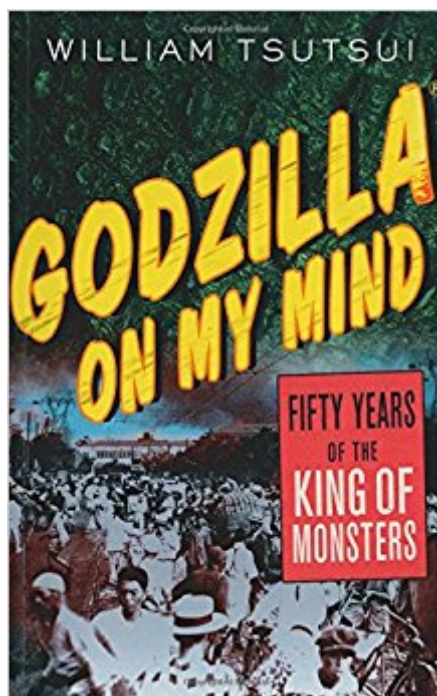


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# Godzilla On My Mind: Fifty Years Of The King Of Monsters



## Synopsis

This year, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his first appearance on the screen, the original, uncut version of Godzilla was released in American theaters to the delight of Sci-Fi and B-Movie fans everywhere. Ever since Godzilla (or, Gojira, as he is known in Japan) crawled out of his radioactive birthplace to cut a swath of destruction through Tokyo, he has claimed a place alongside King Kong and others in the movie monster pantheon. He is the third most recognizable Japanese celebrity in the United States, and his fan base continues to grow as children today prove his enduring appeal. Now, Bill Tsutsui, a life-long fan and historian, takes a light-hearted look at the big, green, radioactive lizard, revealing how he was born and how he became a megastar. With humorous anecdotes, *Godzilla on My Mind* explores his lasting cultural impact on the world. This book is sure to be welcomed by pop culture enthusiasts, fans, and historians alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Godzilla On My Mind is a good read, well written, occasionally provocative and full of facts that show it to be well researched as well as a labour of love.”  
— Dr. Dolores Martinez, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and author of *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture*  
“Bill Tsutsui blends impeccable scholarship with witty writing and an eye for fascinating detail as he follows the romping, stomping path of Godzilla across global popular culture: from Japanese film making in the 1950s, to rap lyrics in the present day; from issues of nuclear disarmament to the character of science fiction fandom; from wind-up toys to advertisements for Nike, Taco Bell, and Dr. Pepper. Inspired by his life-long affection -- passion? mania? -- for the

monster, Tsutsui has written a stellar book; an entertaining and vivid look at Japanese pop culture, its globalization, and American encounters with Japan. Ted Bestor, Harvard University and author of *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World* "William Tsutsui's *Godzilla* takes a fresh, original, and appealing look at one of our more intriguing pop culture icons. Although informed by careful scholarship, the book is highly accessible. It's funny, stimulating, and an overall pleasure to read. I'll never look at *Godzilla* the same way again!" Susan Napier, author of *Anime from Akira To Princess Mononoke: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*

William Tsutsui is an Associate Professor of history at the University of Kansas.

For the fan of the Big G, this is a great book, a personal account that examines all aspects of the *Godzilla* phenomenon, longest-running franchise in movie history. Lots of detail about *Godzilla*'s origins and development, from the original adult horror flick to the silly series of movies of the 1960's and 1970's and later developments. The author points out the Silly Series resulted from the shrinking of the Japanese movie market so that 75% of the market was filled with pink movies and other porn derivatives while 25% was filled with *Godzilla* and similar kid's fare. Since the kids were an important part of the market, the movies pandered to them with a child cast as a major character in each, monsters using wrestling moves stolen from kids' favorite TV shows, and minimal actual death and suffering unlike the original where the destruction resonated with those who lived through the Allied bombings ten years before. Later movies took a different turn with *Godzilla 1985* fashioned as a direct sequel to the original, again with Raymond Burr, a *Godzilla* fan himself according to a biography. My favorite line about *Godzilla* is from the director of the American editing of *Godzilla 2000* on the commentary when he's discussing the ending of the movie. The kid in the movie asks "Why does *Godzilla* save us?" as *Godzilla* flames everything within reach, now that his giant monster adversary is dead. The director notes, paraphrasing, "*Godzilla* saves us, but he does it on his own terms." Very readable, full of information about the *Godzilla* phenomenon.

*Godzilla On My Mind* is a wonderful celebration of the movies, the myths and the magic of *Godzilla*. Professor Tsutsui writes with both candor and passion about the "monster" so many of us love, exploring the connection so many fans have made with *Godzilla* over the years. It is clear that he loves *Godzilla*, yet he is able to look with a keen mind and critical eyes at the movies themselves, as well as the cultural phenomenon that has swept over the world. His style is clean and engaging,

even when he swims in the "deep waters" of "what it all means". At it's core, "Godzilla" is far more than a man in a rubber suit thrashing about on a set of miniature buildings in a series of "kid's movies". Tsutsui teaches without "preaching" as he explores the cultural differences between what Godzilla "means" in Japan, as well as in America and other nations. Even if you are a casual fan, you will find much here to enjoy. If you want to learn more about the "king of the monsters" this is the book for you.

a good book for somebody new to Godzilla nothing more nothing less I can't say it was overly interesting I didn't learn anything I didn't already know and it's partially autobiographical which can be kind of boring but you appreciate the authors enthusiasm for Godzilla anyone that takes it to the point to write a book gets props in my book but I would only recommend this to someone who's new to Godzilla and wants to know more about Godzilla

I consider myself a good, but certainly not fanatical, Godzilla fan. I grew up watching the movies, I have some toys and statues, and I've played most of the Godzilla video games. I'd intended to read this book much sooner, but some of the poor reviews put me off until relatively recently. Anyway, now that I've read the book, here are some quick thoughts on it. The chapter about the original Gojira film, where the author breaks down the symbolism and gives the political/social content in which the movie was made, is very good. Although I disagree with him that the Japanese were the innocent victims of the atomic bomb (I don't condone the use of the bomb, but Japan had plenty of blood, American and Chinese, on their hands), for the most part I found the opening chapter informative and interesting. From that point on, however, the book became a bit of a chore to read. The author devotes significant time to talking about how bad many of the Godzilla films are, which makes the reader wonder why the author ever wanted to write the book in the first place. Frustratingly, the author also repeatedly rehashes the information from the opening chapter. The repetition becomes tedious by page 100. Another complaint I have is that the author tries very hard to provide meaning to films that probably weren't intended to have much meaning. While the author does give some basis (political, historical, etc.) to his claims, often they feel pretentious and unnecessary. I found these sections to be especially frustrating for a couple of reasons. First, earlier in the book the author talked about how bad many of the films--their writing, acting, and direction--are, yet later in the book he praises some of these very same films for tackling important or meaningful social and political issues. Second, and perhaps more frustrating, is that the author breaks down other writers' analyses of Godzilla films, then discounts them all in a couple of

sentences/paragraphs. While I agree with the author that some kind of deeper analysis is unnecessary and most of the conclusions are reached, I don't see why the author even bothered to include them. For the most part, he dismisses the pretentious arguments--that is, until he devotes significant time of his own to doing the very same thing. On the bright side, the writing is mostly accessible and this book won't take one long to read. The author also includes some interesting anecdotes and gives some background info on the production of some of the films, which provided some amusement. I suppose that the book I wanted would have featured more about the history of the films, their players, and the production methods used. Instead, it's mostly about the author's interpretation of Godzilla and his view of Godzilla's importance to pop culture. Not the worst book, but I can only give it a lukewarm endorsement.

I love any book about Godzilla. 'Godzilla on My Mind' is a well-written journey through the entirety of Godzilla's screen presence. A great read. Good for any fan of the G-Man!

Interesting read. Read it before the new Godzilla movie came out. Great historical information

Good so far (half way in)

Very cool book!

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