

Alexander H. Dacuyan  
JAPN 310 Japanese Cinema  
Movie Review

## Gojira (Godzilla)

The movie, "Gojira," is by far a great classic. It has many elements that represent the war between the U.S. And Japan. But it also shows our humanity regardless what country people are from. The culture of Japan is definitely seen in the movie which relates to some of my own habits and experiences. This movie should not be judged or analyzed on simple criteria but many things in a whole to be appreciated.

Gojira has a lot of symbolism to WWII. Gojira is the Japanese empire while the one eyed scientist is the group of American scientists that invented the nuclear bomb. But there is a deeper meaning. I believe the movie is trying to open people's minds to the realities that men create, and from those creations are side effects that come back to haunt us. Gojira can be a metaphor of just that. The destruction that Gojira did is almost identical to what a nuclear bomb would do, again showing the horribleness of what man's creation can do. The fear of the people is the same everywhere. It doesn't matter if it was 1954, 504, or 2004, fear of the unknown is engraved in all humans to a certain level. The fact that radiation is the cause for Gojira existing only strengthens the idea that an awful byproduct of invention was not fully understood. There is also a strong emphasis on Japan's military being the knights in shining armor that are honorably fighting to stop the threat to their country, but unfortunately to no avail. It almost seems the movie lets people know that the soldiers were doing what was best for their country which is paralleled to soldiers of WWII. The oxygen destroyer represents a weapon so powerful it will kill everything in a certain area. Which begs the question, should they use such a weapon? The scientists seem to have a better morality concerning this question because they know what it will mean if it is used. The same can be said for Einstein and others during WWII. There is no sure answer to what can be done about weapons because sometimes you need them and sometimes you don't.

Japan's humanity shows subtly through the movie. There is much sadness in one of the scenes where a doctor realizes the children have too much radiation, which hits at home for a lot of us who have known someone who has died from cancer. The movie strongly shows honor, courage, vigor, vitality and hope among the Japanese people in the way their facial expressions are and how they rally together. This movie has some very difficult situations for our minds to comprehend or solve.

For culture there was an overwhelming amount of politeness when speaking to one another which seems natural to any Japanese person. In the movie the characters act with the same honorific culture as they do now. Weather is often used which seems like it shows how storms were a really big part of Japanese history, which they were, for example: the Mongolian invasion. Having a village warning bell is something that seems to be a cultural thing in Japan because not many villages would have that in America's short history. Culturally, the way the movie portrays its politics is very similar to the west, even to show how small townspeople are sometimes not taken seriously. The elderly were often treated as crazy old goats when they were trying to tell their old stories. A few scenes have a person removing their shoes which is obviously cultural. I do not allow shoes to be worn in my home too.

Most of the camera work seems to be in a very classic style for those movies back then. But the special effects seem way ahead of its time. I believe this movie would lose its value if it was in color because the shots of Gojira blend much better with surroundings. The miniatures were amazing for back then. It must have taken a while to get artists to build those sets. I do like how they used lighting for close-ups, especially on women, which is a big western style too. The script is direct and straight to the point. But that's how I feel about many movies in the 50's.

Overall the movie is done incredibly well. After looking deeper into what the movie is trying to say might not be that clear. But I believe the movie is asking, what can we learn from the past and how can we secure a safer and more peaceful future?