

Making Hachiro Yoshida

Screen(Re)writing: Adaptation Practice as a Creative Discourse

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Philosophy in Creative Writing

Department of Film and Creative Writing
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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Birmingham and is the original product and sole effort of the author.

No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award other than the one it is initially intended, i.e. Doctor of Philosophy in the School of English, Drama, and Creative Studies of the University of Birmingham.

This thesis has not been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed hereby are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Hongyi (Paris) Wang

January, 2024

Abstract

This research project aims to show that adaptation practice can be seen as a creative discourse capable of reinventing and improving the original text through active dialogical responses. The term 'screen(re)writing' highlights the necessity of active rewriting in forming a screenplay designed for film adaptation based on a true story or literary sources. Through investigating two case studies, my original screenplay incorporated their essential elements to serve my specific artistic intentions and narrative styles in the scriptwriting process. Using this screenplay as a medium of criticism, my study contributes to this field of creative adaptation while answering the research question – how can one establish a new type of authorship as an adapter-auteur by treating adaptation as a creative discourse?

In chapter one, I will explain the development of adaptation studies through the 'tiresome debates of fidelity' (Andrew, 1984). Although it is justified, the issue of fidelity proves to be outdated and quite problematic. Instead, contemporary scholars have redefined adaptation study, and the purpose of adaptation goes beyond merely being faithful or accurate. For revisionists, adaptation becomes active rewriting to 'keep the texts alive' (Leitch, 2013), and one must know toward what ends the adaption is designed (Cartmell, 2012). That is why it is crucial to examine two main aspects: 1) Why do numerous adaptations purposefully alter the prior texts? And how did talented directors transcend their source material?

Chapter Two analyses how Francis Ford Coppola skilfully handles the parallel narratives with dual-protagonist arcs in *The Godfather Part II* (1974). By interweaving two storylines together, Coppola mirrors Vito's life with Michael's, with their separate stories reflecting on one another emotionally and thematically. While the first movie remains a faithful adaptation of Mario Puzo's novel, Part II sees Coppola shifting his stance on fidelity, treating his cinematic work as equal to literature. This sequel not only matches the original but also transcends it, showcasing Coppola's mastery as an auteur adapter and his ability to reinvent the Godfather franchise.

Chapter three analyses Hayao Miyazaki's creative adaptation of *The Wind Rises* (2013). In this film, Miyazaki engages in the most challenging intertextual dialogues of his career. Through rewriting multiple sources, Miyazaki adapts the source text creatively, reinventing this wartime biopic drama with his fictional re-imagination to reflect his own dreams, ideology and moral dilemmas. In the first part, we will explore what makes *The Wind Rises* a fictional memoir of Miyazaki and, arguably, his autofiction. In the second part, we will explore how Miyazaki addresses the issues and challenges of representing a perpetrator in an antiwar film. A deeper analysis of Miyazaki's representation of perpetrators in his antiwar films and his rewriting of fictional autobiography is crucial for incorporating those elements into my screenplay.

Chapter four, Making Hachiro Yoshida, delves into the creative writing process of the original script, building upon the discussions from earlier chapters. The chapter begins with a project description and introduces the primary source, archive pictures, and relevant studies of student soldiers and postwar Japanese scholars in their antiwar movements. In the second half, it examines various aspects, including Miyazaki's representations of perpetrators in trauma cinema, the adaptation of Coppola's parallel storylines for the same protagonist at different life stages, social-political commentary spanning prewar and postwar Japan, and the use of a true story to recreate a fictional autobiography.

MAKING HACHIRO YOSHIDA

Written by

Hongyi (Paris) Wang

Based on diaries of Hachiro Sasaki, multiple student-soldiers
And scholarly works of Takashi Yoshida

Address: [REDACTED]
Phone Number: [REDACTED]

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAWN

The deluxe suite is cloaked in shadows, with only a pre-dawn light seeping through the heavy curtains.

The room exudes an air of untouched cleanness, with its sheets tightly tucked as if awaiting the arrival of a guest who never came.

But soon, we find a bearded man in grey suit -- NAKAO TASUKI (41) drenched in sweat, lying wakefully on the floor.

His face, a chiaroscuro portrait: one side basked in soft and warm light, the other shrouded in enigmatic darkness, lending an air of mystery to his countenance.

EXT. TOKYO CITY - SUNSET

The soaring, half-constructed Tokyo Tower is in scaffolding. As the sun ascends, this budding landmark begins to emerge as a symbol of Tokyo's revival in the postwar era.

INT. NAKAO'S DELUXE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Nakao gets off the bed and draws the curtain. The skyline of Tokyo appears orange in the faint morning light. Nakao opens the window, taking a long, refreshing breath.

EXT. TASUKI'S RESIDENCE - LATER

ICHIKA TASUKI is preparing breakfast with the windows open.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Then the phone RINGS. We hear children in the background, then fast footsteps approaching.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Nakao, in a bath robe, has a sip of coffee, holding the line. A breakfast tray rests in front of him.

ICHIKA (V.O.)

Hello?

NAKAO

Good morning, Ichika.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
(raises her volume)
Morning!

NAKAO
How did the school meeting go?

ICHIKA (V.O.)
Taro did great on his exams.

NAKAO
Good. What about the girls?

ICHIKA (V.O.)
(softly)
They already miss you, me too.

NAKAO
Should I just catch a train back?

ICHIKA
Don't be silly.

Nakao throws a glance at the city outside.

NAKAO
I'm being serious. Perhaps coming
to Tokyo was a mistake after all.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
(beat)
If that's what you want, my dear.

Nakao holds his breath, waiting for her response.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
You can come back and try to forget
all of this.

Nakao listens calmly, knowing that's impossible.

ICHIKA
(beat)
Or you can find Hachi--

NAKAO
(interrupts)
I don't prioritise him over our
family.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
I believe you...

Nakao nods, tension easing as his gaze lands on the wardrobe.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
 (softly)
Isn't Hachiro family too?

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Nakao walks out of the lobby in a well-fitted business suit.
A taxi enters our view, ready to pick him up.

 ICHIKA (V.O.)
 You don't always have to ask family
 for help; they'll always be there
 for you. It's never too late.

INT. TAXI - CONINUOUS

Nakao silently watches the bustling streets of post-war Tokyo
as they drive past the headquarter of the Allied Powers.

A pause in the traffic allows us to have a glimpse of Japan's
post-war, democratic changes.

EXT. GINZA, TOKYO - CONTINUOUS

Renowned Hollywood icons like Audrey Hepburn and James Dean
graced screens across Ginza, while Coca-Cola and McDonald's
advertisements nearly cover every visible billboard.

However, under such modern prosperity, starved streetwalkers
in kimonos offer themselves to the young American soldiers,
who seem to be their regular customers already.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Nakao looks away and rolls up his car window.

Like other vehicles, the driver waits patiently behind a
rickshaw that blocks the traffic. His passenger also notices
this congestion.

 NAKAO
 (a bit impatiently)
 Just signal them to move.

No response. It's like the driver ignoring him deliberately.

The traffic doesn't move until the rickshaw finally sets off,
carrying two US army officers in sunglasses.

EXT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN BUILDING - LATER

Nakao gets out of the car in discomfort. Before he leaves,

TAXI DRIVER
Mister, sorry about the traffic.

Nakao gives him a small nod. Adjusting his tie, he looks up. Following his gaze --

The full scale of this government building is revealed. Yet, his gaze eventually rests on the Allied flags.

INT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Nakao approaches the front desk, relaying his request to the receptionist, who nods and swiftly dials an office number.

Looking around, Nakao is surprised to see two US officers from earlier smoking in the lounge area. The Japanese staff, however, choose to overlook the non-smoking sign.

The lift doors open. A Japanese official hurries to the American in uniforms and apologises repeatedly.

RECEPTION LADY
Sir, Mr Yamazaki is ready to see
you at his office.

Nakao shows no sympathy to that poor official. He just nods to the lady and takes their lift first.

INT. HALLWAY, TOKYO METROPOLITAN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Wearing his visitor card, Nakao enjoys the empty lift by himself during the peak hour until the door opens, revealing a dozen of government officials waiting outside.

After an awkward stare, Nakao quickly slides his way out. Holding the card, Nakao looks up, searching. People walk past him, throwing a strange glance.

NAKAO
(murmurs to himself)
Deputy Minister...Higher Education
Bureau...Deputy Minister...

Finally, he locates the office number on the board.

EXT. DEPUTY MINISTER OFFICE - LATER

When Nakao approaches, the secretary who has been waiting for him gently knocks on the door. It opens to find

TANAKA YAMAZAKI (43), a sharp-looking man with very expansive taste, stands up from his desk and puts on a welcoming smile. His office lacks nearly any Japanese elements.

TANAKA
My dearest friend, long time no
see, how I missed you.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka prepares for drink while Nakao eyes the photo frames on the wall. We see an old graduation photo.

TANAKA
It's a shame I couldn't attend your
wedding. I hope you got my card.

Nakao takes a deliberate look at Tanaka's pictures with some wealthy and powerful faces on the wall.

NAKAO
It's fine, you're a busy man. I see
you made yourself some new friends.
(then, unexpectedly)
Have those wartime politicians
returned already?

TANAKA
(good-humouredly)
I wouldn't say 'returned'. Whisky?

Nakao takes the drink from Tanaka, a hint of provocation.

NAKAO
How about a toast to the Allies?

Nakao observes Tanaka closely.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
For pursuing Japan's war
responsibility?

Tanaka holds his gaze, then slowly changes direction.

TANAKA
And building a democratic society.
Please take a seat.

Nakao sits opposite of Tanaka who maintains an appearance. Then, he indicates the name plate on the desk.

NAKAO
Congratulations, Deputy Minister.
It looks like you've made quite a
name for yourself as a politician.

TANAKA
(smiles)
I could say the same about your
thriving business in Osaka.

But Nakao doesn't raise his glass. Instead, he leans forward and finally addresses the elephant in the room.

NAKAO
What about Hachiro?

TANAKA
Yes, of course, Hachiro. He used to
be the most promising among us.

NAKAO
Oh really? I heard he is one of the
youngest professors in the history
of our university.

TANAKA
It doesn't change the fact that he
constantly draws unwanted attention
to himself. You know this better
than anyone, Nakao.

NAKAO
Is that why we're here?

Tanaka nods, relieved that they're on the same page finally.

TANAKA
How do I put this? Hachiro has
been actively reflecting on Japan's
wartimes atrocities. And he is
quite good at appealing students,
teachers, and even ordinary
citizens.

Nakao listens, but doesn't react. Tanaka observes and adjusts his approach.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
Of course, I have no objection with
peaceful demonstrations. But things
have changed with the Cold War.

NAKAO
I'm sure they have.

Nakao watches as Tanaka stands and motions to a world map.

TANAKA
Purging the wartime leaders are no longer the primary concerns. The Americans are now going after the communists and their sympathizers in public and private sectors. They call it *the Red Purge*.

Nakao barely shows any interest.

NAKAO
So what? And what does any of this have to do with Hachiro?

A sudden realization dawns on Nakao, and both men lower their voices. An awkward silence fills the space between them.

TANAKA
Our friend is publicly advocating many sensitive ideas that will get him into some serious trouble.
(observing him)
Or should we just watch and let him commit career suicide?

NAKAO
No offense, you called me here and somehow think I can convince him?

Tanaka LIGHTS a cigarette and holds it with purpose.

TANAKA
We have to try. Both of us. Just ask him if it's really wise to show too much sympathy for the Chinese sufferings when the American are losing the Korean war?

NAKAO
Good point. And if it doesn't work?

TANAKA
Then appeal to his heart, Nakao. As his closet and one true friend.

NAKAO
(bitterly)
After all those years, I am not so sure anymore.

A heavy blow of smoke, covering his hard, emotionless face.

EXT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN BUILDING - LATER

Nakao sits on steps by the exit, ignoring people passing by. Then he drops the cigarette and waves to stop a taxi.

NAKAO

Tokyo Imperial University please.

The driver frowns.

THE DRIVER

You must have been away for quite some time.

NAKAO

Really, what gave it away?

THE DRIVER

They don't use that name anymore, mister. For obvious reason.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka watches by the window as Nakao's taxi moves off.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO - LATER

Nakao stands by Seimon front gate, gazing at the famous Ginkgo Pathway. The ground is carpeted with a bright, golden fan-shaped leaves. Nakao closes his eyes, as the clock tower RINGS in the distance.

INT. LECTURE HALL, UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO - DAY

Nakao finds a lonely male sitting at the lecture table, silhouetted by the projector like a stone statue.

We catch a short glance of his profile. HACHIRO YOSHIDA (41) sculpted with fine features, is holding a small bottle of prescribed medication in his shaky right grip.

Meanwhile, his left hand remains steady and composed, as he nears the end of a lengthy letter adorned with exquisite Chinese calligraphy.

In the background, we hear approaching footsteps. The lecture hall suddenly comes to light.

TEACHING ASSISTANT (O.S.)
 Prof Yoshida?

The noises grow louder as students enter the lecture hall. The room is fully lit, brutally revealing Hachiro's stolid and furrowed face.

Nakao moves closer as if he barely recognises Hachiro.

Hachiro puts on his glasses, forcing himself to maintain an appearance. He TURNS to the classroom, revealing a different look, composed but authoritative.

His students are surprisingly quiet and well-disciplined as their eccentric professor dives right into the lecture.

Nakao takes a seat in the back row like the rest of them.

At the corner, Hachiro's assistant DIMS the light, projecting a series of archival pictures onto the screen.

HACHIRO YOSHIDA
 (loud and clear)
 After eight years of occupation,
 many believe that Japan can finally
 move on as a normal, new country.

CLICK. The photograph captures a vibrant peace demonstration, dated to Japan's independence day in 1952. We POP CLOSE on the image, the slogans echoing to life as if chanted by the crowd themselves.

HACHIRO
 Others remember. Our national
 shame, war responsibility --
 (slowly)
 And arguably the darkest page of
 our modern history.

Looking back, Hachiro hears the peace demonstration encircle him as if the protesters are present in this room. Then, in an unexpectedly darker tone:

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
 December, 1937. While 'the Butchery
 Marked Capture of Nanking' was
 wildly and outrageously reported by
 the New York Times and many others -

A CLICK. Newspaper headlines around the world were enraged by the Japanese atrocities: 'Invaders Despoil Cringing Nanking' 'Eye-Witness Tells Horror Seen in Fall of Nanking'. However, the Japan's papers only celebrated the triumphal capture of China's capital city.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
At home, the massacre in Nanking
DID NOT exist in Japanese official
government account or newspaper at
that time. Can anyone tell me why?

A few hands raise in the back. Hachiro pushes his glasses up,
looking at other students who fall into uneasy silence.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
Truth is, outside this classroom,
the memory of Nanking remains
largely outside the common
awareness in our society today.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tanaka walks down the corridor toward Hachiro's lecture hall,
moving slowly and smoothly.

He gets close enough, listens attentively, and ENTERS as
quietly as possible to find --

INT. THE LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

The lights are dimmed, hiding Tanaka in the dark.

HACHIRO
Show, don't tell. I believe the
same principle applies to history.
Before I proceed, I must warn that
what I'm about to show may be too
graphic for some viewers.

Some hesitate and rise from their seats. Hachiro waits,
giving them a understanding nod.

The newsreel starts playing. Hachiro positions himself in
the centre, casting a silhouette against flickering lights
and shadows.

A female student watches close-mouthed as the Nanking horror
scenes reflect off her ignorant face.

ON THE SCREEN,

A young Japanese officer, not much older than Hachiro's grad
students, DRAWS and HOLDS his long sword in the samurai
style. He's surrounded by curious onlookers,

Kneeling before him are a row of pregnant women who are
begging desperately. But the footage appears SOUNDLESS.

Many students shield their eyes in terror.

The newsreel is cut to the Yangtze river, sparing them the nightmarish scenes. The footage is black and white, so it's impossible to tell how red the river has turned.

Tanaka stands soberly in the back, hidden in darkness.

Hachio cuts to a new scene: hundreds of helpless captives herd for safety in a narrow street toward a LARGE PIT.

Hachiro scans the classroom, but there is no eye-contact, except Tanaka's. No word exchange between them, their silent stare LINGERS there.

Slowly, Hachiro averts his gaze and stops the screening manually. The lights come back on.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
(finishing bluntly)
What's matter then is still
relevant now. Can we move forward
as a new country without
confronting our past? That's the
question we need to ask ourselves.
(beat)
Write two thousands words on your
perspective. See you all on Monday.

Tanaka applauds softly at the back of the entrance.

INT. LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

As students file out of the classroom, Nakao stays behind, taking his time to absorb the reality of the new situation.

Tanaka notices Nakao, determines his course of action, and walks past him. Nakao remains oblivious as Tanaka makes a beeline for Hachiro, who is in the middle of packing.

TANAKA
(warmly)
What an impressive lecture. I can
see you developed a strong interest
in Second Sino-Japanese War.

Hachiro puts everything in the briefcase, indifferently:

HACHIRO
Generally speaking, yes.

TANAKA

I read your recent paper. *'The military mobilisation of the cherry blossom in Japanese culture.'* I found it fascinating.

No response.

TANAKA (CONT'D)

(raises his volume)

Don't you agree, Nakao?

Hachiro looks stunned as Nakao stands up from the backrow. It seems almost surreal to see his face.

HACHIRO

(as if being betrayed)

Even you Nakao?

NAKAO

Listen, I --

TANAKA

Perhaps I owe him an apology.

Tanaka interrupts, cutting between him and Hachiro.

TANAKA (CONT'D)

(to Hachiro)

I must admit that I had considered using him to persuade you, but it feels wrong after we met. No offense, Nakao. It has to be me.

It silences Nakao, who suddenly looks like a fool. Hachiro and Tanaka's eyes are locked together. Their stares are provoking and confrontational.

TANAKA (CONT'D)

(then, slowly)

That's right. We're not done yet.

Hachiro steps back, instead of giving him the satisfaction.

HACHIRO

Yes, we are.

Nakao looks at both of them completely lost.

TANAKA

If you think so. Just like you think that somehow our lives can be normal and *move forward* like everyone else.

Hachiro's face falls. Tanaka smirks in small triumph.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
Look at the three of us, finally
reunited after nearly twenty years.

NAKAO
For what?

TANAKA
(obsessively)
To prove you're wrong, Hachiro. The
golden, genius boy. It's something
you've never even considered.

Nakao could only stare. The colour and tone age in the
background, implying the same location but a different time.

INT. OLD LECTURE HALL - DAY

A CHYRON tells us: 1935 (prewar), Tokyo Imperial University.

All students buried their heads in the entry examination.
Then young Hachiro (18) first RAISES his hand.

From his dreamy eyes, we see a different Hachiro. Confident,
charming, and trouble-free.

Tanaka (19) sits in the first row as Hachiro walks past him.
Intrigued, Tanaka glances up.

The principal himself takes Hachiro's exam sheet, giving him
a positive nod to leave.

EXT. TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - LATER

At the front gate we meet CHIYO YOSHIDA - Hachiro's mom (41)
and his younger, reclusive brother TADAO YOSHIDA (15).

Tadao waves shyly at Hachiro, who quickly returns the gesture
with a smile.

TADAO
How did you do on the test?

Before Hachiro can reply,

CHIYO
You must be hungry. What do you
want for dinner?

HACHIRO
 (warmly)
 Mother, I am fine.

Chiyo wears a rewarding smile.

CHIYO
 Let's go to Shibuya.

HACHIRO
 To pray for my entry exam?

CHIYO
 Tadao and I already have. Tonight
 we celebrate.

TADAO
 Please, brother. You deserve this.

Hachiro nods and allows himself a small smile.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM, SHIBUYA STATION - AFTERNOON

They follow the fast-moving crowd, emerging from the terminal. Wearing a plum silk kimono, Chiyo appears to be in a jubilant mood with both of her handsome sons.

INT. TOKYO ART MUSEUM - LATER

Chiyo, her fingers gently intertwined with Hachiro's arm, wanders through the dimly lit corridors of the Medieval Christian section. Then his attention drifts, drawn to

His brother who is at the corner, staring at an anonymous painting alone for ages. Intrigued, Hachiro approaches Tadao, having a closer look.

HACHIRO
 You have a peculiar eye for
 exquisite art, brother.

TADAO
 (a bit timidly)
 Do you know 'To be with nature is a
 form of art'?

HACHIRO
 Yes, Tadao. My favourite poet
 believes 'we reflect ourselves in
 this land of cherry blossoms.'

TADAO
That sounds beautiful.

Tadao smiles. Hachiro notices his brother holding a pamphlet from the Kabuki Theatre. The show appears to be tonight.

HACHIRO
How about we go to watch *the Persians* tonight?

TADAO
But this evening supposed to be about your celebration --

Hachiro pats his back, giving him an approving smile. We hear the rich, soprano's voice from --

INT. KABUKI THEATER, TOKYO - NIGHT

NARRATOR
*You see how insolence once open
into flowers, produced fields ripe
with calamity; and reaps a harvest-
home sorrow.*

We find the Yoshida among other cultural elites in evening attire. Their eyes are fixed on the grand stage and mesmerised by this feast of classic symphony.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
*The war ends with disastrous defeat
of the Persian King whose barbaric
empire finally crumbles...*

The room is lit. Tadao jumps upright, applauding enthusiastically. Followed by Chiyo in an elegant manner. Hachiro, however, appears lost in thought deeply.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Perched atop on overlooking hill, the Yoshida residence is located in a wealthy suburb of Tokyo, where the snow-capped peak of distant Mt. Fuji is visible on the horizon.

A black Cadillac enters the front yard, parking under the canopy of the abundant blossoms.

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro closes the door. Sitting on the bed, he opens the diary called *The Testament of Youth*.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
*I had a strange moment during the
 play. Unlike people, I can't
 imagine myself being euphoric over
 Japan's victories in the past wars.*

Hachiro deliberates and starts writing down his thoughts.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
*Especially when I am aware that
 there are evil hands trying to
 reach for the pure hearts and souls
 of this country....*

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCE - DAY

Shafts of light penetrate the branches in the early morning mist, entering --

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the daytime, it looks like a small library where Hachiro reads and writes intensively, living the life of a wealthy scholar surrounded by walls of books, exotic souvenirs, and delicate items.

TADAO (O.S.)
 We're late for your test result.

It barely concerns Hachiro who is so focused on his thought.

HACHIRO
 Could you do me a favour? Once I am
 finished, you can inform me about
 the test results.

Hachiro swiftly redirects his focus, finding himself walking along a tranquil country road with an elderly companion.

INT. HACHIRO'S IMAGINARY REALM - CONTINUOUS

SUNG TZU
 (in Chinese)
 The wind is rising.

Hachiro nods, following him like a humble student.

SUNG TZU (CONT'D)
 All the battles we have seen in
 human history, yet you still ask me
 the same question -- why wars?

Hachiro kowtows, displaying the proper respect.

HACHIRO

You're the greatest author in the writing of wars. You understand its nature better than anyone else.

Sung Tzu says nothing. Instead,

SUNG TZU

The country you're living in is in the shadow of a military government, correct?

HACHIRO

Yes, sir. I've sought answers in all your writing. Is there... a way to end all wars?

After a beat,

SUNG TZU

Simple: the death of humanity.

Speechless, Hachiro falls into a dead, uneasy silence.

SUNG TZU (CONT'D)

(bluntly)

Go back to your life, young man. Wars are for politicians and soldiers. Not students.

Closing his eyes as if Hachiro never feels so powerless.

EXT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Hachiro opens the door to find his mom and brother waiting in the hallway. Neither of them can conceal their excitement.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's a beautifully appointed dinner table, with the mixture of western cuisine and Japanese home-made food, at the centre of the table rests a thanksgiving turkey.

In the absence of their father, Chiyo sits at the host seat, uniting this family spiritually.

CHIYO

I called your father. We're all so proud of you.

HACHIRO
 (lightly)
 Except the fact that he's not
 celebrating with us.

She covers it with a smile.

CHIYO
 Let's pray before dinner.

Except Chiyo, neither of them are Christians, yet Hachiro, in a gesture of unity, tenderly holds his mother's hand.

CHIYO (CONT'D)
 (to everyone)
 Close your eyes. We thank you,
 Lord, for all you give; the food we
 eat, the lives we live, please
 continue to direct my boys to your -

We watch the Yoshida family, comfortably seated in a spacious dining room, protected by faith and wealth, giving us a lovely image of modern prosperity

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chiyo is buttoning Hachiro's new suit in front of a mirror. She finishes with a satisfactory smile. Then from the corner,

TADAO
 (softly)
 Only you can achieve such success.

HACHIRO
 Nonsense, Tadao.

Hachiro brings him closer almost like a fatherly figure.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
 Don't stop dreaming. One day you
 will accomplish more.

Tadao looks inspired. Hachiro smiles but only lightly.

EXT. YASUDA AUDITORIUM, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - DAY

Against the moving crowds, Hachiro is admiring Uchida's towering masterpiece, the great hall of Yasuda Auditorium with its architecture splendour.

NAKAO (O.S.)
'The most prestigious gateway for
the chosen elites and future
leaders of this country.'

Hachiro turns to see younger Nakao, who comes to a stop and
maintains a noticeable distance between them.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
Let me guess, you made it to the
top 5?

HACHIRO
We made it together, Nakao.

NAKAO
Stop working so hard, otherwise I
won't be able to catch up.

They close the distance and laugh abruptly. Meanwhile, Tanaka
tries to get Hachiro's attention.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
Hachiro, this is my new friend:
Tanaka Yamazaki.

Tanaka reaches out as if he's been waiting for this moment.

TANAKA
(over-politely)
It's an honour to finally meet you,
Hachiro-kun.

NAKAO
(explaining)
He's a big fan of your works and
other accomplishments.

Hachiro shakes his head. Instead, he treats Tanaka equally.

HACHIRO
Please, my friend, I might learn a
great deal from you too.

Deeply touched, Tanaka holds his hand, almost preciously.

TANAKA
Hachiro-kun, I will be worthy of
your friendship.

INT. YASUDA AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The Spring commencement for the undergraduate has now officially started. The PRINCIPAL ABE (65), bathed in warm ceiling light and framed by heavy velvet curtains, reaches for the lectern, addressing to the class of 1935.

Hachiro sits between his friends. However, Tanaka's eyes keep wandering, more interested in his new friend than what's happening on the stage.

TANAKA

Look at those freshers. They probably think they're gonna change the world. Maybe you can, Hachiro.

PRINCIPAL ABE

As a scholar, I would like you to consider the ultimate value of your academic study. As a philosopher, I believe there are different critiques on what constitutes the success of an individual.

Hachiro begins to listen attentively.

PRINCIPAL ABE (CONT'D)

We know so little about this world and ourselves. What is the purpose of our life, the nature of our mind, individual happiness, social and moral responsibility? I believe there are great discoveries to be made by each one of you.

Principal Abe scans them, searching for those young minds. Among them, he recognises Hachiro.

PRINCIPAL ABE (CONT'D)

Throughout my career, I saw only a handful of students who realised and answered for 'a greater course.' Perhaps, you will be one of the chosen ones.

Captivated, Hachiro is fully absorbed in his words.

EXT. DORMITORY - LATER

Tanaka insists on walking Hachiro to his dormitory.

TANAKA

I'll see you and Nakao later.

INT. DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro registers, signs his name, and gets his room key from the reception.

As he walks past the living room, Hachiro hears the chord practicing a new dormitory song.

SENIOR STUDENTS (O.S.)
*'Right Wind blows in the Capital
 Sky, if you feel the breath of
 Spring. Let's all be mindful, the
 cherry spirit is dying...'*

Drawn, Hachiro gets closer, peering through the Shoji doors.

SENIOR STUDENT
*'As the dew disappears in the
 rising sun, we shall not hesitate
 to wave the flag of liberalism for
 the beloved country.'*

The song is beautifully finished. Hachiro applauds when no one can hear him. Observing, SATOSHI MATSUDA (22), a tall and mature senior student, walks into our foreground.

SATOSHI
 Do you like our new dormitory song?

Hachiro slowly turns, regarding this Senpai respectfully:

HACHIRO
 Very inspiring. Every word has
 grace and...purpose.

Satoshi already likes him, welcoming this bright young man.

SATOSHI
 Pleasure to meet you, my name is
 Satoshi Matsuda.

HACHIRO
 Hachiro. Hachiro Yoshida.

Hachiro shakes his hand. Satoshi feels his strength.

SATOSHI
 Are you a man of sport, Hachiro
 Yoshida?

HACHIRO
 Not an athlete, but my brother and
 I are quite fond of climbing.

Satoshi raises his eyebrow without expecting this.

SATOSHI

Bravo. Would you be interested if I
invited you to our climbing club?

Flattered, Hachiro nods positively, taking this invitation as
merely a social courtesy.

INT. HACHIRO'S ROOM, DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

The desk is well-organised. Hachiro sits by the window,
reading an English novel. Nakao knocks on the door.

HACHIRO

(without looking back)

'A man can only be himself so long
as he is alone.'

Bewildered, Tanaka looks at Nakao who explains it jokingly.

NAKAO

That is his way of telling us to
piss off. Sorry that we've ruined
your reading.

Hachiro closes the book. Nakao shows no guilt or remorse.

HACHIRO

I bet you are. To what do I owe
this night visit, gentlemen?

Nakao smiles.

NAKAO

We haven't properly celebrated yet.

Nakao indicates Tanaka who is scanning Hachiro's bookshelves,
impressed by his collection.

TANAKA

I've found a perfect place to
celebrate our first night together.

EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT

On the giant poster of *Triumph des Willen*, it's a German film
directed by Leni Riefenstahl.

A suspicious look spreads on Hachiro's face.

INT. THEATRE - LATER

They walk into the cinema. Most viewers are men. They notice three people in the front rows are wearing military uniforms.

The lights are dimmed, Hachiro sits down, a bit uneasy.

As the projector begins to roll, the screen fades into white, followed by the film title: *Triumph of the Will*.

Hachiro leans forward, recognising the shooting location.

It's in Nuremberg. The symbol of National Socialism POPS into the grey screen, as the texts show sequentially:

'19 months after the start of Germany's rebirth, Adolf Hitler flew once again to Nuremberg to hold a military display...'

EXT. THEATRE - LATER

Three of them walk out in different states of mind. While Nakao looks obviously bored, Tanaka eagerly awaits Hachiro's comments.

TANAKA

What did you think, Hachiro?

HACHIRO

(irritated)

I wish you had told me that it was goddamn Nazi propaganda.

TANAKA

(speechless)

I thought you like --

HACHIRO

This funny moustached Austrian dictator? Or how he brainwashed the people at the Congress rally? This whole Nazi evil ideology appals me.

NAKAO

(ease the tension)

Why don't we just talk about girls?

Tanaka regards Hachiro differently, then it follows a serious but detrimental question,

TANAKA

Do you believe we're any different from them? That Japan is free from military corruption?

Hachiro's face falls, stunned by Tanaka's political stance.

HACHIRO
Are you pro-militarism or what?

Tanaka doesn't answer that question.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
(deeply disappointed)
Don't invite me to movies anymore.

Nakao, who is caught between their argument, looks struggled.
Hachiro regards Nakao shortly, leaving by himself.

INT. DORMITORY - LATER

Satoshi turns off the light. Through the window, he catches a figure walking back alone. Looking closer, it's Hachiro.

INT. HACHIRO'S ROOM, DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro opens his diary, silently reading his own words.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
My fear is that I am losing sight
of this country's future.
(sighs)
What if Tanaka is right? The
militarists are reaching our young
people and their pure souls?

Turning the page, Hachiro reflects upon an unpleasant idea.

INT. HALLWAY, DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

Without realising, Hachiro addresses his deep concern openly:

HACHIRO
Everything we value in this liberal
environment will be threatened...

Satoshi listens, observing Hachiro with a stronger interest.

INT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

HACHIRO (V.O.)
Brother, you have a beautiful
vision.

Sitting on the bed, Tadao is drawing the utopian Tokyo city.

INT. HACHIRO'S DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

Satoshi watches silently as Hachiro closes his diary.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
But I lied. This land of cherry
blossom no longer reflects our
best, and your dream couldn't be
farther from our political reality.

Giving him some time then, Satoshi knocks gently.

SATOSHI
(smiles)
Guess we both have trouble
sleeping.

Hachiro turns to find his Senpai by the doorframe.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
May I come in, or is it a bad time?

HACHIRO
Of course, please take a seat.

Satoshi approaches and pretends to just notice his diary.

SATOSHI
I wish I had a good habit of
writing like you. It's like having
a mirror in your mind that reflects
so many aspects of yourself.

Hachiro considers. Satoshi suddenly changes the subject.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
I was trying to find you earlier.

HACHIRO
Me, is everything okay?

SATOSHI
Rest assured, Hachiro. Remember our
mountain-climbing club? I'd like to
invite you for a bus trip tomorrow.

HACHIRO
(beat)
May I ask where to?

SATOSHI
(mysteriously)
Somewhere to clear your mind and
open your thoughts. Interested?

HACHIRO
 (thinking)
 How can I say no.

SATOSHI
 Good. We are leaving at 7. See you
 in the morning.

Satoshi wishes him good night, gently closing the door.

INT. BUS - DAY

Sitting at the back, Hachiro starts writing his diary. As he looks through the window, we're captivated by the timeless, snowy mountain of Fuji. It stands as a majestic sentinel on the horizon, an enduring symbol of nature and culture.

INT. DORMITORY - DAY

Nakao knocks on Hachiro's door many times but no response.

TANAKA
 I did what you asked, but I told
 you that he won't see us.

Tanaka averts his glaze, hiding his face from Nakao.

EXT. MISTY FOREST - LATER

Azure winged-magpies are warbling in the pine tree while a fawn darts between bushes. A serene tableau of natural beauty untouched by human hands. Not so far away, we find --

A climbing club hiking through the shaft of light. Satoshi is leading their way,

HACHIRO
 Just imagine all the beauty this
 nature has to offer.

SATOSHI
 Well said, Hachiro. Oh, we're here.

Satoshi sees the mark he left on the large pine tree. They stop and gather at the edge of the forest.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
 Prepare yourself for a sight that
 inspired one of our greatest poets.

Theatrically, he moves the branches and leaves, revealing:

The sublime grandeur of Mt. Fuji veiled in the misty sky.
Gentle breeze wafts through the glimmering mountain lake that
is bathed in the bright orange sunlight.

Hachiro is immediately mesmerised by the view where the
ethereal radiance dances on the mountain lake. Slowly, a look
of pure ecstasy floats on his face.

EXT. HIGH PEAK, MT. FUJI - LATER

Hachiro emerges from the rocky mountain road. He's the first
one who manages to reach the campsite.

He inhales a deep, sweet breath. We find him on an open flat
space, overlooking the picturesque landscape. The purple
skyline creates a surreal theatricality.

Hachiro looks back as Satoshi motions toward him, glancing
over this natural grandiosity.

SATOSHI

What a beautiful country. Look --

Satoshi indicates mountain cherries in blossom. Captivated by
such scenery, Hachiro murmurs heartfully:

HACHIRO

(poetically)

Pink Sakura, spring of life; pink
sakura, beauty of youth; pink
sakura, your splendor in deep snow;
pink sakura, my purity of soul.

SATOSHI

Splendid, Hachiro. This is what
Miyazawa would call the true
Japanese aesthetic.

(off Hachiro's look)

Yeah, I was an enthusiastic reader
of his works too.

HACHIRO

I find my voice in his writing,
especially the quest for beauty in
nature and human souls.

Hachiro steps closer, culminating his emotion at the peak.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)

Look, the blast is gonna scatter
the fragile petals. They will fall
and leave nothing behind.

SATOSHI

Inevitably. Yet it's the fleeting
quality of spring that gives youth
its meaning, isn't it?

A gentle waft, causing a small rainfall of cherry petals.

HACHIRO

We might be young, but by no means
expendable.

EXT. TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - DAY

A military vehicle comes into our frame. Two short but stern
looking officers step out of the car, carrying long swords.

MILITARY OFFICER 1#

After you, Colonel.

(harshly to a student)

You, go and inform your principal
about my arrival.

INT. YASUDA AUDITORIUM - LATER

Along with other professors, Principal Abe waits at the front
of the Great Hall of Yasuda Auditorium.

People make way for the fast walking officers followed by
newly recruited student soldiers.

Among the crowd, Tanaka, who is attracted by the colonel's
power, watches him get greeted by principal Abe. They shake
hands and the colonel takes the lead.

Tanaka, instead of chasing the powerful like everyone else,
just stands there and contemplates. Lost in reverie, his eyes
are getting sharper.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - HOURS LATER

Hachiro walks slowly, lost in deep thought. A breeze wafts
through the field. A butterfly lands on the branch, closes
its wings, matching the shape of a blossom.

Hachiro could only stare at such a peaceful scene. As it
flies, the path becomes clearer.

HACHIRO (V.O.)

I have a new vision for this
country, which I want to embrace
wholeheartedly.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

SATOSHI (V.O.)

Tell me.

Hachiro looks over, Mt. Fuji is shrouded by golden clouds.
Its peak shimmering like a holy temple.

EXT. TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - LATER

Satoshi shakes Hachiro, who slowly wakes up from a short nap.

From Hachiro's POV - Satoshi looks petrified.

SATOSHI

Wake up, Hachiro. Wake up. We have
a really serious problem.

Hachiro rubs his eyes. Following Satoshi, he gets off the
bus and immediately astonished by the sight of

A MILITARY UNIT is having a touring exhibition on campus.

While many students gather, a military officer addresses
them, extolling the virtues of patriotism.

MILITARY OFFICIER

(invitingly)

At the level of the individual, the
flower represents the gorgeous but
very brief life. At the collective
level, it becomes a dominant symbol
of the Japanese people as a whole.

Hachiro stands there, speechless. Someone grabs his shoulder.

NAKAO

We've been looking for you
everywhere. Where have you been?

Tanaka appears. They quickly exchange a glance, then:

HACHIRO

What are they doing here?

TANAKA

Spreading the state propaganda.

NAKAO

(lightly)

It won't work. The students here
possess the most liberal and
critical minds.

TANAKA

Really? I must say what they're
doing is very clever.

Hachiro begins to notice something truly disturbing: the
state has adapted their favourite symbol of CHERRY BLOSSOM in
promulgating their military ideology.

MILITARY OFFICIER

(passionately)

The aesthetic of the flower
embodies the soul of Japanese,
representing the purity of life and
self-fulfilment...

Hachiro recoils as real terror spreads on his face.

MILITARY OFFICIER (CONT'D)

This spiritual quality enables
young men to face the end without
fear, much like the graceful
falling of flower petals.

INT. FIRST HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Like every student, Tadao receives a new textbook. He turns
the pages to find --

It's full of stories of war heroes, portraying positive
images of the battles, such as the heroic battle and great
triumph over Russia in the early century.

Lines that foster young people's desire to fight are
highlighted: 'We must move forward to fight for the eternal
peace in a Greater Asia'

Tadao appears confused as the teacher begins a lesson that
seems to be centred around the emperor and implemented by the
government.

TEACHER

(announcing)

Today, we will be learning how to
properly salute the national flag,
sing the military anthem, and
celebrates the emperor's role in
our society. Repeat after me...

EXT. YASUDA AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro pushes through the crowd of students.

Through this symbolic gateway, they are drawn to a militarised flower trope. Yet, Hachiro can stop no one, a truly heartbreaking sight to behold.

HACHIRO

This is an invasion of our campus.

Tanaka just watches silently as Hachiro hyperventilates.

SATOSHI

All the symbols, and they chose to mobilise the cherry blossom?!

Flabbergasted,

HACHIRO

It cannot be.

Tanaka approaches Hachiro. No words exchange between them. They face each other and their eyes are fully locked.

TANAKA

I know it's difficult to admit, but I have just proven that you are wrong about this country.

Provoked, Hachiro steps forward. Their faces are closer now.

HACHIRO

Japan is not fully corrupted yet, and I still believe in the inherent goodness of the Japanese people.

Tanaka interjects, his tone tinged with resignation.

TANAKA

I respect your ideal of utopian society, I really do. But THIS is our political reality.

Nakao tries to speak, but neither of them pays him attention.

TANAKA (CONT'D)

Take a good look at what happened here. No schools are exempt from their influences.

The words hang in the air.

HACHIRO

(beat)

Principal Abe is right about discovering a greater course.

We juxtapose the image of his brother Tadao, along with all those young, impressible minds in this country.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
To fight for a New Japan free from
right-wing militarism.

Stunned by his declaration, Satoshi and Nakao just stare.

From Tanaka's emotionless look.

DISSOLVE INTO:

TANAKA's steady gaze as his face **ages** with wrinkles.

TANAKA YAMAZAKI(V.O.)
(in an older voice)
I see the appeal of throwing
yourself into a noble cause, but
you are wrong about this country.

We're in --

INT. LOCAL IZAKAYA, TOKYO (1950S) - AFTERNOON

Hachiro, Nakao, and Tanaka are the only guests in a small ramen bar with a single row of seats.

The chef, Mr. TAGOMI (72), who is also the owner, is busy preparing their food in the kitchen.

Tanaka starts by emptying his drink.

HACHIRO
What do you want, Mr Yamazaki?

TANAKA
Are we not on the first name basis
anymore?

HACHIRO
I'd rather keep this professional.

Tanaka forces a smile, maintaining a polite attitude.

NAKAO
(questioning Tanaka)
Why did you lie to both of us?

TANAKA
I had a very good reason.

HACHIRO

Let him speak, Nakao. I'd love to hear him justify what he does in the government.

Nakao looks bewildered as he struggles to keep pace with the conversation, the tension between them only intensifies.

TANAKA

I'm glad you mention that, Hachiro. I'm the one who is actually doing something to make a change.

HACHIRO

(raises his volume)

Make a change? When this country finally embraces the democratic changes, you are trying to reverse it into what?

Hardening his voice,

TANAKA

I simply adapt to the new political reality, like I always have.

HACHIRO

So did the right-wing militarists during WWII.

TANAKA

(almost loses his temper)

Be careful what you are trying to imply, Dr Yoshida.

Nakao hits the table, interrupting their argument.

NAKAO

Both of you, calm the hell down.

It works. Tanaka clears his throat, coming to his senses.

TANAKA

Nakao is right. I'm not here to fight you. If we can't be friends, the least we can have is a civilised conversation.

Hachiro exhales, pouring himself his first drink.

TANAKA (CONT'D)

(softened)

Hachiro, I've always thought of you as a remarkable human being.

(MORE)

TANAKA (CONT'D)
But you are making a life-changing
mistake, much like you did before.

Nakao reacts as Tanaka takes out a list.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
This is a government file enlisting
all the Red scholars.

Tanaka finds the name: Hachiro Yoshida.

At the bottom, however, the paper remains unsigned.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
It doesn't have to be like this,
Hachir -- Dr Yoshida.

Nakao stares at both of them in total bewilderment.

NAKAO
What is going on between you two?

Hachiro says nothing. Tanaka gets up, putting on his jacket.

TANAKA
Don't make a decision now. Sleep on
it and call me tomorrow.
(then earnestly)
Please stay with him, Nakao.

Two men in suits open the door. They've been waiting by a
black official state car. The rain is pouring outside. Tanaka
closes the door, leaving Nakao who is lost for words.

HACHIRO
Two Tonkotsu Ramen, Mr Tagomi. And
some rice wine please.

Hachiro turns to Nakao, pulling their chairs closer together.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
He's right. Stay with me, Nakao,
let's get drunk and unwind tonight.

INT. TANAKA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka sits in the back, wiping his face with a warm towel.

TANAKA
Have you delivered the envelope?

ASSISTANT

Yes, deputy minister. Are we dropping you home?

Tanaka watches rain streaming down from the window.

TANAKA

Not yet.

INT. LOCAL IZAKAYA - CONTINUOUS

Nakao watches Hachiro finish his fifth glass.

NAKAO

She is fine. We have three children now. What about you?

HACHIRO

(beat)

I believe it's best for people like me not to get married. Plus, the thought of marriage has never crossed my mind.

NAKAO

There is nothing wrong with that.

Hachiro smiles in appreciation.

NAKAO (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

You must be hopeless with girls.

They both chuckle. The owner brings them two rice wines. When they stop, Nakao locks his gaze on Hachiro.

NAKAO (CONT'D)

(earnestly)

Seriously, what's going on between you and Tanaka? And please I don't need you to lie to me as well.

Hachiro stops pretending when Nakao looks him in the eyes.

HACHIRO

I apologise for dragging you into this meaningless conflict.

NAKAO

I came to you, Hachiro, not the another way around. There is nothing for you to apologise for.

Hachiro slowly pours Nakao another drink.

HACHIRO

I've often imagined scenarios where
my actions might lead to a
different fate for all of us.

(beat)

But I am tired of living in the
reimagination of the past.

NAKAO

Believe it or not, there's no such
thing as getting used to what you
experienced.

HACHIRO

Well said, let's drink to that.

Nakao just watches his friend empty both of their drinks.

NAKAO

Honestly, I thought you had already
left this city ages ago.

HACHIRO

Really, why?

NAKAO

I was told by *someone* that you were
offered a position at Rutgers
University in New Jersey.

HACHIRO

(flatly)

What else did he tell you?

Nakao looks at his friend, barely recognising him.

NAKAO

And I was told that you wanted to
move to China at some point.

Hachiro makes no response. Instead,

HACHIRO

Forget about my job. Tell me,
Nakao. What matters to you the most
right now?

NAKAO

(bluntly)

Beside this conflict with Tanaka,
your mental well-being.

HACHIRO
(nods)
Thank you for being honest.

NAKAO
You need a way out of whatever this
is, Hachiro. How could you stay
here after all of this?

Nakao stops. Deep sorrow in his eyes filled with confusion.

HACHIRO
(resolutely)
I feel obligated. I feel a
staggering amount of obligation.

NAKAO
Why?

Hachiro pauses, struggling to explain.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
(beat)
Forget it. It's not a big ideal.

They both force a smile at each other.

INT. LOCAL IZAKAYA - NIGHT

Mr. Tagomi is clearing the plates. A happier look than usual.

EXT. STREET - LATER

The rain stops. Hachiro is walking Nakao to his hotel.

HACHIRO
(admittedly)
I wish you had come to see me
earlier.

NAKAO
Me too.

HACHIRO
How long will you stay in Tokyo?

NAKAO
(pretends)
Depends, I still have a family.

Hachiro forces a sad smile. Nakao looks rather tired today.

They stop at a crossroad, facing different directions.

HACHIRO
(abruptly)
Let's have brunch tomorrow at mine.
A small token of my appreciation.

Nakao nods, accepting his invitation.

NAKAO
You better cook properly, Hachiro.

They both can't stop laughing.

EXT. HALLWAY, HACHIRO'S APARTMENT - LATER

While unlocking his door, Hachiro notices something stuck in the threshold. He bends over, picking up-

The letter envelope from Tanaka's office. He holds it, curious. Then the door is gently closed from behind.

INT. HACHIRO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro switches on the light. The room looks pristine, minimalist, and well-organised. Calligraphy scrolls are hung on the walls, the only decoration found.

He takes off his socks, put his shoes nicely on the shelf, and hangs his jacket. We follow Hachiro to the kitchen.

Filling up the kettle, he starts boiling water. While he waits, Hachiro reaches for the envelope. Opening it, Hachiro raises his eyebrows.

TANAKA (V.O.)
'Despite our political differences,
I deeply admire your academic
accomplishments. As a laymen of
history, I wish to collaborate on
my first paper with you for the
Journal of Historical Science.'

It comes with a paper outline.

The title reads: *'No room for political neutrality after the Korean War. Why Japan can't atone her past and reconcile with Communist China?'*

Hachiro reads it again, still unable to believe what he just read. Both of his hands tremble uncontrollably.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - EARLIER

Tanaka sits behind a typewriter, writing fast and sprightly.

TANAKA (V.O.)
 'Sharing a by-line with me will
 clear their doubts about you and
 hopefully reconcile most of our
 misconceptions about each other. So
 I urge you take it into
 consideration. Sincerely, Tanaka.'

Then a gentle knock on the door.

TANAKA
 Almost done.

Tanaka looks quite satisfied with his work. He plucks out the paper and folds it nicely into a special envelope.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nakao lies on the sofa, noticing a missed call. Hesitating, he picks up the phone and starts dialling back.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
 Hello.

NAKAO
 Hello, my dear. I'm really glad to
 hear your voice.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
 Me too.

NAKAO
 It feels like my longest day ever.

Looking at the direction of Hachiro's apartment,

NAKAO (CONT'D)
 I met him today, Hachiro Yoshida.

A long beat, she waits for him to continue.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
 And?

NAKAO
 (taking a deep breath)
 It's complicated. What happened to
 him isn't normal. Hachiro used to
 be the sanest men I know.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
Used to?

 NAKAO
 (in frustration)
Ichika, the truth is I feel quite
helpless in this situation. I don't
know how to help him or solve
whatever is happening between them.

 ICHIKA (V.O.)
 (positively)
You always figure something out.
Take your time.

 NAKAO
 (beat)
Time doesn't heal this matter. But
thank you, have a good night.

Nakao hangs up the phone. The glass reflects the kitchen of --

INT. HACHIRO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro takes off his glasses, rubbing his head indecisively.

 HACHIRO
So this is your idea of a truce? My
complete submission?

The clock hand points at twelve midnight.

 HACHIRO (V.O.)
 (in a much younger voice)
I understand my greater course now.
To create an ideal New Japan and
completely destroy militarism.

We see a similar photograph of his student life from Tokyo Imperial University. Hachiro sits at the centre while Nakao and Tanaka are standing proudly at his sides.

 NAKAO (V.O.)
I never cared about the politics.
It only seems to destroy our
friendship.

JUMP CUT as the hand on the clock points to one now.

Hachiro stands up abruptly and walks out of the frame. We stay there until he brings back a TYPEWRITER, half a dozen notebooks, and a huge pack of paper.

The water in the kettle is reheating.

Hachiro sits in front of the typewriter. Focused and determined, he places Tanaka's article in front of him as if a jarring reminder of personal and national shame.

HACHIRO

This is my answer, Tanaka.

On THE TITLE PAGE, he starts TYPING thoughtfully: *'To forget a holocaust is to Kill Twice: How Japan struggles to confront the Ghosts of Nanking...'*

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tanaka leans on the chair, facing the full-length window with no desire to sleep tonight. In the drawer, he takes out the same photograph and doesn't move his eyes from Hachiro.

INT. NAKAO'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Eyed-closed, Nakao lies wakefully on the bed. Changing sides.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - DAWN

Tanaka considers Hachiro's name on the red scholars list.

INT. HACHIRO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

We hear the 'clickety-clack' sound of the typewriter. Hachiro finally stops typing, scanning through the paper.

The warm light GLIMMERS on his face. Then, it is followed by a satisfied smile. However, it only lasts for a few seconds, then our focus shifts back to --

Tanaka's letter and the government document on the table. Hachiro appears to be having second thoughts.

INT. HACHIRO'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A sharp knife chops the spring onion, cutting the tofu into pretty small cubes. A broth spoon drops them gently into the well-balanced miso soup.

The scrambled eggs are sizzling on the pan, forming the shape of two Tamagoyaki omelettes.

The doorbell RINGS.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nakao sits at the breakfast table. Hachiro has made a lot of effort to impress him.

As Hachiro prepares the coffee, Nakao fiddles with the dial, patiently waiting for the TV to tune in. After a few moments, the screen flickers to life, displaying a baseball match.

Nakao flips through channels until he settles on the NHK broadcast for the early news, but all that appears on the screen is a muted image of people talking.

NAKAO

Are you sure it's working?

Hachiro gently bashes the TV. The picture disappears, only giving sound this time.

TV (O.S.)

*Over 9 millions members, the
national union strikes attempt to
paralyse the government...*

They listen attentively. Faces close to the screen. Suddenly, The picture becomes visible.

Nakao leans forward abruptly as if he recognises a familiar face on the screen.

NAKAO

You must be fucking kidding me.

Tanaka positions himself by the Americans on the screen.

TANAKA (ON TV)

*With the Allied forces, we must
prevent any socialist takeover of
Japan. The decision will be made
regarding if their legal right will
be granted by the Bill of Rights.*

Hachiro stares in disbelief, completely speechless.

Astonished, Nakao indicates a male figure by Tanaka's side.

NAKAO

Wait a second, I know him. This guy
is a suspect of War Crime during
the Tokyo Trial.

Hachiro stands up, hiding his gloomy face from us.

NAKAO (CONT'D)

Is this even real? I thought the Allied Purge order had removed the military regime and all their supporters.

Nakao's body stiffens, as if Tanaka from the television is talking to him directly:

TANAKA (ON TV)

Times have changed. I told you, Nakao. The Americans are radically changing their policy.

HACHIRO

(accepting the fact)

Now they're restoring the old-time political elites to eliminate their present communist enemy, Nakao.

NAKAO

So that is what he's been trying to tell us this whole time?

Hachiro looks weary. Nakao turns off the television.

HACHIRO

(weakly)

Tanaka always has a keen sense of it, you know? The brutal reality of international politics.

Nakao has a quick glance of the room to find Tanaka's letter, the typewriter, and the first draft of Hachiro's article.

NAKAO

Forget about him. You didn't get much sleep last night, did you?

Hachiro gulps down the coffee, deciding to make a move.

HACHIRO

I need to make a call. The leader of JTU, he has to know.

EXT. JAPAN TEACHER'S UNION BUILDING - DAY

We see the largest union headquarter in post-war Tokyo city.

INT. SATOSHI MASTUDA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

HACHIRO (V.O.)
Trust me on this, Senpai. We simply
CAN NOT wait.

Satoshi leans forward, hearing the sincerity in his voice.

SATOSHI
Alright. Let's talk in person.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
In the meantime, how fast could you
organise a full-scale protest?

After a long beat, Satoshi ponders, deciding to believe him.

SATOSHI
Tomorrow.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
(surprised)
Really? You can make that happen?

SATOSHI
Not without your help. I am waiting
for you at the office.

Satoshi hangs up the phone, rethinking his decision.

He gets up from the chair, pulls open the door, and motions
toward his staff.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
Listen, everyone. We got a new plan
for the protest tomorrow.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - DAY

Tanaka opens the door to find two American officers waiting.

TANAKA
(in flawless English)
Please come in, gentlemen.

They shake hands with a professional demeanour, yet there is
an underlying familiarity between them. Tanaka gives his
assistant a subtle nod of acknowledgment.

INT. SATOSHI'S MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro, accompanied by Nakao, arrives just on time. They are greeted by the key staff in the meeting room.

SATOSHI
(to Hachiro)
I think I can speak for all of us
that we trust your judgement.

Satoshi takes a step back to position Hachiro in the middle.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
(then)
My central question is: what is the
angle of this antiwar protest?

The JTU staff nod, shifting their attention to Hachiro who contemplates, facing the chalkboard.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
(to Nakao, whispers)
Just watch. Your friend is really
good at this.

Without explanation, Hachiro nails down to a SINGLE WORD.

They lean forward. Satoshi gets closer to the chalkboard. The kanji reads '*Remilitarisation*.'

They look at each other, impressed by Hachiro's keen insight.

Except Nakao, who looks increasingly concerned but powerless in face of this intense confrontation.

INT. SATOSHI'S OFFICE - LATER

Hachiro stands alone by the window after the meeting. Nakao waits for people to leave the room. Then he approaches Hachiro, offering him a cigarette.

HACHIRO
I'm not sure you are allowed to
smoke in here.

NAKAO
But I feel you need it.

Hachiro studies Nakao's strange attitude.

HACHIRO
Do you disapprove of this?

NAKAO
Smoking, or?

Hachiro indicates the JTU staff meeting outside the office.
Satoshi is giving the order for tomorrow.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell me you're a
member of the JTU? I thought it's
not your type of thing anymore.

HACHIRO
(beat)
We started as a progressive group
of antiwar teachers, scholars,
university professors, you name it.
Initially, we joined together and
discussed post-war Japan's future.
Then we saw the opportunity to
liberate teachers from the state.

Nakao regards Hachiro, trying to hide his concern.

NAKAO
(adjusts his breathing)
So you throw yourself into this
union movement? For what purpose?

HACHIRO
Unify educators and students all
around the country, so we can band
together and fight against the
ministry of education if necessary.

Nakao shakes his head, confronting Hachiro forthrightly.

NAKAO
No, you don't get my question. Why
ARE YOU doing this?

Hachiro stops, glancing up at his friend, then

HACHIRO
(mechanically)
We have to complete the democratic
movement. Whatever the cost.

Nakao sighs deeply, for his friend is not telling the truth.

NAKAO
I don't care about their cause; I
care about your life.

HACHIRO
(resignedly)
It is out of my control anyway.

NAKAO
Is it? Are you sure Satoshi doesn't
Satoshi pulls open the door, bringing them the good news.

SATOSHI
It's all settled, gentlemen.
Tomorrow morning at 10 am. General
Headquarters of Allied Powers. What
do you think?

Nakao looks at Hachiro, who barely hesitates.

HACHIRO
(firmly)
I want it to be the Tokyo
Metropolitan building. East wing,
facing Deputy Minister's office.

Nakao reacts to that, throwing a sideways glance at Hachiro.
The office of Tanaka?

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
I wrote a paper last night. Maybe
it's useful for you.

Hachiro takes it out of the briefcase.

SATOSHI
What is it?

Satoshi has a quick glance and reads a few pages. Realising:

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
It's perfect for our antiwar
movement. Let me print it out and
we will protest at both buildings.

HACHIRO
As you wish.

SATOSHI
(smiles)
We'll take care of it. Go home and
rest. You never sleep properly.

INT. HACHIRO'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nakao opens the door, walking Hachiro to his apartment.

NAKAO

I'll leave your key on the table.

Nakao closes the door as Hachiro STAGGERS, almost stumbles halfway back to the bedroom. Exhausted, Hachiro FALLS heavily on the bed, face in the pillow.

NAKAO (CONT'D)

About your choice of location.

Hachiro has nodded off already. Nakao drops his voice, covering him with a large blanket. Only in sleep Hachiro appears to be trouble-free.

NAKAO (CONT'D)

Sorry, Hachiro, but I disapprove.

Gently, Nakao closes the bedroom door.

FADE INTO:

STUDENT HACHIRO,

Disturbed, he opens his eyes, unable to fall asleep.

INT. HACHIRO'S DORIMITORY - NIGHT

Hachiro closes the window and adjusts the lamp on the desk. Then he reaches for Marx and Engel's revolution work.

INT. CHASHITU, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

The elegantly designed tearoom shows Chiyo's exquisite taste, featuring clean lines and floral arrangements.

She leans on a wooden table, reading a King James Bible. The shoji door slides open. Chiyo glances up at

Her maid YUI (23). She bends her knees, moving smoothly into Chiyo's private tearoom with a letter tray.

INT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - LATER

A gentle knock. Yui enters the room while Tadao is drawing.

TADAO

May I have some coffee, please?

She smiles genially, holding Hachiro's letter. Tadao DROPS his board in excitement.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
*Dear brother, how's school? Even if
 you've seen something abnormal, I
 hope that you can freely devote
 yourself into whatever you are
 pursuing. Nothing lasts forever,
 this military regime may be already
 gone when you graduate...*

INT. CHASHITU, DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo reads another letter from Hachiro thoughtfully.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
 (in a much heavier tone)
*Mom, I had a life-shattering vision
 in which militarism would
 ultimately lead our country into a
 path of total destruction.*

Chiyo presses her lips tightly. Her eyes were grave.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
*The real horror is the thought that
 all hope is lost and we must accept
 the fate stoically. The higher
 degree of consciousness, the
 greater my pain...*

Chiyo puts down his self-tormented letter as if it aches her heart to read any further. Instead, she starts to pray:

CHIYO
 Please, mighty Lord. Help my son,
 give him your wisdom, and navigate
 his soul from the darkness...

Chiyo opens her eyes, looking across the room. Searching. A moment of thought, she grabs the phone, starting to dial. After a few RINGS,

CHIYO (CONT'D)
 Hello, my dear. We need to talk.
 It's about our son Hachiro.

EXT. DORMITORY - DAY

Tanaka follows Nakao unwillingly to Hachiro's dormitory.

NAKAO

Do me a favour, Tanaka. No more politics between you two.

INT. DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

A senior student answers the door. Nakao explains the purpose of their visit. Finally, he agrees to let them in.

SENIOR

He is with other club member.

After he leaves, Tanaka looks at Nakao strangely.

TANAKA

What club?

NAKAO

You can ask him yourself.

They walk down the hallway, starting to hear a dormitory song echoing in the background.

STUDENT CHORD (O.S.)

*Right Wind blows in the Capital
Sky, if you feel the breath of
Spring. Let's all be mindful, the
cherry spirit is dying in the
Capital...*

They get closer, sliding open the shoji door to find Hachiro is among them, singing louder than anyone.

HACHIRO

(passionately)

*As the dew disappears in the rising
sun, we shall not hesitate to wave
the flag of liberalism for the
beloved country.*

(finishing with his own
improvised solo)

*Let it all crumble, so the military
government meets its end!!*

Astonished, they all gaze at Hachiro as if he has become dangerously outspoken in his opposition to the government. His bold stance puts them all at risk.

Shocked, Tanaka shuts the door in total disbelief.

TANAKA

Did you hear what he just said? If anyone reports this, the Kapeitai will storm this place and take custody of your friend.

NAKAO

No, they won't. This is the university where free speech --

He lowers his voice, avoiding people in the hallway.

TANAKA

Nakao, the government is not so tolerant anymore. Do you know how many people get into trouble nowadays for their inappropriate --

NAKAO

You heard that from your family?

Offended, Tanaka shoots him an angry glance.

TANAKA

I won't report him this time. But YOU go tell Hachiro this has to stop and get his things together.

(last warning)

Trust me, neither of us wants to *see him behind bars*.

Nakao regards Tanaka seriously, realising he's not joking.

NAKAO

Let me call his mom.

(deciding)

I think it's best for Hachiro to take a short break from school.

Tanaka agrees, takes one last glance, and shows himself out.

INT. HALLWAY, DORIMTORY - LATER

Nakao hangs up the receiver and notices a group of students approaching him. To avoid them, he pretends to head upstairs.

HACHIRO (O.S.)

Nakao, what a surprise.

NAKAO

Well. I stopped by and have --

The telephone RINGS in the hallway. Someone answers it, then.

STUDENT
It's for you, Hachiro.

HACHIRO
(to Nakao)
Wait a second. I'll be right back.

Hachiro picks up the receiver.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
Hello, Mom?
(then)
Did you happen to get my letter?

Nakao pretends to walk away from their conversation.

CHIYO (V.O.)
I will ask Yui to check my mailbox.

Hachiro looks disappointed.

CHIYO (V.O.)
I was going to ask would you like
to go home this weekend? Your dad
is coming back from Manchuria.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo hangs up the phone. She turns to find Tadao, listening.

TADAO
Dad is coming home? And Hachiro?

CHIYO
I hope so.

TADAO
But they don't see eye to eye --

CHIYO
That's all in the past now.

Tadao drops his voice, unwilling to argue with his mom.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - SUNSET

Chiyo watches patiently as a black car enters our sight.

KENJI YOSHIDA (45) steps out the car smoothly in a smart business suit. He glances up and takes off his hat, giving his family a smile.

Tadao and his mom are welcoming him by the door, which is enough for him. Kenji walks toward them, but to his surprise,

Hachiro silently emerges from behind. There is an awkward stare between them, finally:

HACHIRO
(unnaturally)
Welcome home, father.

Even it's a bit forced, Kenji seems touched by this gesture.

INT. DINING HALL, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - LATER

Kenji sits next to Hachiro who faces his mother.

CHIYO
Let's have a toast.

Hachiro takes a small sip, meanwhile Kenji empties his drink.

HACHIRO
(to his father)
You must have travelled a lot in
China?

KENJI
It really changes you, this
beautiful country which we share a
similar culture with.
(to his sons)
That's why I hope you two can visit
it one day.

CHIYO
(agreeing)
I think that's a good idea.

Hachiro raises his eyebrows, surprised by her open attitude.

CHIYO (CONT'D)
For educational purposes, of
course.

KENJI
Speaking of which, have you decided
your major yet, Hachiro?

HACHIRO
(shaking his head)
Liberal arts perhaps.

KENJI
(forcing a smile)
I hope your education can bear some
fruits, helping you succeed in
life. As parents, we should guide
and support our children the best
we can.

Putting down his silverware,

HACHIRO
You've already taught us to freely
choose our own path and determine
the value of our lives.

KENJI
(admittedly)
That's a western concept, something
we used to value a lot.

Chiyo listens mindfully.

KENJI (CONT'D)
But for the Asian family, filial
piety is the primary virtue. Taking
care of their parents --

HACHIRO
'Is considered the foundation of
individual morality and social
harmony.' Yeah, I know the
Confucian concept of filial piety.

Kenji looks impressed, but Hachiro stresses it for an answer.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
(pressing)
What do you believe, father?

It surprises Kenji, who contemplates his question.

KENJI
We're westernised, but we're not
western people.

HACHIRO
(unflinchingly)
I see.

Chiyo turns to Hachiro, knowing he is unable to hold back.

CHIYO
Let's go to the kitchen and check
on our dessert.

A beat, Hachiro shifts his gaze away from Kenji, showing only obedience to his mom Chiyo.

HACHIRO
With great pleasure.

Chiyo exchanges a glance with Kenji who looks away and refills a new cup of rice wine.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo closes the door while Hachiro checks the stove.

CHIYO
I read the letter you sent me.

Hachiro stops, facing away from her.

HACHIRO
And?

CHIYO
I'm a bit concerned. But I'm also glad you trust me enough to reveal such deep thoughts of yours.

HACHIRO
Did you tell dad? That's why he came back to lecture me?

CHIYO
Not entirely.

Hachiro turns, facing his mom, a bit swayed and unsure.

HACHIRO
Maybe I shouldn't have written you such a letter. I'm sorry to make you worry, mom.

Chiyo holds his hands reassuringly,

CHIYO
Never apologise for coming to me.

Lowering his head, Hachiro finds his body trembling lightly.

HACHIRO
Did I fail you? You didn't raise me to be weak, indecisive, and vulnerable.

CHIYO
(firmly)
You're the strongest and sanest man
I know. Much better than your
father. But don't tell him that.

Hachiro smiles. Then, she wipes his face softly.

CHIYO (CONT'D)
Talk to your dad. I know he wants
to help. In his silly way.

INT. DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo and Hachiro walk out of the kitchen. Tadao looks at his
mom and his father. Then he stands up abruptly.

TADAO
I have some homework to do.

Kenji nods. Tadao leaves the table, joining his mother.

KENJI
(to Hachiro)
I guess it's just the two of us now
unless you have work to do too?

Hachiro stands there, meeting his father's eyes.

HACHIRO
No, not tonight.

Kenji pours him a cup of coffee as Hachiro takes a seat.

KENJI
You asked me if I'd found something
worthy of my life? To be honest,
I've never thought about that. I'm
just a businessman trying to
provide for his family and live a
better life.

HACHIRO
And I'm grateful for that, despite
our difference in opinions.

KENJI
I remember you used to call me a
heartless capitalist. Not that I
blame you, Hachiro. Anyway --
(organising his thoughts)
Your mom told me you've been
reading Marx these days.

HACHIRO
Are you afraid your son is turning
into a communist?
(then)
Don't worry, we read everything.

Kenji forces a smile, trying to ease their tension.

KENJI
It's not concerning to me that you
read and think too much. I've never
had the luxury or talent for that.

HACHIRO
So I assume whatever mom told you
about me doesn't concern you?

Hachiro looks at his father, testing his attitude. Instead,

KENJI
No, her worry doesn't concern me.
Nor does yours.

HACHIRO
(surprised)
Not even the right-winged military
propaganda on our campus?

A beat, Kenji lights a cigarette, taking a calming drag.

KENJI
Think bigger. Don't trap your mind
in the politics of this tiny
country. 'Better to travel
thousands of miles than reading
thousands of books.'

HACHIRO
You just quoted a famous Chinese
proverb, didn't you?

KENJI
Maybe.

They both chuckle. A brief moment of father-son bonding.

KENJI (CONT'D)
I've been thinking of a proper gift
for you. And I'm happy to finance
you a trip to travel abroad.

HACHIRO
To where? Manchuria?

KENJI
I'm thinking China or America.

Without thinking,

HACHIRO
China. I'd like to visit China.

KENJI
Alright, while it's still- safe
and...doable.

Hachiro eyes his father who stops in the middle. Instead, he drinks his coffee silently.

EXT. SANSHIRO POND, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - DAY

Still, peaceful, and ethereal, this park is well-preserved foliage garden. A silver KOI emerges, poking his head out of water. Alone, Nakao is feeding the fish by the pond.

HACHIRO (O.S.)
It always amazes me that the bigger
the pond is, the more magnificent
they can grow. Maybe it's the same
for us.

Nakao doesn't turn, but Hachiro approaches, joining him.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
Nakao, I know my mom called you at
some point, didn't she?

NAKAO
(pretends)
For what?

Hachiro looks at his friend, it doesn't matter anymore.

HACHIRO
Either way, I appreciate your
concern. Well, I'm leaving school
for a trip to Shanghai.

NAKAO
Travelling abroad at this time? Or
are you moving there?

HACHIRO
Honestly, I'm sick of this country.

NAKAO
 (a long beat)
 Tell me: is this our last goodbye?

On the other side, Tanaka listens, his face looks like stone. How could he leave like this?!

A red and white Koi opens its mouth for food, but Tanaka stops feeding it.

Hachiro HUGS Nakao as if it is their proper goodbye.

Tanaka stands up and almost stumbles. We see him walk away in state of stupefaction.

EXT. FUKUOKA AIRPORT - DAY (A WEEK LATER)

The rumbling of the engines coupled with the speed of the wheels as the aircraft lifts off the ground. It starts to ascend, climbing into the air.

INT. FUKUOKA AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Tadao leans on the window, hardly concealing his excitement. It's their first time flying. But Hachiro just smiles, hiding his ecstasy in his eyes.

TADAO
 It's the best part of the journey.
 Imagine the people who are flying
 the planes --

HACHIRO
 (jokingly)
 Maybe we both can work hard and
 become pilots one day.

TADAO
 Father will be furious if no one
 inherits his business.

Hachiro throws a glance at Kenji who is having an argument with the staff. They both look awfully frustrated.

On the display board, the flight to Shanghai is delayed. Sensing something wrong, the smile on Hachiro's face disappears.

INT. CAR - LATER

While Kenji reloads their luggage, Tadao just sits there, downhearted, trying to comprehend the situation.

CHIYO
I'm terribly sorry. They have to
cancel the flight.

TADAO
But why?

In the distance, the sunlight shimmers on the ocean surface. So it must be a different reason than weather.

Kenji gets in the car, starting the engine furiously.

Then Hachiro spots a few soldiers stationed in the airport. Every passenger is under scrutiny as the airport security have received a newer strict order.

EXT. DORMITORY - DAY

A postman drops a stamped envelope at the student mailbox.

INT. NAKAO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A series of knocks, Nakao opens the door to find Tanaka.

NAKAO
(seeing his face)
What's wrong?

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kenji, hands on the wheel, slows the speed, calming down.

KENJI
Maybe it's not the best time to
travel abroad.

TADAO
But what caused such a strict
airline regulation?

They drive past another military station where young soldiers undergo hellish training. Some of the new recruits are not older than his boys, learning how to use a bayonet.

For those who are weak and slow, their training officers are brutal with inhumane punishments.

Kenji quickly averts his gaze and closes all car windows to divert their attention.

KENJI
Anything. Safety issues, low
profit, etc, you name it.

Hachiro LOCKS his gaze on the Japanese army.

HACHIRO
Please tell me the truth, father.
What else did you see in Manchuria?

KENJI
(unnaturally)
Nothing.

It's obviously a lie. Hachiro frowns, his mind spinning fast. His glance becomes sharper.

TANAKA (V.O.)	MILITARY OFFICER
Why do you think they portray	(Passionately)
positive images of the	'Japan must forward to fight
battle? And foster young	for the eternal peace in
readers' desire to be nothing	greater Asia.'
but war heroes?	

Hachiro closes his eyes as the cloud darkens his complexion.

KENJI (V.O.)
It's best to travel now while it's -

His eyes become moist. A truly soul-crashing moment,

HACHIRO
(to himself, inaudibly)
They are mobilising the nation...
(finally realising)
Sanitizing the aggression...and
preparing for the War.

His face bleeds agony, but keeps this knowledge to himself.

EXT. TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - SUNSET

The car drops Hachiro at the front gate. Saying goodbye to his family, he walks in solitude toward the ginkgo pathway.

INT. DORMITORY - LATER

Hachiro opens the door, surprisingly still at this time. As he approaches the living room, the stillness amplifies the depressing atmosphere.

Opening the door, Hachiro sees all the mountain club members in the living room for a meeting. They are utterly stunned to see Hachiro as if he's not supposed to be here.

SATOSHI

(beat)

Hachiro?! Nakao said you already left for a trip to China.

HACHIRO

The flight got cancelled.

Satoshi slides the door closed, trying to organise his words.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)

(confused)

What happened? Why does everyone seem so strange?

People begin to whisper, which makes Hachiro uncomfortable. So he leaves them, ascending upstairs. To find --

The hallway is crowded with students who almost block the entrance of Hachiro's bedroom.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)

Let me through.

Approaching his room, Hachiro sees his best friend Nakao pacing back and forth.

NAKAO

(shocked)

Why did you come back?

STUDENT 1#

Is that him?

STUDENT 2#

Poor guy.

HACHIRO

What is everyone doing here?

Tanaka emerges and approaches Hachiro steadily.

TANAKA

Always the spotlight, Hachiro, but you're truly famous now.

Tanaka indicates a letter on the desk from earlier mailbox.

People fall into a collective silence as Hachiro get close to this mysterious letter.

NAKAO
(horrified)
No, Hachiro. Don't open it --

A hesitated look,

HACHIRO
(self-reassuringly)
It's alright.

Hachiro picks up the letter, taking it out from the envelope.

To his astonishment, it's an OFFICIAL MILITARY DRAFT LETTER for student Hachiro Yoshida.

The frame moves away from his dumbfounded and powerless face as the sound is carrying us to --

EXT. TOKYO CITY (1950S) - DAY

The Metropolitan building is encircled by the one of the largest JTU protests. Thousands of members, supporters, and volunteers wearing the same uniform gather in the same place.

EMIKO MURAKAMI (26), a young journalist backed by well-equipped team, is giving a full coverage of the event. Meanwhile her cameramen are capturing the live images of --

The angry rally. Some rise banners with peace slogans, other wear helmets with the skull. A zealous young man is waving the antiwar flag to draw people's attention.

YOUNG MAN
(with speaker)
They're violating the peace treaty
and secretly rebuilding Japan's
military...

Emiko stops, turning her attention to him. She frowns as if his words sound a bit too well-scripted. But it makes people listen and raise their flags in response.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
'The accused war criminals are
returning to take back the
government while we work so hard to
rebuild this country.
(shouting)
No more wars, no more dead.
(MORE)

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
End this remilitarization before it
destroys you.'

We spot Hachiro and Satoshi watching behind the crowd while the prologue unfolds.

SATOSHI
(to Hachiro)
We have a surprise for him.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka is in the midst of discussing business with the American representatives.

AMERICAN 1#
We're looking forward to seeing you
make a positive impact on --

Their conversation is interrupted by the peace demonstration. They stop, listening as the protest grows louder. It gives Tanaka no choice.

TANAKA
(apologetically)
One moment, gentlemen.

Tanaka approaches the window, peering through the shutters cautiously to find:

His office is being targeted by the JTU protest. The colour signs bear messages of outrage as the media deliver live update to the national audience.

Hesitant, Tanaka looks back to find his guests. They are assessing his response to the situation.

AMERICAN 2#
(subtly)
Is everything alright, Mr Yamazaki?

Tanaka flashes them a reassuring smile. The situation forces him to act. Tanaka shows no weakness. Finally, he opens the shutters. To his surprise:

EXT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The protest suddenly falls silent as Tanaka appears by the window, as if everyone had been waiting for this moment.

Bewildered, Tanaka scrutinizes the peaceful crowd. They're the faces of this countries future.

In this breath-taking silence, several students unfurl a huge banner emblazoned with words of shame aimed directly at Tanaka himself:

'Why can't Japan atone her past and reconcile with China?'

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Seeing his own words, Tanaka freezes, utterly confounded by this sudden public humiliation.

A figure moves forward, making himself visible. It's Hachiro. At that moment, it becomes abundantly clear that Hachiro orchestrated this ambush.

As Hachiro stands with other JTU members, he shoots a defiant glare towards Tanaka's window.

TANAKA
(almost out of breath)
I offer you nothing but peace...

Betrayed and humiliated, Tanaka swallows the rage silently.

HALLWAY, TANAKA'S OFFICE - LATER

Nakao is outside. Before he knocks, American representatives open the door, leaving the meeting room.

SECRETARY
(observing Nakao closely)
You can walk away. I won't tell him
that you've been here.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nakao enters quietly while Tanaka sits alone in the shadows.

TANAKA
Apparently, we both reached out to
him in the wrong way.

Nakao approaches, grabbing a seat opposite of Tanaka.

NAKAO
You warned me that things would get
ugly. And it looks like they
already have.

TANAKA

You must be tired of being our
buffer, especially when there is
little you could do to help.

EXT. TOKYO MEMORIAL PARK - MOMENT LATER

Emiko finds Hachiro by himself on a bench. Approaching gently

EMIKO

'Why can't Japan atone her past and
reconcile with China?' You must be
the author of this powerful line.

Hachiro looks alarmed. Emiko smiles, giving him her card.

EMIKO (CONT'D)

I'm not just a fan, Dr Yoshida. Our
entire association are your firm
admirers.

A different look on his face.

HACHIRO

Japan-China Friendship Association.

EMIKO

Have you heard about us before?

HACHIRO

Of course. Rebuilding a friendly
relationship with China? Very
admirable.

EMIKO

In fact, we read all of your works.
Some of our leaders particularly
like to quote from you.

HACHIRO

You flatter me.

EMIKO

And we believe you are right.

The polite smile fades. He looks at this woman cautiously.

EMIKO (CONT'D)

The keystone of rebuilding the
friendship between the two
countries...

Emiko stops mid-sentence, waiting for his response. But Hachiro doesn't react to her enthusiasm anymore.

EMIKO (CONT'D)

Is remembering Japan's war crimes against the Chinese people. Our movement can set the stage for two peace-loving people.

HACHIRO

(indifferently)

What do you want from me exactly, Ms. Murakami?

EMIKO

I know it's a lot to ask since we just met.

(a bit awkwardly)

We have been waiting for the right opportunity to invite you to join our association --

Interrupting her apologetically,

HACHIRO

I won't be a good fit for your organisation. I'm sure you can find someone better, Ms. Murakami.

Emiko is confounded by his sudden disapproving attitude.

EMIKO

Wait, I don't understand. What do you mean you won't be a good fit?

(explaining)

We fight for what you advocate 'Japan can't move on as a new country unless we confront our war responsibility.'

Hachiro looks at this stubborn woman in frustration.

HACHIRO

We reflect on the past because it's right thing to do, but this whole Japan-China friendship is...

(openly)

I won't be much help to you, Ms Murakami. I'm sorry.

Hachiro leaves Emiko who just stands there speechless.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nakao eyes the photo frame of them three together. Tanaka has put it back on the shelf again.

NAKAO
Hachiro has changed so much. We all
have changed so much.

Tanaka glances at Nakao cautiously.

TANAKA
I know I always underestimated you.

Nakao shakes his head.

NAKAO
No, you didn't.

TANAKA
You're never just a bystander.

Nakao bursts out a self-pity laughter.

NAKAO
That is exactly what I am.

Tanaka looks at him in the eyes.

TANAKA
Then why're you here, Mr bystander?

Nakao averts his gaze.

NAKAO
I'm not going home, Tanaka. But I'm
not staying here for you either.

Tanaka considers his answer.

EXT. TOKYO MEMORIAL PARK - LATER

The stage is set. Facing the crowd, Hachiro sits other prominent figures of JTU against the backdrop of antiwar huge painted banners.

Hachiro can see the diversity of the crowd from different ages and backgrounds united by a common cause. The sight is both inspiring and slightly unsettling.

At the lectern, Satoshi addresses those who have actively answered his high profile protest today. Some sit peacefully, while others chant slogans with unwavering resolve.

SATOSHI

Despite our differences, we are not the enemy of the ministry of Education. But again and again, it proves to be a continued hegemony of the wartime bureaucracy.

(condemning)

Even today Japan's bureaucrats refuse to take responsibility for destroying millions of lives during the WWII and instead perpetuate their rules over the people...

Hachiro remains silent, keeping himself invisible.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)

(admittedly)

Of course, I'm not an expert on this subject. That's why we have a special guest today.

Satoshi drawing their attention to Hachiro who sits there, motionless. People are waiting, but there is no response. Satoshi keeps clapping to distract them.

EXT. ENTRANCE, TOKYO MEMORIAL PARK - CONTINUOUS

Emiko gently pushes her way through the dense crowd. Paying little attention to her, the front audience are fully absorbed by Hachiro's captivating voice.

HACHIRO

I couldn't sleep last night because an old acquaintance of mine sent me his paper outline.

Hachiro takes out an envelope. Reads some chapters out loud.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)

Let see, 'Red propaganda demonized the Japanese aggression.'

(beat)

'On Japan's Innocence: The Truth on the Trial.'

(beat)

'The Illusion of the Nanking Massacre' The list goes on and on.

Behind Emiko, a powerful surge of rage is growing in the air.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
 Absurd as it sounds, the author
 might be right about war criminals
 getting away during the Cold War.
 And the resurrecting military
 ideology.

Hachiro pauses, allowing the audience to think and reflect on
 the gravity of his words. Then,

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
 It took me a long time to realise
 that many political mistakes ARE
 educational mistakes.

Emiko takes a quick photograph, glancing around the possessed
 audience in amazement.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
 So what do we do as educators? Just
 stand by and watch the new
 government falling into the hand of
 pre-war leaders?

Provoked, they respond strongly. It's totally unacceptable.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
 Our system becomes a puppet again
 and poisons the minds of the new
 generation? And teachers
 send...send their students...

Losing his voice, Hachiro can no longer carry on.

Meanwhile, the crowd is about to explode. It is Emiko who
 breaks the maddening silence.

EMIKO
 (wholeheartedly)
 Never send our students to the
 battlefields again.

Hachiro STIFFENS, dumbstruck by this powerful statement. Then
 the crowd CRY OUT with bigger noises and clarity:

MEN 1#
 (frantically)
 "Never send our students to the
 battlefields again."

WOMEN 1#
 "Never send our students to the
 battlefields again."

Hachiro RECOILS on the stage. Banners in the air. Wave after wave. It becomes the SLOGAN, empowering hundreds of people.

INT. THE HEADQUARTER OF THE ALLIED POWERS - CONTINUOUS

Carrying an envelope, the secretary of Deputy minister hurries to the Chief office of the Social and Political Affairs Division.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka closes his eyes, hearing the echo of their protest.

TANAKA

You're wise to stay with me, Nakao.

NAKAO

I'm NOT on your side.

TANAKA

Either way, I don't want you there.

NAKAO

What have you done, Tanaka?

Tanaka takes out the signed red-scholar list from the drawer, laying it out on table for his friend to see.

TANAKA

Anything for our country, Nakao.

INT. ALLIED HEADQUARTER - LATER

Holding the list, the slivered hair American commander watches his people fight between choosing the democratic values and political benefits regarding the situation.

YOUNG OFFICER

The president won't tolerate this red tide of Communist threat.

OLD CONSULTANT

We can't throw away the new civil rights we've just established...

The most experienced committee members appear to be in a state of indecision, struggling with the dilemma at hand. This critical moment, if handled poorly, will ripple and radically affect their postwar policies in Japan.

TANAKA (V.O.)

I can imagine how difficult it is since they issued the purge and demilitarised this country.

(MORE)

TANAKA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(stressing)
But now they need to make a new
decision.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nakao watches as Tanaka stirs the water in the Koi tank.

TANAKA
When they do, Hachiro and his
treacherous colleagues will have
nowhere to hide.

EXT. TOKYO MEMORIAL PARK - MOMENTS LATER

The speech continues uninterrupted until a sudden commotion erupts as a well-trained, armed police squad jumps out of a van and raids the area.

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

At the same time, they hear more sirens approaching.

EXT. STAGE, MEMORIAL PARK - CONTINUOUS

Firing into the air, the Allied-controlled Task Force instantly disperse the JTU protestors. Intimidated, everyone drops their voice. With no wind, banners are down.

POLICE FORCE
(scream)
Hands in the air!!!

Hastily, Satoshi retreats out of breath, disappearing from our sight. Meanwhile, Hachiro stands frozen on the stage, as the police force surrounds their main targets.

EXT. TOKYO MEMORIAL PARK - LATER

Tanaka, flanked by men in suits, navigates through the scattered rally in the aftermath of the orchestrated police raid.

TANAKA
See, I'm right about them again.

Stunned by Tanaka's ruthless pragmatism,

NAKAO
 (horror in his voice)
 Hachiro!!

As Nakao searches restlessly to locate the arrested individuals, Tanaka calmly lights a cigarette and takes a drag, seemingly unfazed by the chaos around him.

TANAKA
 Call me a traitor, criminal or
 whatever you want.
 (beat)
 But I will build a new Japan and
 prove that Hachiro is wrong,
 regardless of the sacrifices.

Nakao snatches his cigarette, throwing it to the ground.

NAKAO
 (stone-cold)
 Is that really all you care about
 after all these years? Just proving
 Hachiro wrong. So what? Who cares?!

Tanaka says nothing.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
 Now I see you're one of them, the
 heartless war criminals!!

Tanaka's face twitches painfully, and without defending himself, he picks up the cigarette.

Nakao shakes his head and walks away, going after Hachiro. Tanaka is left alone, taking a moment of solitude before --

EMIKO (O.S.)
 (timidly)
 Excuse me, I couldn't help but
 overhearing. Are you both friends
 of Dr Yoshida?

EXT. POLICE TASK CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nakao spots a familiar figure among the crowd.

NAKAO
 Hachiro.

His friend turns, shocked yet unshackled. Nor does he suffer from any physical restraints.

HACHIRO
(breathless)
Nakao, where have you been?!

Perplexed, Nakao looks at Hachiro who has been unharmed.

Other JTU members, including Satoshi, are behind the bars in the back of a large police van.

OFFICER 1#
(ordering them)
Step back, get away from them.

NAKAO
Wait, I don't understand.

EXT. METROPOLITAIN CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Emiko watches the passers-by discussing the police raid. She sighs, wondering if it's her fault.

EMIKO
You saw how passionate he was on the stage, but in private he's --

TANAKA
Unapproachable?

EMIKO
Maybe, I don't really know.

Tanaka steps closer, looking at Emiko in her confused eyes.

TANAKA
(sincerely)
It's truly sad to see such a gifted man has wasted his talents and pushed his friends away.
(inaudibly to himself)
Must I destroy this man? No, I won't. He'll always be my friend.

EMIKO
I don't understand, what happened?

TANAKA
(amusedly)
Why do you care? He's just a stranger to you.

A smart woman like Emiko can tell Tanaka is testing her.

EMIKO

It's not about if I like him as a person, but we need his talents in the right place.

Tanaka fakes a smile.

EMIKO (CONT'D)

(eagerly)

You know him personally. And I want to understand him. Do you think I can make it right?

TANAKA

I don't know, he is quite --

Emiko performs a deep bow to show her sincerity.

EMIKO

Please, Mr Yamazaki!!!

Tanaka hides his smile, considers for a moment and extends his hand. A formal gesture of making her his ally.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Satoshi, behind the bars, is yelling at the officers.

SATOSHI

You can't arrest us for organising a protest. This is our freedom --

OFFICER 1#

Of speech? It doesn't justify your socialist revolution. We have a list of all of your names.

SATOSHI

(screams)

Social revolution? What the hell are you talking about?!

OFFICER 1#

Be quiet, you're all suspects. Our investigation will determine whether you have broken the law.

SATOSHI

What about Hachiro?!

TANAKA (O.S.)

(calmly)

What about him?

Hachiro turns abruptly, finding Tanaka by the task force.

SATOSHI
(directing at Hachiro)
This is all his idea to start with.
We're at best his accomplices.

Hachiro's eyes widen, shocked by such sudden betrayal. Nakao looks equally surprised. Their attention shifts back to Tanaka.

NAKAO
Please don't. You have made your
point already.

Tanaka looks neither delighted nor satisfied. Instead,

TANAKA
(to officers)
Well done, gentlemen. That'll be
all for today.

Astonished, Satoshi seems speechless. Why, of all people, is Hachiro the one that is spared? The engine starts.

SATOSHI
(in panic)
DON'T LEAVE US, HACHIRO!!!

OFFICER 1#
(to Hachiro)
Last warning. Stay back from your
friend or you will be charged for
obstructing justice.

Slamming the door, the officer salutes to the deputy minister who nods in appreciation. The police car moves off.

HACHIRO
(long beat, then slowly:)
You promised me a reckoning,
remember?

Bewildered, Nakao is thrown by Tanaka who takes out the list.

TANAKA
(emotionlessly)
We can't arrest you, Dr Yoshida, if
your name is not on the list.

HACHIRO
Why?! You crossed my name out after
you planned so long for my defeat?

TANAKA
 (frantically)
 DO YOU WANT TO GO TO JAIL? IS THAT
 WHAT YOU WANT?!!

Hachiro is rendered speechless. Tanaka closes his eyes,
 facing the other direction.

HACHIRO
 Why are you sparing me?! You don't
 owe me anything.

Starting to realise something,

NAKAO
 He might hurt you or try to prove
 you wrong, but he'd never wish to
 destroy you. Isn't that right,
 Tanaka?

No response. After a long pause, Tanaka mouths the words:

TANAKA
 I said it the first time we met. No
 matter how *little* you think of me,
 I'm worthy of your friendship.

HACHIRO
 (incredulously)
 You think by saving me from jail,
 we can be friends again?

EMIKO (O.S.)
 How could you be so heartless?

Emiko emerges from behind, the last person Hachiro expects.

EMIKO (CONT'D)
 Tanaka treated you with respect,
 but you humiliated him in front of
 everyone, just as you did the same
 when I came to you in good faith.

TANAKA
 From what I can tell, he only sees
 you and your organisation as a
 competitor.

NAKAO
 Stop. You're twisting the facts.

TANAKA
 (calmly)
 Let her be the judge.

Emiko waits, but Hachiro doesn't speak. Still no response, she turns to Tanaka firmly:

EMIKO
Tell me what you know.

Tanaka throws Hachiro a glance, neither hostile or mocking.

TANAKA
He said it's not personal. On the contrary, it's very personal. You remember Dr Yoshida recoiled when you said: 'Never send our students to the battlefield again'?

NAKAO
(stopping him)
Okay, that's enough, Tanaka.

Tanaka pauses, toying them with this moment of awkwardness. Emiko looks at Hachiro who resides into silence. It's his last chance, but Hachiro doesn't take it. Finally,

TANAKA
You see, my old friend, your antiwar ideology, the shining example of liberalism, Hachiro Yoshida --
(revealing)
He was drafted as a student soldier right here fifteen years ago from Tokyo Imperial University.

It's a like a heavy blow. Emiko's eyes widen in disbelief.

Nakao looks away. It's a bit too late now.

EMIKO
(in disbelief)
Is it true?

Hachiro tries to speak, but not a single word comes out.

TANAKA
(brutally)
Now you know why he knows so much about Japanese wartime crimes?

Emiko faces Hachiro, her face filled with confusion as she tries to make sense of everything.

EMIKO
Is that why you hesitated and were afraid to take a stand?

HACHIRO
That's right.

To her surprise, Hachiro's simple confession leaves no room for explanation. Speechlessly,

EMIKO
I just want to understand how --

HACHIRO
Students like myself became
perpetrators?

EMIKO
No, that's not what I meant.

HACHIRO
That's what happened.

Emiko stares at Hachiro, making her own judgement.

EMIKO
I don't believe you. You must have
been outraged by the orders you
were given, strongly opposing --

Interrupting her,

HACHIRO
Doesn't matter. It never did.
Probably never will.

Hachiro lowers his head, accepting his final indignity.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
You won, Tanaka. Congratulations,
I'll resign from the University of
Tokyo this week.

NAKAO
Hachiro, don't be ridiculous.

TANAKA
(lightly)
There is no need, Dr Yoshida.
You're not the only pre-war elite
employed there.

HACHIRO
(to Nakao, truly tired)
Maybe it's time for me to start a
new life in New Jersey. Take care,
Nakao, this is our final farewell.

Stunned, Nakao watches Hachiro, who turns lifelessly, leaving the three of them, having reached his lowest point.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

THE CANNON COMMENCES FIRING IN SEQUENCE.

The attack is ferocious, eliminating everything in sight. Amidst the chaos, the soldiers press on, their faces illuminated by the fiery bursts.

We watch the Japanese Imperial Army marching across the Marco Polo Bridge in heavy smoke. Their excuse for searching for a missing soldier becomes a full-scale invasion.

Title shows: July 1937, Southwest of Beijing city, China.

Then Hachiro's eyes open, we are at

INT. HACHIRO'S DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

HACHIRO (V.O.)
My vision of war came true.

He looks outside. The misty veil of fog obscures the view.

INT. SANSHIRO POND - LATER

Seen from afar, Hachiro walks through the woods. Distressed. He stops at a green spot where he meets the peaceful gaze of

A stone-carved smiling Buddha.

The guilt of being a perpetrator spreads over his face.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

Tadao checks the mailbox but finds nothing from Hachiro.

INT. DINING ROOM, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

Kenji is reading the newspaper about the battle of Shanghai. Chiyo and Tadao eat quietly at the table.

KENJI
Hachiro hasn't come back from
school for weeks.

Kenji turns to his younger son who keeps his head down.

KENJI (CONT'D)
Everything normal in your school?
(explaining)
No one talks about the war?

TADAO
They do.
(carefully)
Some even celebrate it.

KENJI
You know this is an invasion, no
matter how they justify it?

TADAO
(firmly)
I know.

KENJI
Good. Just focus on your studies.
It'll be over before you graduate.

Tadao reacts to that, as Hachiro told him the same thing.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Instead of taking notes, Hachiro is writing horrible thoughts
about his predicament.

HACHIRO
Every night, I dream a different
dream about war as if I'm living in
the shadow of death...

He opens the textbook. We hear bullets firing in the air.

Looking up, Hachiro starts to hallucinate. It's so visually
vivid as if he's already experienced the horror of the
battlefield from his own traumatic memories.

Alone, Hachiro wanders in an endless, foggy tunnel, carrying
a Japanese blade rifle in his clean student uniform.

Hachiro freezes and hears a whole troop marching toward him.
They're obscured by the fog, and we can't tell from which
side the platoon is approaching.

Overwhelmed, Hachiro is paralysed by this inescapable trap,
shivering at the corner. Eventually, he stops moving, drops
his defence, and closes his eyes.

LECTURER (V.O.)
Hachiro?

He SNAPS AWAKE to find an empty classroom. Everyone is gone except his teacher, who looks deeply concerned.

EXT. LECTURE HALL - LATER

The clock tower rings when Hachiro leaves the classroom. Outside the building, hundreds of students are told to head to the Great Hall for a new announcement.

As they gather, the mood shifts from causal conversation to a collective hush, something important is about to unveil.

INT. YASUDA AUDITORIUM, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERISTY - DAY

The principal reaches the lectern. We spot two generals in uniforms among the school council.

PRINCIPAL ABE

In response to the ministry of
education, the university has
decided to shorten our semesters.

Many students immediately protest against this decision, their voices brimming with anger. Other exchange shocking glances and find it difficult to accept.

PRINCIPAL ABE (CONT'D)

(reluctantly)

We aim to introduce the military
scheme to strengthen the patriotic
education among our students.

The military representatives nod approvingly.

Deeply disappointed, Hachiro takes off his Todai student Pin.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Hachiro sits at the corner, reading Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*. A group of students sit on the other side, having a heated conversation.

STUDENT 1#

I'm going to change my major at the
end of this semester.

STUDENT 2#

So you decide to give up psychology
and flee into the department of
science and engineering?

STUDENT 1#
(righteously)
Yeah, so that I can be exempt from
the military draft.

They exchange a frustrated look. It's their new reality now.

Hachiro gently closes the book and sets his gaze on an application form resting in front of him.

The deadline, which is clearly written, states that all first-year students must apply within the next two weeks.

Hachiro, still unsure of what to do, folds the application form multiple times before slipping it into his small pocket.

EXT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

As Hachiro carries his books, he lowers his head and moves towards the exit. Inadvertently, he bumps into someone. It's Tanaka, but he doesn't seem to notice Hachiro.

TANAKA
I'm sorry.

While Tanaka glances up, his expression immediately changes. They look at each other for a long moment. Before they are about to go their separated ways,

TANAKA (CONT'D)
You have a choice, you know? They
won't draft you if you choose a
science or engineering major.

Hachiro doesn't argue and just listens silently.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
I know we have our differences, but
I urge you to be smart, Hachiro.
Don't be brave.
(then:)
When the war is over, we can become
the future of this country. You
understand?

Dumbfounded by his confession, Hachiro looks at Tanaka sadly.

HACHIRO
I appreciate your concern for me,
but there is no future for a new
Japan if our country is in turmoil.

Tanaka shakes his head as if Hachiro is incomprehensible.

TANAKA
 (almost scornfully)
 So this is it? You've made up your
 mind. You're going to answer the
 draft and die for the emperor?

HACHIRO
 (peacefully)
 No, not for the emperor. He does
 NOT equal my country.

Bewildered, Tanaka can't understand, nor does it matter.

TANAKA
 Either way, there is no way back if
 you make the wrong step. The
 deadline for your draft is near,
 Hachiro.
 (still no answer)
 Don't make this our last
 conversation.

For Hachiro, it already is. Glancing at Tanaka, he extends
 his hand as if this is the proper end of their friendship.

EXT. TOKYO CITY - DAY

In the bustling streets, people scatter, making away for the
 newly recruited soldiers who carry their rifles proudly.

EXT. FRONT GATE, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Hachiro is stopped by two army soldiers on his way back.

ARMY SOLDIER 1#
 (arrogantly)
 Hey you, show me your student ID.

HACHIRO
 (unflinchingly)
 Are you Keipetai?

ARMY SOLDIER 2#
 (yelling)
 How dare you to ignore our order?

HACHIRO
 (still)
 We're not in the military.

The situation is growing volatile. Hachiro eyes them, one of
 the soldiers reaches for the rifle.

ARMY SOLDIER 1#
(screams)
It's your last warning.

Satoshi catches Hachiro surrounded by three army soldiers. One of them is about to raise his rifle. Satoshi races toward Hachiro and pushes through.

SATOSHI
Calm down, officers.
(flashes his ID)
Sorry for the misunderstanding,
he's from our dormitory. Hachiro,
show them your student paper.

ARMY SOLDIER 1#
Give me your bag. Both of you!!!

Satoshi makes eye contact with Hachiro, who -- in deference of his friend -- has no choice but to oblige.

They scoff and begin to inspect their belongings. With nothing against them, the army soldiers drop their bags, throwing them a threatening look.

Neither of them flinch. They just watch the soldiers.

ARMY SOLDIER 1#
Go back to school while you still
can.

INT. UNIVERSITY - LATER

Hachiro and Satoshi stroll through the pathway silently.

HACHIRO
Sorry to get you into trouble.

SATOSHI
One day they might harass me too.

HACHIRO
It's painful to live among those
mindless people. They are
celebrating the war that might lead
to our destruction.

SATOSHI
(bluntly)
Seeing you being drafted into the
military is even more painful.

Hachiro looks away deliberately.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
The spirit of this country is dead.
I can't bear to watch it anymore,
especially if you die with it.

HACHIRO
(assuring him)
I have no intention to go to the
battlefield.

SATOSHI
Show me your paper application
then. The deadline is tomorrow.

Hachiro hesitates and knows what Satoshi is trying to do.

HACHIRO
Senpai.

SATOSHI
Let me see, Hachiro.

Satoshi insists strongly. It's not the time for this manner.

A beat, Hachiro retrieves the letter from his pocket and
hands it over to Satoshi with great reluctance.

Satoshi unfolds the paper as Hachiro looks away. Then a look
of astonishment immediately floods his face.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
(incredulously)
History?! You chose history?

Shocked, Satoshi tries to not lose his temper in frustration.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
Why would you risk being drafted?
Or do you believe they will conquer
the rest of the world?
(incredulously)
Don't tell me that you want to be
part of this conquest?

HACHIRO
(unflinchingly)
No, I don't. Japan will crumble and
the perpetrators will meet their
ends.

He looks at Hachiro sadly, barely recognising him.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
I never told anyone, but I have a
feeling that my end is inevitable.
I must find meaning in death.

Utterly speechless, Satoshi looks at Hachiro in agony.

SATOSHI
(harshly)
What if you *can't*? What if your
sacrifice is meaningless?

HACHIRO
(beat)
You told me that day on the
mountain, 'Sometimes death can
drive us into greatness. Without
it, we'll be truly at a loss.'

Without another word, Satoshi watches as Hachiro close his eyes, immersed in the breeze of falling ginkgo leaves.

EXT. SANSHIRO POND, TOKYO - LATER

We find him alone at the only timeless sanctuary on campus, feeding the hungry Koi fish.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
There is indeed something spiritual
about this place.

Hachiro takes off his shoes, dips the cold water, and steps into the pond. As the Koi swim away, we see him walking further into the deep water.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
I realise if anything can destroy
the militarism in Japan, it is...

A park ranger catches him trespassing in the lake.

PARK RANGER
Hey, you. Stop!

As the water reaches up to his shoulders, Hachiro comes to a stop as if he has had an epiphany.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
They crumble during the war. If so,
let it be, for I welcome the defeat
of the imperial army.

A genuine smile mixed with tears as the shadow of death leaves his face. The lifeless mask on his face dissolves, replaced by a bright and vibrant countenance.

PARK RANGER
(furious)
Turn around! You're in big trouble.

All of sudden, Hachiro lurches, diving into the lake.

PARK RANGER
(screams)
Shithead.

INT. TRAIN - LATER

The passengers stare at Hachiro who is soaking wet, dripping everywhere in the carriage.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
My head has never been this clear.

INT. TADAO'S ROOM, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - LATER.

Hachiro knocks the door. Tadao jumps up in excitement.

TADAO
Brother, you're back?!

HACHIRO
I wish to speak to you in private.

TADAO
Of course.

Tadao pulls out his only chair for his brother. Instead,

HACHIRO
Yeah, take a seat, please.
(beat)
I want you to be the first to know.
I'm going to follow my heart and
choose liberal arts.

Tadao looks at his brother strangely.

TADAO
Okay.

HACHIRO
(smiles)
You don't know what this choice
means, do you?

TADAO
It means you can wake up every day
and devote your life into what
you're pursuing.

Hachiro's eyes become teary. These are his words for Tadao.

HACHIRO
Yes, Tadao.
(with difficulty)
It also means that I might be at
risk of being drafted at any time.

Shocked, Tadao stares at his brother unbelievably.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
(beat)
With the exception of science and
engineering majors.

TADAO
(relieved)
That's good news, brother.

HACHIRO
It is. That's why **you** have to
choose a science major when you
enter university.

Tadao's face changes radically. The idea of studying science
comes as a complete surprise.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
Promise me. Our parents can't risk
losing both of their sons...

Tadao freezes. Gradually, all sound drains away. We only
hear his fast heartbeat and the furious voice of their father

KENJI (V.O.)
(yelling)
It's completely unacceptable.

INT. DINING ROOM, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCE - LATER

Tadao watches while their father bursts out from his seat.

KENJI

I raised a future leader, Hachiro.
Not a soldier.

HACHIRO

(calmly)
I'm neither of them, father.

KENJI

I don't care if you have no
national spirit. You're NOT ALLOWED
to fight for THIS or ANY war.

As if already expects his father's reaction,

HACHIRO

You saw this coming in Manchuria,
didn't you?

Kenji regards his son who is revealing his hidden intention.

HACHIRO

I did wonder why you suddenly
sponsored us a trip to China?

Chiyo drops her voice, but Kenji doesn't pretend anymore.

KENJI

Exactly, so my sons won't be
deceived by the government
propaganda, or involved in this
horrific war.

Tadao keeps to himself, he doesn't take sides in their fight.

HACHIRO

I can't choose my fate, father. It
chooses for me.

KENJI

(without thinking)
To be the heir of family business.

Hachiro looks disappointed for Kenji finally speaks the truth

HACHIRO

(coldly)
You only care about your business,
but I'm the selfish one?

Hachiro stands up, ready to leave them at the table.

CHIYO
(harshly)
Hachiro.

Chiyo finally makes a stand, grabbing her son by the arm.

HACHIRO
(painfully)
Forgive me, mother.

Hachiro gently removes her hand. Even Chiyo is dumbstruck, watching his son leave them all in dreadful silence.

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The windows remain closed, framing a lonely shadowy figure.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
'But even while struggling, I wish
to find a way out of the impossible
situation...'

Hachiro buries himself in writing his diary.

TADAO (O.S.)
Brother.

A gentle knock. Hachiro looks up, pulling out an extra chair.

INT. TEAROOM, DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo closes the bible, unable to focus. Her husband faces the dark courtyard garden, pouring another cup of sake.

CHIYO
(admitting)
He doesn't listen to us anymore.

Emptying the drink,

KENJI
(promising)
I won't let him do anything stupid.
You've my words, Chiyo.

She nods, but not fully convinced.

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM, UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro entrusts Tadao all of writings and diary.

TADAO
 (saddened)
 Does it mean you have made up your
 mind already?

Hachiro's smile fades. He's torn and tormented by doubts.

HACHIRO
 To search for a greater cause? Or
 pursue individual happiness?

TADAO
 Maybe you should just stay alive?

Having little hope for life, Hachiro holds the empty cup.

HACHIRO
 To tell you the truth, I might have
 a better choice. Of course, they
 won't understand.

Hachiro stops, does he think too much? After a long beat,

TADAO
 (quoting an ancient
 Chinese proverb)
*'How could pigeons understand the
 ambition of an eagle?'*

Hachiro looks flabbergasted, amazed by his growing wisdom.

Tadao nods approvingly. Grateful tears fill Hachiro's eyes.

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - SUNRISE

Hachiro overlooks the Mt. Fuji unveiled by golden clouds. As
 he sits there, SOUNDS from outside draw him.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Nakao parks by the corner. He stops the engine, waiting.

INT. NAKAO'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

A knock on the window. Hachiro swiftly gets into the car and
 sits in the passenger seat.

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two envelopes are left on the desk for Tadao and Chiyo.

INT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Awaked by the engine sound, Tadao jumps upright from the bed.

INT. NAKAO'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro sees Tadao waving at him from the rear mirror.

INT. TADAO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tadao perches precariously on the window sill.

TADAO
(shouting)
Don't worry about us, brother.
I will choose a science major!!!

From his POV -- The car is leaving his sight.

INT. NAKAO'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Relieved, Hachiro puts his seatbelt on. Nakao can tell that something touches him deeply.

NAKAO
What was that about?

HACHIRO
Making sure that my brother makes
the right choice.

NAKAO
What about you? Today's the day.

HACHIRO
(confidently)
History.

Nakao chuckles, eyes on the road as if he knew it already.
Hachiro takes out another paper application.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
I do admire one of the generals in
the navy. They're educated and
civil; above all, the navy strongly
opposes the military just like us.
(beat)
If the draft is inevitable, I'd
rather join the navy, sailing on
the blue pacific.

NAKAO
(approvingly)
I will take you there if you can be
thousands of miles from the army.

HACHIRO
(touched)
Thank you. Nakao. Thank you.

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tadao reaches for the letter his brother left him. The slightest smile crosses his face.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
Thank you, brother, for endorsing
my vision of a new Japan
wholeheartedly.

EXT. CAR, DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Nakao looks out at the distant ocean, picturing Hachiro's future.

NAKAO
So what are you going to do in the
navy? A translator, accountant, or
captain assistant?

Hachiro lights a cigarette, taking a huge drag.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
As an elder son, you can easily get
a safe desk job. Is that right?

Indeed, Hachiro looks out as the gulls extend their wings, freely gliding in the sky. We juxtapose the aerial view he saw from the earlier aircraft scene. Finally,

HACHIRO
I'm going to fly a plane.

EXT. TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - LATER

A speeding car stops at the front gate. Kenji slams the car door and neglects the approaching guards.

KENJI
(to Tadao)
Show me the way.

EXT. REGISTER OFFICE - LATER

They sit on the stairs, waiting for Hachiro to appear. Kenji keeps checking his watch impatiently.

Tadao looks less surprised as if he already knows Hachiro's idea of diversion. Then he sees

Two senior Navy officers walking this way with a familiar figure by their side.

It's Hachiro. Kenji spots his son with two officers in navy uniforms. They shake his hand and salute to Hachiro.

NAVY OFFICER 2#
(warmly)
We will contact you soon, Hachiro.

His father interrupts their conversation.

KENJI
Hachiro.

They turn. Hachiro meets his father's eyes with a start.

KENJI (CONT'D)
Stay away from my son!!!

They frown, then turn to Hachiro.

NAVY OFFICER 1#
You haven't told your family?
(then to Kenji)
Your son has joined the navy, Sir.
You should be proud of him.

Kenji's eyes go widen in disbelief.

KENJI
No, no. There must be a mistake. My son CAN'T join the navy.

HACHIRO
(apologetically)
Father, I can't quit now.

KENJI
You were angry at me and but we can make this right.

NAVY OFFICER 1#
Take good care of your father,
we'll contact you soon, Hachiro.

They salute to the Yoshida family. With the help of Tadao, Kenji walks past Hachiro without saying or looking at him.

INT. DORMITORY DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

As Hachiro descends the stairs, a big surprise party ambushes him. Utterly wordless, Hachiro looks at his farewell party.

NAKAO

We have a present for you.

Nakao and Satoshi exchange a look. They grab his legs and tie him to a chair while people are cheering.

Nakao takes out a hair clipper. When he finishes, we see a bald but refreshing look from the mirror. Finally, Hachiro laughs like everyone else.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - SECOND NIGHT

All windows are shut. No one answers the door for Hachiro. Denied by his family, Hachiro lowers his head, giving them the longest and deepest bow.

INT. TADAO'S ROOM, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Tadao peers through the curtains.

Kenji suddenly appears by the doorframe.

KENJI

(anger in his voice)

Go back to sleep.

Startled, Tadao has one last look at his brother.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - SUNRISE

The first light penetrates the canopy of cherry trees.

INT. TADAO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tadao jumps outright from his bed, rushing to the window.

Hachiro is already gone.

Tears finally run down his cheek. It's followed by an emotional montage:

INT. LECTURE HALL, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - DAY

Tadao finishes the entry examination. However, there are fewer new students this year.

Tadao hands over his exam paper to Principal Abe, who happens to recognise his last name. Before he can say anything to confirm, Tadao has already left.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - LATER

With no one to celebrate, Tadao sits there by himself.

INT. YOSHIDA RESIDENCY - LATER

Tadao comes home to find Chiyo is selling furniture.

EXT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Page by page, he's reading the diary of Hachiro.

EXT. TOKYO CITY - DAY

Tadao walks past two Keipatai, keeping his head down.

INT. TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - DAY

Tadao holds a sheet paper, considering the science and engineering major. A promise to his dear brother.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

A CHYRON tells us: two year later (1941)

At the dining table, we see a tall, handsome young man. It's Tadao Yoshida (20). The doorbell rings during their lunch.

TADAO

Sit mom. I'll get it.

Chiyo sits back slowly, half of her hair has turned grey.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY -- CONTINUOUS

Tadao opens the door to find two men in uniforms. It's navy officers from the earlier scene. Tadao recognise them immediately. Then he falls into a long, dreadful silence.

TADAO
 (repressing his emotion)
 You came here to tell me that
 Hachiro died on the battlefield?

Tadao firmly holds the door, blocking their way. The navy officers exchange a meaningful look.

NAVY OFFICER 1#
 No. Your brother came home alive.

Chiyo approaches. Tadao senses her presence and turns to his mom, tears welling in his eyes. She sees a smile on his face.

NAVY OFFICER 1#
 But he's in a navy hospital,
 critical condition.

They shatter his fantasy. It takes great strength to say:

TADAO
 Show me.

DISSOLVE INTO:

The old plate reads: TOKYO GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL

TIME-LAPSING as the flat houses in this district THRIVE,
 growing into early post-war skyscrapers.

INT. TOKYO CITY - DAY (1950S)

The scene transitions to vibrant colour on a bustling street.

Hachiro walks alone, moving against the flow of pedestrians.
 He looks spent in a loose tie.

As he approaches the foreground, his gaze fixates across the street, where an aging navy hospital stands.

From Hachiro's slightly blurred POV, we witness an imaginary scene unfold. A phantom truck pulls up, and two nurses emerge, carrying a stretcher with a young officer in a coma. They rush towards the emergency ward.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
 October, 1941, the fate denied my
 long-desired silence after I
 finally reconciled with death.

Even with bandages covering his eyes, we can discern that the patient in the navy uniform is Hachiro himself. His condition makes it clear that he can no longer fly.

Hachiro draws nearer to the edge of the street, his attention barely on the approaching traffic. He is consumed by this vivid memory from the past, one that begins to blur and fade before his eyes, slipping away like a dream.

INT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Nakao, shamed by his failure, packs his luggage harshly.

TANAKA (V.O.)
You must be tired of being our
buffer when there is nothing you
could do.

Picking up the phone, he starts to dial the number home.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
Hello.

Nakao opens his mouth, but no sounds come out of it.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
(gently)
Is your friend doing okay?

NAKAO
No, not really.

ICHIKA (V.O.)
(sensing something)
What happened?

NAKAO
(defeated)
I'm the one who is not worthy of
Hachiro's friendship, not Tanaka.

They fall into silence until a younger voice joins in,

TARO (V.O.)
Dad.

Nakao forces a smile, holding back his emotions.

NAKAO
Hey, how's school?

TARO (V.O.)
Good. We had sponge cake and learnt
a new story today.

NAKAO
Really? What is it about?

TARO (V.O.)
The story of a lost monk trapped in
the valley.

NAKAO
Interesting. Maybe you can tell me
a bit more about the moral lesson.

TARO
Well, let me think: 'It's better to
walk with friends in the dark than
walking alone in the light.'

A long beat of silence. Nakao's face freezes in shame.

TARO (V.O.)
Dad?

NAKAO
Nice. Very nice. Can you tell me
that story, please?

INT. TANAKA'S OFFICE - LATER

Tanaka listens, surprised that Nakao actually called back.

NAKAO (V.O.)
A decision made by emotion is not
decision at all, Tanaka.

TANAKA
Are you questioning mine or his?

NAKAO (V.O.)
(admitting)
I disapprove how Hachiro treated
you and vice versa.

TANAKA
What are you trying to sell me,
beside your neutral stance?

NAKAO (V.O.)
(reluctantly)
I think he's wrong about you, the
protest, more importantly, himself.

Tanaka blinks almost imperceptibly.

NAKAO (V.O.)
Show Hachiro that you're better
than who he thinks you are.

INT. HALLWAY, GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Light bulbs keep flickering, but no one bothers to fix them. Walking through the hallway, Hachiro follows the number to find a familiar room. The plate reads: Room 204

MATCH CUT TO:

The same plate but the colour changes, reminding us that it might be a different time.

We see the Yoshida family by the doorframe, disheartened by the scene as we include the patient's bed. Their faces a canvas of disbelief and shock. The soft hum of medical equipment connect to Hachiro, who is either unresponsive or ignores the presence of his family.

Back to our present -- Hachiro freezes at the same spot. The bed is empty with no mattress.

DR ITO (O.S.)
(from echo to clear)
Thank you for coming on such short
notice.

Hachiro turns to see a young doctor, who welcomes the Yoshida family who appear waiting by the hallway. Their outlines are a bit blurry and more transparent compared to Hachiro's.

From Hachiro's reaction, we can tell that it's a truly bizarre moment as if his reality blurs with increasingly vivid hallucination.

CHIYO
(voice shaking)
Doctor Ito?

The injured Hachiro lies on the bed in a catatonic state. It's a truly painful sight for the Yoshida family to bear. Kenji almost loses the ability to speak.

DR ITO
Let me put it this way, Ms Yoshida.
Physical injuries are the not only
things he is suffering from.

Tadao comes near the bed, gently strokes his brother's hair, and forces himself to smile.

TADAO
Brother, how are you doing?

Meanwhile, Chiyo is begging the doctor to cure him.

CHIYO
But there must be a way --

DR ITO
(lowers his voice)
That's why I am here. We will be
trying a new and more scientific
treatment on your son. I can't tell
you much, but we're doing
everything we can, Ms. Yoshida.

KENJI
(impatiently)
They are wasting our time, Chiyo.

CHIYO
(furious)
Be quiet, Kenji.

Ignoring his parents, Tadao whispers to his brother.

TADAO
You're alive. That's all that
matters!!

Hachiro positions himself in the background. While Tadao
attends to his injured brother in the foreground, the three
of them happen to be in the same frame.

CHIYO (O.S.)
(desperately)
What are his chances, doctor?

DR ITO (O.S.)
We don't know, but we won't give up
easily either. I promise --

Tadao is holding his brother's hand, praying to different
gods and deities.

TADAO
Any of you, if you could hear me,
please bring my brother back.

HACHIRO
Tadao.

The magic BREAKS the moment he speaks. All of sudden, Hachiro
SNAPS AWAKE to find himself completely alone in the room.
Lost, disoriented, and increasingly terrified.

TADAO(V.O.)
Forgive me, brother.

INSERT CUT -- A black dot free-falling from the sky and plunging into the ocean's depths with near-sound grace.

The voice ceases. The space feels emptier. Hachiro stares and shivers, and finally collapses soundlessly.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Nakao waits. A private car pulls over, window rolling down. It's Tanaka in a casual jacket.

TANAKA
Come on, I don't have all day.

INT. TANAKA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nakao sits next to Tanaka who is focused on driving.

TANAKA
What make you think I wanna help
him after I made it clear --

NAKAO
Action defines us, Tanaka. Doesn't
matter what you said, you sheltered
him from the red purge.
(beat)
And I'm done being a bystander.

Tanaka reacts to Nakao's change. After a beat,

TANAKA
And I felt no satisfaction nor any
sense of accomplishment after
beating him down, Nakao. I never
wanted to destroy him.

NAKAO
(beat)
Perhaps we all fantasised about how
different actions might allow
different fates for all of us,
especially Hachiro.

Tanaka nods lightly, keeping his emotions in check.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
I once asked him why didn't he take
the opportunity? You know, the
teaching opportunity in America.

Bewildered by the same question,

TANAKA

And?

NAKAO

(beat)

Hachiro said 'he feels obligated, a staggering amount of obligation.'

TANAKA

(confused)

Obligations of what?

They drive into a tunnel, hiding Nakao's face in the shadow.

NAKAO

(admitting)

I didn't come to Tokyo simply because of your call. In fact, I am well-aware of the entire situation.

Tanaka brakes abruptly. Without looking at him,

TANAKA

You could've saved him a long time ago. Why are you keep pretending and playing fool?

Deeply troubled, Nakao glances up at Tanaka.

NAKAO

The problem is I can't do this myself, nor should I lead you, of all people, to his past.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro reaches in his pocket for a cigarette until he sees a nurse in stripes attending a coughing patient.

Brimming with frustration, Hachiro forces himself to get up for some fresh air instead.

INT. TANAKA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka stops the car by the curve. Openly:

TANAKA

You want me to persuade you? But I won't, Nakao. You either take me there or you don't.

Nakao stares at Tanaka, less confrontational.

INT. ROOM 204, GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro stares at the distance by the window, then his moment of peace is disturbed by a stopping engine sound.

Two figures get out of a private car. It's Nakao, followed by Tanaka. They are in a truce somehow.

NAKAO

I have a choice. Not because we're friends, but because he needs us.

TANAKA

And you'll help me prove him wrong, not about me, but himself. That's all I am asking.

Nakao considers, relents, and gives him a nod.

NAKAO

You do what you have to do, Tanaka.

TANAKA

Which is?

NAKAO

Watching his back, even from the opposite side.

Watching them from afar, Hachiro leaves the window frame.

INT. ROOM 204 - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro sits on the bed, facing the door as their footsteps approach. When his friend enters the frame,

HACHIRO

Hello.

Both of them are spooked by his sudden greeting.

Hachiro looks at Tanaka, neither welcome nor hateful, simply ignoring his presence. Then,

HACHIRO (CONT'D)

(to Nakao)

You knew where to find me.

NAKAO

I do indeed.

Nakao looks at this room. A strong sense of familiarity here as if he has been here more than once.

HACHIRO
(curiously)
How many times have you visited me
here in this very room?

NAKAO
Half a dozen? I don't remember.

HACHIRO
(subtly)
And my brother Tadao?

NAKAO
(beat)
Not even the nurse can remember how
many nights he spent in here.

HACHIRO
I see.

Tanaka absorbs, trying to remain silent, so the three of them
can keep this balance.

NAKAO
I don't know how much you remember.

Hachiro approaches the bed, touching the same pillow where he
slept twenty years ago.

HACHIRO
It's good for our brain to forget,
Nakao. To promote a healthier mind.

NAKAO
But you don't have amnesia.

HACHIRO
That's the problem. Cowardice
maybe, but it's effective.

Hachiro finally rests his gaze on Tanaka.

TANAKA
(less aggressively)
I said I will prove you wrong. Tell
me why you're obligated to stay?

HACHIRO
I haven't moved past from betrayal
into forgiveness yet, Tanaka.

TANAKA
Me either.

HACHIRO
But here we are.

Tanaka positions himself in front of Hachiro.

TANAKA
Here we are.

Tanaka looks at Nakao, then the three of them together.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
(finally)
We can never be friends again, but
it doesn't mean I won't help you.
Believe it or not, that's why I
asked Nakao to come in the first
place.

Hachiro looks at Nakao, then the three of them together.

HACHIRO
(acknowledging)
And he did an excellent job
bringing us together. For that, you
have my appreciation. But this is
not a favour, Tanaka.

TANAKA
It doesn't have to be. This is
whatever you -- WE need it to be.

After a beat, Hachiro nods. Finally, something he can agree.

Nakao looks at both of them, a long breath of relief,
imagining how much they can accomplish if they worked
together from the start.

INT. TANAKA'S CAR - LATER

Nakao is driving instead, leaving the task to Tanaka who
finally has to chance to solve the mystery of Hachiro's life.

TANAKA
So you joined the navy willingly?

HACHIRO
Yes.

Tanaka stops, processing.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
It's a dull story of how it ends.

NAKAO
(casually)
Where were you stationed? I'd never
asked you this before.

Hachiro is caught off guard by this random question.

HACHIRO
(a longer beat)
Yamato.

Tanaka looks up as if he discovered an important puzzle
piece.

TANAKA
The most luxurious battleship the
navy ever built?

The spectacular neon street lights of Ginza's boutiques and
restaurants DANCE on Hachiro's face.

HACHIRO
(sarcastically)
Yes, that Yamato. Rumour is true
that it's even equipped with the
finest soda machines.

NAKAO
(confused)
I don't understand. Wasn't it also
their most powerful secret weapon?

HACHIRO
(chuckles)
Only in their delusion. Our 'Grand
Hotel Yamato' remained unseen and
unknown for years.

With that information, Tanaka slowly pieces them together.

TANAKA
(deducing)
One that never went into battle
during your service? So you were
never wounded on the battlefield?

HACHIRO
(beat, shamefully)
No.

NAKAO
Nor did you engage in the war?

HACHIRO
(defeatedly)

No.

Nakao shoots a look at Tanaka. He is right about Hachiro, whose eyes keep wandering.

TANAKA
I want to understand you, Hachiro.
We have to clear your name. You
need to prove yourself wrong.
(beat)
Let's talk about why you were
released from the navy service and
sent back home so early?

HACHIRO
To protect a senior officer, I was
burned by searing heat caused by
staff mistake and had severe eye
injuries. Later, I was diagnosed as
'unable to fly safely' and sent
back to a navy hospital in Tokyo.

Something doesn't add up. Tanaka looks at his notes again.

TANAKA
And how many years did you stay in
that hospital?

HACHIRO
(after a beat)
Four.

TANAKA
Four?!

The hesitation suggests a more complicated reason.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
Why didn't you go back home?

They drive past a glamour poster of Mt. Fuji unveiled by the pink clouds. The Kanji reads: 'Welcome to Japan, the land of the cherry blossom.'

It's so captivating that Hachiro already fixes his eyes on the poster, drawn by the reviving nature. It touches him something deep, the lost soul of this nation.

We also become aware of a faint, ethereal voice whispering in the depths of Hachiro's mind --

A distant, imaginative murmur that seems to beckon from a world beyond reality.

TADAO
(in peaceful lyric)
Cherry blossoms, cherry blossom,
across the spring sky; come now,
come now, let's go see.

HACHIRO
 (voice trembles, but not
 to them)
 Did you see, Tadao? No more rising
 sun flags on the street.

Hachiro blinks. Before we realise, we are drawn into --

INT. KENJI'S CAR - DAY

Hachiro is driving their father's car while Tadao sits in the passenger seat. However, this lovely moment only happens in Hachiro's headspace for Tadao couldn't witness this himself.

TADAO (V.O.)
 I see, brother.

HACHIRO
 I told you. The country is slowly
 purifying and healing itself.

BACK TO:

INT. TANAKA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka observes attentively as Hachiro talks to the thin air.

TANAKA
 (to Nakao)
 Tadao, his little brother?

NAKAO
 Yes, they grew up together.

TANAKA
 When's the last time Hachiro went
 back home? Do you know where the
 Yoshida lived?

NAKAO
 Maybe ten or fifteen years ago?

All of sudden,

HACHIRO
No one lives there anymore.

TANAKA
(beat)
I bet. You can't go back, can you?

Strangely, Nakao is distracted by Tanaka's questions.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
You're not afraid of going back to
the navy hospital. You're perfectly
fine staying at the University.

HACHIRO
What's your point, Tanaka?

Tanaka locks his eyes at Hachiro who seems uncomfortable.

TANAKA
Your brother Tadao Yoshida.

Hachiro averts his gaze. Tanaka reaches a moment of clarity.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
(a long beat)
Nakao, it took me so long to see
what **this** is.

NAKAO
(pretending)
What are you even talking about?

TANAKA
(soft and slowly)
It's easier to confront our
national shame than the trauma of
your own family, isn't it Hachiro?

Nakao stares. His eyes are completely off the road now.

With Tanaka's steady gaze, Hachiro doesn't pretend anymore.

HACHIRO
(finally admitting)
I thought it's easier to blame war
and military for everything, but
it's really not.

With that, they all fall into a profound silence.

TANAKA
I appreciate your honesty. It must
be really difficult.

NAKAO
 You're not doing this alone,
 Hachiro. That's why we are here.

Off Nakao's silence, we're carried by an engine sound.

DISSOLVE INTO:

A heavily wounded zero aircraft glides through the sky.

Getting closer, we see Tadao sitting in the cockpit and dodging the enemy planes skilfully.

The battle happens 30,000 feet over the blue pacific ocean.

INT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

From the rear mirrors, the enemy aircraft are approaching on both sides. No backups, there is no escape for him.

In front of him, a thunderstorm emerges, closing the gap.

Tadao steadies his wheel. Without hesitation, he accelerates, dashing his plane straight into the stormy cloud.

The plane SHAKES violently, almost losing control.

The gas tank SCREAMS a red warning sign.

Next to the oxygen supply regulator attaches a family picture of the Yoshida's. The oxygen is running dangerously low.

TADAO
 Forgive me.

The inevitable seems near. Tadao starts to murmur a children's song. That's all we hear, the peaceful lyrics at the end of his life.

TADAO (CONT'D)
*Cherry blossoms, cherry blossom,
 across the spring sky; come now,
 come now, let's go see.*

The airplane ascends drastically while all display panels are breaking their limits.

EXT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

It reaches the top, breaks free of the storm, and soars into a quiet, cloudless sky.

It's a miracle. Carried by the wind, the plane escapes the enemy and gravity, at least for a short time.

The shining moon lights up the cockpit. He opens the canopy, exhaling the fresh air.

Tadao closes his eyes peacefully.

The engine catches fire, turning the entire plane into a flaming ball. Free-falling from the sky, shrinking small and crashing straight into the ocean. Almost soundlessly.

HACHIRO (V.O.)
(screams)
Tadao!!!

ON HACHIRO,

He wakes with a start, listening to breathing in the dark.

Both of his eyes are bandaged to cover the injuries. Widen to find him alone in the hospital bed.

Drenched in sweat, Hachiro looks disoriented and feverish, not knowing how much time he has lost.

INT. GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - DECEMBER, 1944 (DAY)

Dr Ito hurries into the room while the nurse is feeding Hachiro, who immediately senses his presence.

HACHIRO
Hello, Dr Ito.

DR ITO
(surprised)
They said you're willing to talk?

INT. HALLWAY, NAVY HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Dr Ito holds Hachiro by the arm, step by step guiding him to walk using a cane.

DR ITO
What do you see behind closed eyes?

HACHIRO
Often the endless winter beach.

DR ITO
Interesting.

HACHIRO
Lately, a recurring nightmare.

DR ITO
What about?

He considers his answer, then chooses the most honest:

HACHIRO
Tadao's plane exploded in the air.

They continue to walk. Hachiro speaks in a very low voice.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
One day he stopped visiting me. I
knew something awful happened. But
none of you told me the truth.
(beat)
Did he ask you to keep it secret?

The deliberate silence of Dr Ito confirms his speculation.

DR ITO
The whole thing came so sudden. I'm
so sorry.

HACHIRO
Tell me, doctor. Please.

DR ITO
(struggled)
About eight weeks ago, thousands of
students, including your brother
had been drafted.

The simple admission is enough to put his world in turmoil.

HACHIRO
That's not possible. Tadao he chose
a science major.

DR ITO
They don't make exceptions anymore.
Only those who can fight or those
who are physically unable to. I
don't know what'll be left for us
after the war...

He tries to grab a seat. Completely fails. Outraged, Hachiro
RIPS opened his eye bandage, forcing himself to see.

DR ITO (CONT'D)
Someone stop him!

From Hachiro's blurred POV -- we have a short glimpse of Dr Ito's terrified look. Then two male nurses grab hold of his arm, stabilise him and cover his eye with a new bandage.

DR ITO (CONT'D)
You could make it worse and lose
your sight forever. Promise me you
won't do that again.

Tears streaming down his cheek.

HACHIRO
(begging)
Just let me see.

DR ITO
That's my job and yours too. I
can't do this when you're fighting
against me. Or our treatment.

The patient actually listens this time.

HACHIRO
The military is desperate because
they're losing.

DR ITO
That's right. Your brother might
survive the war too.

HACHIRO
I need my sight. Please help me,
doctor. I want to get better and
bring my little brother home.

DR ITO
(nods firmly)
Like I said, don't lose hope.

INT. GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Hachiro holds onto a radio. We see him keep switching between two domestic stations. But both of them have been censored. Frustrated, Hachiro turns the radio off.

INT. THERAPY HALL, GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - DAY

Hachiro is receiving eye treatment from doctor Ito.

HACHIRO
Could you help me find some foreign
newspapers? Or reports from English-
speaking countries?

Dr Ito gently applies the lotion onto his eyelid.

DR ITO
They are all banned in Japan.

HACHIRO
I know, but could you smuggle some?

DR ITO
Don't move, Hachiro.
(beat)
I'd say highly unlikely. May I ask
why you want them so badly?

HACHIRO
They won't tell you what happened
until the very end.

DR ITO
Naturally.

HACHIRO
Truth is, even if I recover, I can
do nothing but wait.
(they are both silent)
Only the defeat of Japan will save
my brother.

DR. ITO
I agree.

HACHIRO
If so, let it crumble, I don't care
anymore.

The doctor finishes the treatment.

DR ITO
You don't need a foreign newspaper
to tell you that. I assure you when
Japan surrenders, you will know
from any corner of the world.

INT. HALLWAY, GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Hachiro walks to a phone box. Slowly, he reaches for it and
begins to dial the number of Yoshida residence.

KENJI (V.O.)
 (unemotionally)
 Leave him be, Chiyo. He's good as
 dead.

After a few rings, Hachiro hangs up the phone. We now know
 Kenji is why he never calls or goes back home.

INT. GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - DAY

A CHRYON shows September 1945. The voice of the Emperor is
 broadcast through the hallway.

EMPEROR
 'We have ordered our government to
 communicate with the governments of
 the United States, Great Britain,
 China and the Soviet Union...'

Hachiro listens, holds his breath, and grasps the bedsheet.
 We see his vision is fully restored now.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)
 'That we have decided to effect a
 settlement of present situation by
 resorting an extraordinary measure.
 (beat)
 Our Empire accepts the provisions
 of their Joint Declaration...'

DR ITO
 (incredulously)
 This is it. They surrender. The war
 is over. The war is over!!!

Relieved, Hachiro freezes and bursts into joyful tears. Dr
 Ito approaches him, giving him a knowing glance.

DR ITO (CONT'D)
 What are you waiting for?

EXT. GENERAL NAVY HOSPITAL - SUNRISE

Dr Ito walks Hachiro out of the hospital. A taxi is already
 waiting for him.

DR. ITO
 Please send my regards to Tadao
 when he comes home.

HACHIRO
 I will. Wait for my call, doctor.

Now they are bonded, but it's time to say goodbye. After all these years, Hachiro's finally on his way home.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

Hachiro rings the doorbell, but no one answers.

HACHIRO

Hello?

Still no response. With no choice, Hachiro has to use the hidden key. He searches a couple places and finds it on top of the doorframe.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro unlocks the door and enters as quietly as possible.

To his astonishment, most the furniture is gone as if they have been robbed. The house looks dusty and impoverished.

Hachiro explores around uncomfortably. The war has clearly devastated their family. He hears coughing from --

INT. TEAROOM, YOSHIDA RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo lies there herself. She looks terribly ill, withered.

It contorts Hachiro's face to see his mother fall into such a hopeless and miserable state.

HACHIRO

Mother it's me. Hachiro, I'm home.

Neither can Chiyo recognise him. Her POV -- Hachiro looks more like a delusion. Her hope is long lost.

The door opens, someone walks inside.

Instead of Tadao, it's his father. To Hachiro's disappointment, Kenji brings nothing home but more rice wine.

Hachiro's face is in total disbelief.

NAKAO (V.O.)

You're home.

MATCH/DISSOLVE:

HACHIRO YOSHIDA - SLOW MOTION

Light is bleached by the daylight. He almost stands at the same place with similar state of mind twenty years later.

In the background, Tanaka waits by the car. Nakao gives him an inviting nod for he's no longer excluded.

INT. TEAROOM, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - SUNSET

The house becomes emptier. With little knowledge of this place or this family,

TANAKA

(quietly to Nakao)

It's your journey to guide Hachiro now. I was wrong, Nakao. You should appeal to his heart --

NAKAO

Not his brain, I know what I am doing. You've been really helpful, but now it has to be me, Tanaka.

TANAKA

And I will be your assistant.

Tanaka nods, leaving them for a different room. Nakao joins Hachiro, who is staring at the wooden cross on the wall.

NAKAO

(gently)

You used to say how your mom united this family together spiritually.

HACHIRO

Maybe that's why she couldn't stop blaming herself.

NAKAO

I miss her energy in this house. Was your mom lucid at the end?

Hachiro hears imaginary coughing echoes in this tiny room.

HACHIRO

No, not at all. I can't imagine how many days she just sat there, waiting for one of us to ring the doorbell, 'Mom, I am home.'

(bitterly)

My dad said I was as good as dead. Maybe mom gave up hope too.

NAKAO
Do you feel abandoned?

HACHIRO
(chuckles lightly)
Abandonment requires expectation.
If anything, it's me who abandoned
my family.

A look of realisation on his face.

NAKAO
Is that why you think you inflicted
family trauma on them?

Hachiro is struck silent by this terrifying notion.

NAKAO (CONT'D)
(beat)
Tadao is the only one who never
abandoned you. But you're afraid to
learn the truth about him?

Hachiro glances upward at the wooden cross. There must be a reason why the Lord guides him back. From his face, Hachiro has settled for an answer.

HACHIRO
What you are looking for is a diary
I left for Tadao. It became his. I
know he kept writing. *The Testament
of our Youth, Love and Death.*
(beat)
If you -- we wish to find anything,
the diary might be the answer.

EXT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A ring of dead flowers at the floor. At the centre is the student picture of Tadao Yoshida. Nakao's face changes.

NAKAO
(beat)
Let me be honest with you, Hachiro.
I might have been reckless for
bringing you home without properly
considering your state of mind.
(explaining)
We don't know what we are going to
find, you may experience intense
emotions, respond aggressively, or
re-trigger your family trauma.

Gently interrupting his friend,

HACHIRO
'Walking with friends in a dark
place is better than walking alone
in the light' remember? You can
bring light to my life, Nakao. And
trust me I can handle this.

With the same hope, Nakao nods, maybe that's what he needs.

INT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tanaka closes the last open drawer in frustration.

TANAKA
I can't find any diary.

HACHIRO
Tadao is smart. He would hide it
somewhere only I can locate.

Nakao looks at the cross on bed.

NAKAO
Was Tadao a devoted Christian?

HACHIRO
No, but he believed angels would
pray for him when he slept...
(realising)
Pray for his sleep. Pray for sleep.

Hachiro points at the wooden cross. Jumping onto the bed, he
gets his face close, knocks and listens carefully. Dun-dun-
dun sound, clearly something inside.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)
Find me a tool.

They carefully take the cross off the wall and gently place
it onto the bed. Revealing --

A leathered diary and two unsealed letters.

Nakao takes the diary. The new title reads, *A Testament of
our Youth: Love, in the absence of Life.*

MATCH CUT TO:

The pen hovers over the page.

TADAO (V.O.)
Spring, 1941. This marks the first
month Hachiro stays in the navy. I
wonder whether he is finally free?

INT. HACHIRO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tadao switches on the light, regarding this empty room.

We see his face falls before the light is switched off.

INT. CAR - DAY

Chiyo weeps when Tadao is leaving home for school. Meanwhile,
Kenji is nowhere to be seen.

CHIYO
It's alright, I can take good care
of myself.

Tadao nods. As always, he pretends to be ignorant.

TADAO (V.O.)
Sadly, father barely knows anything
besides running a business - which
no longer exists.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Chiyo pays Yui her last wage.

CHIYO
Sorry, Yui. You're always family,
but we can't afford you anymore.

From the rear-mirror, Tadao sees Yui hugging her silently.

EXT. FRONT GATE, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY - DAY

Tadao walks toward the ginkgo pathway in college uniform.

TADAO (V.O.)
I made a promise.

INT. THE REGISTER OFFICE - DAY

Tadao submits the application form on the first day of school

TADAO (V.O.)
 Brother, why you have a greater
 course to die for while we're
 forced to live? A soulless life
 betrays everything I was born for.

INT. SANSHIRO POND - LATER

Cherry blossoms float in the air. Tadao stops, reaches out
 and touches the fragile petal.

TADAO (V.O.)
 To live is a form of art. God gives
 us will not just to create --

Sunlight streams through the green canopy. Different shapes
 of shadow dance on his face. Tadao also senses something
 spiritual in this place.

TADAO (V.O.)
 But become art as well. The real
 tragedy is just to exist, making no
 impact to the world or yourself.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

The professor explains the theory of high-speed trains.

PROFESSOR
 We will be the first country in the
 world to develop this technology...

From Tadao's notebook, we admire his meticulous pencil
 drawing of the New Tokyo city with incredible detail.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

Snow and storm outside. Tadao sits by the kitchen fire with
 his mom. Chiyo struggles to calculate the taxes.

TADAO
 Let me help you, mom.

She shakes her head.

CHIYO
 Let me learn, Tadao. Don't make me
 rely on you like Hachiro --

Tadao leans backwards, holding all his emotions.

EXT. SHINTO SHRINE - DAY

Chiyo stops, captivated by hundreds of amulets on the tree.

TADAO (V.O.)
I saw her faith growing weaker.
Impaired by countless unanswered
prayers. I don't want her religion
to fail her the way I did.

Profoundly hesitating, she approaches a Buddhist monk.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

Chill summer breeze. The doorbell rings. Tadao answers the door to find two navy officers.

TADAO (V.O.)
Eventually, it's HOPE that brought
down her pillars of faith and will.

Tadao attends his mother who collapses in his arm.

TADAO (V.O.)
War completely shattered Hachiro,
the most brilliant and strongest
person I know. From that moment, I
knew I am a changed person..'

INT. TADAO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nakao can't look at Hachiro whose eyes bleed pain.

NAKAO
He was deeply affected and the tone
got darker.

HACHIRO
(to Tanaka)
You're right. It's not war or
militarism, but me who lead this
family into destruction. IT'S ME.

TANAKA
I didn't...

Tanaka tries to convince him, but no words come out of him this time. Nakao's worst fear comes true. They just re-enacted the trauma. Hachiro stands up, staggering.

INT. BBQ JOINT - NIGHT

It's located in the downhill, run by an old man who is busy cleaning in the middle of cooking. Three high school students laugh and walk into his place.

CUSTOMER 1#

Sake, please.

OWNER

Sorry, we don't sell alcohol here.

CUSTOMER 2#

Beer?

OWNER

I said we don't sell alcohol here.

CUSTOMER 3#

No wonder your business is shit.

They leave the door wide open, but the old man says nothing. We see his face as he approaches the door. It's Kenji, aged but completely sober.

TANAKA (V.O.)

And what happened?

EXT, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro stands in the backyard like a stone statue.

NAKAO (V.O.)

(explains)

Tadao faced the crushing reality that Japan is losing and their fate might be worse than Hachiro's.

An eerie moment of silence, he bursts into throbbing tears.

NAKAO (V.O.)

It happened a few days after Japan surrendered. Hachiro had already came home from the navy hospital...

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAY

Hachiro walks past his father as if he's a total stranger.

Kenji grabs some money, ready to go out. Opening the door, he catches two navy officers. They both recognise Hachiro.

NAKAO (V.O.)
 The poor Yoshida heard that Tadao's
 plane exploded, crashing into the
 sea somewhere in the pacific.

It triggers his worst, recurring nightmare:

EXT. COCKPIT - NIGHT

Tadao's engine catches fire, turning the entire plane into a
 flaming ball. Crashing straight into the ocean soundlessly.

EXT. BACKYARD, YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Hachiro kneels in front of two gravestones.

NAKAO (V.O.)
 Devastated by Tadao's meaningless
 death, Chiyo...

They read: Chiyo Yoshida (May 1898 -- November 1945) and
 Tadao Yoshida (March 1922 -- September 1945)

EXT. CEMETERY - SUNSET

Kenji and Hachiro avoid each other at the funeral.

They pay their respect separately, motion to different ways,
 and never ever speak again.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Tanaka sits by the table, processing the whole tragedy.

TANAKA
 (unnerved)
 I feel I have just seen the real
 Hachiro for the first time.

Nakao refills his drink.

NAKAO
 He came home with new hope and left
 utterly broken. Dead inside.

Tanaka closes his eyes, feeling like the biggest idiot.

TANAKA

I'm a fool, aren't I? All I did
was tear open his old wound while
believing...

HACHIRO (O.S.)

Don't apologise for making me do
the impossible. You still got my
brother's letter?

They spin, surprised to find Hachiro by the doorframe. Fairly
sober with some sense of clarity.

HACHIRO (CONT'D)

Very well, I'm not going anywhere.
(takes the seat)
Let me finish it.

EXT. BBQ JOINT - NIGHT

Kenji closes the shop at midnight, exhausted. The whole town
rests in dark. The only light gleaming is:

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Stunned, Hachiro continues while they listen attentively.

HACHIRO

'Even my brother is gone, he has
the biggest influence on me. Like
Hachiro, I start to search for
meaning in life while all hope is
lost. I found two souls reside in
my heart. One looks to earth, the
other faces heaven.'

A short pause. Then, as the tone switches to the second-
person, Hachiro looks over as if **Tadao is present**, speaking
directly to him.

EXT. FUKUOKA AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Tadao watches the rumbling of the engines coupled with the
speed of the wheels as the aircraft lifts off the ground.

TADAO

*I've dreamed so many dreams of our
first flight experience. Often my
chest pounds with excitement when I
think of the day I will follow your
path and soar into the blue sky.*

Tadao's imagined POV -- the airport becomes a tiny dot and the city shrinks into a small piece of the diagram.

EXT. SCIENCE LAB, TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERISTY - DAY

Their experiment is interrupted by several intruding officers who make everyone unnerved, except:

TADAO

*As the situation worsens, we might
all go to war sooner or later. At
this point, I've already given up
any illusion. Brother, you're right
ages ago. We have little hope for
life. Death is inescapable.*

Tadao like everyone else, is herded into the auditorium.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tadao sits by Hachiro's bedside, silently reading a book called *Vincent and Theo: Untold Story of Van Gogh Brothers*.

TADAO (V.O.)

*Dying is hard and living is harder.
I don't care if the whole world
abandons you. I'll always be there.*

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro's hands shake holding the letter, but a third hand makes it stop. It's Tadao, who smiles encouragingly. But neither Nakao nor Tanaka can see his brother.

TADAO

(directly to Hachiro)

*So I trained my body and mind as
hard as I could. Every time I visit
you in the hospital, you fill me
with the strength to become the
shield to protect the ones I love.*

Tears fill Hachiro's eyes, threatening to spill.

TADAO (CONT'D)

*In our loved ones, we see our own
potential. Through that love, our
potential comes true. You taught me
how we can transform death into a
quest for idealism.*

INT. COCKPIT - DOWN

The aircraft is losing control. Tadao takes off his goggles.

TADAO (V.O.)

*Thank you, I finally realise that
this quest is not the desire of
creating an utopian country. Nor my
life purpose is sacrificing for an
ideal, New Japan. They were never
my real need, brother.*

Tadao calmly watches both engines catching the fire.

TADAO (V.O.)

(teary)

*Loving and deeply loved by you give
my life and death ultimate meaning.
This is my greater course, so my
fall won't be meaningless,
voiceless, or soundless.*

Closing his eyes, Tadao enjoys his last few seconds of life.

TADAO

*Only the strong can forgive. Be
strong, brother. I believe you can -*

The plane DASHES into the ocean like a missile while Tadao is forever silenced by the deep water.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

They see Hachiro collapse in a silent cry, hunched up in a corner, his body convulsing with shivers.

Nakao bends his knees, comforting him softly. Tanaka's eyes are equally red and wet.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Kenji stands frozen outside, his mind racing as he processes everything he just overheard.

The knob appears rusty. A wrinkled hand slows to reach it but drops and lets go in the middle.

Kenji's head droops down, his face twisted in anguish. After a moment of inner turmoil, he musters the courage to step forward.

INT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - CONTINUOUS

Light steps ascend the stairs. Then the body of an old man enters our frame, but they barely notice him.

KENJI
(gently)
Sorry to interrupt.

Without looking, Hachiro immediately recognises the voice.

NAKAO
May I help you, sir?

KENJI
(timidly)
Yes, boss. I'd like to speak to my son, please.

Kenji points at Hachiro. Nakao is stunned to see Mr. Yoshida.

KENJI (CONT'D)
(smiles)
It has been ten years and thirty days. How are you, son?

Hachiro is perplexed by Kenji's agreeable manner.

KENJI (CONT'D)
May I sit?

Hachiro regards this man who used to be his insolent father.

HACHIRO	KENJI (CONT'D)
When did you?	You're back.

KENJI (CONT'D)
(strangely polite)
Sorry, you go first.

Nakao can only stare. But Tanaka already makes him leave.

KENJI (CONT'D)
They're your friends from school?

Glancing at both of them,

HACHIRO
(naturally)
My best friends.

Stunned, Tanaka statues there. Until Nakao closes the door.

KENJI

I'm glad someone took care of you.

Finally, Kenji indicates Tadao's letter on the floor.

KENJI (CONT'D)

So your brother left you a long letter? Of course he did. Why would he leave anything to me?

HACHIRO

(hesitating)

Would you like to read it?

Kenji throws a glance at it, turning back to his son.

KENJI

Maybe later.

HACHIRO

Honestly, I thought I'd never see you again.

KENJI

(guessing)

Because you can't forgive me? Or what I did to this family? Maybe that's why you left this place.

Hachiro never expects to hear such admission from his father. Lost in words, Hachiro feels a great tremor overtake him.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Tadao adored you wholeheartedly. And Chiyo, she never blamed you for anything. The only fool was me.

(painfully)

Forgive me, Hachiro. I'm the reason we lost this family.

Hachiro comforts his father who curls over, crying.

HACHIRO

Father, listen, we need to first forgive ourselves, then each other. Tadao just taught me one of the greatest lessons of my life.

Kenji looks at his son in the eyes.

KENJI

What's that?

HACHIRO

'Loving and deeply loved gives our
life and death ultimate meaning.' I
was wrong for all my life, but now
I learn to love again, my friends
and my lost family.

Kenji glances at Hachiro, his body slowly wracked with tears.

EXT. YOSHIDA'S RESIDENCY - DAWN

The sun rises over the majestic peak of Mt. Fuji. Hachiro
emerges from the house after a long, sleepless night.

Nakao and Tanaka are waiting by the car. They move forward,
looking intently at him. Judging by his composition,

TANAKA

(smiles)

You're a changed man now.

NAKAO

(deliberately)

Are we dropping you at the airport?

Kenji watches them through the window. Hachiro shares a long,
meaningful glance with his father.

HACHIRO YOSHIDA

(back to them)

That won't be necessary.

INT. CAR - LATER

Tanaka is driving, leaving Hachiro alone in his headspace.

TANAKA

(to Nakao)

You sure you don't wanna stay?

NAKAO

Our job in Tokyo is done. My wife
has been waiting for me too long.

Tanaka nods gratefully, truly appreciating Nakao's company.
Nakao smiles, there is a new bond between them now.

NAKAO (CONT'D)

I got a call from Satoshi. They
were released already. You only
wanted to scare them, didn't you?

TANAKA

Tell them I am sorry. This whole thing is just a misunderstanding between me and Hachiro.

NAKAO

(again)

No more politics between you two.

INT. TRAIN STATION - LATER

Nakao gets out of the car. Hachiro rolls down his window.

NAKAO

Don't thank me, or I will never come to visit you again.

HACHIRO

(smiles)

Then I will go to yours next time.
It's your turn to cook for me.

Nakao throws Tanaka a sideways glance.

NAKAO

How about I cook when both of you visit me in Osaka?

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Hachiro moves to the passenger seat. Only two of them now.

TANAKA

Is there a place you want to go?

CUT TO:

Satoshi's wide eyes. He stares in disbelief. We're in

His office now as Hachiro officially quits, returning his JTU membership card.

EXT. JAPAN TEACHER'S UNION BUILDING - LATER

Hachiro leaves the building, taking a refreshing breath. Surprisingly, Tanaka is gone. Another car is waiting for him.

EMIKO

(smiles)

I bet that JTU is not happy with your resignation.

HACHIRO
What can I say? I reconsidered your
offer, Ms Murakami.

EMIKO
May I ask what changed your mind?

HACHIRO
(warmly)
Many people, yourself included.

Emiko smiles, extending her hand.

EMIKO
Welcome on board, Dr Yoshida. We're
officially colleagues now.

Hachiro smiles at his membership of Japan-China Friendship
Association. A new beginning.

HACHIRO
Feel like I've lived not just a
second but a third life now.

EMIKO
Most people just exist, but you
actually live. Now turn your
experience into wisdom.

HACHIRO
I may not have gone where I
intended to go, but I think I have
ended up where I needed to be.

Sensing something, Emiko looks at him. A smile of quiet joy
spreads across her face.

We watch them get into the car, which drives away from our
static view. Three figures ENTER as they get further.

The Yoshida family smile warmly. They look pellucid but
tranquil, a comforting lyric PLAYS as our world around them

FADE INTO WHITE:

THE END

Chapter One:
Rethinking Adaptation Theories and Practice

Overview

Sixty years ago, George Bluestone raised the question in his founding text *Novels into Film*, of ‘how adaptation theory, despite being one of the oldest areas in film studies, has had little influence on the discussions of film and literature’ (1957: 63). Similarly, Dudley Andrew questioned why such ‘systematic study of films based on literary sources’ had, until quite recently, stood apart from the main currents in film theory (1984: 37). Through studying the writings of these founding theorists, contemporary scholars like Thomas Leitch, Deborah Cartmell, and Kamila Elliott have recognised a clear ‘rupture between the theory and the practice of adaptation studies’ (Leitch, 2007). This rupture has sparked ongoing debates and critical examinations within the field of adaptation studies.

In contrast to many of their contemporaries, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan have actively challenged the primacy of literature as a discipline. In doing so, they expressed a clear opposition to ‘privilege literature over film in adaptation theories’ (Cartmell, 2012). Their revisionist perspectives are also embraced by other scholars who seek to foreground and redefine adaptation theory. Through establishing themselves as the revisionists, Leitch, Cartmell, Elliott and others have initiated a fresh and contemporary discourse that transcends the traditional notions of adaptation ‘solely being faithful or accurate to the original material’ (Elliott, 2003). More specifically, Thomas Leitch considers adaptation as a form of rewriting, advocating how ‘texts need to be rewritten to be alive’ (2007: 13).

Nevertheless, there are conflicting views about such revisionist statements. One of the central questions that arises is why do a considerable number of adaptations seem to purposefully alter the prior texts? Another equally intriguing question concerns how do adapter-auteurs transcend their source material? To answer those questions, Leitch, Elliott and Cartmell directed their attention towards the concept of the ‘creative use of adaptation’, delving into innovative approaches through research-based screenwriting (2012: 45). However, as Cartmell acknowledges in her essay, a thorough examination of creative adaptation necessitates substantial practice-based research to complement theoretical analysis (2012: 46). Given the scarcity of relevant example studies, it remains largely a theory whether adaptation can truly be regarded and approached as a creative discourse.

This research project aims to demonstrate that film adaptation practice can be seen and treated as a creative discourse capable of reinventing the original text through active dialogical responses. I refer to such dialogical responses as ‘screen(re)writing,’ which highlights the necessity of active rewriting in forming the screenplay that is made for the film adaptation, either based on a true story or literary sources.

Using the revisionists' studies as a starting point, *Making Hachiro Yoshida* is designed as a research-based screenplay that can be critically analysed for its specific narrative styles, artistic intentions, and textual status as a written adaptation. Through investigating two case studies -- *The Godfather Part II* by Francis Ford Coppola (1974) and Hayao Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* (2013), my screenplay not only incorporates their essential elements to serve my specific artistic intentions and narrative styles but also addresses the underlying reasons and methods behind the process of rewriting. Thirdly, my research and practice contribute to this new field called ‘creative adaptation’ and benefit those who write/study adaptation for creative purposes. Treating adaptation as a creative discourse, this practice-based research intends to advance our knowledge of creative adaptation in theory and practice, rethinking ‘what is fiction’ and ‘what is original’ in broader literary and cinematic contexts.

In the rest of this chapter, I will briefly explain a relevant historical context, explore different attitudes toward the issue of fidelity, introduce critical revisionist scholars with their theories, and discuss the current rethinking of film adaptation in the literature review. Accordingly, it will focus on a specific issue I wish to address, namely, *how one can establish a new type of authorship as an adapter-auteur by treating adaptation as a creative discourse*. Then, in more detail, I will clarify my research aims and their academic significance, showing how my project can be critically analysed not just for its artistic intentions and narrative studies but also its textual status as a written (form of) adaptation through incorporating two selected case studies. Admittedly, there are some research limitations. For instance, this project places a natural emphasis on a particular genre from the personal writing process instead of providing an all-inclusive method for all adaptations.

Finally, the end of the chapter will provide a structural outline for the entire thesis, including the purpose of each chapter, how they are related, and a brief summary of their contents. In doing so, I will prepare the reader with a clear roadmap of what to expect regarding every section, individual chapter, and dissertation as a whole.

Adaptation, Literature, and Textual fidelity

As one of the oldest areas in film studies, adaptation theory had been established as 'the systematic study of films based on literary sources', tracing its prehistory back to 'the rise of American academic study of the film' (Naremore, 2000). However, far from being a prevalent topic, the field received little or no serious academic investigations until 1948, when a French film theorist, André Bazin, published his ground-breaking paper. In 'Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest,' Bazin establishes the principles of adaptation study as well as its problems, debates, and discourse for contemporary scholars (Bazin, 1948). For Bazin, film adaptations should be treated as 'autonomous works' rather than 'mere translations of their literary sources' (1948:21). One of Bazin's key points is that strict fidelity to the source material is not always desirable or necessary. Instead, he suggests that adaptations often require changes to fit the different demands and strengths of the cinematic medium (1948:23). At the end of his essay, Bazin concludes that the artistic value of a film lies in its ability to stand on its own, regardless of how closely it adheres to the original text (1948: 26). Bazin's theories contributed significantly to film studies by providing a framework for understanding and evaluating adaptations beyond mere fidelity to the source material. As adaptation theory started to receive academic attention, scholars began to explore its relationship with other established art forms, particularly literature. Subsequently, numerous outstanding works were produced in the following decades. However, the predominant focus in writings on adaptation remained under the sign of literature, which provided an 'evaluative touchstone for films in general' (Leitch, 2013).

In 'Literature versus Literacy,' Thomas Leitch explains how the adaptation studies tended to 'privilege literature over films', and this approach had 'dominated the field of adaptation over a half-century' (2013: 3). There are several reasons for such prioritisation of literature over films in the development of adaptation studies. In the early decades, academia placed a higher value on literature as an art form than film, often considering film adaptations as subordinate to their literary source material. This bias reflects longstanding cultural attitudes that associate written texts with intellectualism and high culture, contrasting with the perception of film as a more populist, commercial, or low-culture medium (Elliott: 2003). Secondly, as literary studies held a central position in the Department of English, scholars trained in literary criticism often shaped the early development of adaptation studies. For instance, studies of Shakespeare on film use Shakespeare's texts as an implicit standard of

value for organising their analysis of film adaptation, where ‘courses in Shakespeare films were conducted under the sign of literature, analysing and evaluating the film at hands as if they were literary works themselves’ (2013: 4). Under such literary influences, scholars and critics used to focus solely on analysing adaptations of literary classics or canonical works from the literature perspectives. Thirdly, literary texts, particularly novels and short stories, have provided abundant source material for adaptation. Many classic works of literature are in the public domain, making them more accessible and adaptable for filmmakers. Adaptations of literary works have been more prevalent and widely studied, reinforcing the emphasis on literature in adaptation studies. However, by solely organising themselves around canonical authors, this prioritisation of literature over films in adaptation became problematic as it established a ‘presumptive criterion for each new adaptation’ (Leitch, 2013). As Leitch observes, this approach eventually treats ‘literature as a proximate cause of adaptation,’ making fidelity to the text central to the field (2013: 3). Consequently, ‘this fidelity to the text’ advocates strict faithfulness to the original text and accurate preservation of the characters, plots, and themes with little or no alternations needed.

Nevertheless, the primacy of literature is not unchallenged. In *Novels Into Film* (1957), George Bluestone examines the differences between literature and film, stating that ‘two media are marked by different traits that belong to separate artistic forms’ (1957: 50). While the novel is a linguistic medium that relies on language to create images in the reader’s mind, the film is a visual medium that employs visual and auditory elements for storytelling. For Bluestone, ‘the inherent differences between novel and film’ make them fundamentally different forms of art, and ‘it is fruitless to say novel A is better or worse film B’ (1957: 52). As novels and films are two mediums, certain aspects of novels may not be suitable for films and vice versa. For instance, a novel’s complex internal dialogue or extensive backstory might slow the pacing of a film or be hard to visually show. Similarly, a film’s visual impact and dynamic pacing can be challenging to capture in written form. Like Bazin, Bluestone believes strict fidelity to the literary source ignores the actual adaptation process. Instead, he argues that ‘adaptation is a transformative process,’ often involving changes in plot, characters, structure, and sometimes themes (Bluestone, 1957). As one of the most influential figures in the field, Bluestone challenges the primacy of literature as a discipline by showing how film adaptation ‘should not be judged by their fidelity to the source material’ but by ‘their success as independent works of art’ (1957: 54).

As another founding scholar, Dudley Andrew has already predated such ‘tiresome debates of fidelity’ (1984: 31). Instead of focusing on other more promising aspects, the field as a whole had been tirelessly pursuing ‘the notion of fidelity as a criterion’ (Andrew, 1984). In his essay ‘Adaptation’ (1984), Andrew acknowledges Bluestone’s theory that literature and films are different media by emphasising ‘the concept of intermediality’, which refers to the interaction between different media (1984: 28). For Andrew, strict fidelity to the source text is less important than ‘the intermedial dialogue’ between literature and film. Instead, he focuses on exploring such intermedial dialogue through the processes and implications of adapting literature into film (1984: 29). While listing three modes of relations between the film and the text -- borrowing, intersecting, and transforming, Andrew concludes that adaptations are ‘complex cultural and artistic phenomena’ that should be studied within the ‘broader context of intermediality and cultural exchange’ (1984: 37). Similarly, in *Literature and Film* (1969), Robert Richardson also highlights the ‘intertextual nature of adaptations’ and how films should be seen as texts that dialogue with their literary source (1969: 15). Like Bluestone, Richardson emphasises ‘the importance of contexts in understanding adaptations’ (1969:18). The cultural and historical moment in which a film is produced can significantly influence how the source material is interpreted and presented (1969: 18). For Richardson, adaptation studies have developed through those dialogical responses and become more than ‘the tiresome debate of fidelity’ (1984: 28). One of Richardson’s central arguments is that film adaptations should be ‘understood as reinterpretations’ of the source material that ‘offer new insights and perspectives’ (1969: 24). Likewise, Andrew also considers film adaptations ‘the appropriation of meaning from a prior text, a process and sometimes a leap from the novel ’ (1984: 29). Treating adaptation as reinterpretation, Richardson advocates that filmmakers should be free to interpret the source material creatively, which allows them to bring their own vision to the story and to make it relevant to contemporary audiences.

Together, those founding scholars have provided revisionists with a solid ground to question the notion of fidelity as the criterion for success in film adaptation. For some revisionists, ‘it is questionable whether strict fidelity is even possible’ (Barthes, 2000). Others raised the question of fidelity to *what* precisely -- should a filmmaker be faithful to every detail of the literature? (Whelehan, 1999). The issue of fidelity, which used to be justified, might be outdated and even problematic in some practices. (Leitch, 2013). Even André Bazin himself acknowledges that ‘under some circumstances, faithfulness to a form, literary or otherwise, is perhaps illusory’ (1984: 25).

The purpose of adaptation

‘Narrative is not specific to any one medium,’ Robert B. Ray explains in his essay how the nature of narrative transcends the boundaries of specific mediums across various forms of storytelling. Furthermore, without treating ‘cinema as an equal medium of literature,’ any film adaptation would never be considered as worthy as the literary original (Ray, 2000). Later, Roland Barthes further explored the concept of ‘narrative intertextuality,’ delving into the dynamic storytelling process, especially as it ‘emigrates from one medium to another.’ (Barthes, 2000). Meanwhile, the revisionists, in line with their perspective, prioritise the adaptation to different mediums as one of their primary goals. This implies that the purposes of adaptation extend beyond strict accuracy or faithfulness to the source material (Cartmell, 1999). In his original essay, Bazin already recognises that ‘he is dealing with different artistic forms’ (1997: 20). While Bluestone highlighted the inherent differences between film and the novel, Barthes further argues that what *matters* is ‘the equivalence in different forms’; especially when it comes to narrative, ‘both [novel and cinema] formats are fundamentally in the service of storytelling’ (2000: 33). According to Barthes’s theory, film adaptation’s key lies in narrative codes incorporating visual storytelling in a specific format, often requiring a ‘translation’ between two mediums. Barthes treats adaptation as an intermedial translation, neither being uncritically faithful nor cutting its tie with literature completely (ibid.:34). This approach recognises that different mediums have unique storytelling techniques, and strict fidelity to the text may not always result in a successful adaptation.

Cinema has often been ‘compared with its literature’ (Andrew, 1984). However, as Robert B Ray explains in ‘The Field of Literature and Film’, whether one recognises it or not, ‘the literary contents would be inherited by the new cinema’ (2000: 42). In Hollywood, we see the ‘prevalence of adapting novels and true stories’ even among the most successful and accomplished directors (Carroll, 1988). For those who work in the industry, ‘it is not a secret that the studios favour adaptation over the original screenplay with a few exceptions’ (ibid.: 19) for several reasons. For instance, Carroll explains how adaptations of pre-existing works benefit from ‘established source material, built-in audience/fanbases, recognition of prestige, and storytelling complexity’ without mentioning the reduction of financial risks (ibid.: 20). As a result, the advantages/preference of adapting pre-established texts can be seen in the number of films adapted every year, from classic novels to autobiographical stories. Nevertheless, as Carroll illustrates, even those ‘seemingly independent features’

cannot be entirely free from literary influences or distance themselves from all the existing texts. Not surprisingly, there is a myth that 'all films adapt,' which is a bit extreme and presumptive (Carroll, 2003). Nevertheless, I wish to show how *all films adapt differently* due to different attitudes toward this scope of fidelity, which is roughly divided into three scales:

Completely faithful ----- True to the Spirit ----- Purposefully rewriting

Some of the most faithful film adaptations include William Wyler's *Wuthering Heights* (1939), which captures the intense emotions and gothic atmosphere of Emily Brontë's novel; Robert Mulligan's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), a poignant and accurate reflection of Harper Lee's exploration of racial injustice in the American South; Peter Brook's *Lord of the Flies* (1963), which is true to William Golding's chilling portrayal of societal breakdown among stranded boys; Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972) faithfully adapted from Mario Puzo's novel and executed it to perfection; Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), a faithful and chilling adaptation of Thomas Harris's psychological thriller, etc. Each of these films is celebrated for its adherence to the source material and ability to translate the original works to the screen effectively.

When it comes to being true to the spirit of the original source, we see excellent examples from filmmakers like David Fincher, Victor Fleming, and Stanley Kubrick. In David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999), while there are changes from Chuck Palahniuk's novel, the film captures the anarchistic and anti-consumerist ethos that defines the original work. Victor Fleming's *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) diverges in certain aspects from L. Frank Baum's book and embodies the whimsical and fantastical spirit that has enchanted audiences for generations. Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining* (1980) is particularly notable. Although Kubrick takes significant liberties with the plot and characterisations, straying from King's original narrative, he brilliantly captures the psychological horror, pervasive sense of dread, and profound isolation that lie at the heart of the book. Kubrick's unique directorial style and atmospheric tension effectively translate the novel's unsettling mood and themes to the screen, creating an adaptation that, while not textually faithful, remains true to the essence of King's chilling tale. These directors demonstrate that capturing the spirit of a story often involves balancing fidelity to the source material's core themes with creative reinterpretation to suit the cinematic form, resulting in films that resonate with the original's emotional and thematic depth.

Taking a step forward, we have directors such as Alfred Hitchcock who purposefully rewrote the original source to freely create their own cinema. Hitchcock openly admitted in interviews that he often extracted only the basic ideas from the stories that piqued his interest, using them as starting points to build his narrative (Hitchcock, 2009). This approach is evident in his adaptation of *Psycho* (1960). While the film is based on Robert Bloch's novel of the same name, Hitchcock diverged significantly from the source material. Notably, he reimagined the character of Norman Bates, giving him a more complex psychological profile than in the novel. Hitchcock also altered the story's resolution, crafting a suspenseful and visually iconic climax that deviates from Bloch's original ending. For Hitchcock, the key to successful adaptations is being faithful to the cinema and storytelling. In doing so, Hitchcock became the new author of *Psycho*, transforming this film into a Hitchcock original with his signature traits and directorial brands.

From 'fidelity to the text' to 'fidelity to the spirit' to 'fidelity to the cinema,' this scope of fidelity reveals different attitudes toward the source text. While each film adapts differently, some adaptations possess a transformative relationship with the original text, generating a new artistic expression with its distinct shape and value (2009: 23).

Revisionist: Adaptation as Rewriting

In *Adaptation and its Discourse*, one of Thomas Leitch's central arguments is that 'texts need to be rewritten to be alive' (2013: 16). Taking an 'active stance' toward the original source, Leitch advocates 'the necessity of rewriting' in which every text ought to invite reinterpretation and offers itself to be reinvented (ibid.: 16). Treating every text as a text to be rewritten, revisionists like Leitch places emphasis on the intrinsic value of new works existing independently for their own sake. 'It is better at being themselves,' Leitch justifies this perspective by drawing from Bluestone's assertion that there is no basis for comparing the superiority and inferiority of film A and novel B (ibid.:17). Leitch challenges us to reconsider the purpose of adaptation, proposing that instead of strict faithfulness to the source material, adapters have the freedom to prioritise their fidelity to the audience and the work of adaptation itself. In this perspective, the adapters are empowered to make decisions that align with their creative vision and the needs of the intended audience. 'This is a move away from passive literacy,' Leitch explains, 'being uncritical consumers of the texts to active literacy – capable of engaging with them productively and capable of rewriting whatever they read'

(ibid.: 17). For Leitch, the act of textual rewriting can help us understand 'how experiences are constructed and reconstructed in different contexts' (ibid.: 18). Additionally, having the ability to rewrite the texts empowers adapters with a sense of themselves as active rewriters rather than receivers of the texts.

Through such active literacy, Leitch highlights that film adapters can 'shed new cultural light on the source text,' having the potential to 'establish a new type of authorship' (Leitch, 2007). The term 'auteur' denotes the film director, revered as the author of the film for their distinctive approach and instantly recognisable style. The concept of auteurism originated during the late 1940s with the advent of the French New Wave, a period that coincided roughly with the publication of Bazin's founding theory of adaptation. At that time, one director stood out as a prominent exemplar of the 'adapter-auteur'. For many revisionists, Alfred Hitchcock embodies their ideal adapter, who not only actively engaged in the process of rewriting in making his cinema, but also managed to create a new type of authorship in his adaptation, 'overshadowing the original authors and their influence with his distinctive directorial brand name' (Leitch, 2013).

In 'Adapter as Auteur,' Leitch further explains what constitutes Hitchcock's auteurship. However, even for someone so talented and accomplished as Hitchcock, establishing themselves as auteur is a 'slow and laborious process' (Leitch, 2007). During the 1940s and 1950s, Hitchcock maintained an impressive pace, producing a new film every year. Despite being an independent producer for his own company, Hitchcock failed to create any notable departures from the adapted sources that would be considered remarkable (in terms of deviation or departure). Until the new studio urged him to 'make and market his film' Hitchcock felt obligated to rethink going beyond his role as an adapter (ibid.: 136). Avoiding those renowned authors who would leave little room for his creation, Hitchcock developed a new strategy by creating his 'own franchises by steamrolling authors whose work he coveted' (ibid.: 137). To 'wrestle with their authorship', Hitchcock banished those writers after anonymously purchasing their copyrights, such as *Psycho* and *Strangers on a Train*. Instead of preserving their original literature values, Hitchcock set himself on a path of creating his own cinema by exploring what later became the 'familiar markers of the Hitchcock's universe: mysterious doubles, icy blondes, staircases, brandy snifters, and the explosion of self-references' (ibid.: 138) According to Leitch, all these generic thrills came to define Hitchcock's unique artistic style and became his distinctive individual approaches.

After *Psycho* (1960), Hitchcock succeeded in establishing the credentials of his auteur-adaptor role by making what is known as the 'Hitchcock originals' (ibid.: 140).

As a renowned script consultant, Linda Seger underscores the essential role of rewriting in screenwriting and adaptation. In *Making a Good Script Great: A Guide for Writing & Rewriting by Hollywood Script Consultant* (2010), Sieger argues that the rewriting process is what transforms a good script into a great one. She treats film adaptation of literary works as 'a specialised form of rewriting' and encourages screenwriters to see 'adaptation as an opportunity for creative interpretation' (Sieger, 2010). For Sieger, every adaptor and screenwriter has the potential to bring new life to the original work and significantly enhance the quality of their adaptation through meticulous rewriting strategies.

Creative Writing for the Adaptation

The revisionist concept has given us a new direction in adaptation practice, with a new emphasis on active literacy and literary performance. In *Redefining Adaptation Studies*, Kamilla Elliott proposes how adaptation must be 'extended and rethought as a creative process' (2003:12). She gives special attention to teachers' creative use of adaptation' in workshops; one of their goals is to teach adaptation through creative writing or vice versa. 'Adaptation has much in common with creative writing,' Mark O' Thomas highlights in the first sentence of his paper -- *Brokeback Mountain on London Underground*, 'both processes are a means of discovery – a journey of reflection and interpretation which always opens to new revelations' (2005: 15). Not only they are 'reflective practices' in nature, but they imply a strong case for creative writing to 'have a methodological presence' in teaching adaptation study (Thomas, 2005). At the University of East London, Thomas Leitch created a course in 'Writing the Adaptation', where creative writing students critically reflect on adaptation in their writing (2008: 25). Not just in Thomas's classroom, many teachers have combined adaptation and creative writing in their daily teaching. As Cartmell notices, combining the side of creativity with the critical reflection of adaptation can be found everywhere. For revisionists, adaptation studies have particular relevance to creative writing, and they have much in common regarding theory and practice (Cartmell, 2012).

Along with Leitch and Elliot, Cartmell advocates for a more creative and flexible approach to adaptation, encouraging a broader understanding of the adaptive process as a

form of artistic expression and intertextual dialogue. Unfortunately, the prevalence of such creative adaptation is 'regarded as an approach that's too frivolous or reductive to be taken seriously' (Cartmell, 2012). Adaptations that diverge significantly from their source material to explore new artistic territories are sometimes undervalued or criticised for their lack of fidelity rather than being appreciated for their originality and the new perspectives they offer. To evaluate the status of film adaptations and promote a more inclusive approach, Cartmell actively calls for 'a major reorientation in the field toward *creative adaptation*, particularly, investigating adaptation through advanced and research-based screenwriting' (2012: 56). However, this innovative approach has not garnered significant attention and remains far from being prevalent in both theory and practice.

Research aims, questions, and objectives

Accordingly, this original screenplay project answers Leitch, Elliott, and Cartmell's call for writing the adaptation on the research level with the screenplay as the medium. Their works demonstrate how most film and adaptation studies today neglect not just creative adaptation but 'the textual status of screenplay', which should be 'analysed independently' in its own right. While many directors consider their films 'as worthy as the original', the screenplay is rarely 'treated as equal as the cinema and literature' (Elliott, 2003). Screenwriters, however, do not just undertake the role of adapters but consider their scripts as the written form of adaptation. Similarly, Leitch admits how 'most adaptations take place in the process of screenwriting', yet the study of this practice 'has been largely dismissed as a background, or swept under the carpet in literary and film studies' (2013: 56). In response, they advocate more practice-based research to place special emphasis on the critical analysis and practice of screenwriting in creative adaptation. Naturally, one of my research goals is to use this original screenplay as a medium of criticism to show the necessity of rewriting as a criterion for adaptation.

Firstly, using the revisionists' studies as a starting point, *Making Hachiro Yoshida* is designed as a research-based screenplay that can be critically analysed for its specific narrative styles, artistic intentions, and textual status as a written adaptation. By combining creative writing with adaptation practice, this project emphasises textual rewriting and explores dialogical responses in the screen(re)writing process. Through this approach, I aim

to answer the research question: How can one establish a new type of authorship as an adapter-auteur by treating adaptation as a creative discourse?

Secondly, focusing on the creative use of adaptation, this original screenplay examines two case studies: Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather Part II* (1974) and Hayao Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* (2013). These case studies illustrate 'how' and 'why' rewriting has been implemented in their adaptations. By combining the writing process of *Making Hachiro Yoshida* with these examples, my research demonstrates that film adaptation is a creative discourse that can reinvent and enhance the original text through active dialogical responses. Through investigating these case studies, my original screenplay incorporated their essential elements to serve my specific artistic intentions and narrative styles in scriptwriting.

Thirdly, my research and practice contribute to this new field called creative adaptation and benefit those who write/study adaptation for creative purposes. Furthering revisionists' adaptation theories, I created and used the term 'screen(re)writing' to highlight the necessity of active rewriting in forming a screenplay designed for film adaptation based on a true story or literary sources. Treating adaptation as a creative discourse, this practice-based research intends to advance our knowledge of creative adaptation in theory and practice, rethinking 'what is fiction' and 'what is original' in broader literary and cinematic contexts. *Every film adapts differently*. For those interested, this project will provide my approach and methods for adapting, reinterpreting and recreating the source material that is based on a true story. In doing so, one can learn how to balance staying true to the original material and making necessary changes to suit the new medium. More specifically, by combining the elements of fiction and history, this screenplay further challenges the limit of historical representations and adaptability of a text in the genre of fictional autobiography.

Limitations

Admittedly, this research project targets a specific adaptation, namely a fictional autobiography exploring particular themes, and is supported by two personal choices of case studies. I intend to refrain from instructing how other creative projects should be adapted. Throughout my writing process, it becomes evident how all films are adapted differently. The last thing I want is to provide or even suggest an all-inclusive framework for all adaptations. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that the scope of fidelity encompasses a range of

possibilities. Some adaptations remain completely faithful to the source material, exhibiting minimal or no concern for rewriting. On the other hand, there are instances where poor rewritings are criticised for being intentionally unfaithful or simply devaluing the original source with no improvements. By acknowledging the diverse nature of adaptations and the complexities involved, I aim to provide a nuanced analysis that respects the unique qualities of each creative project without imposing a rigid set of guidelines.

The revisionist's perspective of adaptation as rewriting is potentially problematic in some circumstances. Adhering blindly to some rules of 'how you should adapt' may yield detrimental outcomes, leading to faithful but terrible adaptations with meaningless rewritings. 15 Acknowledging the limitations, I intend not to devalue my work or the revisionist contributions. Instead, this self-reflective section critically examines the study, confronts its weakness, and identifies issues that future scholars and writers can avoid. By doing so, the intention is to maintain objectivity in my scholarly endeavour, neither exaggerating its contributions nor downplaying its academic values.

Thesis Outline

In the following chapters, I will critically examine two creative examples selected for my project development: Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather Part II* (1974) in chapter Two, followed by Hayao Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* (2013) in Chapter Three. Each case study offers a unique approach and distinctive contribution in their creative adaptations, giving us a better understanding of our research objectives. In chapter four, the writing and adapting process of the original script *Making Hachiro Yoshida* will be analysed to reflect how they benefit from our previous discussions in earlier chapters. More specifically, I am interested in incorporating their representation of the perpetrator in trauma cinema, adapting parallel storylines for the dual-protagonist journey, reflecting social-political commentary between prewar and postwar Japan, and using a true story to recreate a fictional autobiography.

Chapter Two

Making *The Godfather Part II*: Coppola's Creative Discourse

This chapter aims to analyse the parallel narrative from two resonating periods constructed by Francis Ford Coppola in *The Godfather: Part II* and how he transcended the original film by making this sequel 'one of the greatest cinematic adaptations' (Guardian, 2014). Released in 1974, *The Godfather: Part II* won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1975, and Oscar for Best Adapted screenplay in 1975 and ranked No. 10 as 'one of the greatest screenplays', according to IMDb. While the first movie 'romanticises the life of organised crime', Part II gives the audience 'an unflinching look at the dark side of power and vice' (Ebert, 2008), giving the sequel a more realistic portrayal of the Mafia that many believe has surpassed the original masterpiece. Rated as 'the best movie in the trilogy', *The Godfather Part II* is widely considered by many film critics to be even 'better than its predecessor' (Los Angeles Times, 2006). Admittedly, none of these achievements would be possible without the success of his first adaptation.

Coppola's first *Godfather* (1972) is faithfully adapted from Mario Puzo's novel and 'executed it to perfection' (Collin, 2016). According to the Paramount Picture, Coppola 'insisted on the film being called '*Mario Puzo's The Godfather*,' rather than just *the Godfather*, because his original draft of the screenplay was so faithful to the novel, he thought Puzo deserved the full credit for it' (ibid.:2006). However, it is *The Godfather: Part II* that shows the mastery of Coppola as an auteur-adaptor and his artistic contributions to the medium. With no original plan to make a sequel, Paramount Pictures quickly changed their mind and offered Coppola 'something he can't refuse,' namely, the opportunity to expand this new franchise. With 'unilateral control over the sequel,' Coppola freely explored the aftermath of Michael Corleone's story existing independently of the novel (ibid.: 2016). As a result, we see a change in Coppola's attitude toward fidelity, as well as his relationship with the original author. That is to say, Coppola started to play a leading role in making his cinema, establishing a claim to his own film authorship in the new movie.

'Texts need to be rewritten to be alive' (Leitch, 2007); this became undoubtedly clear for Coppola in the process of making *The Godfather Part II*. However, the main issue Coppola faced was that 'they had no published sequel' to adapt then (Collian, 2016). It took another ten years after Part II's release for Puzo to publish his second novel, *the Sicilian*,

which has little to do with the Corleone family. ‘For me, the Godfather story already had an end’, Puzo admitted in an interview (The New York Times, 1980), giving the reader little information about what happened after Michael moved to Nevada. Coppola had no choice but to take an ‘active stance’ in reinventing the Godfather story. Nevertheless, Coppola did not exclude the original author but worked with Puzo in their script collaboration (ibid.: 2016). For both of them, the purpose of this adaptation was fundamentally in the service of storytelling, where active rewriting became not just a strategy but also a necessity in reviving Michael Corleone’s journey.

No longer bound to the novel, Coppola developed a ‘breathtakingly ambitious prequel-sequel that is as gripping as the first movie’ (Bradshaw, 2014). In the finale of *The Godfather*, Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) completes his transformation after publicly executing five criminal heads in New York and quickly adapts his father’s role as the new Mafia Don. In making *The Part II*, Coppola relocates the story to Nevada, where Michael promises his wife to ‘legalise the family business in five years’ (Coppola, 1974, p36). But, on the other hand, we see his aggressive expansion causes more bloodshed, betrayal, and implacable hatred within and outside his own family. ‘A top-down history of political intrigue’ praised by Peter Bradshaw from the Guardian review, ‘Michael’s new story already makes for excellent narratives, but one classic is not enough for Coppola’s ambition’ (Guardian, 2014). Instead, we see the parallel narrative of two equally weighted stories -- Michael’s sequel and his father, Vito Corleone’s prequel.

Parallel Storylines

Taking two linear storylines, Coppola interweaved them together to create a multiple timeline structure in which they are specifically parallel to each other. A similar structure can be found in other films like *Intolerance* (1916), *The Fountain* (2006), *Cloud Atlas* (2012), and *Dias De Gracia* (2011), where their stories are emotionally, casually, and thematically intertwined. ‘The effect can be beautiful,’ Rashawn Prince observes in *The Tastes of Cinema*, ‘As if to suggest a continuity between humanity across oceans and ages. But it can be equally challenging to parallel these storylines’ (CineFix, 2016). In *The Godfather: Part II*, Coppola takes on such challenges by creating a three-and-a-half-hour features that beautifully parallels both Michael’s and Vito’s narratives. Furthermore, through exploring the nature and functions of such parallel narratives, he makes a prequel-sequel that

is distinctively unique to Coppola's cinematic storytelling (Ebert, 2008). In the first half of the chapter, we investigate the functionality of Coppola's parallel narratives and how they are conveyed emotionally and thematically in *The Godfather: Part II*.

Dual-Protagonists Arc

While most films focus on developing one leading character, Coppola made a critical decision to establish dual protagonists, featuring Michael and his father, Vito equally. Far from being an easy task, it is challenging to develop one credible character, let alone a dual protagonist journey. 'Writers can get lost in the logistics of crafting two protagonists,' Peggy Sukia points out in her paper on modern scriptwriting. 'The attempt to erect dual protagonist can be seen as an attempt to distract [our attention] from weak, unformed, and solitary ones.' (Sukia, 2007). On the contrary, both Michael and Vito's stories are strong, fully formed, and considered 'classics in their own rights' (Prince, 2016). In other words, *The Godfather Part II* can be either Vito's rise to power or Michael's new adventure, and both of them would make excellent narratives by themselves. But what Coppola envisioned was more than just a sequel or prequel.

In 'How to Handle Two Lead Characters,' Stephen Harper explains two 'methods of crafting dual protagonists: co-protagonist and parallel protagonists' (Industrial Script, 2020). While the co-protagonist mode features two characters with the same goal in a similar journey, parallel protagonists 'consists of two characters in separate stories, each with their individual goals' (Harper, 2020). Meanwhile, the co-protagonists are situated in the same storyline without counterpointing each other; parallel protagonists have their 'journeys cut back and forth from one another, closely interweaving their narratives on plot and thematic levels' (ibid.: 2020). In *The Godfather: Part II*, Coppola is not interested in a singular narrative or co-protagonists in the same context. Instead, Coppola switches our focus equally between two parallel characters in separate stories.

As a result, the dual-characters arc is flawlessly adapted and executed in Coppola's new Godfather story. Having them pursue different goals, Coppola made Michael and Vito central protagonists, who undergo opposite character growths and changes in similar amounts of screen time. To show how Coppola structures the story of the Corleone family backwards and

forwards, I identified some key characteristics, focusing on the developments of their external and internal journeys. As briefly outlined below:

- Michael's (external) want: To find out who is behind the attempted assassination and eliminate his new enemies regardless of the sacrifices.
 - Michael's (external) obstacles: While his enemies conspire for his demise, there are traitors in the family, forcing him to trust no one but himself.
 - Michael's (internal) obstacles: Believing his father's decree, 'the strength of a family, like the strength of an army, lies in its loyalty to each other.'
 - Michael's (internal) need/realising: 'Times have changed. If history taught him anything, he could kill anyone, including breaking the taboo of killing his brother who betrays him' (Coppola, 1974, p180).
-
- Vito's (external) want: To start a new family in America and revenge the murder of his parents when he returns to Sicily one day.
 - Vito's (external) obstacles: Don Fanucci of the Black Hand causes his unemployment and threatens his promising life in New York.
 - Vito's (emotional) needs/realising: To survive and thrive, he has to become a new power against the local Don for 'great men not born, but grow great.'
 - Vito's (emotional) obstacles: His crimes and sins would be passed on to his children, especially Michael, who becomes more sinister than his father.

Bearing in mind that this juxtaposition does not represent the dual protagonist arc but serves to elucidate their wants and needs within the dramatic contexts. Throughout the film, it gives us a basic understanding of 'who they are' and 'what drives them'. Admittedly, there are several other factors involved in establishing the dual-character arc, including their points of view, personalities, life-changing decisions, moral a(de)scents, etc. But it is not our goal to list all the attributes in creating a credible character. Instead, we will focus on how and why Coppola creates such a mirror-life to handle the dual-protagonist journey.

Mirror Life

Coppola mirrors the life of Vito with Michael's, having their stories reflect on one another thematically. If one treats it as a coherent narrative, *The Godfather Part II* can be interpreted as a story of the Corleone family's power struggle across two generations. However, having a

deeper and closer look, we see how Vito and Michael are contrasted through such mirror life. 40According to Harper's theory, 'Dual protagonists must equally spiral, intersect and clash multiple times throughout the course of a screenplay' (2020). Alternating between Vito and Michael's narratives, their stories are both compared and contrasted. On the one hand, they have separate journeys at different times; on the other hand, their stories subtly intertwine as if their internal journeys resonate with each other on a thematic level. In Coppola's design, this reflection formulates a 'tighter bond between characters' and 'augments on the story's theme as a whole' (Harper, 2020).

In the constant juxtapositions, we have the ascent of two Godfathers and their father-son interactions across time and landscapes. For Coppola, this dynamic between father and son is so fundamental to the Godfather spirit that he reintroduces Vito Corleone after his cinematic demise as a younger character in *Part II*. In the opening scene, Coppola reveals the origin of young Vito Corleone, where his parents are murdered by a local Mafia, leaving the young boy no choice but to escape his birthplace. Similarly, Michael is targeted by attempted murder at home, which sets him on a lonely and dangerous journey of revenge. Michael's mind wanders on the train, taking him to the past where his father struggles to provide for his family in New York. Despite having different predicaments, Michael and Vito find their strengths in the powerful desire to protect the family. As fathers, observed by Helen, Vito and Michael are represented as characters 'whose love is timeless, and they would do anything for their sons' (2012). In her article, 'Top 10 Father Figure in film,' Helen ranks Vito Corleone as the number two; 'the term – father is as much a symbol of fear as it is of love. Vito's family exists in two entities and he is the father of both – on the one hand ruthless as the Don of the Corleone, on the other [represented as] compassionate and loving as a father to his children and a husband to his wife. As a father in every respect, Vito is in many ways a figure of perfection' (Another Magazine, 2014).

Their journeys continually overlap and intertwine through Coppola's transitional techniques. Vito loses his job and falls under the control of Don Fanucci, while Michael encounters Hymn Roth, a key player in the conspiracy against the Corleone family. Both father and son face a choice: to fight or yield. In both cases, they opt for strategic deception to outwit their adversaries. Vito feigns subservience to Fanucci, while Michael maintains a cordial relationship with Roth to lower his guard. This parallelism creates the illusion of commentary between them, with the father paving the way for the son, who follows in his

footsteps to become the new Godfather. Eventually, their journeys converge at the climax, as Vito eliminates Fanucci and ascends as the new Don, while Michael strikes when his enemies are most vulnerable, expanding Corleone dominance. However, these similar character arcs are distinctly contrasted by their divergent attitudes toward the family code.

In Coppola's representations, Michael reflects only the opposite image of his father. 'The principles valued by Vito', as Coppola explains through his constructed creations, 'is counterpointed by Michael's disregard of them' (The Godfather Notebook, 2016). Always putting his family first, Vito educates Michael that he can't be a real man without his family. 'You can do anything,' Vito instructs Michael, 'but never go against the family' (Coppola, 1972, p16). At first, Michael appears as the new Don, supervising almost every family affair, such as his niece's engagement, his sister's divorce settlement, and his brother's troubled wife, etc. Bearing in mind Vito's diplomacy, Michael operates his father's old-day business in a similar manner by 'keeping his friends closer and enemies closer' (Coppola, 1974, p91). However, Michael's reign is challenged by a targeted shooting at his bedroom, nearly killing his family. This attack becomes a life-shattering event that reshapes the course of Michael's life, leading him toward a path of bloodshed and vengeance. 'This marks the devolution of Michael Corleone', Writer K. M. Weiland uses Michael's example to explain her definition of 'a corruption arc,' where a character who is good but 'throws away that chance and consciously chooses darkness' (2008). According to Weiland, 'We feel no regret for Michael's decline. Vito is a murderer too, but he grows wise and defends old values against modern hungers' (10: 2008). Through their mirror life, Coppola highlights the differences between Vito and Michael, showing us how and why 'Vito is sympathetic, yet Michael gradually becomes a villain' (2008).

Although they are both Mafia Dons, Michael 'loses sight of those values and becomes a new godfather every bit as evil as he has to be' (Ebert, 2008). In Part II, Michael fully adopts this role as an 'all-controlling Mafia tycoon' who violates his wife's trust and breaks the promise to legitimise their family business. While Vito builds a vast Corleone network from nothing, Michael slowly tears them apart without knowing it. Instead of keeping everyone close, Michael alienates people around him, becoming increasingly lonely, and trusting no one but himself. 'In Michael's life, paranoia is a useful defence mechanism,' Ebert observes, 'Coppola shows Michael breaking down under the pressure' (ibid.: 2008). Even Tom Hagen, the most trusted confidant whom Michael considers a brother, is finally suspected. As a result

of his negligence, his brother Fredo betrays him to join the enemy. In desperation, Michael approaches his mother, revealing that he might have lost the family entrusted by his father. For Michael, however, times have changed, and he finally decides to break the biggest taboo – to go against the family (Coppola, 1974, p151). Showing no mercy to his brother, Michael silently executes Fredo, who dies believing he has been forgiven. Terrified by Michael's brutality, his wife Kay can no longer live with her husband's crime. 'Just like [their] marriage is abortion,' Kay admits that she aborts Michael's unborn child, 'Something is unholy and evil, [she] will never bring another one of Michael's sons into his world' (Coppola, 1974, p174). Losing control, Michael exiles his wife, preventing her from getting close to their children again. In contrast to Vito, who leaves this world peacefully with dignity, Michael 'loses his remaining shreds of morality and becomes an empty shell, insecure and merciless' (Ebert, 2008). The corruption arc is perfectly executed, and Michael becomes irredeemable. In the enclosing scene, we have the mirror images of Vito and Michael reflecting their whole lives, which are smoothly and silently embedded in such final juxtaposition.

Story Progression

In Coppola's parallel storylines, the development of Vito's story also progresses Michael's narrative. To achieve that, Coppola employs stylish and metaphorical transitions that create a human continuity across time and space. Taking the first scene/narrative transition as an example, we have young Vito alone in a single cell where he has to spend six months of quarantine. In the following frames, Coppola beautifully parallels Vito's face with that of his grandson two generations later.



Fig 1.1: 'Vito looks out the Statue through a barrel window'



Fig 1.2: 'Then he turns and sits in the corner.'



Fig 1.3: 'He's silent for long time, Then in sweet, pure voice, he sings to himself in Sicilian'



Fig 1.4: 'A nine year old boy, dressed immaculately in white...'



Fig 1.5: 'He has black hair, and his face is unmistakably similar to Young Vito's.'



Fig 1.6: 'As Anthony Corleone his grandson moves on the way, Vito's sad song reaches fifty years later.'

The screenplay is presented here:

EXT. THE STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

The VIEW slowly begins to pull back, revealing this to be the view from inside the quarantine cell, where Vito stands on his bench, looking out to the statue through the barrel window.

Then he turns, and sits in the corner. He is silent for a long time. Then, in a sweet, pure voice, he sings to himself in Sicilian.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

MOVING CLOSE SHOT - A nine year old boy, dressed immaculately in white, with a large white silk bow tied to his shoulder, moving slowly down the aisle of the church with a group of other children.

He has black hair, and his face is unmistakably similar to young Vito's. He moves slowly, his hands clasped around a golden missal.

We HEAR only the pure voice of Vito in Sicilian, his sad song reaching out from the past, as ANTHONY CORLEONE, his Grandson, moves on the way to his First Holy Communion more than fifty years later.

As the writer and director, Coppola remains faithful to his script descriptions and accurately executes his vision in the finished film. In this particular scene, we have film and script resemble the same visual images. For Coppola, it is not just a scene transition or technique of editing but a necessary shift of audience's perspective to progress the parallel storylines. After Michael survives the attack, we see him gently kissing his son goodnight. Michael's love for his son travels back in time and translated into Vito's feelings toward the new-born baby. Michael's story is shifted into Vito's life with the slightest push. In doing so, Coppola smoothly intersected and embedded their stories within each other.



Fig 1.7: 'Michael touches his forehead softly.'



Fig 1.8: 'Michael kisses his son A gentle goodnight.'



Fig 1.9: 'As Michael's face dissolves We see young Vito (23)'



Fig1.10: 'There is much on His mind, as the sound of the Waltz echoed an old Italian Music'



Fig 1.11: Vito approaches the bed reaching for his son.'



Fig 1.12: 'Vito holds his son lovingly in arms as his wife watches them happily.'

Through Coppola's story progression, their storylines are emotionally linked together, with Michael effectively transmitting those emotions into Vito's inner world. In expressing that love, both Michael and Vito realise their potential to protect their loved ones. Even though they are sinister, we can relate to that love, share a universal feeling, and perhaps show sympathy for their situations (Collin, 2016). The theme is amplified, and so are their inner worlds visually connected. Naturally, through appealing to our feelings, the emotional link becomes the glue that holds character and audience. However, for Coppola, these emotional moments are not the sole means of fostering audience engagement.

Coppola purposefully leaves out a significant part of Vito's life between these transitions, jumping from his childhood to his youth without explaining what happened in between. Known as the 'narrative gap,' Coppola cleverly employs this strategy in his parallel storylines, inviting us to reconstruct these missing events. By employing a back-and-forth narrative style, Coppola eliminates the element of mystery surrounding the 'what' and instead directs the audience's attention on 'how' story progresses. In doing so, the audience deliberates on what happened to young Vito after he finishes the quarantine and how he makes a living alone in New York with a language barrier. Unfortunately, Coppola does not give us a direct answer nor explain Vito's early life through other characters' dialogues. As a result, it remains a mystery to us how Vito arrives at this moment. To make sense of the narrative, the audience actively engages with the stories by filling in the unshown events themselves. And this act of filling the narrative gaps allows the audience to facilitate in the process of story progression.

As Weiland points out, 'In all cinema, there is perhaps no arc as flawlessly executed as that of Michael Corleone in the Godfather Part II' (2005). We see how Coppola magically interweaves two linear storylines that are beautifully paralleled. Having Michael's life mirror that of his father Vito, Coppola shows two opposite images of Godfathers in their ascent to

power. Through the emotional link, the viewers learn to appreciate such story progression with its subtle thematic transitions. As they reach the climax, the two narratives eventually meet and complete each other in view of the grand chasm embedded in the final juxtaposition. While the first half investigates the incredible structure, the second half will discuss what makes Coppola's Part II 'one of cinematic history's greatest adaptations' and best-written screenplays in cinematic history (The American Institute, 2015).

Making *The Godfather Part II*: Coppola's Creative Discourse

While the first *Godfather* remains a faithful adaptation of Mario Puzo's novel, Part II signals a notable shift in Coppola's approach to fidelity. Although some material and contents are inherited from the predecessor, Coppola had to adopt a proactive stance, particularly given the absence of a published sequel. This marked a significant departure for Coppola, who not only reimagined the narrative as his own but also elevated it to be on par with the original, effectively becoming 'the new author of the Godfather saga' (Bradshaw, 2014). In this chapter, we will explore the methods and motivations behind Coppola's reinterpretation, examining whether this 'unfaithful' adaptation can be viewed as a creative discourse within a broader dialogical context. Through this analysis, I will show that rewriting in Coppola's adaptation becomes a new criterion of mastery. In Part II, Coppola shows his true mastery as an auteur-adaptor in transcending the original and reinventing the Godfather franchise.

Joseph Bonanno: the 'Real' Godfather

In addition to Mario Puzo's novel, Coppola also learns from the true story of Joseph Bonanno, who is widely recognised as the 'real' Godfather (Crosson, 2022). Drawing inspiration from the real-life tale of Joseph Bonanno, Coppola gains new perspectives from this legendary Mafia boss in recreating his fictional counterparts. Born in Sicily, Joseph Bonanno ran one of the five criminal families in New York from 1931 to 1968. At age three, Joseph emigrated to New York City with his father, whose family was deeply involved in organised crime (ibid.: 2022). Known as the Castellammare clan, Joseph's uncles originally led this Mafia family. After the war, Joseph took control of the family and became the youngest Italian-American Mafia boss at 26. Facing the Mafia Commission, Joseph strategically brutally eliminated all his rivals. Eventually, Joseph left New

York and moved to Arizona, where he embraced his retirement. In 1983, Joseph published his autobiography, *A Man of Honour*, became a 'self-serving and reflective manuscript' (ibid.: 2022). As depicted in the movie, many of Joseph Bonanno's life stories work their way into the Godfather story and become key events in Vito and Michael's storylines. Joseph provides 'unique viewpoints and perceptions as a real-life mobster' without cinematic filters, which confounds Coppola's romantic imagination of the Mafia Don (ibid.: 2022).

Influenced by Joseph, Coppola highlights the conflict between Michael's criminal ambition and the desire to legitimise the family business. In the opening scene, Michael makes a generous donation to the State University of Nevada, inviting the Senator and other distinguished guests to celebrate his son's Holy Communion. While dancing at the party, Michael's wife reminds him of a promise that he once made that 'the Corleone family will be completely legitimate in five years' (Coppola, 1974, p36). Ironically, that is 'seven years ago', and the family operates the same business. 'I know, I'm trying, darling.' Michael kisses his wife, falling into a long silence. Not just for Kay, that is the promise Michael makes for himself. In a private meeting with the Senator, Michael looks offended when the Senator says, 'I don't like the kind of men you are and see you come and out of this clean country in oily hair, dress in the silk suit, and try to pass yourself off as decent Americans' (Coppola, 1974, p29). The word 'Mafia' is never spoken in the Godfather series, according to Bradshaw's review, 'but it is heard three times in the sequel during the Senate hearings' (2014). It becomes a personal insult for Michael, who used to alienate himself from the Corleone family in the hope of being a decent American. Even as the new Don, Michael is mocked by the Senator for 'the dishonest way he poses himself' (Coppola, 1974, p29).

Similarly, Joseph presents himself as a 'fine, benign gentleman' on the book cover of his autobiography. 'It is cleverly designed,' observed the New York Times, 'Yellow evokes a feeling of warmth and happiness. Joe's cover disarms people, 'making them feel certain sentimental toward him' (McDowell, 1983). It is not just a disguise, but a 'common belief fallacy in the Mafia psychology' (ibid.: 1983). Joseph highlights this conflict psychology of how the Mafia believe 'they can have it both ways,' that no matter how illegal their businesses are they can be properly legitimised. Deeply believing such a fallacy, Michael fools himself into thinking he has 'no interest or investment in anything illegitimate' at the height of his power (Coppola, 1990, p41). Coppola takes this idea further in Part III, where Michael abandons his Mafia friends and becomes the leading figure to 'legitimise the business' by

making billions of investments into Immobile, a corrupted Vatican-controlled corporation. Despite Michael's justification, this investment with the Immobile is the most ambitious family expansion, making himself 'an international conglomerate' and 'the richest criminal alive' (Coppola, 1990, p43). This is 'the Mafia ideal' for Joseph, who is on 'the same side of hypocrisy' (Roger, 2010). Picturing himself as a 'caring old man who lives peacefully in his garden with his grandchildren,' Joseph offers Coppola new interpretations of what a sequel the Godfather story can be.

Re-Author the Godfather

For Robert Stam, the term 'adaptation' already implies 'there is more than one text and more than one author' (Stam, 1993). In the actual process of filmmaking, the authorship of the adapted film does not always belong to the original author, unless they play a significant role in this cinematic recreation. In the case of the Godfather series, there is a noticeable transition in authorship (Collin, 2022). In the first movie, Puzo's original story and intentions are faithfully translated. However, in Part II, the cinematic interpretation expands beyond the book, and authorship of the film no longer solely resides with Puzo (ibid.: 2022). Meanwhile, Coppola outgrows from his adapter status and becomes equal, if not more superior, in re-authoring the Godfather story with his directorial brand name.

For Coppola, *The Godfather* franchise needs to be rewritten to be alive again. However, writing 'a great sequel is rare and extremely difficult' (Coppola, 1972). In Coppola's case, the viewers are fascinated by the Mafia war and their power struggle. But it is less captivating if Coppola does more of the same (Collins, 2022). Simply repeating the Godfather story will not be sufficient and could be a disappointing failure. Meanwhile, Brent Hasting points out, 'the least important part of the sequel is to resolve lingering plotlines and character arcs from the first project' (2013). Likewise, with the original story satisfactorily resolved, Coppola had to avoid making the same Godfather movie. 'It is indeed paradoxical,' Brent explains, the audience loves the original but 'the more different your sequel is, more chance of your success' (2013). That is why Brent believes there are few good sequels, let alone great ones. So how did Coppola achieve the unimaginable: creating the 'finest sequel ever made,' perhaps surpassing its legendary predecessor?

In 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogic of Adaptation,' Stam further encourages us to consider

thinking of the original not 'not as a enclosed text,' but 'an open structure to be reworked by a boundless context' (1993). So naturally, Coppola understands that the Godfather story, despite being completed by Puzo, can be 'reworked' as 'an open structure' and generate new texts through rewriting and reinvention. At the novel's end, Michael moves the Corleone family permanently to Las Vegas after his nightmarish vignette of slaying five Mafia heads. For Puzo, this is the end of the Godfather story. 'I felt immensely grateful to Puzo for having imagined these vivid characters,' Coppola appreciates such heritage from Puzo's novel after their script collaboration, 'He has given [me] such great raw material to work with' (Coppola, 1980: 4). Although the original story is over, Coppola tells the viewers that 'there is more to tell you'. And 'the best sequel,' according to Brant, 'completely reinvents the storyline and character arcs' (Brant, 2008). In other words, Coppola needs to continue *The Godfather* series with an original story as the film's new author.

'Trusting the tale, not the teller', Coppola focuses on *his* storytelling to meet with the audience's 'sky-high' expectations. According to Andrew Collin, 'Part II is more ambitious, it's more elegiac, it delves deeper into the soil of Italian-American myth – plus, trying to match the critical and commercial dynamite of the first film? *The Godfather Part II* was, from conception upwards, an insane project. But it worked.' (2022: 24). Instead of picking up where the last story left off, Coppola opens a new chapter by reimagining Michael's story's aftermath in Las Vegas, Nevada. Seven years after the Five Families War, Coppola restarts this new storyline for Michael Corleone, who tightens his grip on the family crime syndicate as the new head and aggressively expands the Corleone control to Las Vegas, Hollywood, and even Cuba. In a grander scale, Coppola preserves and expands the scope of this Mafia underworld from New York City to include the most powerful criminal families in America. With the taste of the original, Coppola confounds audience's expectations with different stakes, social-political contexts, and re-portrayal of old characters.

Admittedly, filmmaking is a collaborative endeavour and Coppola did not solely rely on himself. However, Coppola's 'creative control and personal vision behind the second film is so prominent that makes him the primary author of a film' (Paramount Picture, 2006). In the sequel, we will see how Coppola re-fictionalised both central characters. Having Puzo only as his cowriter, Coppola recreated the Godfather as the real author of the Part II, thus marking his distinctive status as the film auteur.

Reportraying Vito and Michael Corleone

In The Godfather Part II review, Collins highlights the brilliance of Coppola and Puzo's approach, which expands the saga in two compelling directions, 'This Puzo-Coppola masterstroke propels us both forward into the Faustian rise of Don Michael and backwards into the early 1900s, offering an intimate glimpse into Vito Andolini's initial foray into the world of the Mafia' (2020). Although Coppola decides to keep both major characters from the first movie, he takes an innovative approach by re-portraying them in his original story. With Vito, Coppola invites us on a fresh expedition, unveiling the untold origins, enigmatic backstories, and what makes Don Corleone's who he is. Meanwhile, in the case of Michael, Coppola adeptly subverts our expectations, drawing our attention to his character's fall and immoral journey.

Despite Marlon Brando's iconic portrayal of Don Corleone, Coppola intends to change the actor by giving the Godfather different representations. In the first movie, Coppola has Vito's character and his story resolved, leaving the screen time for the rise of Michael. In *Part II*, however, Coppola makes an unconventional but not unheard of decision, that is, reviving Vito's character and bringing him back to the cinematic foreground. Admittedly, Coppola's choice of Brando is perfect for the first movie. Yet he decides to cast new actors Oreste Baldini (for kid Vito) and Robert De Niro (as young Vito Corleone). Drawing the material from the novel, Coppola reintroduces the origin of Vito in Sicily and later his rise to power in America. 'Robert De Niro takes the mantle from Brando and accomplishes the same acting feat by becoming a younger Vito,' Rawson Prince observes, 'this storyline retains the same romanticism from the first film as opposed to the darker storyline belonging to Michael Corleone' (*Taste of Cinema*, 2017). As powerful but also different from Brando's performance, De Niro's portrayal shows a 'restrained and intelligent hard-working immigrant' (ibid.: 2017) who struggles to provide for his family. Reluctantly, he 'is introduced to a life of crime' by his neighbour Peter Clemenza, who starts to appreciate Vito's remarkable talent, willingly following his leadership. Unlike other Mafia heads, we see De Niro's humble image of the Godfather, who is devoid of ego and always spends his valuable time with his family. In contrast to Brando's Vito, who is aloof and untouchable, it is easier for the audience to relate with this fatherly figure who is more caring and human. Like his predecessor, De Niro also won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in 1975, making his representation of Vito

equivalent to Brando's. Having different Vito actors, Coppola further improves and completes this character in his recreation.

Meanwhile, Coppola takes a different approach in reinventing Michael, played by the same actor. 'Francis Ford Coppola re-wrote the entire script over a weekend because Al Pacino said he didn't like the original and would not do the film,' an Paramount executive reveals in an interview, 'He [Al Pacino] told Coppola that he hadn't actually disliked the first script all that much, but knew it could be better' (Coppola, 2006). Previously, Coppola focuses on Michael's character growth, how this educated war hero swears to revenge on his father through participating in family business, of which he used to disapprove. Given the external threats against his family, Michael's ascent to power is somehow justified, even his nightmarish vengeance. In Part II, however, Coppola makes it difficult and even impossible for the audience to side with Michael who 'slowly descends into becoming a cold-hearted monster' (Ebert, 2008).

The Guardian calls it the 'devolution of Michael', which contrasts with the honour and dignity of his father Vito. Michael's fall is established by Coppola and brilliantly played by Pacino, who 'suggests the furies and hatred that lie just beneath his character's controlled exterior' (Bradshaw, 2014). No one can tell what Michael has become and this New Michael 'loses common touch.' Becoming increasingly cruel and closed, Michael is 'drawn more and more deeply into a byzantine web of deceit and betrayal' (ibid.: 2008). Spending minimal time with his wife, Michael distances their relationship, locking her in the house like a prisoner. Following Fredo's betrayal, Michael's faith in the idea of family loyalty shatters. As he vanquishes his enemies, Michael extends no mercy, opting for ruthless acts of murder and destruction. Nevertheless, what makes him unrecognisable is 'Michael's order of Fredo's death' (Prince, 2017). After renouncing his brother, Michael cannot forgive or forget Fredo's betrayal. 'He injured me, making me betray myself.' Michael holds Fredo responsible, struggling with whether or not to kill his own blood. For Coppola, this is a soul-shattering event where Pacino recreates Michael's character by doing the unimaginable. Knowing this sin would haunt him forever, Michael makes the biggest mistake, breaking the taboo of murdering his family. As the film concludes, we witness Michael completing yet another transformation, finding himself abandoned by nearly everyone except for those who either work for him or dread him.

Confronting Italian-American stereotypes

As the son of an Italian immigrant, Francis Coppola faces the dilemma of either reshaping or reinforcing the ethnic stereotype represented by earlier gangster films that 'all Italians are criminals' (Stefano, 2017). In 'Italian-American and the Mythology of Crime,' Stefano Marnzana indicates how an Italian Heritage Organisation accuses 'Puzo's novel of further damaging the collective reputation of Italian-Americans' and being 'the principal responsible agent' (21: 2017) for promoting such Italian Mafia mythology of crime. From their perspectives, it is believed that Puzo 'has enriched the Mafia sequel with a nuanced and personal touch, employing the Mafia as a metaphor for representing Italian-American society' (23: 2017). Nevertheless, Stefano strongly opposes such discrimination against Puzo's novel, nor does he believe that 'Vito's corruption and anti-social ideology are the product of Sicilian fatalism and poverty in the novel' (23: 2017). In fact, Stefano considers most Italian-American victims of 'Hollywood's interest in ethnic delinquency' during the Depression. Fortunately, the film adaptation renews his faith, '[Coppola] 's films develop a new approach to transform the utterly dishonourable Italian gangster to a more human and glamorous character, that in some way has tempered the preceding negative image' (Stefano, 25: 2017).

Besides its cinematic values, Coppola's *Part II* sheds new social-cultural light on the representation of Italian Americans in media. In 'All My Sons: The Godfather and the Cinematic Representation of Italian-American Families,' Albert Lena argues how Coppola's films change 'the screen representation of Italian-American ethnicity from a new perspective.' (211: 2016). Before *The Godfather*, Italian immigrants were portrayed as 'social outsiders,' 'sinister criminal,' and 'dangerous low-class people' (212: 2016). For instance, *Little Caesar* (1931) featured Edward G Robinson as a ruthless Italian American gangster and *Scarface* (1932) represents Paul Muni as a violent Italian immigrant who involved in extortion and various criminal activities. This ethical discrimination was further highlighted in the genre films where 'Italian American gangster becomes a major film personification of America's social failure, including the crisis of increasingly elusive American Dream' (Lena, 215: 2016). However, with *the Godfather series*, Coppola recaptures the audience with their favourite tale of American Dream through Vito's perspective 'as an ambitious, hard-working immigrant' (215: 2016). The Italian outlaw is not evil per se anymore,' Lena observes, 'Vito seems to 'flourish as a warm and charismatic leader (215: 2016)

To give the film more credibility, Coppola not only hires Italian crews but stresses his actors to speak authentic Sicilian with a positive portrayal of Italian families. 'This decision extended to various aspects of the production,' as Coppola reveals himself, 'including cinematography, art direction, and even some of the writing staff, but employing Italian talent added to the film's genuine appearance and atmosphere' (The Godfather Notebook, 2017). Authentic Sicilian language is another key aspect of Coppola's Italian representation, 'Coppola insisted that certain scenes, particularly those involving Italian characters in private moments, be performed in authentic Sicilian dialect. This linguistic accuracy added depth to the characters and conveyed a sense of cultural fidelity' (Stefano, 2017).

On the other hand, Coppola intentionally downplays the Italian mobster elements while focusing on the positive portrayal of Italian families in American society. The wedding scene, for instance, 'makes an enormous impression on the Italian American audience' (ibid.: 2017). An interview with Coppola reveals how 'he [Coppola] originally planned that the first scene should be an overhead shot of the Corleone wedding, but an Italian friend suggested he went for something unexpected' (The Godfather Notebook, 2017). Instead, Coppola 'had the solider deliver the speech in front of a massive American flag and acting on his friend's Coppola begins with the simple, memorable, ironic statement – I believe in America' (ibid.: 2017). As Lena notes, how Coppola encourages and even celebrates that the Corleone family 'instilled a profound sense of cultural pride in their pursuit of wealth and power (218: 2016). By highlighting the family's culture, traditions, and the paramount value of loyalty, Coppola imbued the characters in the film with a sense of humanity (Lena, 220, 2016). He ensured the audience perceived them as multidimensional individuals driven by intricate motivations, transcending mere stereotypes or one-dimensional criminal portrayals. Through his films, Coppola has effectively conveyed an Italian critique of how Americans have misrepresented Italian culture and promoted the rich cultural identity of Italian Americans, offering a nuanced exploration of these themes. As a result, Coppola's films have established 'an Italian critique of American defamation' and 'their celebration of cultural identity' (ibid.: 217)

Placing 'the family values' at the core, Coppola advocates that '*The Godfather Part II* is not all about the organised crime, but a family chronicle in the context of American immigrant's experience' (Stefano, 2017). Like many Italian Americans, young Vito in Part II struggles with the early immigrant experience, 'but never apologise to take care of [his] family' (Coppola, 1974, p72). In contrast to other Mafia leaders, the rise of Vito Corleone

reminds us of the possibility of the American dream and inner goodness of the first immigrants. Through Vito Corleone, Coppola has created an 'affective father, a community leader, and a King Lear figure completely devoted to his sons and family' (ibid.: 2017).

Naturally, this family-centred paradigm proposed by the Corleone family appealed to many audiences worldwide, 'who have identified with the Sicilian family's values.' despite their association with the Mafia world. Not just Italians other immigrant groups also feel related to the Corleone, regarding the complexity of family relations, 'which raises the question about family loyalty and betrayal, and the impossible expectations of immigrant in the American society' (ibid.: 2017). Like Vito and Michael Corleone, they are also ruled by their ethnicity, reflecting their difficulties adapting to American life. According to Lena, Coppola is extremely 'ambitious' in adapting Puzo's novel because he 'intends the film to function as a cultural landmark in the American cinema' (213: 2016). For Coppola, the *Godfather* goes beyond just changing the cinematic stereotypes associated with Italian American immigrants. This ethnic model is represented by the Corleone family in the *Godfather Part II* intends to 'develop a new ethnic paradigm for the media' (ibid.: 2016) With Coppola's effort, the *Godfather* series, has 'challenged the very core of mainstream US culture' (ibid.: 2016) and was appraised as 'one of the richest and most incisive portrayals of Italian American life yet captured on film' (Lena, 24: 2016).

Coppola's Cinematic Legacy

When it comes to adaptation, both *Godfather* films are 'epics befitting the best of American literature and also exceptionally made films, complete with Oscar-winning acting, directing, writing and art direction' (Ebert, 2008). After fifty years of their release, which *Godfather* film is better remains debatable. While both films rank top five in an IMDb list for the greatest movies ever made, the second instalment is often regarded as 'the best sequel and prequel in the history of cinematography'. For instance, in his article, Nathan Harper describes 'five things *The Godfather Part II* does better than the original'. Similarly, Rashawn Prince explains 'six reasons why Part II is the best in the trilogy.' As a follow-up movie, Part II is widely considered 'superior' to the first movie by many reviewers.

Nevertheless, I have no intention of privileging one film over another. Instead, the chapter paid more attention to Coppola's dialogical responses -- to rewriting, reinterpretations, and

re-contextualisation. In the last section, I will demonstrate why Coppola's adaptation can be seen as a creative discourse in a broader cinematic context. Like Miyazaki, the anime master, Coppola transcends his Godfather franchise into a unique, renowned cultural icon.

Reaching the status of an idol, Coppola's Godfather is compared to 'Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Ian Fleming's James Bond (The Guardian, 2006). To global fans, Coppola established a new trend in portraying organised crime, making portrayals of the Mafia popular iconic in the industry. 'The genius of Coppola,' reviewed by Peter Bradshaw, 'is to reinvent these criminal narratives as a dysfunctional dynastic psychodrama' (ibid.: 2006). Far from being despicable characters, the mobsters in *The Godfather* have turned themselves into 'respectful and wealthy criminal businessmen, who dress in a silk suit with combed oily hair, granting themselves decent places in American society' (Coppola, 1974, 29). As Stefano observes, Coppola's Godfather even inspired a 'feeling of admiration almost of envy' among the non-Italian audience, who worship and celebrate their luxury and adventurous lifestyle (25: 2017).

Vito Corleone himself is also considered 'the 11th most iconic villain' by the American Film Institute and his philosophy is 'the must-taught wisdom of men in the 80s and 90s' (Cowie, 2005). Matt O'Neill observes that the impact of *The Godfather* films has been so 'wide-reaching that there have been endless references and parodies in pop culture', from Fat Tony in *The Simpsons* to Jerry Seinfeld's description of a "massacred" t-shirt (The Godfather icon, 2006). Meanwhile, Coppola's work has inspired many promising careers, including Martin Scorsese and Brian De Palma. For David Chase - the creator of *The Sopranos*, 'his universally adored TV series about a depressed mobster in therapy wouldn't exist without the legendary Godfather' (The Sopranos Interview, 2004). Those greatest franchises of our time – *Star Wars*, *Aliens*, *James Bond*, *the Lord of the Ring*, *Harry Potter*, and *Marvel Cinematic Universe* i+ all powered by sequels and instalments. 'It all started with the Godfather Part II,' according to Jon Lewis, 'that has been essentially pushed the idea of cinematic follow-ups to new heights (8: 2009). For Neil, the Godfather films' paved the way for kind of all evolutions' in cinematic storytelling and filmmaking' (ibid.: 2009). Whether true or not, Coppola's epic masterpieces forever changed the history of the film adaptation, and they remain unsurpassable as our 'cultural bedrock' almost half a century later.

In conclusion

Along with Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises*, Coppola's *The Godfather Part II* presents an excellent case study for developing my original screenplay. By examining the parallel narrative that mirrors the dual protagonist's life, *Making Hachiro Yoshida* aims to incorporate such structure and story progression perfected by Coppola's work. Additionally, my screenplay has much to learn from Coppola's creative and dialogical responses in adapting the Part II; more specifically, how he 're-authored' the prior text, 're-portrayed the original characters,' confronted the 'social-historical representations,' and became part of a broader cinematic context. Likewise, I hope to find out if my film adaptation can also be a creative discourse capable of improving and transcending the original source, while probing the limit of historical representation and textual adaptability in fictional autobiography.

Chapter Three

The Wind Rises: Hayao Miyazaki's Fictional Autobiography

This chapter examines the creative adaptation of Hayao Miyazaki in *The Wind Rises* (2013). Like Coppola, Miyazaki excels as an adapter-auteur by engaging in one of his career's most complex intertextual dialogues. Through rewriting multiple sources, Miyazaki adapts the source text creatively, reinventing this wartime biopic drama with his fictional re-imagination to reflect his own dreams, ideology and moral dilemmas. In addition, Miyazaki's creative adaptation investigates 'what is fiction' and 'what is original,' demonstrating 'how' and 'why' rewriting has been implemented in making *The Wind Rises*. This chapter will be divided into two sections. First, we will explore what makes *The Wind Rises* a fictional memoir of Miyazaki and, arguably, his autofiction. In the second part, we will explore how Miyazaki addresses the issues and challenges of representing a perpetrator in an antiwar film.

As the co-founder of Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki has explored a wide range of genres and authored 12 acclaimed anime features. These have achieved critical and commercial success, including Oscar nominations, British Academy Film rewards, and Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature between 2003 and 2024. In *The Master of Japanese Animation*, Helen McCarthy considers Miyazaki 'a meticulous craftsman whose films celebrate the strengths of nature, the struggle against the perpetration, the search for utopias, and the eternal importance of love' (1999: 15). Miyazaki's films set 'new standards for feature-length animation', earning him titles such as the 'Disney of Japan' and the 'Kurosawa of anime' (Cavallaro, 2015). In academia, Miyazaki's works have garnered significant scholarly interest, leading to serious cinematic studies of Japanese animation films (Greenberg, 2018).

Before announcing his retirement in 2013 (a decision he has revisited multiple times), Miyazaki created arguably 'the most sensitive and controversial animated movie' in recent memory: *The Wind Rises* (Byford, 2013). Despite political controversy, *The Wind Rises* received critical acclaim and is considered 'the highest-grossing Japanese film in 2013' (Keegan, 2013). This highly controversial Oscar-nominated masterpiece is a decades-spanning tale inspired by the story of a young aircraft designer who 'pursues his dream of making a beautiful aeroplane' during WWII. Based on the life of Jiro Horikoshi, the semi-biographic novel by Tatsuo Hori, and his own manga published in 2009, Miyazaki tasks himself with perhaps the most challenging intertextual narratives. Admittedly, it is

uncommon even for someone like Miyazaki to create a ‘re-adaption of his own manga with the same name’, which takes material from Tatsuo Hori’s 1937 semi-autobiographic novel and primarily centres around the life of Jiro Horikoshi (Hairston, 2015).

The Wind Rises: A Tribute to Hayao Miyazaki’s Autofiction?

Throughout his animation career, Miyazaki has developed a ‘penchant for romantic action-adventure, slapstick comedy, alternative landscapes, magical creatures and hero’s journey’ (McCarthy, 2013). Taking Miyazaki’s directorial debut -- *Castle of Calioastro: The Princess and The Thief*, as an example, it is set in a ‘European never-never land of the ancient castle’, starring a princess in distress and ‘a lovable rough who steals hearts as easily as jewels’ (ibid.: 2013). As Susan J. Napier observes, Miyazaki developed many themes in his later movies, which are ‘stretched out in this light-hearted, romantic comedy’ (Napier, 2005). The combination of these elements creates highly stylish and distinctive Miyazaki films loved by children and adults worldwide (Cavallaro, 2015).

However, all these Miyazaki elements are purposefully avoided in *The Wind Rises*, which instead situates the least heroic character in a real-life context. In an interview with Roger Ebert, Miyazaki explains why this film ‘holds a special place among all his anime features,’ and what it means to him as the film’s author. ‘For me, [*The Wind Rises*] is more intimate. Creating this film is a beautiful and painful process’ (Ebert, 2013). Then Miyazaki stops there without giving us too much detail. Some suspect Miyazaki incorporated personal features into this film, while others believe that *The Wind Rises* was made for Miyazaki himself (ibid.: 2013). In the first half of this chapter, we will investigate what makes this Miyazaki project arguably his fictional autobiography.

In Greek, ‘auto’ means ‘self,’ making autobiography essentially a ‘self-biography’ (Masterclass, 2022). Popular among readers, an autobiography is a ‘nonfiction story of a person’s life, written from their point of view’ (ibid.: 2022). Autobiographical works can take various forms, including memoirs, diaries, biographical novels, and films (ibid.: 2022). While the strict definition of an autobiography is a ‘first-person account of its author’s entire life,’ James Patterson explains that ‘some authors choose to write fictionalised versions of their life stories, blending fact and fiction to create a narrative that captures the essence of their experiences’ (Patterson, 2022).

In Miyazaki's case, the real characters and events are used as the foundation of the narrative. While the story is loosely based on the life of Jiro Horikoshi, it can be seen as a retelling of what happened in Miyazaki's perspective. When referring to *The Wind Rises* as Miyazaki's autofiction, it implies that the film tells Jiro's story and serves as a vehicle for Miyazaki to navigate and articulate complex personal and historical themes within a semi-fictional framework. By infusing the narrative with his insights and perspectives, Miyazaki transforms this story into a reflective piece that mirrors his life journey and career. In doing so, Miyazaki combines fiction and autobiography, transforming Jiro's biographic narrative into a multifaceted adaptation; using Jiro's life as a canvas, Miyazaki creates a fictional autobiography that subtly mirrors his own dreams, ideology, and responsibility.

Nevertheless, Miyazaki is not the first individual drawn to Jiro Horikoshi's story. Before him, novelist Tatsuo Hori wrote a semi-autobiographical work titled *The Wind Has Risen* in 1937. In an interview with Roger Ebert, Miyazaki acknowledged Hori's influence but emphasised his own interpretation of the story. Miyazaki noted, 'The original novel was written as a kind of propaganda for the war effort, portraying Jiro Horikoshi as a heroic figure determined to build aeroplanes for Japan's military. That is not my intention, so my film takes a new approach' (Ebert, 2013). Instead, Miyazaki decided to remake Jiro's story by 'exploring the ethical implications of Jiro's work and the human toll of war' (ibid., 2013). Later, Miyazaki created a manga adaptation based on Jiro Horikoshi's life, retaining the same name. However, Miyazaki's creative journey did not end there; he waited for the right moment to bring this historical drama and his untold narratives to the cinematic forefront (Ebert, 2013). Possessing distinct authorial qualities, this adaptation by Miyazaki transcends mere screen(re)writing. Analysing these attributes will provide us with a clearer understanding of Miyazaki's narrative styles and artistic intentions in this adaptation.

Self-projecting:

With a family history reminiscent of the protagonist, Hayao Miyazaki subtly projects himself into Jiro Horikoshi's character. Born in wartime Japan, Miyazaki grew up in an upper-middle-class family in Tokyo. His father, Katsuji, was the director of the family firm - Miyazaki aeroplane. Since childhood, Miyazaki has exposed himself to the world/industry of aircraft production. Like the Mitsubishi Corp depicted in the film, Miyazaki's family company was not only involved in wartime activities but specialised in manufacturing

various aircraft components during WWII (McCarthy, 1999). As the director of the Miyazaki Corporation, Katsuji often worked ‘tirelessly and immerses himself into work, an image deeply imprinted in the mind of this future animator’ (1999: 26).

Miyazaki developed a profound familiarity with Mitsubishi A6M Zero, as his family company had been manufactured parts like rudders for the Zero’s production. Thus, this aircraft held special significance, serving as both Jiro's most significant design and a product closely tied to Miyazaki's family heritage for many years. In essence, Jiro's narrative not only draws upon meticulous research but also integrates elements from Miyazaki's personal history, as detailed in *Hayao Miyazaki: The Starting Point* (2014). While some might contend that ‘Miyazaki's obsession with flight defines his career’ (Napier, 2005), such a statement appears exaggerated, as Miyazaki deliberately chose not to inherit the family business involved in aircraft part manufacturing. Instead, he ventured into the burgeoning animation industry during the 1960s. Nonetheless, Miyazaki's familial connection to Jiro Horikoshi primed him from the outset to create *The Wind Rises* (1996: 28). After decades of crafting feature films, Miyazaki reserved this concept for his final cinematic masterpiece.

Not just identifying with Jiro’s story, Miyazaki impersonates himself as Mr Caproni to be the imaginary mentor of Jiro Horikoshi. Known as the ‘authorial surrogate’, Miyazaki employs such cinematic device to insert himself as a character, often to convey his ideas, beliefs, or guidance through the fictional narrative (Oxford, 2000). Even though Jiro never has the opportunity to meet Caproni in reality, they engage in three life-changing conversations. These dialogues between the author and his protagonist have crossed time and space, directing Jiro's career trajectory and profoundly shaping his worldview. In their first encounter, Miyazaki inspires young Jiro through Caproni, ‘Listen, boy, I am not a pilot. I don’t even know how to fly. To fly airplanes is simple. But I am a creator of the airplanes’ (*The Wind Rises*, 11:49)¹. It is clear that these are Miyazaki’s words of encouragement for Jiro that even a near-sighted Japanese boy can pursue his dream of becoming an aviator engineer. As the author, Miyazaki chooses to guide Jiro’s character from the beginning, teaching him the dual nature of the aircraft, ‘[how] they are not tools for war and money’ (12:00) Through Caproni, Miyazaki’s words deeply imprinted in Jiro’s mind; it almost

¹ Note: As there is no published script for *The Wind Rises*, all references are to specific moments in the film itself. The time markers indicate the exact minute and second in which the quoted dialogue or described scene occurs, providing precise locations within the movie for verification.

becomes the unspoken motto of Jiro. As a result, we see Jiro is determined to contribute not to the war or personal wealth but to advance humanity's aviation technology by turning beautiful designs into reality.

Miyazaki employs the technique of 'authorial surrogacy' on several occasions throughout the film. In their second encounter, with Jiro now a respected aircraft designer, Miyazaki, as Caproni, shows Jiro his retirement project: a metal plane so gigantic and advanced that surpasses Jiro's imagination. This contrasts with Jiro's frustration about Japan's limitations. Inside Jiro's mind, Miyazaki imparts a vital lesson: 'Inspiration is the engineer's key; it unlocks the future, and technology follows' (56:40). This can also be interpreted as Miyazaki's message for the future anime artists. Miyazaki emphasises that this is Caproni's 'final fight' as they both near retirement (2013). In return, Jiro shows us the prototype of his design, which is so smooth and spotless that even Caproni is impressed by its efficiency and durability. Together, they watch Jiro's beautiful design gliding into a golden cloud.

For Miyazaki, this is the legacy Jiro originally wished to leave behind, not the Zero the military later weaponised. Unfortunately, in the film's climax, Japan faces inevitable destruction, including all of Jiro's Zero fighters. Jiro, in their final encounter, grimly notes their loss. As he surveys the wreckage, Miyazaki's Caproni appears, marking their first meeting and a sombre moment of reckoning. Miyazaki shifts the conversation, asking if Jiro has lived his life to the fullest. Slowly, he guides Jiro away from guilt, presenting an idealised image of Jiro's muse. Jiro says his farewell, finding the strength to continue. This moment signifies forgiveness and reconciliation. Miyazaki's offer of wine symbolises an invitation they can never fulfil in real life (2013). This imagined dialogue concludes with Jiro and Miyazaki walking towards their 'shared kingdom of dreams' (2:00:16). Through his presence in the film, Miyazaki accompanies Jiro throughout the entire journey.

Fictional Autobiography

For Miyazaki, *The Wind Rises* combines two narratives, fiction and autobiography. After this film, Miyazaki published two memoirs: *Starting Point* (1976-1996) in 2014 and *Turning Point* (1997-2008) in 2021. Both are considered Miyazaki's autobiography, covering every feature film except *The Wind Rises*. As the author, Miyazaki seems to exclude *The Wind Rises* from his latest memoir purposefully. After conducting an interview focusing on the film

The Wind Rises, Roger Ebert starts to realise why this film holds ‘a special place among all his features’ in the service of a different purpose (Ebert, 2013). As our earlier demonstrations show, Miyazaki not only projects himself into Jiro’s story but reflects his moral commentary in this work of fictional reimagination. With specific narrative style and artistic intentions, *The Wind Rises* arguably can be interpreted as a fictional autobiography. According to the definition of autofiction, ‘An author may decide to recount their life in the third person, to modify significant details and characters, using fictive subplots and imagined scenarios with real-life characters in the service of a search for self’ (Patterson, 2005). In *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki uses the real-life character – Jiro Horikoshi, with both fictive subplots and imagined scenarios to reconstruct his life. Drawing inspiration from various sources, including the novel *The Wind Has Risen* (1938) by Tatsuo Hori, *Zero: The Story of Japan’s Air War in the Pacific* (1958) by Masatake Okumiya, and *Eagles Of Mitsubishi The Story Of The Zero Fighter* (1992) by Jiro Horikoshi himself, Miyazaki weaves fictional subplots and imagined scenarios into the new narrative.

This approach allows him to create a parallel story told in the third person, offering a multifaceted portrayal of Jiro's character and experiences. Simultaneously, Miyazaki's incorporation of his own life experiences, as documented in *The Wind Rises Interview*, adds depth and authenticity to the adaptation. By blending these elements, Miyazaki constructs a narrative that provides unique insights into both Jiro's journey and his own artistic vision. Through blending two genres, the boundary between fiction and the author's own life can sometimes become ambiguous. This ambiguity gives Miyazaki greater creative freedom in rewriting *The Wind Rises*. Like many revisionists, Miyazaki takes an ‘active stance’ toward his sources, inserting them into a much ‘broader intertextual dialogism’ (Elliott, 2003). In *In the Wind Rises*, the story of Jiro undergoes significant changes and is transformed by Miyazaki, who sheds new meaning on the original texts (Leitch, 2013). With his social and moral critiques, Miyazaki offers a new reading to Jiro’s story, improving the adapted source with his fictional reimagination. In rewriting Jiro’s narrative, Miyazaki extracts ideas he likes and reinvents the tale with his distinctive style. In doing so, Miyazaki creates a new work that exists independently (Cartmell, 2012). Although some fidelity is sacrificed in *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki knows to what ends his adaptation is designed: to establish himself as an adapter-auteur. In this particular film, Miyazaki creates a type of authorship by making such autofiction, where Jiro’s biography is reinvented into a Miyazaki narrative with his personal features and metaphorical themes (Suzuki, 2014).

As an example of autofiction, *The Wind Rises* is a film rich with personal metaphors that transcends generic storytelling. Miyazaki's films often explore profound social and philosophical themes, and *The Wind Rises* continues this tradition. A recurring line in the film, 'The Wind is Rising!... We must try to live!' (15:04), underscores its central theme. Miyazaki uses metaphorical representations of different winds to capture and convey complex emotions and ideas. The film portrays the ascent of dreams, the turbulence of crises and failures, the gentle breeze of love, the destructive hurricane, and the emergence of a new current of life. These elements reveal Miyazaki's ability to 'weave intricate narrative layers and thematic depth into his storytelling' (McCarthy, 2013).

To begin with, we have 'the rising wind of dream' (McCarthy, 2013) Miyazaki's animation journey mirrors Jiro's, both ignited by youthful interests that blossom into lifelong passions. In the first scene, young Jiro ascends to a rooftop, where an exotic aircraft awaits, ready to transport him to a realm of imagination (01:12). Slowly, it rises with the wind, unfurling its bird-like wings and carrying Jiro into the vibrant blue sky. Wherever Jiro soars, a warm orange sunlight accompanies him, dispelling shadows (02:01) As two free spirits, Miyazaki and Jiro traverse diverse landscapes to pursue their passions and dreams. Nevertheless, Jiro's career endures relentless tests and challenges. He faces not only the hunting of the special police but also grapples with numerous setbacks. Miyazaki, no stranger to such 'storms of calamity and failure' (ibid.: 2013), has confronted even more significant career crises than Jiro. Fortunately, both men find a 'gentle breeze of love in their lives' (ibid.: 2013). Nahoko not only retrieves Jiro's hat but also rescues him from the brink of moral collapse, rekindling his determination to persevere. Similarly, Miyazaki's wife, Akemi Ota, fully supports him, contributing to many Ghibli studio projects during times of crisis (Suzuki, 2008). Although Akemi keeps a low profile and rarely appears in public, she is crucial to Miyazaki's work, a sentiment he openly acknowledges in interviews. The parallels between Jiro/Nahoko and Miyazaki/Akemi are evident in their respective journeys. For Miyazaki, this couple became their fictional parallels, highlighting the intertwined nature of their personal and professional lives.

In Jiro's dream, he gracefully guides his aircraft through the ascending wind until he encounters a dark airship adorned with the Iron Cross emblem. As a looming crisis unfolds, a tempest of devastation takes shape, during which his plane is ruthlessly attacked and ultimately obliterated by malevolent entities. To Miyazaki, these figures symbolise Nazi

Germany and Imperial Japan, both implicated in inhuman atrocities and massacres (Napier, 2014). Later in the film, Jiro's Zero plane also becomes a lethal weapon in the hands of the military. Ironically, Jiro finds himself at the centre of 'this hurricane of destruction' (McCarthy, 2013). Meanwhile, with all his anti-war masterpieces, Miyazaki struggles with moral integrity over his family's involvement in the war. This guilt complex by association forces Miyazaki again and again to reflect the true nature of perpetration (Suzuki, 2008). Is every Japanese, including himself, morally culpable for the Japanese war crimes? Nevertheless, Miyazaki's faith remains unbroken, 'the winds of a new era are blowing, and they must live through the chaotic transitory stage,' for he believes a new current is coming, and what matters is the survival of our faiths (Elbert, 2013).

It can also be interpreted as his message to the audience: life can be incredibly harsh or even fail you profoundly, but one has to learn how to transform that tragedy into life-enhancing forces (Miyazaki, 2013). The rising wind impacts Jiro and everyone, urging them to live courageously and purposefully. Through rewriting *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki places a new faith in Jiro and himself to navigate any turmoil period and redefine the purpose of their works, careers, love and life. By embedding these personal metaphors into the narrative, Miyazaki honours his own experiences and underscores the universal themes of love, resilience, and creative passion. This nuanced layering of autobiographical elements within a historical context enriches the film's narrative complexity, allowing viewers to engage with both the overt story and the subtler, more personal subtext.

Social and Moral Responsibility

According to Hannah Arendt, a political philosopher, 'social and moral reflections refer to the process of contemplating and critically examining social issues, ethical dilemmas, and moral values' (Arendt, 1958). In her book, Arendt engages in introspection and encourages contemplation of the broader 'societal and ethical consequences arising from one's actions, decisions, and beliefs' (ibid.: 1958). In cinema, filmmakers frequently use their works to represent social issues and ethical dilemmas characters face. One example of social reflection is the film *12 Angry Men* (1957), directed by Sidney Lumet. The film explores themes of justice, prejudice, and the power of individual conviction within a jury room. Occasionally, films also serve as 'cultural and historical reflections' (Andrew, 1984).

By accurately depicting historical events or specific cultural contexts, Dudley Andrew reveals that cinema can engage viewers in thoughtful consideration of the past and appreciate the diversity of human experiences (ibid.: 1984).

In *The Wind Rises*, specific types of critiques are also offered by Miyazaki to comment on social and moral responsibility. The opposition to war, for instance, remains the constant theme in Miyazaki films. In *Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind* (1984), we see the equivalent aftermath of the post-nuclear Japan: a near-feudal world where war has ‘destroyed most humankind’s technology and polluted the environment seemingly beyond repair’ (McCarthy, 1999). Meanwhile, *Porco Rosso* (1992) revolves around an Italian ace pilot, who leaves his fascist country in a self-exile during two World Wars. Tormented by the past, Marco transforms himself into an anthropomorphic pig filled with regret and self-pity. *Howel’s Moving Castle* (2004) directly portrays the brutality of war, influenced by Miyazaki’s opposition of American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Having a ‘great deal of rage about Iraq,’ Miyazaki sides with his fictional resistance, who spends every night fighting the invasion of an unstoppable force (ibid.: 1999). All of these can be seen as self-directed reactions of Miyazaki, who constantly reflects on what extent a person or country can be morally responsible for their culpable actions (Napier, 2005). Consequently, Miyazaki sees this moral commentary as imperative, particularly in light of his family's involvement during the war.

For Miyazaki, this national crime might also be a family one, which needs to be fully acknowledged. ‘Japan’s aggressive war is absolutely wrong,’ Miyazaki openly apologises for the past after making *The Wind Rises*, ‘There is every need to show remorse for the inhuman atrocities and enormous damages inflicted on the Chinese people’ (Elbert, 2013). *The Wind Rises* forces Miyazaki to face his family crime by holding them blameworthy. With his father working as a wartime engineer, Miyazaki considers neither Katuji nor Jiro innocent. Although Miyazaki did not stress such association in the movie, it is not a secret, at least in Japan, that his family firm -- Miyazaki Airplane used to be part of the Zero production.

In the eyes of Miyazaki, both Mitsubishi Corp and Miyazaki airplane worked for the imperial army, served their military conquest, and equally blameworthy for their wartime crimes. In other words, Miyazaki sees his father in Jiro, a deadly armed merchant and indirect perpetrator (ibid.: 2013). Ironically, his father has lasting influence on Miyazaki, especially his fascination with the airplane. Taking *Porco Rosso* as an example, the protagonist’s

beloved flying boat is fully designed by Miyazaki and almost every feature has the presence of self-designed aeronautic machines. With his talent and resource, Miyazaki never becomes a designer of the fighter plane; instead, he makes a career decision that almost completely detaches himself from his family and the arms industry. This detachment can be interpreted as an act of strong disapproval. As a son, Miyazaki finds it 'impossible to forget his father' who served in the imperial army around the 1940s (McCarthy, 2013). Jonathan Clements, the scholar of Miyazaki's works and family, argues the key to 'understand Miyazaki's creative motivation lies in his attitude toward the family history' (Clements, 2007). It is likely that Miyazaki has been living in 'the shadow of his family's shame' (ibid.: 2007). After spending his whole career creating dreams for children, Miyazaki finally decides to face his family's past by retelling the story of *The Wind Rises*. Strongly identifying with Jiro's story, Miyazaki also holds himself as a morally responsible agent, willing to take greater obligations due to his family's involvement in war. Driven by such moral responsibility, *The Wind Rises* aims to engage both the author and viewers in thoughtful consideration of the past and 'societal and ethical consequences arising from one's actions, decisions, and beliefs' (Arendt, 1958)

Wish-fulfilment

In psychology, the term 'wish-fulfilment' is referred to as 'the satisfaction of desires or wishes in a way that provides emotional or psychological gratification' (Freud, 1900). As Freud notes, it involves the 'fulfilment of one's desires, dreams, or fantasies, often in a manner that offers a sense of contentment, happiness, or relief' (ibid.: 1900). In the context of cinema, Robin Wood, whose writings on film often incorporate psychoanalytic theory, first proposes that 'some films can also serve as a wish-fulfilment, providing viewers with a sense of escapism, emotional satisfaction, and the opportunity to experience scenarios and outcomes they desire' (Wood, 1965). For Wood, not just the reviewers, filmmakers also 'achieve the wish-fulfilment through the desired outcomes' (ibid.: 1965). That is to say, the author of the film could see their works as the fulfilment of personal desires, dreams, or fantasies, including characters achieving career success, finding true love, or realising long-held ambitions. For instance, filmmakers may create characters who 'embody qualities or traits they admire or wish they possessed' (Polan, 2000). In her book *Pulp Fiction*, Polan explains how Quentin Tarantino features his 'idealised characters with witty, confident, and stylish personalities, mirroring Tarantino's love for pop culture and sharp dialogue.' (ibid.: 2000). Likewise, Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* can also be a wish-fulfilment,

featuring idealised characters who mirror Miyazaki's own desires, dreams and fantasies.

In the cinematic context, the 'ideal muse' refers to 'an actress or female character who consistently inspires a particular filmmaker' (Waller, 2005). Federico Fellini, for instance, frequently cast his wife, Giuliette Masina, in his films, like *La Strada* (1954) and *Nights of Cabiria* (1957). According to Gregory Waller, Giulietta becomes 'someone with whom the director shares a strong artistic connection and whose presence in their films enhances the overall creative process' (ibid.: 2005). So naturally, Giuliette becomes Fellini's muse who embodies the 'whimsical and tragical characters that Fellini envisioned' (ibid.: 2005). In *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki also creates an imaginary muse – Nahoko, who embodies all Miyazaki's fantasies for a perfect wife and ideal companion. In his article, Brendon Walsh explores Miyazaki's engagement with romanticism in his films, 'how these romantic ideals can be characterised by Miyazaki's interpretation of romantic sublime' (Walsh, 2013). For Walsh, how to present and reveal this romantic sublime becomes 'the very centre of Miyazaki's creative philosophy' (ibid.: 176). In *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki has a new interpretation of this romantic sublime, which places a special focus on Nahoko Satomi. Unlike Jiro, she is a fictional character created by Miyazaki and his team. Walsh highlights the fact that 'Nahoko is not based on a real person, but rather serves as a symbol of the beauty and fragility of life in a time of war' (ibid.: 179). On a train to Tokyo, Jiro has his first encounter with Nahoko, a young lady who rescues his hat. 'The Wind is rising; we must try to live' (15:04). Their connection seemingly fades after the Great Kanto Earthquake, but they reunite years later at a summer resort, where Jiro catches her parasol this time.

As the wind rises, this becomes Miyazaki's ideal of perfect reunion and romance. As a man with little emotion, Jiro reserves all his feelings for Nahoko. It is the first time we witness Jiro, previously portrayed as purely rational, acting impulsively for Nahoko. Despite her tuberculosis, Jiro insists on marrying her, 'I will wait for you to recover. Even if it takes a hundred years' (1:24: 42). Ignoring all the professional advice, Jiro insists on completing their wedding ceremony before her treatment. 'Her character,' Miyazaki reveals in the interview, 'transforms Jiro in a fictional and romantic way. I believe Nahoko completes Jiro while resonating film's themes of love, loss, and the power of the human spirit. Something that is definitely missing in Hori's original novel' (Miyazaki, 2013). In this fictional reimagination, Miyazaki moves away from a traditional romantic hero to Nahoko, using her as the embodiment of the romantic sublime.

In *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki seeks to address his lifelong struggle with balancing personal life and work, a source of deep regret in his real life. Like the young Miyazaki, Jiro initially fails to comprehend that work is intertwined with life itself. Both Miyazaki and Jiro become consumed by their work, functioning as dedicated machines with little regard for anything beyond their ongoing projects. Miyazaki's personal life mirrors this imbalance. His strained relationship with his son, Goro, is a stark example of his years of indifference and humiliation as a father. 'He might be rated as 100 for his animation,' Goro reveals, 'But for his fatherhood, I rate it 0 [points]' (Goro, 2013). Those who work with Miyazaki also observe 'how Miyazaki has burned bridges with a lot of people, including his son.' Years later, Miyazaki admits that he cannot undo the 'terrible treatment of his son even though Goro has been deeply hurt' (Miyazaki, 2015).

Incapable of balancing work and family himself, Miyazaki presents a harmony between Jiro's happiness and responsibility. To fulfil his fantasy, we see an ideal balance between Jiro's life and work in *The Wind Rises*. This romantic subplot empowers Jiro to fulfil his destiny while maintaining a balanced life. While Jiro works tirelessly at night, Nahoko lies silently beside him, holding his hand firmly. It is one of Miyazaki's personal favourite moments, 'Work here,' Nahoko asks him to stay, 'If you need to smoke, do it here as well' (1:50:15). Nahoko's unconditional love and support starkly contrast to Miyazaki's own experiences of being misunderstood and seeking no emotional support from anyone but himself (Elbert, 2013). Nahoko's love allows Jiro to pursue his dream without sacrificing it for her. In the end, we see the creation of Zero, and Jiro finally fulfills his goal of making his dream plane. Similarly, Miyazaki becomes a world-renowned director in pursuit of his dream. However, in doing so, he has sacrificed his family and his relationship with Goro. Unlike his son, Nahoko easily forgives Jiro and encourages him to live a better life at the end of the film. Poetically, Jiro feels the wind rising again. Nahoko, who is already gone, appears to say one last goodbye. Relieved, Jiro reconciles with the death of his wife without being morally haunted. This final reconciliation fulfils Miyazaki's imaginary fantasy of redeeming his lifetime mistakes and receiving forgiveness from his loved one. (Suzuki, 2005).

In this creative adaptation, Miyazaki combines fiction and autobiography to recreate the life of Jiro with his artistic intentions and narrative styles, such as self-projecting, personal metaphors, social/moral responsibility and wish-fulfilment, hoping to navigate and articulate complex personal and historical themes in this controversial antiwar film.

The representation of the perpetrator in the antiwar film

Despite the critical acclaim and becoming the highest-grossing Japanese film of 2013, *The Wind Rises* is described as ‘arguably the most sensitive and controversial animated movie’ in recent memory (Byford, 2013; Keegan, 2013). Miyazaki’s decision to engage in such a controversial narrative after a career of creating child-friendly animations raises questions. Miyazaki’s storytelling has been described as ‘simple and warm, with love for unusual detail and concern for our world, recreating it as if through the eyes of a child’ (McCarthy, 1999). However, Miyazaki departs from these elements in *The Wind Rises*, specifically during wartime Japan (Keegan, 2013). Additionally, of Miyazaki’s twelve films, *The Wind Rises* is the only one rooted in a true story and character. That is to say, the film reflects the collective memory of the Japanese people during the war. Nevertheless, it seems difficult to imagine that someone like Miyazaki, who publicly reflects on Japan’s war crimes during WWII, would feature a character who could be easily identified as the ‘perpetrator’ for his wartime design – Mitsubishi A6M ‘Zero.’

Helen McCarthy notes that Miyazaki brings a ‘considerable breadth of social and moral awareness’ that forms the basis of his later works (ibid.: 2013). Miyazaki’s stance on war and Japanese atrocities remains consistent, as he opposes them in all his animated films, including *The Wind Rises*. Brooke Barnes observes that ‘critics at film festivals have praised its nuance... *The Wind Rises* delivers complex messages about turbulent modern times by examining past traumatic events’ (Barnes, 2013). In an interview with the New York Times, Miyazaki acknowledges that *The Wind Rises* will be his last ambitious animated project, marking a significant conclusion to his career (New York Times, 2013). Therefore, this section will explore how Miyazaki departs from his usual approach, featuring a perpetrator-like figure as his protagonist to reflect on the nature of war, atrocities, and perpetuation. Examining the perpetrator in an antiwar film directly contributes to the characterisation, representation, and moral complexity of my protagonist in *Making Hachiro Yoshida*.

The ethics of identification

In discussions related to trauma and cinema, the term ‘perpetrator’ is often used to refer to ‘an individual or a collective entity accountable for inflicting harm, violence, or trauma upon

others' (Morag, 2013). In the context of trauma cinema, perpetrators are commonly 'linked to actions involving aggression, oppression, or violence', and they frequently occupy a 'prominent position in narratives that delve into themes such as trauma, conflict, and historical atrocities' (ibid.: 2013).

Despite situating Jiro as his protagonist, Miyazaki never asks his viewers to identify with or forgive the perpetrator. In an interview with David Ehrlich, Miyazaki admits that 'I [am] very aware of the fact that some people might see it as a celebration of war or a romanticisation of a dark time in Japanese history. I do not want that to be the message of my film' (Ehrlich, 2013). Instead, he intends to individualise Jiro's character, who gives us a different impression of the wartime Japanese soldiers portrayed as mindless killing machines who are ignorant of their actions. In Miyazaki's portrayal, Jiro is neither of them but an intellectual with a conscience. For Miyazaki, 'Jiro is not a hero in the traditional sense' but 'a man a complex and flawed individual' (ibid.:2013). More importantly, Miyazaki 'wanted to explore [Jiro]'s story in all its complexity' (ibid.:2013).

In *The Wind Rises*, we see a pragmatic idealist driven by his childhood dream, and his only interest is making beautiful aircraft. The film opens with Jiro's magic encounter with his dream idol, the Italian aircraft designer Giovanni Battista Caproni, who becomes his lifelong imaginary mentor. Deeply influenced by Caproni's vision and their dialogues, Jiro learns his first and one of the most important lessons, 'Airplanes are not tools for war. They are not for making money. Airplanes are beautiful dreams' (12:04). Unlike others, Jiro has little or no interest in money or making weapons for war but turning his beautiful dreams into reality. Later, Miyazaki reveals Jiro's ideal aviator in several daydreams of his: a white aircraft that strongly resembles the symbol of peace, soars above the blue sky where there is no war and poverty.

Despite his idealistic pursuit of a personal goal, Jiro is fully aware of the destructive potential of his designs on the battlefield, where they become deadly weapons of war. After becoming a plane designer, Jiro has another dream in which he discusses with Caproni the nature of their designs, 'Humanity dreams of flight, but the dream is cursed. Aircraft are destined to become tools for slaughter and destruction' (57:33). In other words, Jiro knows that both his dream and designs are cursed by Japan's military ambition; with or without his permission, the beautiful airplanes Jiro designs would be made to be 'tools for slaughter and

destruction' (57:42). Facing the same moral dilemma, Caproni asks Jiro a profound and philosophical question, 'Which would you choose, a world with pyramids or one without them?' (57:38). The implication is clear to Jiro: Would he choose a world with or without his A6M Zero? While Jiro fulfils his dream of making the best airplane, hundreds of thousands of Japanese would sacrifice for the militarists' dream of conquest. In the film, Jiro has personally experienced the horror of destruction during the Great Kanto Earthquake. Similarly, what Jiro creates can inflict devastating effects and numerous civilian deaths. To his surprise, Caproni prefers to 'live in a world with pyramids in it' (57:52). It is intriguing that Jiro neither endorses nor rejects this confession. What he comprehends is that both of them are powerless to alter the inevitable, and the approval or disapproval of one person holds little significance in the course of history.

Nevertheless, Jiro's aspiration to design a peaceful aircraft alone is enough to establish him as a remarkable character in Miyazaki's representation. 'It is unrealistic' for Miyazaki to suddenly portray a 'heroic character among the Japanese engineers', nor can he justify the invention of the most deadly fighter plane during WWII (McCarthy, 2013). Like the inevitability of the war, the creation of the Mitsubishi A6M Zero (or the Zero) is destined to come into being with or without Jiro. 'Who are they going to fight?' Jiro asks his friend colleague, who reveals, 'China, Russia, Britain, The Netherlands, and America' (1:52:38). Jiro falls into a long silence while his friend tries to explain that 'we are not arms merchants; we just want to build good aircraft' (1:52:42). However, it is their good aircraft that make them arms merchants, making it impossible to separate the two. Instead of arguing with his colleague, Jiro keeps his judgment to himself. During a meeting with the Navy, their company's clients, Jiro silently observes as the officers voice their demands, including speed, power, and manoeuvrability requirements. However, as his superior notes, Jiro appears disinterested in their demands or urgent needs. On the contrary, in his designer seminar, Jiro is passionate about guiding his fellow workers on the importance of focusing on their original designs rather than being dictated to by the navy. He inspires them, saying, 'We are designing for the future. Our goal is to create an all-metal aircraft, unlike anything the world has ever seen' (1:36: 27). In his capacity as the chief designer, Jiro suggests that weight issues can be resolved 'if our plane does not carry machine guns' (1:37:10). His comment elicits laughter. However, it genuinely reflects Jiro's desire to create an aircraft devoid of weaponry. This moment underscores his commitment to innovation and his vision of a future where planes are not tools for wars and money but for peaceful purposes.

One can argue that the theme of antiwar in *The Wind Rises* is rather subtle and not as prevalent as other films such as Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), which graphically depicts the brutal realities of war and its dehumanising effects, or Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), which delves into the psychological and moral corruption brought on by war. As a self-reflective film, *The Wind Rises* conveys its antiwar sentiment through a more nuanced and personal narrative, focusing on its protagonist's moral dilemmas and internal conflicts. Through his representation, Miyazaki demonstrates that sometimes, portraying the untold and unimaginative perspective of a noteworthy perpetrator, rather than muting their voices, might be as important as staging our war heroes.

The act of indirect perpetrator

While films such as *Nanking* (2007), *Downfall* (2004), and *Devil on the Doorstep* (2000) have portrayed and condemned perpetrators of human atrocities, they often leave out an account of indirect perpetrators. Defined by Raya Morag in her *Perpetrator Trauma and Cinema*, the term 'indirect perpetrator' refers to 'individuals or groups who may not have directly committed violent or harmful actions themselves, but they supported, facilitated, or enabled those actions to occur' (Morag, 2013). Although they do not participate directly in battlefields, Morag considers those indirect perpetrators 'equally responsible for the war crimes committed by their country' (ibid.: 2013).

Similarly, in *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki does not shy away from holding Jiro morally culpable for being on the wrong side of the invasion. 'While Jiro was passionate about creating beautiful aeroplanes,' Miyazaki explains in an interview that '[he] did not want to shy away from the realities of war and the destructive impact on other people's lives' (Hariston, 2014). After graduating from Tokyo Imperial University, Jiro joined a company called Mitsubishi Internal Combustion Engine Corporation, where he was immediately assigned to the Falcon Project. When the company tests the prototype in the airfield, Jiro first meets the army representatives. It is not a secret that the company Jiro works for is designing military flight planes, and their new Falcon project would equip the army with the latest technology. While both of his superiors greet the army officers, Miyazaki depicts Jiro walking away from them (39:27). It is a brief, subtle moment where 'Jiro chooses not to engage with the military and redirects his full focus back to the aircraft' (ibid.: 2014). As a result, Miyazaki shows the audience that Jiro has 'tried his best not to side with either

military or the war' (ibid.: 2014). After the airfield test, Jiro's superior reveals that 'the army changes their mind after their failure, and they would go for a completing design' (40:16). We see a complicated reaction on Jiro's face for the first time. While he is glad their company ceases to work for the army, Jiro cannot help but feel downhearted that there would not be a Falcon Project two. In the film, Miyazaki highlights this moment in which Jiro feels powerless to decouple his career from the military conquest.

In Miyazaki's film, Jiro finds himself compelled to adapt to the harsh reality that only the military can fund their aviation project, given Japan's poor social and economic conditions. In one poignant scene, Jiro, as his routine, purchases two slices of sponge cake and encounters three starving children on his way home. Filled with compassion, he offers his cake to them as a gesture of kindness. This moment is a stark reminder of Japan's societal priorities, where the government emphasises technology over the welfare of underprivileged children. Miyazaki articulates this perspective, noting, 'In my version of the story, Jiro's dream of building beautiful aeroplanes is tempered by Japan's poor socioeconomic background' (Harriston, 2014). For instance, Jiro's friend and colleague reminds him that 'there are dozens of hungry kids right there in the neighbourhood' (43: 49). Highlighting this conflict, Honjo brings to Jiro's attention 'the cost of [a small part of their plane] would feed that kid's family for a month' (44:08). Jiro is rendered silent by this revelation, seemingly oblivious to the social realities surrounding him. Honjo continues to lecture Jiro on how the government plans to allocate more funds for research in Germany, emphasising, 'Poor countries need aeroplanes. It is truly ironic that they pay us a lot to learn from German technology, enough to feed every child in Japan' (44:22). Miyazaki exposes a different facet of technology beyond its destructive nature, one that is even more chilling. The very creation of technology can come at the cost of numerous human lives. Impoverished nations strain themselves to acquire what they deem necessary, echoing Caproni's sentiment that he 'would rather live in a world with pyramids in it [regardless of the sacrifice]' (57:52).

As the chief engineer, Jiro chooses the technology with the knowledge of its price: countless lives are lost at home and abroad. Miyazaki highlights such acts of perpetration by featuring Jiro as an indirect perpetrator. 'Including myself, a generation of Japanese men who grew up during a certain period have very complex feelings about WWII, and the Zero symbolises our collective psyche as perpetrators.' Miyazaki speaks of such national shame in an interview with the *Asahi Shimbun*. 'Japan went to war out of foolish arrogance, caused

deaths throughout the entire East Asia...but for all this humiliating history, the Zero was the finest state-of-the-art fighter of the time and represented one of the few things that Japanese could be proud of' (Asashi, 2014). Perhaps, this conflicting feeling toward the Zero is one of 'the complexities' Miyazaki wishes to explore in Jiro's character. Ironically, Jiro has no little or no time to reflect on the nature of his actions and their consequences. His focus remains solely on his aircraft designs, leaving him little room to contemplate matters beyond his work. Beyond good and evil, Miyazaki shows us a world with shades of grey, where Jiro is neither ignorant nor innocent of Japan's war ambition. Despite this awareness, he actively involves himself in the design of the Zero, fully conscious that 'his beautiful plane' would be inevitably used as a war machine. 'It is the only time I have ever felt guilt about my own movies,' Miyazaki reveals at the end of the interview, given the representation of Jiro Hirokoshi, whose dream is 'unfortunately tempered by the reality of war and the knowledge that his work would be used for destructive purpose' (ibidi: 2014). Eventually, Miyazaki refrains from justifying Jiro's actions, leaving it to the audience to decide whether or not Jiro should bear moral culpability for his inventions.

The reflection of Japan's perpetration

Miyazaki himself fully acknowledges Japan's atrocities and actively reflects on such wartime crimes on multiple occasions. 'As a Japanese person,' Miyazaki addresses that 'he feels a great responsibility to reflect on the actions of [his] country in the past and the harm that was caused to others. It's important to confront this history and to work toward peace and understanding with other nations' (Mori, 2014). With his careful treatment, Miyazaki brought Jiro's perspectives onto the cinematic foreground. In the same resort where he meets Nahoko, Jiro is approached by a German named Hans Castrop who is familiar with Jiro's purpose of visit. To Jiro's surprise, Hans discloses that 'Dr. Dunker is in trouble for fighting the government' (1:15:15). At that moment, Jiro realises how strongly his visitor criticises the Nazi regime. 'Nazis are a gang of hoodlums,' Hans tells Jiro who silently agrees with his social commentary, especially when he finds out that Dr Dunker has been arrested for his criticism of the government (1:15:34). This encounter perhaps underscores one of the most significant messages conveyed by Miyazaki himself.

‘Make a war with China. Forget it. Make a puppet state in Manchuria. Forget it. Quit the League of Nations. Forget it. Make the World of your enemy. Forget it. Japan will blow up. Germany will blow up, too.’ (The Wind Rises, 1:16:07)

Jiro reacts calmly to such anti-government comments. As a Japanese person, he is neither offended nor humiliated. Having little interest in Japan’s military ambition, Jiro shows deep concern for his country’s future. Knowing that ‘Japan will blow up [as a result of their invasion]’, Jiro deliberates and asks the real question, ‘Must they go to war?’ (1:16:26). It is also Miyazaki’s question: Must Japan go to war with China, make an enemy of the world, and lead herself into destruction? For both Jiro and Miyazaki, this perpetration seems meaningless and unjustified, ‘bringing great pain, death and suffering to all involved’ (1:17:20).

According to Kelts, a scholar of Miyazaki’s films, such social commentary can be read as Miyazaki’s ‘indictment of the powers that turned Japan to brutality in its quest for global significance’ (Kelt, 2013). However, Jiro’s personal stance has very little impact on his government. Like his German visitor, Jiro has to watch their beloved countries leading themselves onto the path of self-destruction. ‘They must be stopped,’ Hans warns Jiro, who says nothing this time, for he understands they are powerless against the regime themselves. To Jiro’s frustration, Nahoko’s father brings him further bad news that she has a fever and has to cancel their dinner plan. ‘Just like his country, Nahoko becomes terribly ill from this moment.’ Kelts observes ‘how Jiro’s private life is also perpetrated’ (ibid.: 2013). As Nahoko’s health deteriorates, Jiro finds Japan increasingly weakened and drained by the war. It aches Jiro’s heart to see that their illness maybe incurable. There’s a poignant symbolism in how Jiro connects Nahoko’s well-being to that of his nation, seeing the war as Japan’s own form of tuberculosis.

Accordingly, Miyazaki forces the film to truly reflect on the nature of perpetration, instead of avoiding the blazing sun of Japan’s war crimes. At the end, we see Jiro’s Mitsubishi A6M fully weaponised, turning into the most deadly Zero. In a juxtaposition scene, we see endless bombing over China and many other Asian countries. ‘We are arm merchants,’ Jiro admits to his colleague that their planes become ‘the tool of slaughter’ (1:52:43). What makes it worse is that ‘these planes are going to fight in Britain, Russia,

Austria and America' (1:52: 34). This is when Jiro painfully realises that he is responsible for not only the preparation in Asia but Japan's world invasion.

For Miyazaki, this is Jiro's private confession of crime. As an indirect perpetrator, Jiro can no longer fool himself that '[they] are just making good aircraft'. In the last scene, Jiro is neither sad nor disappointed to find all his planes destroyed, 'none of them returned, all swallowed up by the sky' (2:01:37). Instead, he approaches Caproni calmly in the dream where they first meet. 'Our kingdom of dreams,' Jiro says to his mentor bitterly, 'Now becomes the land of the death' (2:00:39). For Jiro, this is the legacy he left behind - a wasted land of death. Miyazaki cannot help but comment on behalf of Caproni because there is no denial of Jiro's indirect acts of atrocity and perpetuation. While Caproni intentionally changes the subject, asking if Jiro lives his fullest life, Jiro agrees with deep perpetrator guilt, 'Yes, but everything falls apart toward the end, though' (2:00:39). It is not just all his planes that are physically falling apart, but Japan is defeated and losing the war. In Miyazaki's eyes, however, this defeat means peace and the death of militarism. Finally, Jiro can walk freely in an open field, where he once again meets the imaginary Nahoko holding the white umbrella, 'Darling, you must live' (2:01:51). Unlike those war criminals, Jiro has a second chance to live his life to the fullest. Bearing this collective and personal shame, Jiro finally breaks into tears and fully confronts his perpetrator's guilt. As Nahoko smiles and ascends to the sky, Jiro reconciles with his soul and lets go of his loved one as the wind rises.

Having Jiro directly face the loss and guilt, Miyazaki invites the viewers to see the traumatic impacts on both sides of the aggressors and victims at home and abroad. Situating a perpetrator-protagonist allows Miyazaki to confront Japan's wartime responsibilities and reflect on the nature of perpetration and its consequences. Through the lenses of Jiro Horikoshi, we see differently how individual Japanese meditate on the nature of war beyond victim-aggressor dynamics, nationality, and even history. In doing so, Miyazaki further condemns not this particular war but opposes all wars.

Conclusion

A deeper analysis of Miyazaki's representation of perpetrators in the antiwar film and his rewriting of fictional autobiography is crucial for incorporating those elements into my screenplay. Dealing with the perpetrator trauma, my adaptation is based on the diary of a

Japanese student soldiers during the same period. With the same background, Jiro's story provides me with a good standard for portraying a noteworthy Japanese in the event of war. By examining Miyazaki's representation, I have gained a better understanding of the issue of identification, the acts of indirect perpetrators, and how to reflect Japanese perpetration for my characters. Additionally, my creative composition benefits from Miyazaki's narrative styles and artistic intentions, blending factual biography with personal and fictional elements to create a rich, reflective film in the process of screen(re)writing. Miyazaki's film further contemplates 'what is fiction' and 'what is original', showing me 'how' and 'why' rewriting has been implemented in this creative adaptation. In this case, *The Wind Rises* can be seen as the most essential secondary source in writing *Making Hachiro Yoshida*.

Chapter Four

Writing and Adapting the Original Screenplay – *Making Hachiro Yoshida*

In this chapter, I will examine the sources and writing/adapting process of the original screenplay, *Making Hachiro Yoshida*, to reflect on how they benefit from our discussions in the earlier chapters. Then, after analysing Hayao Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather Part II*, I am particularly interested in incorporating their representation of perpetrators in this particular trauma cinema, adapting parallel narratives for a noteworthy individual whose writings resonate across time and space, coupling social commentary with the critique of moral responsibility from prewar to postwar Japan, and re-authoring his true story to create a fictional autobiography.

Part I: Overview

In the mainstream impression, Japanese soldiers of WWII are often depicted as 'mindless killing machines completely deprived of guilt or remorse for their actions' (Chang, 1991). For instance, the infamous Nanking Massacre (1937) has been made the subject of narrative films that aim to recuperate the victim's voices. In their documentary *Nanking* (2007), Oscar-winning documentarians Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman drew heavily from Iris Chang's research *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of WWII* (1991), which combines diary entries, first-hand accounts, and survivor interviews. Featuring Chang as one of the main narrators, they draw exceptionally graphic descriptions of the atrocities and chart the scourge of war through this 'six weeks of horror'. Additionally, there is *The Flowers of War* (2011) as a fictional depiction of this historical event. Adapted from Geling Yun's novella *13 Flowers of Nanking*, the film features Christian Bale as an American head priest, who provides refuge to a group of escapees in a church compound as they seek to survive the ongoing massacre in Nanking city. While morally gripping documentaries like *Nanking* attempt to shift the balance of power by bolstering victims' experience, they often leave out an account of the perpetrators.

Through 'assembling brief biographies, wartime dairies and poetry of some young Japanese,' Emiko Tierney challenges our knowledge and understanding of Japan at war in her *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflection of Japanese Student Soldiers* (2006). Tierney explains,

‘unlike most brainwashed zombies, there was a small group of thoughtful, liberated, and noteworthy students’ who were outraged by the military atrocities and voiced their strong disapproval:

‘War is another name for murder. How could I watch millions of lives
destroyed...Human freedom are robbed away, and the spirit of this country is dead...’
(Sasaki, March 1942)

While Miyazaki stresses his personal connections to the history in *The Wind Rises*, my grandfather also told us the story² of his friend who worked in the safety zone and recalled his encounter with a Japanese soldier. Instead of shooting the Chinese civilians, this young Japanese soldiers stood silently until they all entered the Safety Zone. This unknown soldier’s story provides me with a fresh perspective of Japanese invaders, making me think deeply and differently about the portrait of the sectoral and individual perpetrators: What are their perspectives on war and militarism? What does it mean to be drafted as a student soldier? Or express an anti-war stance as a Japanese? Did they have a choice between individual freedom and social responsibility?

Bearing in mind these questions, I had been inspired to explore the untold, missing narratives and their moral complexity during the war. This film follows the life of a student soldier who experiences the Japanese atrocities as a traumatic, life-shattering event that forever changes his identity and life purpose.

Primary Source

A Testament of the Youth: Diary and Love, in the Absence of Life by Hachiro Sasaki is a 466-page book ‘devoted to his diary, letters, essays, and poems he wrote between 1939 to 1945’ (Sasaki, 1981). Born in 1922, Sasaki was raised in an upper-middle-class family rich in cultural and intellectual activities. Sasaki’s passion and talent in his studies led to academic achievements ‘so successful that most Japanese students could only dream of achieving them’ (1981: 40). As a mature thinker, Sasaki was selected by the prestigious Tokyo Imperial

² [1] As one of the selected young filmmakers, I have made a short film exploring personal heritage and family wartime stories with Create Studios and English Heritage. The film was premiered in British Film Institute, London (July 22, 2022) Paris, HW, director. *It’s Your Story Now* (2022), British Film Institute. <http://makingmymark.createstudios.org.uk/paris>

University, where students would have been the future leaders of Japan. However, as the war intensified, the military government became so desperate that they mobilised students from all over the country. In December 1943, Sasaki was drafted as a student soldier from his university, among other five hundred liberal art students who were considered ‘expandable’ by the military leaders (1981: 299). They were sent to the Yababe Air Base, training for the non-returned, suicidal tokkotai mission. On February 1945, Sasaki was summoned and asked if he wished to ‘volunteer’ to be a Kamikaze pilot. According to Sasaki, ‘it is hardly a free choice at all’ (1981: 400). With no escape, Sasaki died ‘heroically’ at the age of twenty-two. Like other Kamikaze pilots, Sasaki’s death made little or no impact on the war. Only four months later, Japan surrendered unconditionally.



Fig 2.1: *A Testament of Youth: Diary and Love, in the absence of Life* (1981) by Hachiro Sasaki (1939-1945)



Fig 2.2: The Sasaki Family
Front: Mom and little sister
Back (left to right): His elder brother Hachiro, father and little brother Tazio



Fig 2.3 (Left to right): Hachiro and his closet friend Hirasawa



Fig 2.4: Hachiro's school life in some of the most elite student clubs



Fig 2.5: Hachiro's pilot training at the Yababe Nay Air Base



Fig 2.6: The Night before the final Kamikaze Mission

Of all the student soldiers, Sasaki showed ‘the strongest opposition against the war, resolutely declaring his anti-militarism stance’ (Tierney, 2006). According to Emiko, Sasaki's intellectual writings offer us 'extraordinary insight into the complex thought process' of a young man who searched for the meaning of life and a greater cause in the face of the inevitable death (2006: 66). Meanwhile, we see Sasaki's love of beauty in nature, purity in spirits, and dignity in human souls. Yet, this idealism was cursed, for militarism had corrupted the heart and soul of his beloved country. Emiko observes, 'Sasaki remains deeply patriotic' despite his criticism of the government. Instead of the emperor-centred state, Sasaki believes in 'an idealised Japan' (Tierney, 2006). In search of a greater cause, Sasaki envisioned his ideal of Japan in a new era of humanism. Reflecting on his writing, Sasaki

started to believe that war would destroy militarism and purify Japan after his ultimate sacrifice. As the title suggests, this writing was a 'will' or 'testament' left by a young man. According to Sasaki, this diary 'consists of [his] love and responsibility toward families, friends, and country even though he was no longer alive' (1981: 400). With this new faith, Sasaki finally reached a 'rationale for his mission, accepted his fate stoically, and died for his utopian new Japan' (1981: 420).

The Sasaki family did not publish the book until 1981, claiming it was due to American censorship in postwar Japan. However, after a private visit of his family, Emiko learned that 'there are no funeral nor memorial service for Hachiro; nor did they bury his ashes (which were never recovered) in the tomb' (2006: 40). In private, Hachiro was 'never mentioned by any family member' until his father passed at seventy-four, as the pain associated with him 'was too much for them to bear' (Tierney, 2006: 40). Nevertheless, except for his younger brother Taizo, to whom Hachiro entrusted his writings, he preserved and protected this remarkable story's memory. 'Don't you die,' Taizo recalled his brother's last message, '[Hachiro] advised me to choose a science major, yet he was resolute and never tried to avoid his fate' (Tierney, 2006: 47). Taking his brother's life-saving advice, Taizo escaped the draft, survived the war, and became a prominent professor at the University of Tokyo, formerly known as Tokyo Imperial University. With their father gone, Taizo reached out to Hachiro's closest friends, Hirasawa and Ouchi, who had become a successful businessman and well known scholar in postwar Japan. Through their collective efforts in a more liberal period, the diary finally came to light after thirty-six years since Hachiro's death.

Adaptive Translation

Prior to my project, Emiko Tierney has dedicated her first and most significant chapter in the *Kamikaze Diaries* to studying and translating Hachiro's life into English. Although the book offers a good summary, the content is insufficient to create a biographical film adaptation. While Emiko organises Hachiro's thinking 'thematically within a chronological sequence as they change over time' (2006:14), my intention is to delve into Hachiro's private thoughts and personal narrative in order to fully comprehend him as a human being. The most effective approach to accomplish this is by reading his original diary written in Japanese. Through this process, I have gained a profound understanding and first-hand knowledge of what made Hachiro who he is.

For the thesis requirement, the screenplay is written in English, even though the characters would have originally spoken Japanese in the film. A similar but different approach can be found in *The Last Samurai* (2003), where the story takes place in Japan, but the script is entirely English. The writer John Logan in that case opted to utilise subtitles for non-English dialogues, thereby avoiding the need for translation efforts (Logan, 2003). Conversely, my scriptwriting adopts a different approach by extensively relying on pre-translation. This necessitates me to assume the role of both an adapter and a translator.

On the one hand, translating requires me to convert a written text [story and dialogues] from one language to another while ‘retaining the meanings and intent of the original text with cultural and linguistic nuances’ (Zatlin, 2014). On the other hand, adaptation demands ‘modifying or making necessary changes’ to make it suitable for a different media, culture and context so ‘the new content better resonates with the targeted audience’ (Naremore, 2000). Instead of prioritising one over another, I have learned to integrate translating into the adaptation process or vice versa. As Katji Kerb observed in his book, ‘They have much to offer each other in both practical and theoretical terms,’ it became clear to me how adaptation and translation as ‘closely intertwined areas’ and ‘an integrated part of our intercultural narrative’ (2015:31). More importantly, as Kerb reveals, both of them ‘offer themselves to be reinvented with the occurrence of rewriting’ (2015: 32). Indeed, the line between adaptation and translation becomes less clear, especially in our creative writing, where they are generated together and serve the same purpose of rewriting.

In the actual translating process, I found that everyday conversations and colloquialisms are readily comprehensible in both languages, requiring minimal explanation. As a result, direct translation became my primary approach. Additionally, I retained specific Japanese loanwords since they are common expressions in English, such as sushi, ramen, kimono, haiku, sensei, and Kamikaze. In some cases, cultural equivalents need to be considered to translate certain phrases, such as tokkotai (for special attack force), gakusei-hei (for student soldiers), and hanami (cherry blossom viewing). When encountering ancient proverbs, I abstracted the meanings and restructured it in the English language using the closest equivalents. For example, when Taizo inspires his brother by quoting ‘How pigeons could understand the ambition of an eagle,’ he demonstrates the grandeur of Hachiro’s ideal, which may not be comprehended by the narrow-minded. I also translated a Japanese haiku, a

dormitory song, and Hachiro's short poetry with new reinterpretations to capture their original rhythms, meanings, and spirits. My aim was not only to be faithful to the targeted language but to make the British-English translation sound more natural.

One of the challenges is balancing formal and informal dialogues. For instance, characters' social-political commentaries might come across overly formal; as Hachiro reflects on Japan's crime in a history lecture, 'Truth is, outside this classroom, the memory of Nanking remains largely outside common awareness in our society today' (p11). In the same scene, we also encounter informal dialogues as Hachiro discards his professional tone when interacting with his friend, 'Even you, Nakao?...Listen, it doesn't matter what you think, we're not done yet' (p13). This balance between a level of professionalism and causal interactions allowed for a dynamic and realistic portrayal of the characters' relationships and added depth to their personalities. As the screenplay was written in English, I tried to avoid making the characters sound too 'English' as if they were native speakers who claimed to be Japanese.

To preserve the cultural appropriation in translation, it is essential to maintain 'the essence of their cultural background and language,' while still ensuring the dialogue is 'accessible and relatable to an English-speaking audience' (Linder, 2017). Meanwhile, characters' speeches and languages cannot come across as overly 'Japanese,' as this could make the script sound too formal, polite, and unnatural. That is because respectful tones are often used in Japanese conversation, whereas in the English-written script, I chose not to include these titles (like kun, san, sama, etc), unless it is essential in the context. Given the cultural differences, formal languages are hard to avoid. For example, when Hachiro interacts with his parents and seniors, it is expected that he uses a formal manner of speech, 'Mother, it is my pleasure to be your assistance' (p67). Similarly, his younger brother Taizo will show Hachiro the same level of respect, 'Brother, please forgive my manner, but I would like to inform you...' (p88). In some specific scenes, regardless of any attempts to downplay the formality of the language, this inherent attitude will naturally be reflected in their speech and behaviours.

While adapting their dialogues, I frequently found myself questioning, 'Do people speak this way?' or 'Does it make sense in both languages?' At times, the answer was no. Despite my best efforts, achieving one hundred percent accuracy in translation was not always possible, and not everything could be fully translated. So naturally, I had to readjust my goals

and prioritised effective storytelling over strict linguistic accuracy. Like adaptation, translating is also ‘a rewriting process’, where you constantly ‘reinterpret, reconstruct and reinvent new meanings’ (Leitch, 2017). In order to bring Hachiro’s diary to life in English, I need to engage with the material creatively. The new content bears ‘transcendent relation’ to the prior text but produces ‘a new artistic value’ (Cartmell, 2010). That’s why it is essential for me to understand the nuance in their languages as an adaptive translator, finding a subtle balance between writing natural dialogues and transmitting the culture respectfully.

Making Hachiro Yoshida

As the title page indicates, the screenplay is based on the diary of Hachiro Sasaki and the scholarly works of Takashi Yoshida, who strongly opposed the war, militarism, and Japan’s denial of the Nanking Massacre. As a fictionalised docudrama, it follows the life of Hachiro Yoshida, a former student soldier who experiences the military draft as a life-shattering event. After miraculously surviving the war, he becomes a prominent scholar who actively reflects on Japan’s war responsibility. However, tormented by his guilt as a perpetrator, Hachiro has to re-learn how to live the fullest of his second life while facing the familial trauma that has haunted him for decades.

The screenplay has evolved, transformed, and developed three versions throughout the writing process. The first version faithfully adapted Sasaki Hachiro’s story, tracing his life from 1939 to 1945. Despite being a faithful adaptation, I felt dissatisfied, and something was missing to make this narrative a stronger impact. The storyline was straightforward, followed the standard Three-Act structure, and any writer could easily adapt it into a screenplay. Moreover, the original story also has flaws and fails to develop other characters. That is when I realised something: this is not just Sasaki Hachiro's story. It is a collective experience, and Hachiro can only reflect so much in his diary.

Accordingly, my second version remained true to the spirit and started to develop other fictional characters, such as Tanaka, Nakao, Satoshi and Emiko. Their purpose was to enrich Hachiro’s character and narrative. By interacting with those characters, Hachiro’s story became more dynamic and developed more character depth. Compared to the original story, this second draft placed a greater emphasis on the relationship between Hachiro and his brother Tadao, highlighting their powerful effect on each other. Although Tadao seems less

significant in the story's first half, his character becomes increasingly crucial for solving Hachiro's life mystery as the story unfolds. At the end of the second version, I started to think differently about the fate and dynamic between the Sasaki brothers. Although it was an improvement, it was not the final draft, as the end remained unchanged. Treating adaptation as rewriting, revisionists inspire me to take an active stance in reinventing this story.

Instead of retelling Hachiro's story this time, the third version recreates his life, drawing from memories of multiple student soldiers with similar experiences. While taking the characteristics of central characters from their historical parallels, this screenplay allows the key events to diverge and develop from the adapted source. Reading Sasaki's diaries always make me wonder what if he survives the Kamikaze mission? What kind of person he will become after the war? This becomes the key event that diverges from the original Sasaki Hachiro story and allows me to explore the alternative in my screenplay.

In this film adaptation, Hachiro's eye injuries make him no longer suitable to be a pilot. Instead, his younger brother takes his place in the family to die for the country. As Sasaki's diaries reveal, he 'always knew his inescapable death' and developed this self-awareness 'years before the draft' (1981: 360). In facing the self-convinced death, Sasaki volunteered to join the suicidal mission; neither his superiors nor his family could persuade him otherwise. However, in this film adaptation, Hachiro's traumatic experience makes him no longer suitable to be a pilot. Instead, his younger brother Tadao takes his place in the family to 'die for the country.' Hachiro's unwanted survival allows me to explore an alternative post-war life that complicates his life as a self-discriminating perpetrator who 'prefers the death over the agony of indecision' (Sasaki, 1981). By reversing their fates in the fictional parallel, this power-war life was another turning point for me to investigate not just the guilt and trauma of the individual perpetrator but also two opposing camps that emerged after the war regarding Japan's war responsibility.

Meanwhile, I chose Takashi Yoshida to be a representative of Japanese scholars who worked tirelessly to preserve Nanking's history and memory in postwar Japan. Had there not been the contributions of these activists, the significance of Nanking and other Japanese atrocities would remain as forgotten domestic issues. His book *The Making of the Rape of Nanking* (2006) has garnered recognition from the Japan Times, New York Reviews, Pacific Affairs, East Asia magazine, and has propelled the discussion on the Nanking Massacre into

the forefront of international historical debates. Like his predecessors, Yoshida has brought international awareness once again to scholarly debates of Nanking. Not just reflecting their works, Yoshida presents the ‘most comprehensive account of the Nanking debates’ and confronts the massacre as ‘their worst national shame’ (Yoshida, 2006).

Drawing inspiration from decades of liberal movements, I re-portrayed Hachiro’s postwar life, envisioning him as a prominent anti-war scholar. As a fictional figure, Hachiro Yoshida works his way into history and breathes new life into those forgotten stories of noteworthy individuals. As Coppola did in *The Godfather Part II*, this film re-authors Hachiro’s story using the diary as a starting point. Learning from Miyazaki’s narrative style and artistic intentions inspired me to create my own cinema while further exploring intertextual adaptation principles. Ultimately, I intend to breathe new life into these forgotten stories of noteworthy individuals and frame them with ‘ethical consideration and historical obligations’ (Lipkin, 2011). That is how the story of Sasaki Hachiro eventually becomes the fictional autobiography of Hachiro Yoshida.

Part II: Integrating *The Wind Rises* and *The Godfather Part II*

Perpetrator and Familial Trauma

Inspired by Raya Morag’s study, I am fascinated by the perpetrators who ‘experience their crime as trauma and suffer psychological injuries’ as a result of their direct or indirect act of atrocity (2013: 129). Similar to Miyazaki in *The Wind Rises* (2013), I was faced with the ethical dilemma of representing Japanese student soldiers as the perpetrator in the event of war. It is not my intention to ask the viewers to identify with perpetrators. Instead, I intend to individualise a particular group of Japanese student soldiers whose experience of war marks the collapse of their moral identity. Shifting from victim to perpetrator experience, Morag first proposes to define and analyse ‘the perpetrator trauma as a new sub-genre in scholarly, representational, literary and societal contexts’ (2013: 130). For Morag, due to this sudden experience of ‘violating his own identity,’ the perpetrator finds it extremely difficult to confront such crime, ‘capable of inflicting trauma on himself’ (2013: 132).

In *Waltzing with Bashir: Perpetrator Trauma and Cinema* (2013), Morag opens with ‘the portrayal of an ex-soldier’s post-trauma’ from Ari Folman’s award-winning film *Waltz with*

Bashir (2008). Like the *Wind Rises*, this film is an animated autobiography, following the 'director's quest to recover his lost memories of the 1982 massacre in the Palestine camp refugee' (Bradshaw, 2008). In this post-traumatic film, the director projects himself onto the protagonist, who can no longer repress the memories and recalls the traumatic incident where he indirectly participates in the massacre of Palestinian refugee. Over the past quarter century, the massacre's horror has been 'absorbed and repressed within Israel's minds,' as Folman suggests, 'the very concept of Israel's crime...makes it a uniquely painful and potent subject' (2008: 134). As a result, this knowledge so violently shatters the protagonist/director's moral identity that he cannot cope with this crime, 'presenting the trauma of the complicit indirect perpetrator' (Morag, 2013).

Likewise, the story of Hachiro Yoshida revolves around his unresolved perpetration and family trauma. After surviving the war, Hachiro returns to the place where he was drafted and starts to educate the young minds about Japan's war responsibility. Publicly, Hachiro establishes himself as an antiwar scholar, advocating how 'Japan cannot move on as a new country unless it confronts the national shame' (p10). Privately, he is haunted by the memories of war and blames himself for being on the wrong side of perpetration. According to Morag's definition, Hachiro presents the trauma of the 'complicit indirect perpetrator' (2013: 140), perhaps the most complicated form of perpetrator trauma. Although he does not take direct responsibility for the Japanese atrocities or other misdeeds, Hachiro experiences the 'collapse of moral identity' on the collective level and experiences the Japanese 'crime as his own trauma' on the personal level (Morag, 2013). Put it another way, Hachiro does not participate in the atrocities, yet he suffers more psychological injuries than those direct perpetrators. This is because of 'Hachiro's love of the country' that makes him feel equally culpable and blameworthy. As Hachiro describes, 'Japan's crime and shame become his crime and shame' (p14). For Morag, Hachiro cannot forgive what Japan did, especially to the Chinese people in Nanking; this knowledge 'so violently shatters his moral identity' that Hachiro finds it 'extremely difficult to confront such crime, starting to 'inflict guilt and trauma on himself' (ibid.: 2013). When his closet friend Nakao asks 'why [Hachiro] chose to stay and drags himself into the darkness,' we understand why Hachiro 'feels obligated. A staggering amount of obligation' (p56). In doing so, the film explains one of the myths by presenting Hachiro's trauma as a complicit indirect perpetrator.

As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that Hachiro finds it easier to confront the national shame than his own family trauma. As a scholar, he actively reflects on Japan's wartime crimes and promotes peaceful protest against re-militarisation. On the one hand, it can be seen as an attempt of seeking redemption and reclaiming the moral responsibility. On the other hand, it can be also be perceived as Hachiro's self-punishment for he forces himself to stare at the 'blazing sun of the Japanese atrocities' with no intention to forgive himself. This moral contradiction, as Morag notes, is the 'very centre of this perpetrator trauma' (2013:141). Nevertheless, the film is not just about Hachiro's perpetrator trauma. Although the nature of perpetration is reflected in the trauma on a national scale, I realise that the personal story of Hachiro Yoshida is equally if not more important to the screenplay. In other words, there is something deeper than this perpetrator trauma. Looking back on his family tragedy, I started to realise Hachiro's greatest fear: neither is he as guilty as his country nor is it possible for such perpetration to ever be forgotten or forgiven.

Reading Sasaki's diary and reflecting on his past, it gradually manifests that Hachiro's real, unspoken nightmare is 'the trauma he inflicted on his family' (p90). Incapable of dealing with this family trauma, Hachiro projects this pain outwardly by overwhelming himself with all kinds of peaceful protests and anti-war movements. In doing so, Hachiro fools himself and misguides all of us into thinking that he simply blames himself for the perpetration. As the story progresses, it begins to feel like the final puzzle is unravelling the 'mystery of Hachiro Yoshida' (p70). In Act 3, we journey alongside Hachiro as he returns to the Yoshida residency. Here, he uncovers the truth about his younger brother, pays a visit to his mother's gravesite, and ultimately reconciles with his father, Kenji. To me, this represents the heart of Hachiro's psychological wounds and the ideal setting to resolve this post-traumatic narrative. For Hachiro, 'home' transcends mere physical space; it's where the hero rediscovers 'how to forgive himself' (p100).

Hachiro and Yoshida: Parallel Protagonists journey

Taking two linear storylines, I interweaved them to construct a dual timeline structure that runs in parallel. In the initial draft, a key consideration arises regarding the inclusion of dual protagonists, given that they represent the same individual but from different periods. Admittedly, my first synopsis adapted a linear three-act structure, following the life of Hachiro Sasaki. The story itself was straightforward and can be faithfully translated from the

original diary without any need of rewriting. However, this approach contradicts my research methodology, which focuses on rewriting the adaptation. And the first version would leave little or no room for the material of Dr Yoshida or the fictional recreation in general.

Alternatively, I redirected my focus toward the narrative of Dr Yoshida, with intermittent flashbacks to his prewar memories. Unfortunately, this proved to have been a wrong direction. Not only would it undermine the importance of primary sources, but the constant flashbacks scenes could be annoying or even distracting, regardless of their significance. After studying Coppola's *Godfather Part II*, I realised that it aligns precisely with my intention – treating them as two characters with separate stories, each with their individual goals and purposes. I am not inclined towards a singular narrative or co-protagonists in the same context. Instead, what I seek is a parallel existence between Hachiro and Yoshida, a mirror life between two characters from resonating periods.

By moving backward and forward, I have their narratives comment on each other on plot and thematic levels. Like Coppola, I balanced two storylines: one is set in the prewar, another situated in the postwar. Not just layering them on top of each other, I was intrigued to see if two stories can resonate emotionally, thematically, and maybe even slightly casually (Harper, 2017). For instance, in the constant juxtaposition, we see a continuity between their interactions across time and space, how Hachiro becomes anti-militarism at school, and decades later it fuels his passion to organise one of the largest national protests in postwar Japan. This antiwar theme is so fundamental that resonates through both of their narratives, and this reflection formulates a 'tighter bond between characters' and 'arguments on the story's theme as a whole' (Matt, 2015). Meanwhile, their lives are contrasted in such mirror life, making Dr Yoshida also 'unrecognisable' in the eyes of Hachiro's old friends. As Nakao observes, he appears to be 'a different person' whose values are 'counterpointed by that of the young Hachiro he knows' (p14). The war shatters not just his moral identity but also forever changes his identity of who he is. For Yoshida, his life effectively ends, much like Sasaki's at the age of twenty-two. This second life feels almost unreal, as if it belongs to another person entirely. Similar to Jiro, Yoshida senses the rising wind, and he needs to learn 'how to live his second life to the fullest' (p99).

Meanwhile, I want to show how Hachiro's story also progresses Dr Yoshida's narrative. For me, they are emotionally linked together in such a story progression. Inspired

by Vito and Michael, I created not just a scene transition but ‘a necessary shift of audience’s perspective to forward another storyline’ (Ebert, 2008). In one particular scene, I have Hachiro receive his draft letter in still silence; then we hear background protest echoing: ‘Never send our students to the battlefield again!’ (p67). Waves after waves, this becomes the most powerful slogan in the peaceful demonstration. With the slightest push, Hachiro’s story seamlessly transitions back to Yoshida’s again. Through this approach, I have their stories smoothly intersected, transferring the emotion across time and space (Leighfield, 2012). In the second half of Act II, Hachiro is diagnosed as unable to fly and sent back to the Navy hospital. Employing a time-lapse technique, I show how flat houses in this area thrive, growing into early post-war skyscrapers. In doing so, the story forwards into the time of Yoshida, who stares at the same hospital with complicated feelings. As he revisits the site, Yoshida tries to feel what his family feels thirty years ago.

In this particular scene, I intend to show how Hachiro imparts that feeling into Yoshida’s inner world, transcending time constraints. This allows Yoshida to briefly encounter ‘vivid hallucinations’ in which he sees his family ‘overlayed with the scene from his headspace’ (p 97). In this moment, Hachiro relives and re-experiences the family trauma for the second time. The theme is amplified, and so are their inner worlds visually connected (Harper, 2013). Keeping in mind this spiral network, I have both narrative threads work in unison, converging at the climax to resolve their character arcs and complement each other within the broader context of the final juxtaposition.

Representations and Social-political commentary

While representing perpetrators in an anti-war cinema, this film investigates another strange social phenomenon: how these idealistic youths in Japan, despite being liberal and anti-war, were mobilised by the military government. In other words, how did military propaganda appeal to not just ordinary Japanese but educated and critical minds like Hachiro in prewar Japan? With Emiko Tierney’s and other scholars’ insights, I found the answer in the diaries of Sasaki Hachiro and the student soldiers. According to Emiko, many intellectuals underestimated the state propaganda, especially how the totalitarian regime ‘mobilised and militarised’ the aesthetic symbol of cherry blossom (2006: 26).

In Japanese culture, cherry blossom embodies the spring of life, the purity of the individual, the beauty of nature, and the virtue of sacrifice (Sasaki, 1981). Personally, Hachiro Sasaki saw the best qualities of Japanese people in the image of cherry blossoms. During a bus trip, Hachiro is so captivated by the mountain cherry in blossom that he composes a beautiful poem:

*Pink Sakura, spring of life; pink
Sakura, beauty of youth; pink
Sakura, your splendour in deep
Snow pink Sakura, my purity of soul.*

For many Japanese, they 'reflect [themselves] on this land of cherry blossom and [this symbol] reflects the true aesthetic of the Japanese people' (Sasaki, 1981). However, military propaganda had twisted and abused this notion. Emiko refers to it as the 'militarisation of cherry blossom in Japanese culture' (2006: 26). As a victim and witness of this state propaganda, Yoshida wrote an article with the same title, directly addressing how they brainwashed and indoctrinated the youths in Japan through exploiting their favourite cherry blossom symbol. Intrigued by this concept, I consciously chose to incorporate it into the screenplay.

Although Sasaki's diary overlooks this aspect, a carefully crafted scene was devised in the film to depict the insidious process. When Hachiro returns from the bus trip, they find a military unit having a tour exhibition, where an officer tries to appeal to students' patriotism.

MILITARY OFFICER
(invitingly)
At the level of the individual, the flower
Represents gorgeous but very brief life. At
The collective level, it becomes a dominant
Symbol of the Japanese people as a Whole.
.....
Aesthetic of the flower embodies the soul
of Japanese, the purity of life and
self-fulfilment. This spiritual property
enable young men to face the end without
fear like the graceful falling cherry petals.

Shocked by such a speech, Hachiro realises a terrifying fact that the 'military is using the cherry blossom to evoke the virtue and beauty of patriotic sacrifice' (p30). In the eyes of the military leaders, the young Japanese lives are like that of a flower, gorgeous but brief and

expendable. They demand young people to 'fulfil their life purpose with other Japanese as a whole' (p30). This symbolic and aesthetic flower can give them the spiritual strength to 'face death without fear' like the 'graceful falling cherry petals' (p30). Enraged, Hachiro cries out wholeheartedly, 'How dare you use and weaponise cherry blossom like this?' (p31). Yet, they must face the reality that the 'military government are aestheticising the ideology of inevitable sacrifice' (p32). With this scene, I intend to visualise Emiko's notion of the 'militarisation of cherry blossom' and navigate Hachiro to find his 'greater cause': 'We must fight for a new Japan free from the right-wing militarism' (p33). In so doing, the film strategically establishes its anti-war theme.

Naturally, my film intends to specifically portray the struggle between individual integrity and the demands of one's country, particularly in the context of elite Japanese students. Throughout the narrative, Hachiro grapples with the decision to pursue personal happiness and freedom versus fulfilling his social responsibilities, as expected of other Japanese individuals. One particular scene that effectively captures this struggle occurs when Hachiro, in a moment of agony, confides in Nakao, expressing that he finds it 'impossible to betray either his own soul or his country' (p70). In comparison to other representations of similar historical themes, the script offers a fresh and alternative viewpoint on the subject matter through delving specifically into the experience of elite Japanese students. Through their narrower lens, my script hoped to offer a unique perspective on the historical theme. For Hachiro, the greater awareness comes with greater pain, and this moral dilemma constantly tortures his heart and soul. By centring the story around Hachiro and his internal conflict, I intended to show how Hachiro reconciles with such common yet conflicting psychology to make peace with himself. This distinguishes it from other representations that may focus on different aspects or perspectives of the same history.

At the end of diary, Hachiro Sasaki firmly believed that only war would destroy militarism in Japan. 'All will crumble in the war,' Sasaki recorded this moment of epiphany, 'And militarism would meet its end' (1981: 380). Considering the historical context, it was astonishing how accurately Sasaki had predicted the future of Japan from today's perspective. According to Sasaki, Japan needed to be 'purged and reborn' as its heart and soul have been corrupted (1981: 101). Not just Sasaki, Emiko discovered in her research that other student soldiers also became 'deeply disappointed and increasingly less patriotic' after seeing those atrocities (2006: 62). Scholars like Yuki Tanaka reveals in her book *The Hidden Horrors*:

Japanese War Crimes in WWII (1996), how the massacre in Nanking was a turning point after which the Japanese government could no longer hide or justify its inhuman atrocities among its people (Yuki, 1996). As a result, some [student soldiers] began to openly criticise the ideology and lose their faith in the government; others followed a similar pattern to Hachiro believed their responsibility to 'save this fallen, barbaric and corrupted Japan' (Tierney, 2006). In the mainstream impression, it was almost unimaginable that there were student soldiers like Hachiro Sasaki who were deeply committed to eradicating Japanese militarism. Before he died, Hachiro Sasaki envisioned a 'utopian Japan in a new era of humanism and idealism' (1981: 387). Unfortunately, he could never witness a 'new Japan' that is free from militarism.

After the visit of Sasaki's family, Emiko could not help but imagining 'what their lives would be like if Hachiro survived; perhaps the postwar Japan would be a better place with individuals like Hachiro Sasaki' (2006: 68). Likewise, I was deeply intrigued by the alternative narrative had Hachiro Sasaki miraculously survived the war and lived a longer life than the age of twenty two. What is it like for anti-war veterans such as Hachiro to live in a postwar Japan? How would he respond to the purging of pre-war militarists? What journey would he undertake in constructing his new ideal country? Is there a possibility for Sasaki to transform into a progressive, anti-war scholar like Yoshida, dedicating his life to reflect on Japan's wartime responsibility? Bearing in mind these questions, I finally decided to remake this tale of Sasaki into a new fictional autobiography like Miyazaki did for Jiro in *The Wind Rises*. As a representative of these liberal and peace-loving student soldiers, Hachiro Yoshida will bring this group of student soldiers for the first time to the war docudrama foreground.

Re-authoring a fictional autobiography

Studying Coppola's *The Godfather Part II* and Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* prepares me to take an active stance, transcend the adapter status, and reauthor the adapted text as my own. Even though the original story of Sasaki is an intriguing narrative, I felt a 'staggering amount of obligation' to give Hachiro different representations as adaptation leads to reinterpretation. Instead of treating Sasaki's diary as an enclosed text, I considered it an 'open structure to be reworked by a boundless context' (Leitch, 2007). That is to say, despite Sasaki's story already having an ending, it can be 'reworked' and generate new texts through rewriting. Like Coppola, I naturally focused on storytelling by 'trusting the tale, not the teller' (Lipkin, 2001).

As a result, the *Godfather Part II* encouraged me to open a new chapter by reimagining the aftermath of Hachiro Sasaki's story in post-war Japan.

This gives me the creative freedom to raise different stakes introduce new social-political contexts, and re-portray the original characters. While keeping most of Sasaki's story, I intend to re-fictionalise Hachiro into my own character. Accordingly, this film sets the audience on a new journey from Nakao's third-person perspective to discover the 'mystery and untold stories' of what makes Hachiro who he is. Meanwhile, I employed some free writing so Hachiro's character can be developed freely. That is to say, it does not have to be an 'orthodox narrative that is cause-effect'. Instead, 'a random sequence of chance, coincidence, and occurrences' can be equally effective in portraying a character instead of pre-planning everything ahead (McKee, 1997).

To achieve that, I studied art cinema narrative, which is less conventional in screenwriting. It is defined as 'tiny moments' by Jordi Valdivia in his essay, where he argues 'without considering a pre-planned structure' and looks for 'structure [that] would give them order while maintaining some of their disconnected qualities' (Valdivia, 2022). Instead of imposing events 'from outside intrusion,' I learned to take a step back, trust the character, and allow events to develop 'out of the situations in which characters are found' (McKee, 1997). For instance, I allowed Hachiro to explore freely on campus, where he came across the Sanshiro Pond. This place is never mentioned in Sasaki's diary, yet I found something magical about this pond. This seemingly ordinary place refreshes Hachiro's story, allowing me to seek 'deeper meaning from mundane moments.' As a result, this commonplace situation, despite having 'little narrative role in the traditional scene', gives me a powerful insight into the character dynamic and their relationship (1997: 153). It becomes associated with Hachiro's inner world, especially every stage of his internal change. All these tiny moments and seemingly mundane places offer me new opportunities to re-portray Hachiro as a new character organically. And the remaking would only be natural with such non-traditional artistic free-writing. By the end of the film, we see Hachiro finish another transformation, learn to live his second to the fullest, and finally become whole again. In this process, as Leitch outlines in his theory, an adaptation of a true story becomes a process of actively rewriting, a constantly changing and evolving work of art capable of becoming something independent from the original source.

Original characters like Tanaka Yamazaki and Nakao Tasuki are strategically introduced in this film. While Nakao is loosely based on Sasaki's closest friends Hirasawa, Tanaka has been invented as a new character for several reasons. In his study, Harper explains why film adaptation frequently create new characters to 'make the story work effectively in the cinematic medium, capture the essence of the source material, and engage the audience in a compelling way' (2015: 14). Initially, I started the film with Hachiro's lecture, which now commences on page 10, from his perspective. However, I felt that the tone and themes of story had not been properly introduced. Since the film is not just about 'reflecting on Japan's wartime responsibility' on a national scale, it also confronts Hachiro's unspoken family trauma on a personal scale. Hence, Nakao's perspective is essential to unfold the entire story, helping the audience to follow complex ideas from book to a more visual medium. Additionally, for those who 'are not interested in politics,' Nakao appeals to a different audience, making the story more inclusive and shedding a different light to the mystery of Hachiro Yoshida's story.

Meanwhile, Tanaka assumes the role of Hachiro's adversary to 'enhance emotional impact' and 'create dramatic conflict' (Harper, 2015). As Syd Field famously argues, 'All drama is conflict. Without conflict, you have no action; without action, you have no character; without character, you have no story; and without story, you have no screenplay' (1979). For Hachiro, Tanaka embodies the source of conflict, evoking specific emotions or reactions from the protagonist. In numerous plot-points, such as the lecture scene, JTU protest, and police raid, Tanaka introduces conflict, tension, and obstacles that may not have been as prominent in the original diary. While serving as the key figure for Hachiro's character development, Tanaka was also created to 'highlight certain qualities of aspects of [Hachiro], providing challenges, depth and contrast to the original narrative' (Harper, 2015:16).

This project also contemplates the cinematic categorisation of 'what is fiction' and 'what is original', especially in the film adaptation (Andrew, 1984). 'The relation between history and fiction as intertext', Dudley Andrews argues, 'is complex in any adaptation' (1984: 24). It encouraged me to combine the element of history and fiction in formulating the character of Hachiro Yoshida. Mirroring the life of his brother, Hachiro becomes a professor at the University of Tokyo, where he actively works with actual organisations like the Japan Teacher Union (JTU) and the Japan-China Friendship Association. In this screenplay, actual events are also borrowed and recreated, such as the national peace demonstration in 1951 and

other anti-war movements organised by JTU in postwar Japan (Seraphim, 2006).

By invoking the root in history, I intend to give the story the factual basis of its event, allowing the character to critically reflect on the social and political commentary in the dramatic context. Taking the JTU protest against re-militarism as an instance, it can be seen as a fictional, traditional cause-effect event; at the same time, it can be supported and traced back by many post-war movements in postwar Japan (2006: 86). Put it another way, it is half fictional and half-historical, making it hard to discern 'what is fiction' and 'what is original' in the dramatic context (Andrew, 1984). Drawing material, memories, and experiences from multiple backgrounds, I aimed to enrich Hachiro's original narratives, embed his second life in a historical context, and reinvent a fictional autobiography by interweaving history with fiction. Not just a complex intertext, this fictional autobiography enables me to develop original perspectives from the adapted materials, probing the limits of historical representation and textual adaptability (Leitch, 2013).

In conclusion, I have no intention to shape the public memory of WWII, nor make any claim regarding how the Japanese invaders should be remembered, whether their aggressions are direct or indirect. However, as an anti-war film at its core, *Making Hachiro Yoshida* explores these unimaginable perspectives through the lenses of individual perpetrators, mediating how these forgotten but noteworthy stories can be remade with 'ethical consideration and historical obligations'.

Like other war docudramas, this film re-creates actual people of the past through the performance of collective memories. Likewise, I wish to use this fictional autobiography to revive and preserve the collective memories of Hachiro Sasaki, Tanaka Yoshida, other student soldiers and liberal scholars who not just oppose this war but condemn all wars. The perpetrator-trauma cinema can be a new trend in this sense, or as Morag advocates, a 'new sub-genre of war films' (2013: 65). Finally, sometimes portraying the noteworthy perpetrators, rather than muting their voices, might be as important as staging our war heroes.

Conclusion

This research project aims to demonstrate that film adaptation practice can be seen as a creative discourse capable of reinventing and improving the original text through active dialogical responses. The term ‘screen(re)writing’ highlights the necessity of active rewriting in forming a screenplay designed for film adaptation based on a true story or literary sources. Through investigating two case studies, my original screenplay learned to incorporate their essential elements to serve my specific artistic intentions and narrative styles in the scriptwriting process.

In chapter one, I briefly explained the ‘tiresome debates of fidelity’ (Andrew, 1984). Although it is justified, the issue of fidelity proves to be outdated and quite problematic. Instead, many contemporary scholars have redefined adaptation study, and the purpose of adaptation goes beyond merely being faithful or accurate. For revisionists, adaptation becomes active rewriting to ‘keep the texts alive’ (Leitch, 2013), and one must know toward what ends the adaption is designed (Cartmell, 2012). That is why it is crucial to examine two main questions: 1) Why do numerous adaptations purposefully alter the prior texts? And how did talented directors transcend their source material?

Chapter Two examines how Francis Ford Coppola handles the parallel narrative with a dual-protagonist arc from two resonating periods in *The Godfather Part II*. Interweaving two storylines together, Coppola mirrors the life of Vito with Michael’s, having their separate stories reflecting on one another emotionally and thematically. While the first movie remains a faithful adaptation of Mario Puzo’s novel, Coppola changes his attitude toward the notion of fidelity in *Part II*, treating his cinema ‘as equal of the literature’ and this sequel is worthy as the original. In fact, in transcending the original, *the Part II* shows the true mastery of Coppola as an auteur-adapter in reinventing the Godfather franchise.

The purpose of chapter three is to analyse the creative adaptation of Hayao Miyazaki. In *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki engages the most challenging intertextual dialogues in his career. The first half examines the issues of representing a perpetrator in the event of war. Then, in the second half, we discussed what makes *The Wind Rises* Miyazaki’s autobiographical fiction. Through rewriting multiple sources, the author reinvents Jiro’s original biography into a beautiful Miyazaki tale, rich in love and depth, blending a wartime

biopic drama with his fictional reimagination to reflect Miyazaki's own dreams, ideology and moral responsibility.

Chapter four, *Making Hachiro Yoshida*, examines the creative writing process of the original script in which the previous discussion from earlier chapters are reflected. After the project description, I introduced the primary source, the archive pictures, and relevant studies of the student soldiers and postwar Japanese scholars in their antiwar movements. In the second half, it discusses integrating Miyazaki's representation of perpetrators in a trauma cinema, adapting Coppola's parallel storylines for the same protagonist in different ages, reflecting social-political commentary between prewar and postwar Japan, and using a true story to recreate a fictional autobiography.

In the following sections, I will explain the contribution of my study, acknowledge the limitations, and provide recommendations for further research.

Writing the Adaptation for Creative Purpose

Adaptation study has particular relevance to creative writing, and they have much in common regarding theory and practice (Leitch, 2013). Revisionists like Thomas Leitch put his theory into practice by designing a course called 'Writing the Adaptation.' In his workshop, Leitch teaches adaptation through creative writing where students learn to 'creatively engage with their texts, rewriting whatever they read' (2013: 23). Fascinated by such 'creative use of adaptation,' Deborah Cartmell advocates how 'adaptation needs to be 'extended and rethought as a creative process' (2012: 45).

In 'Redefining Adaptation Studies', she calls for a major reorientation toward what she defines as 'creative adaptation' (Cartmell, 2012), particularly investigating adaptation through advanced and research-based screenwriting. The emphasis on creative adaptation is on 'bringing a fresh and unique perspective to the original work, placing a greater emphasis on creativity and originality, and often resulting in a more distinct and innovative final product' (Cartmell, 2012; Leitch, 2013). However, as our research question indicates, whether adaptation can be seen as a creative discourse has not been adequately answered. Due to the lack of research-oriented screenplay projects that focus on the creative use of

adaptation, this innovative approach to adaptation has not garnered significant attention and remains far from being prevalent in both theory and practice.

So naturally, this project aims to respond to the request made by Leitch and Cartmell, using my original screenplay as a medium of criticism to show the necessity of rewriting as a criterion for adaptation. With their studies as a starting point, *Making Hachiro Yoshida* is designed as a research-based screenplay that can be critically analysed for specific narrative styles or artistic intentions and its textual status in written adaptation. By combining creative writing with adaptation practice, this project emphasises textual rewriting and explores dialogical responses in the screen(re)writing process. In doing so, I aim to answer the research question: *How can one establish a new type of authorship as an adapter-auteur by treating adaptation as a creative discourse?*

The study of Coppola's *The Godfather Part II* and Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* provides distinctive approaches and insights into the creative practice of adaptation. Like *The Wind Rises*, *Making Hachiro Yoshida* demonstrates 'how' rewriting is implemented through fictional reimagination, varied representations, and re-authoring the original text. Drawing from the diary of a noteworthy individual, the project also incorporates diverse materials and experiences to reinvent this fictional autobiography in both prewar and postwar contexts. The study also addresses 'why' such rewriting is necessary in storytelling. For instance, a traditional, linear narrative could not effectively handle the complex, multi-timeline structure required. Instead, the creative choice to adapt a dual-protagonist storyline, as seen in Coppola's Part II, proves more effective. Another reason for altering prior texts is to address 'ethical considerations and historical obligations' while introducing the story to a new audience. This is why *Making Hachiro Yoshida* portrays perpetrator trauma in an antiwar film, ensuring that the nature of perpetration is genuinely reflected on both national and personal levels.

Furthermore, my research and practice contribute to this new field of creative adaptation and benefit those who write/study adaptation for creative purposes. Furthering revisionists' adaptation theories, I created and used the term 'screen(re)writing' to highlight the necessity of active rewriting in forming a screenplay designed for film adaptation based on a true story or literary sources. Treating adaptation as a creative discourse, this practice-based research

intends to advance our knowledge of creative adaptation in theory and practice, rethinking ‘what is fiction’ and ‘what is original’ in broader literary and cinematic contexts.

Limitation and Implications

Admittedly, this research project targets one particular adaptation, namely, a fictional autobiography with specific topics supported by two personal choices of case studies. Despite some general strategies outlined in the chapter (such as recontextualising, re-fictionalisation, re-imagination, reinterpretation, etc.), I have no intention to instruct how other creative projects should be adapted. Even within the same genre, saying fictional autobiography, I cannot guarantee that my project would be one hundred per cent suitable for your case study. The last thing I want is to provide or even suggest an all-inclusive framework for all adaptations. This overly ambiguous attempt, in my opinion, is no different than creating a universal narrative mode for all feature films.

Meanwhile, the scope of fidelity also implies that some adaptations are completely faithful with little or no concern for rewriting. At the same time, there are many examples of poor rewriting that are criticised for being intentionally unfaithful or simply devaluing the original source with no improvements. In fact, the revisionists claim that adaptation equals rewriting is potentially problematic in some circumstances. Blindly following some rules of ‘how you should adapt’ might do more harm than good, resulting in faithful but bad adaptations or unconventional yet meaningless rewritings. Acknowledging the limitations, I intend not to devalue my work or the revisionist contributions. Instead, this self-reflective section critically examines my study, confronts its weakness, and identifies issues that future scholars/writers can avoid. On a larger scale, I want to be objective in my scholarly efforts without exaggerating their contributions or downplaying their academic values.

Every film adapts differently. For those interested, this project will only provide my approach and methods for adapting, reinterpreting and recreating the source material that is based on a true story. To make the semi-fictional character Hachiro Yoshida, I employed techniques such as 1) reauthoring Sasaki Hachiro’s life; 2) borrowing experiences from different student soldiers; 3); reversing the real character’s fate in their fictional parallels; 4) mirroring the lives of the prominent antiwar scholar; 5) paralleling the dual-protagonist storylines 6) remaining faithful to the material but creating a diverging event for exploring

the alternatives, etc. Furthermore, I emphasised the importance of 'ethical consideration and historical obligations' when adapting the story of a real-life character. It is crucial to understand the purpose of the adaptation—whether it aims to represent a noteworthy character or to make social, moral, or political commentaries. The adapter must acknowledge their responsibilities toward the historical texts and thoughtfully engage with those personal narratives. In doing so, one can learn how to balance between staying true to the original material and making necessary changes to suit the new medium.

Understanding the 'necessity of rewriting as a criterion for adaptation' is only the beginning; one should mediate on 'what is fiction' and 'what is original' while offering new insights and reinterpretations to the source material. By combining the elements of fiction and history, this screenplay further challenges the limit of historical representations and adaptability of a text in the genre of fictional autobiography. Treating this adaption as a creative discourse, my goal is to bring new life to the story of Sasaki Hachiro, transcend the source material creatively, and become the new author of *Making Hachiro Yoshida*. In doing so, the characteristics of creative adaptation by Deborah Cartmell, Kamila Elliot, and Thomas Leitch have been investigated, explored, and achieved by this film.

Accordingly, there are a few recommendations for future researchers. Every adaptation is unique, with a complex relationship with the original source. The study constantly evolves by engaging with new practices and creative discourses. Nevertheless, future adaptation theory and practice will not give up on mediating 'what is fiction' and 'what is original,' blending elements of history and fiction to test the limit of literary performance just like this project did. Furthermore, it also benefits us from studying how (adapted) texts get promoted or transformed from intertexts to full-textual status and precisely what makes them 'independent works existing by themselves.' This clarification would establish a more solid ground for textual rewriting. In actual writing practice, I insist on not imposing rules or strategies simply because they succeed or are important to other film adaptations. Instead, this project hopes to open a new window for writers who can extend and rethink adaption as a screen(re)writing process. Like Cartmell, I call for a reorientation in the field toward the active screen(re)writing with creative, dialogical responses, treating every source as a text to be freely improved, organically reinvented, and potentially reauthored. In this new wave, young writers can cross-train themselves to be active adapters who bring new life to the text and keep both fields thriving for future generations.

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