

# Presenting an Innocent Nation: Critique of *Gojira* (1954)'s Reflections on Japan's WWII Responsibility

*Fanglin Wang*

The Japanese film *Gojira* (known as *Godzilla* to Western audiences) is a *kaiju* or monster movie, and the first installment in the *Gojira* series. *Gojira* films are allegorical, and typically comment on the contemporary political and moral issues of their time. Released soon after Japan's defeat in WWII, *Gojira* offers timely insights into Japan's reluctance to admit wrongdoing in initiating and entering the Second World War. Created shortly after the U.S. Occupation Period (1945-1952), *Gojira* (1954) sheds light on who is to blame and who is not to blame when dealing with Japan's war responsibility. *Gojira* attributes blame to the pro-American Japanese government officials and the American nuclear-bomb program while presenting an innocent Japan through the film's focus on common Japanese people who are victimized by both nuclear bombs and the invasion of the monster *Gojira*. This contrast in representation presents ways of remembering and ways of forgetting, thus depicting an imagined history that allows Japan to escape from confronting its war responsibility.

---

*Fanglin Wang is an M.A. student in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown University. Her research focuses on Japanese films' reflections on war trauma in post-WWII, and national cinema at large. She can be reached at fw181@georgetown.edu.*

---

## Part I. Historical Background

*At one point in the 20th century, Japan walked the path of war. Then, on December 8, 1941, Japan initiated hostilities against the U.S., Great Britain and others, plunging into what came to be known as the Pacific War. This war was largely fought elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region, but when the tide turned against Japan, American warplanes began bombing the homeland, and Okinawa became a bloody battlefield. Within this context of war, on August 6, 1945, the world's first atomic weapon, a bomb of unprecedented destructive power, was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. (Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall)*

This is the epitaph on the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for nuclear bomb victims in Hiroshima, Japan. Serving as a message to contextualize WWII history, it is missing the correct timeline for the initiation of hostilities in East Asia. The epitaph is controversial—particularly for Chinese and Korean citizens—because it neglects to mention Japan's own responsibility in initiating the war and the numerous atrocities they committed during that period. WWII actually started on September 18, 1931, when the Japanese army used an “explosion on the South Manchurian railway” as an excuse to invade Manchuria (Tanaka 2006, 1). That “Japan was defeated...by Asians” was also not acknowledged on the memorial shrine and “naturally hinders full recognition of the responsibility of Japan's abhorrent military acts and the war losses that its Asian neighbors suffered as a result of war and colonialism” (Tanaka, 2). Another controversial aspect of this message is the presentation of Japan's victimhood. The deaths of hundreds of thousands of Japanese citizens in Hiroshima and Nagasaki is framed as a “sacred

sacrifice,” while “removing any reference to [Japan] kill[ing] so many people or why and for what these people had to be ‘sacrificed’” (2). This message positions the Japanese as “victims of war rather than as assailants” (2).

In the post-WWII period, Japan's reconstruction of its cultural and national identity included a reluctance to admit its war crimes; this has become one of the most debated issues among its neighbors—namely China and South Korea—who suffered from Japan's invasion. At least 14 million Chinese people were killed during Japan's invasion of China (Mitter 2013). The most notorious war atrocity in China was the Nanjing Massacre, in which Japan brutally slaughtered 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians from December 1937 to January 1938 (Merkel-Hess and Wasserstrom 2010). Similarly, between 1932 and 1945, Japan forced approximately 80,000-plus women from the Korean Peninsula, China, and other Southeast Asian countries to work as military prostitutes—known today as “comfort women”—for Japanese soldiers (Sala 2017; Blakemore 2018). The lack of acknowledgement of these and other atrocities was made explicit in Japan's revision of its high school history textbooks, which excluded these and other war crimes the Japanese committed during WWII (Oi 2013; Hayashi 2015).

According to the current Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Japan dealt collectively with the issue of reparations, property, and claims with the countries concerned. That was the method that was generally accepted by the international community at the time” (“History Issue Q&A” 2018). In 1993, Japan issued its first official apology for “recruiting” Asian and European women to work as comfort women (Sterngold 1993). However, Japan refused to admit that they literally forced these women to

work as military prostitutes (Sterngold). In addition, Japan apologized specifically to South Korea in 2015 and offered \$8.3 million to “provide care” for former comfort women (Sang-Hun 2015). These apologies did not satisfy the victims. In response to Japan’s apology to South Korea in 2015, survivors and their advocates criticized the apology as not “complete and meaningful” enough, since “[it] did not recognize Japan’s role in establishing and maintaining the system of sexual slavery...It fails to meet criteria set out in international human rights norms that a public apology must be an ‘acknowledgement of the facts...’” (Tolbert 2017).

Furthermore, it is telling that it took until the 1990s for Japan to even approach a meaningful acknowledgment of wartime atrocities. To understand how this situation arose, it is useful to examine the U.S. Occupation in Japan from 1945 to 1952, in which the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of General Headquarters of the Allied Occupation Forces (GHQ) was responsible for “teaching Japanese citizens ‘the truth’ about the war by revealing Japanese war crimes and highlighting the devastating consequences of the war including Japan’s destruction and defeat” (Tanaka 2006, 3). However, despite these duties, much of the information on Japan’s war atrocities—such as Japan’s colonization of Korea and Taiwan, and China’s resistance to Japan’s invasion—were not taught to the Japanese public (Tanaka 2006, 4).

In the early 1950s, the United States’ top priority was to exploit and bolster the democratic ideological frontier of Japan against neighboring communist powers such as China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea (Tanaka, 6). Thus, the United States government was lenient in forgiving Japan for its war crimes, both during the

1946 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and the establishment of the San Francisco Treaty in 1951 (6). To make the U.S. occupation of Japan as seamless as possible, General MacArthur and the U.S. government protected Emperor Hirohito in order to get his testimony in the Tokyo Trial (5). They depicted Emperor Hirohito as a victim who suffered from the deception of Japanese military leaders during the war; in the public’s mind, the Emperor “emerged... as the peacemaker who saved Japan from annihilation” (5).

## Part II. Literature Review

### *(a) Movies’ Reflections on Social Change and Politics*

As a media form that reflects social change, movies reimagine and reinterpret history. They also play an important role in the formation of identity. Analysis of Japanese films has shown strong links between the films messages and viewers’ contemporary ideological concerns—such as their views on democratization, victimhood, masculinity, and war responsibility.

In the 1920s, films were used as a tool to reinforce Japan’s social education policy. The Japanese bureaucrats viewed the general public as less intelligent than elites; thus, their education and social values needed to be strengthened through government-approved films (Hideaki 2013, 79-82).

During the U.S. occupation period, film critic Kyoko Hirano (1992) states that popular Japanese media channels such as film, radio, and theater were used by U.S. forces to spread occupation propaganda and democratic ideals (Hirano, 5). To reconstruct Japan’s democracy and comply with the Potsdam Declaration (the terms of Japan’s surrender), censorship was widely

enforced in the film industry; as the Cold War approached, the U.S. censors paid more attention to banning films that were leftist and communist (Hirano, 6).

In the 1950s and 60s, popular movies in Japan were mostly state-promoted war propaganda (Gerow 2006, 2). Yale Japanese film studies professor Aaron Gerow (2016) argues that there were only a few types of Japanese war films being produced in this post-war period. In many of these movies, Japan is depicted as “a normal nation” with “healthy nationalism” (Gerow 2016, 196). Soldiers in these films willingly die for their country, such as Japanese WWII heroes like Yamamoto Isoroku, or “young kamikaze pilots” (Gerow 2006, 2). These movies depict “individualized melodramas of victimization and sacrifice” and helped in the formation of Japanese neo-nationalism in their “reinforcement of Japanese masculinity [and] the veneration of the sacrificial war dead” (2). In the 1990s, movies became bolder in their attempt to revise history; they would “fantasize Japanese victories, free...of the ‘taboos’ of postwar Japanese democracy that so many on the pop culture right complain of” (2).

In interpreting the fantasy presented in Japanese war films, Gerow states that viewers should not just look for “signs of an independent Japanese nationalism,” but also discover:

*the reasons why the nationalism in these works is so warped and tortured, confronted with a myriad of obstacles it takes convoluted paths to avoid...reminding us of what nationalism has to erase in order to appear compelling and unproblematic.*  
(11)

It is within this context that it is important to look at Japanese post-war films’ fictional

presentation of victimization and war responsibility, as they have a strong link to Japanese citizens’ present and past ideologies in real life. Previous researchers have studied political and social responses to the traumatic events of WWII. However, few have focused on the controversial issue of Japan's war responsibility through the lens of Japanese film production in the 1950s.

(b) *Gojira* (1954)

*Produced in 1954, Gojira reflects immediate and agonizing memories of man-made destruction. This is because Japan in the mid-1950s still bore the scars—both physical and emotional—of total war and defeat. Long after Japan's surrender in 1945, even long after the departure of General MacArthur and the American occupation forces in 1952, the shadows of the WWII tenaciously haunted the Japanese people. Despite the guarded return of economic prosperity in the 1950s and steady progress on physical rebuilding, the dark memories of war — so compellingly evoked in Gojira — remained fresh and traumatic. (Tsutsui 2004, 16-18)*

Made soon after Japan's defeat in WWII, *Gojira* offers a timely insight into Japan's reluctance to admit its wrongdoing in initiating and entering the war. *Gojira* is a *kaiju* (monster) movie and the first in the *Gojira* series. Major themes include anti-American sentiments and anti-nuclear messages. *Gojira* films are allegorical, commenting on political and moral issues of their historical time. Instead of presenting the war atrocities Japan committed in WWII, *Gojira* presents an innocent Japan that is traumatized by nuclear bombs and strives to protect itself from the invasion of the monster *Gojira* (referred to in the West as *Godzilla*). There is a notable absence of military soldiers in the film, which presents

an image of innocence instead of reminding viewers of the aggression of Japanese soldiers during the war.

### Part III. Movie Analysis of *Gojira* (1954)

*Gojira* sheds light on who is to blame and who is not to blame when dealing with Japan's war responsibility. The innocent and blameless common Japanese people are presented as victims of the nuclear bombs and it criticizes the privileged pro-American Japanese government officials' inability to deal with an external threat. The movie also condemns American science, in particular the invention and use of nuclear bombs, which destroyed the peaceful life of the common Japanese people. In this way, *Gojira* reframes Japan's role in WWII as that of a powerless victim and not an aggressor, and therefore denies its own responsibility while erasing its war crimes.

The movie *Gojira* opens with the sinking of two Japanese ships, Eiko-maru and Bingo-maru, near Odo Island. The ancient sea creature Gojira is blamed for this incident by local elders. Professor Yamane and his colleagues go to Odo Island to investigate and find that Gojira's footprints are radioactive. In Professor Yamane's presentation to the Diet (i.e. Japan's national legislature), he demonstrates that Gojira is a creature that is produced by nuclear bombs. Hearing this, conservative politicians and journalists have a heated debate on whether to reveal the presence of Gojira to the public. Under pressure from the government, the news about Gojira is censored. However, Gojira's continuous attacks on Tokyo make destroying Gojira an urgent matter. Professor Yamane's daughter Emiko confesses to her lover Ogata that her fiancé Dr. Serizawa's

has created a weapon, called the Oxygen Destroyer, that can kill Gojira. Emiko and Ogata visit Dr. Serizawa's research lab and try to persuade him to use the Oxygen Destroyer to destroy Gojira. Dr. Serizawa hesitates at first, but after he sees the people of Japan suffering and praying for peace, he decides he must use it. In the end, Dr. Serizawa releases the Oxygen Destroyer into Tokyo Bay, sacrificing his life in the process.

#### *Sequence 1: Professor Yamane's Testimony to the Diet*

*Gojira's* first scene is an effective demonstration of Japanese power dynamics in the 1950s. The scene features four groups: politicians, scientists, journalists, and common people. The scene opens with Professor Yamane explaining his investigation of Gojira's presence on Odo Island. As the presenter, Professor Yamane is supposed to be given the most attention in this scene. However, more light is given to the Japanese politicians sitting to the right of the frame. The contrast of light indicates the importance of the Japanese politicians and the relatively unimportant presence of Professor Yamane. Moreover, Professor Yamane's voice is calm, soft and slow. As a pragmatic and elderly pacifist, Professor Yamane provides the film with a voice of reason. However, his soft voice denotes a lack of forcefulness, which indicates his powerlessness in deciding whether to publicize Gojira's existence to the general public. In comparison, the voices of the politicians and journalists in the room are fast and loud.

As Professor Yamane explains why the ancient creature Gojira appeared in Japan, the film uses medium shots on both the scientist group (led by Professor Yamane) and the politician group (led by Representative Oyama). The focus on Professor Yamane and

Representative Oyama is also a reflection of the hierarchical male-dominated Japanese society, where men are generally given more respect and influence than women, and older people are generally more respected than younger people. Professor Yamane and Representative Oyama are the oldest males in their respective groups and are centered as the focal point of their groups by both dressing in black suits while the other men around them wear lighter colored suits. When Professor Yamane ends his presentation, the curtains in the room are opened and sunlight streams into the room to illuminate the side of the room where the scientists sit—indicating the professor’s transparency and credibility.

Following Professor Yamane’s presentation, a debate begins between members of the Diet and a contingent of journalists on whether the general public should know the truth (i.e. Gojira’s presence). Representative Oyama stands up and argues against making Gojira’s presence known to the public. His colleagues look up to him and nod several times in agreement when Representative Oyama insists that releasing news on Gojira will make “Japan’s fragile diplomatic relations become further strained...Our political life, economy, and foreign relations will be plunged into chaos” (*Gojira* 1954). Although the window curtain is still open, strangely, no sunlight is shining into their side of the room—indicating that the arguments made by Representative Oyama (i.e. the leader of the politicians’ group) are not transparent or trustworthy. The historical and ideological subtext of this scene is clear. In the Occupation Period of the 1950s, the Diet (Japan’s national legislature) was under U.S. control. By refusing to publicize Gojira’s presence after learning that Gojira is radioactive and presents an imminent threat to the Japanese people, the film’s untrustworthy politicians represent the pro-

American Japanese politicians who were protecting American interests at this time.

In the same scene, Representative Oyama’s argument is quickly interrupted by a group of journalists. The male journalists all sit in the first row, but the camera tilts to ensure the modern-dressed female journalists are the dominant figures in the camera frame. The female journalist who dresses in black is again the oldest and the most experienced, however, she is not the focus of the journalist group that is confronting Representative Oyama. Instead, a woman dressed in a light-colored western-style blouse and hat is the first journalist that speaks up to argue with Representative Oyama. Her voice is loud and quick; she waves her arm upward as she defends the responsibility of telling the truth to the public. In the context of 1950s Japanese society, her assertive actions present as masculine, and her new ideas and comparative youth are at odds with traditional social norms—as represented by a silent middle-aged woman in a kimono near the politicians.

The woman in the kimono is depicted through a long shot, which seems to signify her unimportance, in the middle of Representative Oyama’s arguments. However, including this woman among the politicians is not a coincidence. Since the kimono is symbolic of traditional Japanese culture, this middle-aged woman seems to represent the preservation of Japanese tradition in the society. She looks serious, quiet, and seems not to wear any make-up, which reminds the audience of the war-time Japanese women who wholeheartedly devoted themselves to support the country. The Diet preserves traditional Japanese culture, which is represented in this scene by the kimono-wearing woman. Thus, the journalist’s dress code and language

represents a challenge to the Diet and their traditional values.

As the politicians and journalists argue with each other, we see a high angle that captures the messiness of the presentation room, in which the group of journalists and the group of politicians stand up and point fingers at each other. As the arguing continues in the background, the camera shifts to capture Professor Yamane and his associates who look too terrified to get involved in this argument. This further illustrates the powerlessness of the scientists and the strength of the politicians. We also see the common people who came to listen to the Gojira presentation. They are only included in the far right of the camera frame, indicating their vulnerability and lack of influence.

In the next shot, we are shown the newspaper that is published the next morning. Instead of publishing articles on Gojira, articles include topics such as “Disaster Response Center established” and “Heavy losses at sea: 17 ships sunk to date.” In this scene, Gojira is Japan’s unsolved problems. This symbolization can be further analyzed through Gerow’s statement, in which he argues the importance of discovering “the reasons why the nationalism in [fantasy war films are] so warped and tortured, confronted with a myriad of obstacles it takes convoluted paths to avoid...reminding us of what nationalism has to erase in order to appear compelling and unproblematic” (Gerow 2006, 11). The court scene in which Professor Yamane gives his presentation on Gojira resembles the court of the Tokyo Trial, during which the countries who won WWII gathered together to examine Japan’s war crimes. Similar to the actual events—in which the United States helped Japan cover up crimes committed by the Emperor Hirohito and his senior advisors in exchange

for setting up a military base to spread democracy and confront communism—conservative politicians in the film also try to disguise Japan’s vulnerability. By not dealing with Gojira properly and hiding the truth from the public, the film’s politician characters (who care only about Japan’s international reputation rather than its people) become metaphorical stand-ins for pro-American politicians in post-war Japan. Killing Gojira therefore allows Japan’s history to be metaphorically rewritten, so that Japan can be as innocent as it is before the war.

#### *Sequence 2: Dr. Serizawa’s Decision*

In confronting the threat from Gojira’s invasion, there is no alternative but to use Dr. Serizawa’s Oxygen Destroyer in order to save Japan. Though this could be compared to the United States using an atomic bomb during World War II, the film depicts Dr. Serizawa as Japan’s savior. He has no intention of letting his invention be used to hurt people and thus represents the altruism of Japanese science. American science—represented in the film by atomic bombs that injured and killed Japanese people—is implicitly criticized. Furthermore, the absence of Japanese government officials in figuring out how to destroy Gojira represents a critique of the Japanese government. Thus, the film argues that in the post-war period, the future hope of Japan relies on altruistic scientists like Dr. Serizawa rather than untrustworthy (i.e. pro-American) politicians like the ones in the movie.

When Dr. Serizawa explains to Ogata why he has never published his research on the Oxygen Destroyer, he confesses that once his research gets published, politicians around the world will inevitably turn it into a weapon. Thus, as long as he lives, there is a chance that he will be forced to

use the destructive Oxygen Destroyer. As he speaks, nostalgic and sad music plays in the background, which seems to justify the credibility of Dr. Serizawa's comments. A close-up of Dr. Serizawa's face highlights the eye mask worn on his right eye, which was injured during the war. As the viewers hypothesize what would happen if Dr. Serizawa publishes his research, Dr. Serizawa's eyepatch acts as a living reminder of the war and evokes audiences' sympathy towards him. He embodies the decency and the benevolence of Japanese science.

In the next shot, a group of middle-aged people—the majority of whom are women dressed in kimonos and men dressed in Western and soldiers' clothes—surround a television set to watch the same program as Dr. Serizawa. Their clothes are made from simple materials and the fact that everyone stands around one television indicates that they do not come from high-income households. As the camera zooms out, viewers can see that the middle-aged people are praying for peace, which also signifies their vulnerability and lack of control in the situation. Their praying hands further emphasize the film's depiction of a harmless and innocent Japanese nation traumatized by war.

This illusion is further strengthened in the next shot in which young school girls are singing in a gymnasium. At first, a long shot captures the school girls in both the first and second floor of the gymnasium, followed by a close-up of these young girls' faces row by row. The tears in their eyes are clearly visible as they sing. Seeing this scene on television ultimately persuades Dr. Serizawa to kill Gojira. After turning off the television, Dr. Serizawa stands up and burns all his notes, as he decides to use his invention to kill both Gojira and himself, to ensure that the Oxygen Destroyer will never again be used

as a weapon. The film frames this decision as the ultimate sacrifice.

In Gerow's terms, Japan is depicted in *Gojira* as "a normal nation" with a "healthy nationalism," for which soldiers willingly die (2016, 196). Although Dr. Serizawa is not a soldier in the movie, his sacrifice to save Japan functions in the same way. Without stating explicitly who is to blame, this scene focuses on the victims. With the implication that Gojira is radioactive, Dr. Serizawa's sacrifice resembles the "sacred sacrifice" of Japanese victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings (Gerow 2006, 2). In this vein, Dr. Serizawa's death at the end serves to "remov[e] any reference to [Japan] kill[ing] so many people [during the war], or why and for what these people had to be 'sacrificed.'" The film positions the Japanese people as "victims of war rather than as assailants" (2006, 2).

### *Sequence 3: The Death of Gojira and Dr. Serizawa*

The third sequence focuses on the heroic actions of Dr. Serizawa and Ogata as they go underwater to kill Gojira with the Oxygen Destroyer at the end of the film. The destruction of Gojira is a victory for a more innocent and purified Japan and the death of Dr. Serizawa is presented as a sacred sacrifice.

As Dr. Serizawa and Ogata go down to the bottom of the ocean in search of Gojira, the nostalgic and sad music is once again used to indicate praise for their effort to save the nation. Gojira, who sleeps at the bottom of the sea, has no idea that he will soon be killed by the Oxygen Destroyer. Interestingly, the music signifies a mournful feeling for the death of the king of monsters. The music is also slow, sad, and nostalgic as Dr. Serizawa opens the Oxygen Destroyer



and kills Gojira. As Dr. Serizawa cuts the rope that was intended to pull him back to the surface, a piano's bass notes are added to the score, and Professor Yamane takes off his hat in mourning for Dr. Serizawa's death. According to Japan Times (2014):

*Serizawa's words and final act pose a serious moral challenge to mankind, especially to political leaders, military planners and scientists who have already accumulated the knowledge of producing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and who even may endeavor to make more powerful and cruel weapons. (Gojira 1954)*

As Professor Yamane sits down, he states that as long as nuclear testing continues, another Gojira may appear someday. The film ends with a medium to long shot of the sky and sea, in which the sun shines onto the peaceful water. However, melancholy music reminds the viewers that the price of peace (killing Gojira) shall forever be remembered. Next time, there may not be an Oxygen Destroyer that can save Japan from being invaded by a nuclear monster.

Akira Takarada, the actor who played Ogata, talked about his understanding of Gojira from an insider's point of view. To Takarada, Gojira is more than just a cold-blooded cruel monster. He was touched by the film's closing scene, in which Gojira is killed by the Oxygen Destroyer. He commented:

*I shed tears. [Gojira] was killed by the oxygen destroyer, but [Gojira] himself wasn't evil and he didn't have to be destroyed. Why did they have to punish [Gojira]? Why? He was a warning to mankind. I was angry at mankind and felt sympathy for Gojira, even if he did destroy Tokyo. (Tsutsui 2004, 88)*

Takarada's comment is evidence of the way people in Japan simultaneously identified as and sympathized with the monster, seeing Gojira as a victim.

Gojira represents a wounded Japan and its people as they struggle to figure out a way to move forward from both their crimes and their losses during the war; Gojira's skin resembles the skins of people who have been affected by the radiation from nuclear bombs. The film implies that Gojira, and hence Japan, was an undeserving victim of the United States' nuclear program. Thus, destroying Gojira is symbolic of destroying the pain the United States inflicted on Japan by dropping the nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As Tsutsui argues, *Gojira's* ending is iconic, and its "welcome and therapeutic implications" of victimhood are the foundation for Japanese society today (2004, 37). Gojira—like the physical and emotional suffering of war—was "an uncontrollable, unfathomable curse visited upon a helpless, blameless Japan" (37). Moreover, it is also a silent protest of the United States' censorship of Japan's cultural productions during the Occupation Period. If Gojira is destroyed, then Japan will have the power to reshape its nation, and its WWII narrative, on its own.

Ultimately, the destruction of Gojira is a destruction of Japan's past. As shown by the ending shot of the peaceful waves and clear sky, the truth of history disappears, and everything seems to have a fresh start. However, the sad music in the background reminds people not to forget the trauma and suffering Japan has gone through.

## Part IV. General Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, I conduct three sequence analyses to uncover how *Gojira* (1954)

sheds light on Japanese attitudes towards power structures, victimhood, and sacrifice in relation to both their war crimes and traumatic losses during WWII. This movie presents a nation whose innocent and peaceful people were unfairly attacked by a nuclear monster. It also criticizes privileged, pro-American government officials and their inability to deal with an external threat. There is great potential for future research on this topic. One possible site of further research would be an assessment of the *Gojira* series over time; researchers could compare and contrast the themes and allegorical representations of Gojira in each movie. This approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Japan's attitudes towards its war responsibility, and whether these attitudes evolved over time. Another potential approach would be to examine other genres of Japanese films made in the 1950s in order to further explore to what extent sentimentality was used to propagate a national consciousness of victimhood in post-war Japan.

## Bibliography

- Blakemore, Erin. 2018. "The Brutal History of Japan's 'Comfort Women'." *History*. <https://www.history.com/news/comfort-women-japan-military-brothels-korea>
- Gerow, Aaron. 2006. "Fantasies of War and Nation in Recent Japanese Cinema." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* | Japan Focus, Volume 4, Issue 2. 1-12. <https://apjif.org/-Aaron-Gerow/1707/article.html>
- Gerow, Aaron. 2016. "War and Nationalism in Recent Japanese Cinema: Yamato, Kamikaze, Trauma, and Forgetting the Postwar." In *Divided Lenses: Screen Memories of War in East Asia*, edited by Michael Berry and Chiho Sawada. 196-219. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- "Godzilla's message still relevant." *Japan Times*. 2014. Accessed March 2. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2014/07/20/editorials/godzillas-message-still-relevant/#.WtZRPdPwZ-U>
- Gojira*. 1954. Kultura Mediaspace: University of Wisconsin-Madison. Directed by Ishiro Honda. Toho Co. Ltd. [https://mediaspace.wisc.edu/media/Gojira+%281954%29/0\\_77dat3bv](https://mediaspace.wisc.edu/media/Gojira+%281954%29/0_77dat3bv)
- Hayashi, Yuka. 2015. "Japan's Textbook Changes Get Failing Grade From Neighbors." *The Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/japanese-middle-school-textbook-changes-raise-irk-china-south-korea-1428402976>
- Hideaki, Fujiki. 2013. "Creating the Audience: Cinema as Popular Recreation and Social Education in Modern Japan." *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*. 79-100. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hirano, Kyoko. 1992. *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952*. Washington, DC and London, UK: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- "History Issue Q&A." 2018. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/q\\_a/faq16.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/q_a/faq16.html)
- Merkel-Hess, Kate, and Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N. 2010. "Nanjing by the Numbers." *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/02/09/nanjing-by-the-numbers>
- Mitter, Rana. 2013. "The World's Wartime Debt to China." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/18/opinion/the-worlds-wartime-debt-to-china.html>
- Oi, Mariko. 2013. "What Japanese history lessons leave out." *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21226068>
- Sala, Ilaria Maria. 2017. "Why Is the Plight of 'Comfort Women' Still So Controversial?" *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/opinion/comfort-women-japan-south-korea.html>
- Sang-Hun, Choe. 2015. "Japan and South Korea Settle Dispute Over Wartime 'Comfort Women'." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/29/world/asia/comfort-women-south-korea-japan.html?module=inline>
- Sterngold, James. 1993. "Japan Admits Army Forced Women into War Brothels." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/05/world/japan-admits-army-forced-women-into-war-brothels.html>
- Tanaka, Yuki. 2006. "Crime and Responsibility: War, the state, and Japanese society." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* | Japan Focus 4(8): 1-12. <https://apjif.org/-Yuki-Tanaka/2200/article.html>
- Tolbert, David. 2017. "Japan's Apology to South Korea Shows What Public Apologies Should (Not) Do." *Huffington Post*. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-tolbert/japans-apology-to-south-k\\_b\\_9111566.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-tolbert/japans-apology-to-south-k_b_9111566.html)
- Tsutsui, William. 2004. *Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.