

***Toho's Uncanny Monster:
Re-imagining Japanese Postwar National Identity Through the Godzilla Franchise Films***

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Abstract

Whereas *Godzilla* (1954) made by Toho, one of the biggest Japanese studios, is most discussed by academic researchers who see this film as a significant sci-fi monster genre film in the post-war cinema, the twenty-eight *Godzilla* franchise films made in the past sixty years still have been remained under-researched by academic film scholars in relation to the gender implications of monsters. In particular, Japan has been the first and only country which was attacked by the American nuclear bombs and consequently lost in the Second World War and then rapidly rose from the war since 1950s as one of the world's largest economies, the *Godzilla* monster is identified as the most significant national icon in Japan. Since the following franchise films develop a rather different formulaic narrative in which *Godzilla* fights repeatedly with a number of monsters rather than acts alone to destroy the urban landscape as shown in *Godzilla* (1954), this paper therefore will use both the psychoanalytic feminist and intersectional approaches wherein gender and national identity are understood to be formed by universal notions of nationalism and patriarchy to explore the gender significance of the *Godzilla* monster in relation to hypermasculinity and fatherhood which both construct the post-war Japanese national identity in *Son of Godzilla* (1967), *Godzilla vs. Spacegodzilla* (1994) *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah* (1995).

Keywords: Fatherhood, Japanese Cinema, Monster, Masculinity, National Identity

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Introduction

Toho as the leading Japanese motion-picture studio, inspired by the Hollywood monster film, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), created the iconic sci-fi monster, Godzilla, in *Godzilla* (1954) (also known as *Gojira*) (Kalat, 1997). Although *Godzilla* shares a similar storyline with the Hollywood monster film by featuring atomic-mutated dinosaurs causing civilian casualties and eventually being destroyed by high-tech weapons, the reading of the Godzilla monster should be understood within the Japanese cultural context. Whereas the Hollywood monster film tackles the problem of nuclear testing in relation to America's cold war arms race (Noriega, 2006), *Godzilla* represents the repressed trauma about America's nuclear bomb attacks in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the WWII (Inuhiko, 2007). By tackling the controversial interpretation of the war trauma in relation to Japan's dual role played in the war as the oppressor and the oppressed or the perpetrator and the victim, the narrative constructs Godzilla's ambivalent identity which is simultaneously disavowed and sympathised by the Japanese government, military, journalists, and scientists (Yamazaki, 2006). Godzilla's monstrous body is placed in an indeterminate position which blurs clear distinctions between the perpetrator and the victim, the real and the fictional, the natural and the unnatural, and the past and the present.

Compared with the scholarship which offer insightful analyses on Godzilla's 'otherness' explained through the psychoanalytic concept of the return of the repressed, the culturally symbolic significance of the Godzilla franchise associated with the gender dynamic has remained under-researched since the twenty-eight franchise films released in the past sixty years developed a rather different formulaic narrative in which Godzilla fights repeatedly with a number of monsters rather than goes alone around rampaging the Japanese urban landscape (Kalat, 1997; Tsutsui, 2004; Noriega, 2006). In each franchise, Godzilla plays an ambivalent role: a protector saving Japan from the other monsters' attacks and a destroyer punishing Japan for the technological and economic exploitation of nature resulting from the technological development. The franchises made between 1960s and the 2000s centre on Godzilla's fight with two groups of monsters: those which protect Japan from Godzilla's threat, and those which threaten Japan's security. This rationalised narrative of ritual repetition, which Godzilla always stays strongest among the other monsters, creates an ideological fantasy in which Godzilla is 'naturalised' or 'legitimated' as a Japanese national hero. This paper thus explores ideological conflicts played out in the franchise films and their intersection with gender issues. I shall argue that these conflicts – between the natural and the unnatural, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the original and the reproduced, and the heroic and the villainous – underpin the cinematic spectacle of the violent fights between Godzilla and the other monsters, and between monsters and the Japanese military. I shall emphasise that the display of hypermasculinity – the “ideal manhood that relies in the exercise of forces to dominates others” (Burstyn, 1999, p. 192) – plays a pivotal role in the cinematic construction of gendered national identity in relation to Japan as the “imagined community” of the nation-state (Anderson, 1997). Godzilla's body represented in the franchise serves as an ideological arena for re-imaging Japanese postwar national identity, re-narrating national history, and even as a contested space between monstrosity and masculinity for playing out male Oedipal anxieties.

The psychoanalytic approach including the concept of the return of the repressed, the Oedipus complex, the uncanny, and the abject will be employed to analyse the monster's body, gender, and kinship. In applying these theoretical concepts, however, I am not making universal, ahistorical, and asocial analytical claims about Godzilla's gendered body and

identity. Rather, I am suggesting that such theoretical notions are worth re-thinking cross-culturally because they can provide insights into the mechanisms by which the discursively constructed Godzilla monster is positioned through fantasy and desire and in relation to a historically, socially, and culturally specific context. Accordingly, this paper examines Godzilla's monstrosity in relation to the anxiety hovering over gender and national identity. Due to restrictions of space, the number of possible case studies is limited and selective. The selection criteria are according to the texts which significantly construct Godzilla's hypermasculinity and gendered national identity through the acquisition of fatherhood. I will explore Godzilla's masculinity regarding the representation of fatherhood in *Son of Godzilla* (1967), *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* (1994), and *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah* (1995).

Masquerades of Masculinity and Adoptive Fatherhood

Whereas Godzilla in the 1954 film represents the repressed national trauma primarily in terms of being a war victim, in the later franchise films the monster is more strongly linked to this trauma in connection to the tension between being an aggressive perpetrator during the war and having a desire for remilitarisation in the postwar period. Since the 1960s, economic success has triggered the revival of nationalistic sentiment about remilitarisation; however, this sentiment has not yet been embodied and has always evoked the militarist past within a demilitarised, democratic, and capitalist postwar Japan (Stronach, 1995, p. 111). The franchise films particularly engage with the ambivalent notion of remilitarisation by showing the repetitive resurrection of Godzilla as well as the repetitive fights between Godzilla and the other monsters. The franchise films can be understood as operating on three levels: the first is a cinematic pleasure associated with Godzilla's repeated resurrection which is derived from the repressed war memories; the second concerns the spectacle of violence as a form of pleasurable display of the masculine fantasy of militarisation and patriotism; the final level is the superego pleasure of controlling or repressing those desires by eliminating Godzilla at the end of each franchise film. It can thus be suggested that Japanese audiences enjoy, or are invited to enjoy, the pleasures of both identifying with and expelling the monstrous in re-imagining Japan's postwar national identity through the continual eruption and re-containment of the repressed.

From the 1960s, Godzilla's character was elaborately transformed from that of destroyer of Japan into that of Japanese national hero who eliminates other or malicious monsters. Such a transformation can be seen as a result of the need to attract younger audiences in response to the declining audience for Japanese cinema and Japan's recovery from the war (Hollings, 1997; Desser, 2000; Noriega, 2006). Particularly, *Son of Godzilla*, *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla*, and *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah*, merge Godzilla's heroic hypermasculinity with fatherhood to construct an exemplar of the cultural ideal of masculinity as well as rewriting Japan's postwar history through Godzilla's invincible body, violence, and parenting. According to Connell's definition, hegemonic masculinity is the ideological ascendancy of particular forms of masculinity that are embedded above all in "mass media content" and its creation of "fantasy figures," rather than corresponding to the actual character of the majority of men of that time (Connell, 1987, p. 184). This ideal form of masculinity, Connell argues, is "culturally honoured, glorified, and extolled" in its "given historical setting" (Messerschmidt, 1993, p. 82). Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity is valuable in decoding the cinematic representation of Godzilla's gendered monstrosity. Godzilla in these three films is no longer simply marked as the uncanny Other as he was in the first film, but now stands for an ideal manhood through his hypermasculine combats with the other monsters as well as his representation of fatherhood in relation to a young dinosaur, Godzilla Junior. Godzilla's

hypermasculinity in association with physical prowess, dominance, and violence is justified in the name of protecting his adopted son from the threats caused by the vicious monsters. Since Godzilla is now portrayed as a national hero, his invincible body can be seen as illustrating the state as the public form of Japanese patriarchy. Since, his body has been 'softened' or 'humanised' by his parenting in terms of his 'emotional' identification with Godzilla Junior. Godzilla's fatherhood can be characterised as a private form of patriarchy that is also ideologically incorporated into Japanese hegemonic masculinity as part of Godzilla's gendered national narrative.

The 1967 franchise first introduces Godzilla's son, called 'Godzilla Junior,' which hatches from an unknown gigantic egg on one of the Japanese islands, Solgell Island, occupied by three giant praying mantises and a giant spider. Simultaneously, Godzilla emerges from the sea and approaches Solgell Island because he 'hears' Godzilla Junior's crying when the infant is attacked by the praying mantises. The scene elaborately constructs that Godzilla has an 'innate' tendency for fatherhood in the same way that the baby dinosaur 'naturally' identifies with Godzilla as a father. Godzilla's resurfacing from the sea and Godzilla Junior's birth do not connote the return of the war trauma of the first film but rather engages in the rewriting of Japan's postwar history by using Godzilla Junior's 'youth,' 'innocence,' and 'naturalness' to represent the united and recovered nation which replaces Godzilla's burdened history, speaking to young Japanese audiences who were born after the war without the imprint of war trauma.

This film signifies Godzilla's performing fatherhood as a rite of passage into patriarchal manhood, marking the transition from the traumatic past represented in the 1954 film to the prosperous present of the 1967 franchise. Godzilla rescues Godzilla Junior from the praying mantises and the spider's attack and teaches the young to identify with the hypermasculine father figure, in order to construct the father-son hierarchical relationship. In the scene where Godzilla Junior is frightened by his father's power and refuses to try to make his own fire breath after seeing Godzilla's powerful beams, Godzilla shows his patriarchal authority. He threatens Godzilla Junior with his fists to demonstrate that he would spank his son if Godzilla Junior does not obey his order. Godzilla Junior is afraid and tries to breathe out small smoke rings rather than the full fire. Godzilla also prevents his son from contacting or playing with the female human who always gives Godzilla Junior fresh fruits because he does not want his son to identify with the human/female/mother figure. Godzilla therefore uses his authority to suppress Godzilla Junior's childish and naive behaviours to establish the father-son relationship in the form of submission to the will of the father: Godzilla Junior is deferential, obedient, and subordinate. After identifying with Godzilla's authoritarian fathering, Godzilla Junior then constructs his own manhood by protecting his father and himself through using his fire breath to attack the vicious monsters.

The monster's masculinity and masculine authority can be understood as denaturalized rather than 'naturally' or 'biologically' determined. Lacan and Freud both argue that the phallus is a social construction which operates as "a symbolic double for the penis" (MacMullan, 2002, p.7). Although the phallus signifies power, authority, and superiority, Lacan suggests that no one possesses it because the phallus is the absolute signifier of power, authority, and superiority which transcends the material body (Lacan, 1982). Masculinity can thereby be seen as a performance or masquerade which works through the male body in order to 'show' the possession of the phallus as well as veiling an actual lack (Tasker, 1993, p. 242). For example, Lacan explains that in 'male parade' – "the accoutrements of phallic power, the finery of authority, belie the very lack they display" (Tasker, 1993, p. 242). In *Son of*

Godzilla, it is hard to find the physical similarity or trace the biological kinship between Godzilla and Godzilla Junior in terms of their bodily features: Godzilla is a giant radioactive mutant dinosaur but Junior Godzilla is ‘naturally’ born from an egg and looks like a small lizard. Since their biological sex is not visible, it can be argued that the physicality of the two monsters’ bodies becomes the crucial medium through which to perform masculinity, concealing lack but showing “possession of the phallus” by staging the father-son scenario in order to represent Godzilla’s national-heroic masculinity and power (Studlar, 1997, p. 122).

According to *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* and *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah*, link Godzilla’s heroic hypermasculinity to his sacrificial fatherhood and to patriarchal succession, focusing on Godzilla’s protective fatherhood rather than the educative mode shown in *Son of Godzilla*. At the same time, the loss of phallus enacted in these films suggests a response to the crisis of masculinity caused by the shifting position of Japan in the 1990s’, as it enters economic recession. Whereas *Son of Godzilla* highlights fatherhood in relation to ‘the Law of the Father’ in constructing ‘good’ patriarchal kinship between Godzilla and Godzilla Junior, *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* represents a ‘bad’ kinship in which Godzilla’s cells are mutated in outer space to become SpaceGodzilla. The physical features of SpaceGodzilla are identical to Godzilla’s, except for SpaceGodzilla’s jagged and bone-colored dorsal fins made of white crystal and the crystals sprouting from SpaceGodzilla’s shoulders. In this respect, Godzilla can be seen as the father of SpaceGodzilla in terms of biological affiliation, and Godzilla Junior is SpaceGodzilla’s older adopted brother. However, SpaceGodzilla’s sameness and difference creates an uncanny double of Godzilla which threatens rather than perpetuates the structure of patriarchy, as SpaceGodzilla acts out patricidal desire against his biological and symbolic father. According to Freud, the resolution of the Oedipus complex is the repression of the son’s desire to kill the father that entails the acquisition of moral and cultural values governing society, which can be defined as the Law of the Father (Beattie 2002, p. 24). When the son ‘literally’ kills his father in order to appropriate power and fill his father’s position, it is the violation of patriarchal law. Godzilla Junior ‘performs’ identification with Godzilla, SpaceGodzilla is ‘born’ to kill his biological father. The Oedipal narrative enacted by SpaceGodzilla is not only ‘patricidal’ in relation to the killing of Godzilla, but also ‘fratricidal’ in terms of imprisoning Godzilla Junior.

According to Freud’s discussions in *Totem and Taboo*, the social order is maintained through the patricidal guilt of the sons which is represented through three fundamental taboos: the prohibition of patricide which maintains the patriarchal order; the repression of incestuous desire in relation to the justification of the father’s possession of the mother; the ban on fratricide as the father’s power to maintain the social order between his sons (Freud, 1950). The father-son relationship is ambivalent and competitive. In contrast to Godzilla Junior, who successfully resolves the Oedipus complex by identifying with Godzilla’s phallic power and repressing his infantile desires, SpaceGodzilla’s embodiment of the infantile wish to take the place of the father is also the motivation for fratricide by eliminating Godzilla Junior. In contrast to Godzilla Junior’s small, short, and round body, and his childish qualities such as naïve curiosity and harmlessness, SpaceGodzilla is a full-grown dinosaur with violent, aggressive, and powerful characteristics. SpaceGodzilla’s hyperphallic power is signified by his fire breath and sharp crystallised dorsal fins and shoulders. When SpaceGodzilla uses his crystals grown on his shoulders to trap Godzilla Junior under the ground and his fire beam to attack Godzilla, his monstrous body becomes the spectacle of a ‘fetishized’ masculinity which both displays phallic power and reveals the ‘lack’ of the phallus at the same time. Although SpaceGodzilla imprisons Godzilla Junior and defeats Godzilla with his powerful

fire breath and hard crystallised body, he still needs technology to reinforce his hypermasculine power in order to destroy Godzilla.

Whereas Godzilla's technologically mutated body is the result of nuclear weaponry, SpaceGodzilla is 'born' from 'natural' forces in outer space, where the energy from star explosions triggers the mutation of Godzilla's cells. SpaceGodzilla therefore lacks the 'idealised' phallic masculinity represented by Godzilla because he is strongly dependent on nuclear technology. Consequently, SpaceGodzilla does not celebrate his hyper-phallic masculinity but instead enacts a quest for the lost phallus: he occupies the Fukuoka Tower, the tallest seaside tower (234 meters) in Japan, as his fortress, in order to strengthen his phallic power by technologizing his body. When SpaceGodzilla stands next to the Fukuoka Tower, enormous crystals erupt from the ground and surround both him and the Fukuoka Tower. SpaceGodzilla, the tower, and crystals form an energy zone, with the tower acting as a lightning rod that accumulates the energy from the earth and transmits it to his crystallised shoulders. He absorbs the energy from the phallic props of crystals and tower to become a powerful techno-fetishized monster, allowing him to disavow his own lack.

SpaceGodzilla utilises these phallic props to substitute for his lack of a masculine identity which 'should have been given' by Godzilla, and constructs an illusory power in order to stage Oedipal scenarios. He is then literally castrated by Godzilla as punishment for violating the patriarchal law. The final scenes of *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* display the spectacle of Godzilla's destruction of SpaceGodzilla's fetishized phallic power with the help of the Japanese military: Godzilla knocks down the Fukuoka Tower to stop SpaceGodzilla from absorbing energy, and uses his fire beams to burst SpaceGodzilla's chest, after SpaceGodzilla's crystallised shoulders are ruptured by the missiles fired by the Japanese military force of the UNGCC. Finally, SpaceGodzilla lies down in the middle of his phallic fortress and is burned by Godzilla's fire beams. As the fortress becomes an arena of devastation, Godzilla stands in the middle of SpaceGodzilla's destroyed fortress and roars to assert his phallic potency.

These repeated associations of the Fukuoka Tower with phallic power suggest profound anxieties in the context of Japan's economic recession. The tower represents an ambivalent symbol of masculine/economic power: located in Hakata Bay near Fukuoka City, which has been the economic centre in the south-eastern region of Japan, it was finished in 1989 when Japan's bubble economy began to collapse (Hatakeyama and Freedman, 2010, p. 420). Accordingly, the tower connotes both economic growth and collapse: the year of *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla*'s release, 1994, was the year in which Japan experienced its worst economic crisis (Arayama and Mourdoukoutas, 2000, p. 68). SpaceGodzilla mistakenly identifies the tower as the idealised, stable, and coherent phallus and maintains the illusion that he 'has' the phallus signified by the tower. Following this argument, Godzilla's reassertion of his phallic power can be seen as functioning to disavow the loss of masculine dominance and adequacy triggered by the economic recession.

Whilst SpaceGodzilla's death enacts a literal castration as punishment for his phallic ambitions, Godzilla Junior in *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah* acquires his manhood by deferring his repressed desire to kill his father until he takes over Godzilla's power. Whilst SpaceGodzilla is punished for his Oedipal crimes, Godzilla Junior's repressed desires result in Godzilla's sacrificial fatherhood in order that Godzilla Junior can be 'ethically' justified as Godzilla's heir. *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah* is the only franchise showing Godzilla's 'death' and highlights Godzilla Junior's transformation from adolescence into manhood by juxtaposing his growing

body with Godzilla's deterioration. After his overstraining fights with SpaceGodzilla in the previous film, Godzilla's heart has a nuclear meltdown that causes his impervious body to become blazing, glimmering, and burning red as well as his body temperature to rise exponentially. Godzilla's nuclear meltdown not only makes his body unstable, melting, and overheated, but also challenges his hypermasculinity – the hard and taut body that has ideologically reinforced Japanese national identity and patriarchal kinship, and embodied the ideal of phallic masculinity.

Since the franchise has constructed Godzilla's idealised hypermasculinity through his impervious, invulnerable, and violent body, contradiction arises when, in *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah*, his hypermasculine body is involved in what we can read as a process of feminisation, together with the failure of masculinised technoscience. Godzilla's monstrosity now connotes both the hypermasculine and the feminine at the same time: the mixture of the 'hard' and 'soft' body. According to the narrative, Godzilla's overheating and melting body is a walking time bomb which is a threat to Japan's security. His nuclear meltdown can be seen as the feminization of his male body, while the melting body can be seen as the abject that transgresses the boundary between the corporeal inside and outside (Campbell 2004: 62). Nuclear technology not only creates the hard and taut skin that defines Godzilla's national heroic identity, but also triggers the abject horror that threatens Godzilla's identity when nuclear meltdown gradually dissolves his body from within. Godzilla's overheating and melting body is the site where we see enacting the struggle between masculine identity and the abject.

Importantly, the film does not provide a radical critique of masculinised techno-science via a feminised male body, but instead disavows Godzilla's feminised body by staging his sacrificial fatherhood as a rite of passage for Godzilla Junior's Oedipus complex, to reconfirm Godzilla's masculinity. The horror of Godzilla's uncontrollable abject body is only shown in the opening scene, where the monster violently stomps over Hong Kong. The feminisation of Godzilla's invincible body is scientifically explained, controlled, and monitored by the Japanese authorities, in order to keep the boundary between the inside and the outside of the male body under control. After discovering that Godzilla's overheating, steaming, and melting body is the result of the nuclear reaction in his heart, the Japanese military uses an anti-nuclear weapon to 'freeze' Godzilla's abject body, in order to postpone the explosion and lure Godzilla to fight with Destoroyah. Accordingly, Godzilla's masculinity is reconfirmed through his once more invincible, impermeable, and aggressive body. In the meantime, the links between Godzilla's fatherhood and the hypermasculine invincible body are particularly underlined. The father-son relationship is intensified when Godzilla Junior is killed by Destoroyah.

The ten-minute scene of Godzilla's rampage against Destoroyah is highlighted in the final part of the film after Godzilla witnesses Destoroyah's killing of Godzilla Junior. After a long shot showing that the mutant Destoroyah is much bigger than Godzilla, a series of close-ups amplify Godzilla's sympathetic character. Godzilla's emotion is represented by focusing on his face, together with his extended howling and the sombre orchestral background music. His howling is also identified within the film by the Japanese female reporter and the Japanese male science student as the father's crying at the loss of a family member. In addition to revolving around Godzilla's face, the camera also uses close-up shots of his feet and chest in order to represent Godzilla's soft or vulnerable body caused by the overheating nuclear meltdown of his heart. After the mutant Destoroyah knocks Godzilla to the ground, the camera immediately moves to Godzilla's face and his moving feet as he struggles to stand

up, and then focuses on his face again after Destoroyah coils his tail around Godzilla's neck. The nuclear meltdown turns Godzilla's impervious body into an abject body that blurs the boundary between the hard and the soft. We see a large amount of yellow liquid or blood spill out of Godzilla's chest and belly when the mutant Destoroyah uses his fire beam to cut through Godzilla's body. These scenes, which represent the spectacle of feminising Godzilla's invincible body, take up less than one minute in the ten-minute fight between Godzilla and the mutant Destoroyah.

Godzilla's nuclear meltdown is dramatically portrayed in slow motion as a construction of a tragic hero's death in the ending of *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah*. When Godzilla's body temperature reaches 1200 degrees Celsius, indicating nuclear meltdown, the Japanese troops surround him and fire anti-nuclear weapons in order to cool down Godzilla's body and minimise the nuclear blast range in Tokyo. As the slow-motion highlights Godzilla's struggle against the laser and missiles fired by the Japanese troops, the sombre music and the sympathetic gaze of the Japanese military leader, scientist, and journalist are combined to intensify the identification with Godzilla's vulnerability. After the anti-nuclear weapons contain Godzilla's destructive explosion, the long shot of Godzilla's body shifts to a close-up that centres on the left side of Godzilla's face as his head movement slows, indicating the beginning of meltdown. The facial skin liquefies piece by piece and the bones under the skin are exposed. The final moment of Godzilla's death turns back to a long shot which displays the blurred and red outline of Godzilla's body and then the body's shape is completely dissolved with his last feeble howling. Whereas Yukari and Miki's comments reveal Godzilla's inability to maintain his hyperphallic power constructed by the unstable nuclear technology, however, the patriarchal disavowal mechanism functions once again, by ideologically staging Godzilla Junior's resurrection from the radiation caused by Godzilla's nuclear meltdown.

After Miki's 'sentimental' condolence, the camera turns to Meru, the new and powerful psychic reader of Godzilla, who is surprised by sensing Godzilla Junior's activity from the debris of the airport in Tokyo ruined by Godzilla and Destoroyah. The camera moves slowly towards the smoggy airport, revealing Godzilla Junior standing up straight with much bigger and sharper dorsal fins on his back: resurrected and mutated into a gigantic dinosaur. Not only is his mutated body figure identical to Godzilla's, but he also waves his two short arms with their sharp claws and aggressively howls to the sky to show his horrific and awful power – his father's iconic gestures. Before Godzilla's mutation, the patriarchal kinship between Godzilla and Godzilla Junior was formed by adoption, but after the resurrection, it can be argued that Godzilla literally gives birth to Godzilla Junior. Since Godzilla Junior identifies with Godzilla's patriarchal figure, the two seem to have formed a pact in which Godzilla Junior takes on Godzilla's attributes, as represented in *Son of Godzilla* and *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla*, to guarantee his position as heir, and eventually transforms himself into the patriarchal successor both metaphorically and biologically. Godzilla's phallic power is transmitted by the line of physical descent from father to son through his sacrificial death, as the promise of not only a new physical life for Godzilla Junior but also the safeguard of Japan's security.

Conclusion

Godzilla, as a culturally produced monster, carries multiple meanings which constantly replay particular masculine anxieties caused by the social changes in Japan since the end of the WWII. The first Godzilla monster of 1954 is a hybrid of American atomic radiation and

Japan's traumatic war experiences and represents the return of the repressed in connection to Japan's ambivalent role in playing both victim and perpetrator during the WWII, as well as its defeat "on both socioeconomic and moral grounds" (Sakai 1989: 114). Since Godzilla's rampage across the urban landscape of Tokyo produces the uncanny moment when the repressed war memories surface to present consciousness, the elimination of Godzilla carried out by the Japanese male scientist signifies the rewriting of Japan's postwar history, the re-imagination of Japanese national identity, and equally important, the alleviation of male anxiety.

As Japan recovers from the war and becomes a major world economic power in the 1960s, Godzilla in *Son of Godzilla* is gendered as a national hero and devoted father rather than being a repressed 'Other'. Ironically, Godzilla's masculinity is not self-evident or biologically determined but instead is performed or masqueraded through the father-son scenario and the hypermasculine spectacle of fights with the monster-villain in order to appropriate phallic power. The fragility of this masquerade is revealed in *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* and *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah*, where Godzilla's devoted and sacrificial fatherhood exposes his lack of penis/phallus and a loss of masculine capability and mastery in response to Japan's changed status at the beginning of the 1990s.

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