In Archaic "societies, myth conversely indicates 'a true story', and is also highly valuable because it is considered sacred, exemplary and meaningful" (2001, p.11-12). To Eliade, myth is the comprehension of reality and a tool to interpret it. In addition to claiming that the way of thinking, which is the basis of myths, has a unique structure, the structuralist approach also defends a perspective that give myths a special place. In this respect, Levi-Strauss mentions that myths think within them without the knowledge of people (2013, p.37). When this is taken into consideration, it becomes significant what myths derive from and how they are formed.

To Campbell, it is possible to mention four explanations about the formation of myths. The first one is the natural environment. Accordingly, myths are based on the relationship of humanity with their environment, and they are shaped by an effort to rule nature, to make it useful, to make an emotional intellectual explanation that will end the discussion about it. Secondly, the various feelings and thoughts brought about by the historical process offer a living space that is far beyond the individual, and such common motifs lead the myths. Thirdly, the myth as a manifestation of guilt and jealousy relationships among mother and father and child associated with Freud expresses a process in the function of acquiring the emotions and thoughts that will culturally prepare the individual and make her a member of society, as in the revelation of the suppressed. The last explanation is the process of civilization related to the reflection of the inevitable biological process of humans, transition rituals, and acquiring emotions and thoughts suitable for all ages (1994, p. 660). Structuralism conceives myths as immanent structures related to human thought. According to this;

Mythical stories are, or seem, arbitrary, meaningless, absurd, yet nevertheless they seem to reappear all over the world. A 'fanciful' creation of the mind in one place would be unique—you would not find the same creation in a completely different place. My problem was trying to find out if there was some kind of order behind this apparent disorder—that's all (Levi-Strauss, 2013, p.45).

From this perspective, myths or mythology appear as an effort to interpret and explain of the signs in a much broader framework.

It is possible to categorize myths in general, although classification is quite complex and difficult. Major myths in Britannica are mentioned as follows; myths of origins, destruction and eschatological myths, messianic and millenarian myths, culture heroes and soteriological myths, myths of time and eternity, myths of providence and destiny, myths of renewal and rebirth, myths of memory and forgetting, myths of high beings and celestial gods, myths concerning founders of religion and other religious figures, myths about kings and ascetics, and myths of transformation (Buxton & Smith, 2017). While mythical cosmogonies try to answer the question of the formation of the world and the birth of gods (Cassirer, 2005, p.78), myths of origin or creation myths maintain and complete the myth of cosmogonies (Eliade, 2001, p. 37). In this way, primitive man has the chance to see her universe, society, and self as a meaningful whole. Therefore, myths have significant functions in terms of the organization of social life.

Myths connect people to their culture and explain the natural and the supernatural (Berger, 2014, p.129), emphasize the cultural identity of people (Wilkinson, 2010, p. 9), naturalize the culture, that is, the artificial one (Fiske, 2003, p. 233), presents it in a reality that cannot be questioned. In this phase, people find answers to the following questions:

Who am I? What is the nature of the universe I live in? What kind of relation do I have with this universe? What is needed to survive? How much do I have a say about my own life? How do I balance between my responsibilities about society and my family and my own desires? How can I lead a satisfying life? How can I accept the inevitable side of death? (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 18).

The main function of all myths and rituals is to involve the people in local organization emotionally and mentally and continues to be (Campbell, 1995, p. 460). Campbell mentions the four functions of mythology. These indicate mystical, cosmological, social, and psychological meanings. First of all, the myth implies to the awakening consciousness that the universe has intense mystery. Secondly, this mystery can be interpreted, and on the basis of this, the myth develops an integral image of the universe. Thirdly, mythology shapes people according to the needs of a social group conditioned by geography and history. Campbell, defines the fourth function as the most vivid and significant and concludes that this function undoubtedly ensures the individual to settle in unity. Consequently, the individual is in harmony with a) *the ultimate awe-inspiring mystery* that is within and beyond everything b) *the universe* (macrocosm) c) her *culture* (mesocosm) d) *herself* (microcosm) (1994, pp. 14-16, 636; Campbell & Moyers, 2013, pp.53-54). As it is seen, myths are a form of contact with the social and natural structures.

Taboos have a great importance for social life. Marshall states that Freud and Levi-Strauss believe civilization to be born of the incest taboo. The word taboo, which means 'holy' or 'inviolable' in the Tonga language, refers to the ban of some things, objects or movements, or even not talking about them (Marshall, 2005, p. 712). Sahlins denotes that taboos have an organizing function in daily life or practice, and are in that order (2014, p. 94). By referring to Freud, Morris mentions that he thinks the taboos are caused by emotional irritability (2004, p. 253). Indeed, Freud (1999, p. 72, 81) states in his study titled 'Totem and Taboo' [1917] that taboos were brought out from outside, and thus through forced bans. This inference has significant consequences, because if there is a taboo, there must be a strong unconscious tendency to this taboo. This is a sign that people should have an instinct to violate this ban. Thus, taboos such as killing, cannibalism or incest indicate that there is a desire and a tendency to such actions in human psyche; there is no point in banning anything if there is no desire. So taboo is a primitive ban imposed from the outside (by an authority) and is directed against the strongest desires of man. The desire to violate this ban continues in the unconscious; people, who obey the taboo, show an ambivalent attitude toward what is affected by the taboo. The magic power attributed to taboo is based on its ability to create provocation; and it acts as a contagion because the example is contagious and the banned desire becomes displaced in the unconscious upon something else. The expiation for the violation of a taboo through a renunciation proves that a renunciation is at the basis of the observance of the taboo (Freud, 1999, p.90).

Taboo is labeled as mysterious, dangerous, and ban while it is associated with 'holiness'. The fact that it is a ban on almost everyone and its contagious nature requires intensive punishment of the violation. It is because the person, who violates taboo, is also taboo; there is no barrier for others to violate this taboo when s/he is tolerated. For this reason, Freud handles taboos as primitive forms of *obsessive neuroses* and thinks that they both have intense mutual characteristics. Accordingly, both of them are;

1. They emerge without any detectable motive.

2. They are maintained with a specific type of internal necessity.

3. They easily become displaced and carry the risk of transmission via banned object.

4. Violation of the taboo requires intense redemption and ritual actions.

Although the rituals, which should be made due to the violations of taboos, vary from culture to culture, it changes to be purified by specific rituals or completely excluded from the community according to the nature of the taboo. They are the intense kind of renunciation of motives and desires indicated by these purification rituals. As a result, Freud regards such taboos and desire for them as the core of neurosis; he also mentions that they are the constituent elements of civilization (Freud, 1999, pp.83, 87).

Japanese Shintoism and Creation Myth

Japan, which is a state of islands in the Far East, has a significant and privileged place in terms of its late modernization and its rapid success in it, and preserving the importance of traditions. The natives of the islands of Japan are not the Japanese that live there right now. Mongolian tribes crossed the Korean Strait

and invaded these islands in 1-2 century BC and brought the Shinto religion here based on the belief that all elements of nature had a divine spirit (Rosenberg, 2003, pp.577, 583). Shinto means the way of 'kami' (to, tao in Chinese) or the guardian gods of all things (Eliade & Couliano, 1997, p. 265). Swyngedouw states that 'kami' means god in Japanese. These gods can be thousands, and they point to something that is primarily fearful.

In this sense, some natural phenomena and human beings are considered to have a nature of kami and be good in essence. Life in harmony together with kami is experienced with goodness and pure heart, and is under the protection of these gods. Happiness is expected for the present life, not the future (Swyngedouw, 2005, p.90, 93).

Campbell defines Japanese mythology as "the most fairy-tale world history". To him, there are four phenomena that become prominent to mention Japan. The first is that the arts of a civilization developed with Buddhism after the arrival of Buddhism in these lands are similar to the Christianization of the Germanic Europe. Japan is in dream, young and a productive society. Secondly, 'traditional Japan' has never existed due to this youth situation. Thirdly, they see the mystery in the world with their mental structures. Finally, since they are an island society, they show compatibility or homogeneity (1993, pp. 437-438, 441).

The first five gods of Shinto were born spontaneously from chaos according to the Japanese creation myth. *Izanagi* (he who invites) and his sister *Izanami* (she who invites) were born from their mating. They create the first island, get down there and discover sexuality. *Hiruko* ("leech child") is born from the first relationship (because the woman speaks first) and cannot walk even when he is three years old. They do not like him and they set him adrift in a reed boat. Winds determine his fate. The gods produce numerous deities with their sexual union until the fire god burns his mother's uterus and kills her. Izanami's death disturbs Izanagi and he goes to hell after her. Izanami helps him with the condition that he does not seek her during the night, but Izanagi does not keep his word, he sees his wife covered with insects with the light of the torch. Izanagi is chased by 'ugly females'; Izanami gets angry at him and goes after him. Finally, he divides the two worlds by placing a rock in Izanagi Yomi Pass. While Izanami kills a being every day in her kingdom, Izanagi fertilizes 1500 beings so that the world does not remain uninhabited. Purifying himself from the taboo of contact with death, Izanagi then creates the most important kami of the Shinto gods, the Sun goddess Ameterasu and the crafty god Sosa-no-o (Rosenberg, 2003, pp.579-581; Campbell, 1993, pp.442-446; Eliade & Couliano, 1997, pp.266-267). While this myth bases Japanese creation myth on the incest relationship between a man and woman, it provides a significant reference about subjects such as death/life, how the relationship between men and women should be, how the world and afterlife differ, and what the gods of this place are. It is possible to find the reflections of this myth in the film.

Findings

Nature / Culture

One of the main binary oppositions put forward by Levi-Strauss is *nature/culture*. Culture includes everything produced by humanity in response to nature (Aydin & Ozbudun, 2003, pp.521-523). Therefore, their comprehension and interpretation of nature, which is a referent, is an important cultural signifier. At the beginning of the film, a disabled man tells the children about a mythological incident. This story largely refers to the Japanese creation myth (Ko, 2011, p. 82), the relationship between Izanagi and Izanami. This story is also a manifestation and mythological expression of the process that Eliade regards as the transformation of chaos into the cosmos (2001, p.181). In the film, this story is narrated as follows:

They came from the Kurage[2] Sea a long time ago. A brother and a sister. A god and a goddess. They created an island together. This was their story, the story of how the island was created.

Then one day, the god in heaven called out to the male god. He told him to be the guardian god of the island. The god in heaven gave him a bright red rock. The male god was very happy and threw the rock into the ocean. A huge amount of water splashed. Lo and behold! Suddenly, Kurage Island appeared in the ocean.

What happened next? Then the male god tried to sink the island. But he failed. He said, 'I have to sink it somehow, but I cannot'. He begged the god in heaven for this. 'I beg you; give me the missing part of my body'. The god in heaven was astounded and said: 'What part of your body is missing?' 'The missing part of my body ... A woman's body is missing'.

The rest of the story is narrated in another scene:

When the island was first created, the brother became the god and the sister became the goddess. They did not know how to have a baby. So the young god and goddess prayed to the god in Heaven and asked him. They asked him for advice. They phoned the god in heaven. The god in heaven said to them:

"Go in opposite directions around the well."

They both did what was said and embraced when they met again. So brothers and sisters became husband and wife. Then the god in heaven brought the birds, animals down to earth, all in pairs. Thus, humans, birds, animals and insects settled on the island.

By presenting the similar of Japanese creation myth, the island of Kurage is interpreted as Japan itself. So the transition from nature to culture also seems to be similar to the whole community's comprehension of themselves, particularly as an isolated being. In this case, the community seems to be integrated with the spirit of the island and accept the basic nutrients it offers. However, in the film, this does not work

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[2] "Jellyfish" in Japanese.

completely without contradiction. It is because the opportunities provided by the island are limited and it is essential to control the number of people on the island as the sources of the island cannot be increased. One of the most obvious views of this is the control of the increasing population on the island. In the film, engineer Kariya is shown on a stage to take a walk. When engineer comes to the middle of the island, Ryu explains:

There are 'Hitomasuda' ruins here. Long ago, a bell was rung to gather the islanders together. To keep the island's population under control ... people, who are late, were killed.

The bell, which is rung in a note that is heard in almost every part of the island, provides an opportunity to control people, who are disabled and cannot run at a sufficient speed on the island, and causes their death when necessary. Since there is always someone coming late, the population of the island is kept under control. A similar explanation is given that they come to the edge of the cliff that is also a significant water source on the island:

In ancient times, they used this place to keep the population under control, to throw pregnant women, they say so. During the feudal periods; this island belonged to a cruel, warrior clan.

Although the referred date of the film is not completely contradictory and an ideal period, the limited possibilities offered by nature is determinant. There is no way to overcome and to dominate it. People adapt by accepting and obeying the limits offered by nature. Understanding nature is the same as seeing the manifestation of a divine soul at every point in it. This understanding, which is one of the basic approaches of Shinto religion, conceives nature as a point where the genetic existence is connected, as a continuum. God is everywhere, in all the leaves. In this respect, culture, or the way human understands nature, create its own difference by identifying with nature. Nature is transformed into order by presenting it to the service of culture and accepting its limits, thus it avoids the idea of chaos. In this regard, chaos is the nothingness of the formation of nature for the islanders of early period; it means not to connect her own existence to anywhere. When the creation myth is produced and the adventure of 'creation' is revealed, nature is humanized even if its rules and limits are followed at that moment, and it transforms into an appearance designed by mankind. At this stage, chaos turned into a cosmos.

However, the mythical journey also offers a return to nostalgia of a natural state. The understanding of space in the film is not only in the form of a concrete, real space. There is a level that makes sense between this place (island) and beyond (mythical land) and beyond it promises freedom in terms of being a virgin place where the myth can occur (Considering the occupation of Okinawa, making it fertile by recapturing the occupied land). However, heroes can never go beyond, its existence is known; it belongs to another world and provides an important framework for violating taboos. However, this is a clearly transformed place that firstly becomes a sugar factory and then turns into a center of a touristic tour. The railway and the airport are at the center of the modernization that is not so intense in this place. Therefore, the island symbolically encounters a new occupation. The director is considerably against this modernization; because its effects are dramatic. For example, Toriko who is petrified while waiting for her beloved, Uma who still drifts towards the unknown in the ocean, Nekichi whose body is thrown deep into the ocean, seems to be the

bearer of this untouchable sin. Heroes cannot reach beyond, it seems like an infinite distance, but culture is the main creator of this *distance/intransivity*; the people of this culture. These anonymous people punish with their masks and leave the hero in an infinite abyss. In the end, suppression mechanisms work, not desire. Thus, with this spatial distinction, the film places the beyond in a sacred platform and island in an unholy space. Since the mythological regeneration and recurrence does not occur, the blessing of the island does not occur. In this respect, when the explanations about the formation of myths highlighted by Campbell (1994) are taken into consideration through the film, it is possible to say that the film as a modern myth reflects the reaction of Japanese people against post-war destruction and modernization. As emphasized by Desser, the film reflects student protests of the 1960s and their reactions to political events such as the US occupation of the Okinawa and Vietnam War (1988, p.88). Although the film strongly influences nostalgia, expects an "island", which has got rid of the invasion and the negative effects of modernization, it dramatically admits that this cannot occur. The island is simply and mechanically "modernized" but that does not make the islanders "modern". The director also seems to offer a call to the original unity of the mythological past rather than requesting them to be interested in modernity. It is possible that this is part of the modernity in a way. The demystification of daily life or disenchantment of the world leads people to the search for a more original integrity, the desire to be a part of Great Chain of Being (Taylor, 2011, pp.10-11). As a result, the discourse of the film indicates the melancholy of the impossibility of the call for this kind of existence.

Taboo / Violation

The reason of the dramatic conflict of the film or the curse on the Futori family is the violations of the taboos that family members did periodically. Nekichi appears to be the person who violates the biggest taboo in the family. Nekichi lost his wife after Second World War and started to "become wild" as stated by villagers. First of all, Nekichi molested many women on the island, and he lastly had an affair with his own sister Uma. Therefore, it is possible to mention that he was punished for the violation of incest; he had sex with his sister like the god Izanagi. Moreover, it is seen that Yamamori also had desires for her daughter, and he violated the taboo in order to satisfy her daughter, who was rejected by her husband and her needs were not met, when Nekichi spoke to her father. Finally, it is understood that Nekichi's sister Toriko, who seems disabled, had desires about her brother Kametaro, and desired to have sex with him. In this respect, it is possible to state that the family has incest tendencies as a "natural instinct".

To Freud "human culture is above all the suppression of instincts" (Touraine, 2002, p. 143). The various divine "signs" that occurs after the capture of Nekichi and Uma's sexual affair (the 1947 malaria epidemic, the big earthquake, and the red big phallic rock dragged right into the middle of the paddy field on the island) are interpreted as a symbol of the anger of the gods against this sin. Due to the violation of incest, a special sanction and a purification ritual are implemented to Nekichi and his family. First of all, his sister Uma is assigned to the service of Ritsugen Ryu who is the manager of the island. The people of the island do not contact the Futori family unless there is a special necessity. Consequently, the taboo of touch and fear of contagion emerges. At last, the big red rock dragged to the middle of the paddy field must be displaced. The rock, which must be displaced, includes a mandatory recall or the punishment to remember. Nekichi remembers his sin with the cyclicalness of his work and the necessity of doing it every day.

However, it has become the center of one of the most significant actions on the island so far. Rock means that the Japanese modernization is detached from its roots.

With the displacement of the rock, the "purifying" ritual will end, and Nekichi and his family will again become a normal member of the society on the island. This is particularly the main desire of grandfather Yamamori. Nekichi and Uma sometimes meet secretly, but Yamamori tortures his son with a stick in front of the whole community when this violation occurs. This ritual, atonement, which seems to be endless for years, now becomes a part of daily life for Nekichi. In fact, he does not approach that process only with a moral duty, he *likes* it. At this stage, Nekichi's behavior means not only as atonement, torment and ritual, but as facing the consequences of the wasted action in the story of Sisyphus. Nekichi has burdened all the atonement of the act of desire in which he is imposed, and internalized this endless and vain act. He seems to use this act as a cover for his own violation, his legitimacy. This offers a partially supportive perspective of what Cassirer said for desire. The conscious in desire is the first and primitive form of the ability to shape the being (2005, p.232). Nekichi also creates his existence by desiring, burdens the atonement of desire, and tries to legitimize his own violation by the rock he tries to displace. Engineer Kariya, who is a candidate for his son-in-law, soon shows this similar tendency. Although Kariya does not want to let Toriko get closer to him at the beginning, he cannot endure at the end and is fascinated with the general tendencies of the island. He is in the service of Nekichi, who is now his father-in-law, and helps him as a groom. He makes an intense effort to displace the rock together with his father-in-law. Consequently, it is possible to say that the task of 'displacing the rock' has an attraction particularly for men, creates a closed place where they deal with it, and therefore they create a masculine space for them by getting rid of the pressures of the society. The rock, which means the difference between the underworld and the real world, as in the Japanese creation myth, states the distinction between the instincts and reality. According to Jung a person can unconsciously identify himself with a person or an object (2009, p. 24). The rock is suitable for this definition. Nekichi, and then the groom try to displace the rock and drop it with intense effort.

The developments on the island sometimes affect the Futori family positively and negatively. Ryu wants to change the old form of the island and rebuilds it as a new, more modern, group based on community (*gemainschaft*) relationships. In order to accomplish this, a sugar factory was established on the island in the past with his efforts, but this factory, which needs a lot of water, is now inoperable. When this solution was found to have no economic and rational aspect, it was not a return to the old days but a touristic formula was produced that would present the island as a Japanese nostalgia for modern citizens. The authentic structure of the island is presented to tourists by the construction of the railway on the island. With the presentation of the island as a touristic center, the drama of the Futori family has reached the peak. Uma and Nekichi take their motor boats that do not work well and set off on journey to mythical and fertile lands. They want to build a new island, a new mythic land, and restart creation just like in the creation myth. The islanders, who follow them including Nekichi's own son, catch them. After beating and killing Nekichi, they leave Uma alone in the middle of the sea with the fate of the wind, like the 'leech child' (*Hiruko*). Although the creation myth of the island was blocked, mythology was renewed differently for Nekichi and Uma. They have become a mythological hero. There is no way for them to find the lost mythical land. Even though the myth, which created the island, provided equalization, a similarity in them, the desire for modern social life, the motive to kill a father, and a series of misunderstandings that did not allow

disobeying the norm, placed them at the center of a dramatic, tragic event. Thus, the myth cannot occur and the rebirth of the island and the return to the old days is impossible. Instead of this, the failed attempt becomes a myth. Although the island cannot be the center of a new, mythic resurrection according to the director, this failure keeps it as an object of desire. The success of myths –even when they portray an unsuccessful event– is that they open the subject up for discussion in an ahistorical field and constantly feed the desire for its emergence.

Civilized / Uncivilized (Monster)

In the film, the violation of taboo constitutes a framework that leads to binary opposition of *civilized/uncivilized* in terms of violating social norms or the basic principles of civilization according to Freud's view (2004, p.174-175). Being human is based on internalizing the basic suppression mechanisms of civilization and to maintain it. Freud regards neurosis as the product of conflict between impulsive demands and formal or social demands (Morris, 2004, p. 249). In this context, the pursuit of desires produces a devastating effect when these desires eliminate the rule of external marriage and the ban of incest in the most basic way. In the opinion of the islanders, the Futori family is a 'monster'. They, especially Nekichi, commit the sin of incest; members of the family somehow present a mentally problematic or neurotic appearance. When Nekichi is punished, he expresses his sins as follows:

> *Forgive me; I will not see Uma again! I will not take off my shackles and pray to the gods! I will never sail to sea! I will not hunt with gunpowder! I will not do anything! I will do whatever you say! I beg! Forgive me!*

However, the director seems to be in favor of the Futori family. Almost all kinds of disasters that happen to the island are interpreted with the sin of this family and the family functions as a scapegoat in this aspect. The sin of all islanders is purified on them. For example, the Futori family has become a taboo because of their sin; they are untouchable as violators of taboo. In contrast to this, the islanders gather around the Futori family home in the evening and try to make Toriko dance. Yet another islander tries to abuse Toriko. Many people hunt secretly, but they are not caught like Nekichi. Those who find the periodic festival meaningless are punished. Consequently, there is no sign that the islanders are truly purified and sinless. The director presents this hypocrisy to the audience in fairly critical tone and creates the feeling that the Futori family is actually a victim.

Campbell explains why the myth is tragic that it is associated with the consciousness of the hero (1994, p.424). The statement of Campbell is particularly valid for Uma. Nekichi is still hopeful during this journey on the ocean; he is innocent, atones for his sin and becomes ready and excited to travel to the mythical land.

We are alone. There is no one other than us. We are together. We have a lot to do, Uma. There is no one on the Holy Island. We will work, only the two of us. We plow and plant the land, catch fish and stock up on crops. Aren't we just like gods? We will be the founders of the Holy Island.

Uma loses her initial hope and excitement during the journey and knows or feels that the society will prey on their mind. Eventually, her expectation comes true. This punishment mostly hides behind the mask of the society free of individuality or the masks of the gods. The hero Nekichi faces his tragedy, shouts, tries to express the injustice done to him, but no one seems to have any intention to hear these screams. What makes the event more tragic is that Kametaro also wears a mask on his face and goes to kill his father. He kills his father, serves to help the islanders to tie his aunt or his prospective mother to the boat and to leave her to the fate of the wind in the ocean. In a sense, the film appears to gain dramatic empathy where the failure occurs.

Mechanization and modernization without modernity, which become without the formation of an intellectual atmosphere suitable for modernity, production style and relations or the system of social relations, is presented in the film with nothingness, a loss, a relentless nostalgic content. On the other hand, the unrealizable form of the myth enables its continuation with the cultural pain and guilt. Kametaro's self-reflective activity makes him question some incidents. He constantly feels guilty about the death of his father and his role in the release of his aunt / future mother to the ocean relentlessly. Seeing the ghost of his sister, Toriko, also becomes meaningful as a sign that allows this trauma and repression to come into consciousness. The non-renewability of the primary action is provided with an obsession, sinfulness and the guilt that exactly create this idea of non-renewability. Some of the islanders blame Kametero 'monstrosity' or nonhuman:

- If so, then? Ryu's dog? Or the engineer's dog? In any case, you are not human.

- I am human. I will join the next Dongama Festival.

Consequently, he participated in the festival, moved away from nature, took control of his desires and became human by wearing the mask of the community and getting ready to do everything. He goes to Tokyo; it seems as if he got rid of the island of Kurage, his daily problems and atonement. On the other hand, he cannot get rid of the emotional crisis he experienced in this period. He killed his father; thinks what it means. As a result, when he is confirmed to be "human", a big break or a certain degree of neurosis manifests itself. This is a reflection of the conflict that Freud pointed out. Civilization is possible by the suppression of instincts, but when suppression occurs, neurotic diseases will also come after the individual. A similar view is defended by Jung: civilization's huge benefits have caused huge losses as much as we cannot imagine (2009, p.51). Although the transition from nature to culture, accepting taboo as a social norm and a basis of civilization brings the individual closer to the notion of civilization, it seems that there is no possibility to compensate for this loss. This depression, which Kametaro experienced, is considerably represented in his personality as something belonging to the Japanese national spirit. This first railway of the island refers to the major negative aspects of this modernization just as Japanese modernization states its symbolic progress in a railway opened in 1872. As a result, the origin of the idea of

modernity is not a new and rational viewpoint about the universe that derives from the individual herself, but it emerges from outside as a forced modernization, an occupation and a dramatic lament for this occupation.

Traditional / Modern

Film establishes an opposition between traditional and modern (Japan) through mythology and its individual reflections. Traditional culture has a structure that produces rice, is majorly introverted, and regulatory norms are shaped directly according to the needs and interests of the community rather than the individual. Trust in the gods is essential, and the balanced relationship between these gods that exist almost everywhere and the people maintains the existence of the community. On the other hand, modern Japan has begun to produce sugar cane instead of rice under the leadership of Ryu. The islanders, who have water problems due to unsuitable products with the nature of the island, try to fight drought caused by these problems and asks for help from traditional gods. The geographical and climatic structure, which is not suitable for the sugar factory, soon transforms the island, which represents Japan, into a touristic destination mandatorily. The airport and the railroad are built with the community's hypocrisy in the background, and the elegy of expectation and despair is lamented in the name of Toriko. The interest shown by tourists to the images of this mythology is limited in astonishment. The tragedy behind the image does not attract them. As a weekend event, they take a glance at the 'virgin' and 'untouched' past. Post-war Japanese modernization actually differs from the representations in the film, at least in terms of technology and industrialization. Productivity increased and the economy grew in this era. The fact that the film's presentation of the island is different and bad from real-life modernization is about the feeling and effects of this modernization. Just as the adventure of a traditional individual continues in a dramatic atmosphere in a modernized world, under the same conditions, Japanese national values and culture will begin to present an atmosphere of "show" in which only some rituals are implemented. The disturbing element is the feeling that the soul of Japanese national identity is lost.

The director majorly makes the feeling of nostalgia about traditional Japan visible. Although old and traditional are sometimes ironically defined with adjectives such as "wild" and "barbarian", it is seen that modernity does not bring happiness and peace, and the creation myth cannot be renewed and repeated compared to present time. Moreover, it is not possible to create a new creation myth as well as the incidents that happened to Nekichi and Uma, and to make a history where the past is resurrected. The director seems to encounter the result and accept it, but what remains at the end of the film is the feeling that something is *wrong*. Even though the relationship between Nekichi and Uma is incest, the audience is prompted to approach with sympathy for their escape and innocent love. Likewise, Kametaro's self-reflection keeps the feeling that something is wrong.

> *I was shattered … I was troubled there. I wanted to think about what my father did, what I did and what you did. I was in a very difficult situation. Why did I kill my own father?*

The audience knows that the intervention against Nekichi and Uma is unfair; there is no murder committed for their punishment. According to the prominent discourse in the film, Nekichi has atoned for these crimes

even though he has committed various crimes. The community and Ryu violate taboos secretly and exploit the members of the Futori family whenever possible. They use the family like a scapegoat and externalize their sins through them. The processes of industrialization and transformation into a touristic center on the island are harmful. The transition to sugar production and fabrication is not suitable for the climate and geographical structure of the island. Its presentation as a touristic destination has gained meaning as a country tourism that form is more prominent than content. Therefore, the effort of modernization for the director has completely failed and what appears to be an achievement consists of an illusion. In this regard, Kametaro's depression means the depression of Japanese modernization. "Modernity has lost in nothingness" (Touraine, 2002, p.15). "As the anthropologists have found, one of the most common forms of mental disorder in primitive man is the surprising separation of consciousness (if we speak scientifically; dissociation), what they call 'soul loss" as stated by Jung (2009, p. 23). The disabled man in the film, who tells the myth in a scene, loses his soul and goes searching for it. This soul loss, which has a metaphorical meaning for the film, again depicts the situation of modern Japan.

Discussion and Conclusion

When this general anti-modernist, nostalgic and traditionalist attitude of the film is handled, it is seen that the most significant problem is in the understanding of modernity. The discourse of the film indicates the perspective of modernization without modernity. Elements such as the implementation of specific technical tools, the establishment of the factory, the construction of the airport, a touristic destination belong to the external aspects of modernization. The idea of modernity has many aspects such as technique, communication, culture, and economy. Consequently, this notion of modernity and its implementation seems to be an invalid and incomplete factor considering the developments without these elements. The engineer Kariya's (as stated by Desser, "bears a strong resemblance to Imamura himself" (1988, p.86) continuous calculation presents a rationality that discusses the sources and productivity of the island in the terms of profitability, but this completely demonstrates an instrumental rationality perspective. In other words, modernity, in its visible form in the film, is a process that is majorly tried to be established by a pragmatic mind and to be also implemented to reach economic goals. The inner dynamics are completely ambiguous; there are no criteria such as individuality, entrepreneurship, and objectivity in the understanding of the nature and society by mind; there is no interest in them. There is also no modern individual trying to find his own way in a demystified world; on the contrary to external and mandatory developments, a communitarian behavior is dominant which acts majorly with communal (*Gemainschaft*) feelings and survives on the island. The desperation and nothingness left after the demystified nature are emphasized instead of an innovation in modernity's understanding of nature and its effort to make objective explanations. Desperation, passiveness and emotional reaction are highlighted instead of critical opposition to the destruction that is caused by full adaptation to unsuitable production sources and is majorly tried to be transformed into a show center.

The film depicts an attempt to revive a tradition and its failure. As a result, the hero tries to atone for his sin, and regains what he deserves through this atonement. His desire to revive his myth and creation, and his escape is responded with a devastating reaction. He finds himself at the center of a murder that he is not

responsible for, and is brutally murdered by those who wear masks on his face, including his own son. His wife is tied by their hands and left in the endless ocean. Their treatment is like a 'leech child' as Hiruko.

The Profound Desires of the Gods opens to discuss Japanese modernization through taboo and its violation accompanied by a particular creation myth. In this phase, it is concluded that the film occurs in a mood of tragedy in terms of the emotional environment it creates. The loneliness of Kametaro and the loss of his entire family is a dramatic phenomenon that needs to be thought. The reason for Kametaro's self-reflection is the lack of modern manifestation of the myth. The functions of the myth have not been realized as categorized by Campbell. Kamatero was unable to position himself somewhere at the psychological, cosmological and mystical levels, and fell into the abyss. Although he appears to be integrated with collectivism and mesocosmos, this is completely formal. There is no one to guide and understand him. The Weberian world he lives in is a world that loses its magic, and he does not know how to contact larger phenomena in this phase.

Although the film presents a nostalgic perspective on the past, it seems to accomplish its goal in terms of the quality of the emotional impact it tries to create. Because the myth does not occur and renew, it creates an opportunity for its renewal. Nekichi and Uma's last journey is difficult, but it is a journey that is *desired* to be accomplished for the audience. The relationship between siblings, which considered naïve, seems to provide an opportunity to renew the creation myth from ancient times. On the other hand, Toriko turned into a rock in her eternal waiting and became a touristic and sad image. A community, which is free from harmonious evil and harmful pioneers, gains meaning the acceptance to the community with atonement instead of the principle of exclusion and return to the path of the ancestors, as the conditions prepared for the resurrection of the myth. Therefore, it is possible to say that the film tries to revive the myth with the tragic ending. In other words, the lack of emotion and the absence of catharsis that the film influences, provide the audience an emotional impulse to revive the myth. Consequently, the death of the characters in the film is their birth; the guarantee of their *rebirth*. Their disappearance and reappearance are their possibility to emerge out there. Return to the origin, which involves in the discourse of the film, the reconstruction of the old Japanese nostalgia steps up the tempo thanks to the transition to this different form. It is because the failure of the creation myth or the dissonance in its repetition accomplished with this notion of failure. Thus, the protagonist's transition to mythos, eternity, and his infinite existence in his son's mind transform the mythology into a perpetual element. The film attempts to complete this myth of returning to origin by making it incomplete; creates desire for it by marking its incompleteness. The pursuit of a myth belonged to another period, trying to experience the virtues of another period as today's requirements, is a 'defect' and tragicomic, and it becomes a nostalgia with its intense pursuit. For this reason, nostalgia can be said to revive the ethos and to sustain it in the myth of another time, and the film is a typical example of this.

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