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Hiding Hiroshima

Adam T. Fernandes
Rhode Island College

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HIDING HIROSHIMA: BLOWING AWAY
ATOMIC RESPONSIBILITY
IN FILM

By

Adam T. Fernandes

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THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

HIDING HIROSHIMA: BLOWING AWAY
ATOMIC RESPONSIBILITY
IN FILM

A Thesis

Presented

By

Adam T. Fernandes

Approved:

_____	_____
Kathryn Kalinak	Date
_____	_____
Bonnie MacDonald	Date
_____	_____
Joseph Zornado	Date
_____	_____
Nancy Bockbrader	Date
_____	_____
Earl Simson	Date

ABSTRACT

The following is an exploration of the representation of nuclear weapons in Japanese anime and US live action cinema of the 1980's. To investigate this topic, methods from Cultural Studies have been employed. Specifically, the silences and contradictions of the films are examined to reveal the cultural ideologies of Japan and the US in the era in which the films were produced. Following brief descriptions of the historical events of both Japan and the US in the 1980s, as well as the history of atomic cinema, key films from both nations are examined in depth. Critical analyses are contained for the Japanese animated films *Barefoot Gen*, *Barefoot Gen 2*, and *Grave of the Fireflies*, while the US live action films, *The Day After*, *Testament*, and *Miracle Mile* are investigated. The examination of these films reveals the repression of questions concerning guilt and responsibility pertaining to the Japanese involvement in World War II, and the US' creation and use of the first nuclear weapon. Additionally, a brief examination of Japanese and US films using displaced representations of nuclear weapons is included as further evidence of this repression.

Animation in the United States is often regarded as a form of children's entertainment. Early silent animation, like film itself, was not specifically targeted at children. Various factors, including the marketing of Walt Disney cartoons to young audiences as well as the implementation of the Production Code in the 1930's, led animators' explorations into more adult themes to be short-lived. These changes within the American film industry helped mold the perception of animation as a family entertainment that most Americans still have today. Although the American animation industry undoubtedly influenced Japanese animation, anime, as it is commonly known today, did not begin to take form until after World War II, and largely throughout the 1960's and 1970's. It doesn't take much experience of anime to realize that Japanese animation has developed into something very different from American animation. Anime often deals with mature themes, such as the effects of technology in society or the sexual development of adolescence, making it clear that the animation produced in Japan is not only intended for children.

The concept of nuclear apocalypse is a major theme found in many examples of Japanese anime and much of it focuses on children or adolescent protagonists. Feature-length anime films such as *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*, 1983), *Barefoot Gen 2* (1986), and *Grave of the Fireflies* (*Hotaru no Haka*, 1988) directly deal with portrayals of wartime aggression against Japan during World War II. While apocalyptic anxiety can be found in films throughout the world, Japan's nuclear experience is unique, and many anime texts demonstrate a collective social anxiety explicitly linked to the atomic bomb. Despite the abundance and popularity of these films, both live-action and animated, Japan itself delayed coming to terms with its nuclear past for years. Japanese film historian Donald Richie observes the passivity of the Japanese people, not only in their daily lives, but in their filmic representations of the atomic bombings in his 1961 article "'Mono no Aware': Hiroshima in Film." Richie defines *Mono no Aware* as a kind of response among the Japanese people to trauma: "This happened; it is all over and finished, but isn't it too bad? Still, this world is a transient place and this too is sad; what we feel today we forget tomorrow; this is not as it perhaps should be, but it is as it is" (22). Richie points out how

quickly the Japanese put the war behind them, without taking time to come to terms with their past, and suggests that the Japanese reaction to the atomic bomb was simply acceptance.

However, film scholar Jerome Shapiro, in his book *Atomic Bomb Cinema*, argues that

Richie's description of *aware* is substantially incomplete and misleading... *Mono no Aware*... is only half of a very complex aesthetic, one that must be balanced by playfulness, which shapes the Japanese response to the bomb. This 'spirit of playfulness which exists as an essential component of Japanese art to the same extent as seriousness, or perhaps even more so,' is precisely what is missing from Richie's (but not only Richie's)... argument. (265-66)

Similarly, World War II historian, John Dower, indicates in his book, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, that the Japanese response to the atomic bomb was not simple. Dower writes "there was no single or singular 'Japanese' response to the defeat apart from a wide-spread abhorrence of war. On the contrary, what is fascinating is how kaleidoscopic such responses were" (25). He goes on to describe the surprise of both American and Japanese leaders at the unexpected response of the Japanese people to the end of the war. There was, on the one hand, a great relief from ending the war, but also a great number of people who "displayed no concern at all for the good of society" (25). In other words, the Japanese response to the atom bomb was not a simple one.

Of course, the nuclear apocalypse theme is in no way a Japanese exclusive. Shapiro points out that apocalyptic-themed narratives aren't particularly new. Early in his text he writes that the apocalyptic narrative is a tradition that can be traced throughout human history and that nuclear weaponry has simply become a modern agent used to continue this tradition (21-49). It should come as no surprise that US cinema has also become fixated on nuclear films, the large majority of which are live action. Films such as *The Day After* (1983), *Testament* (1983), and *Miracle Mile* (1988) clearly embody America's cold war nuclear anxieties in the 1980's. Twentieth-century American

historian Paul Boyer, in his book *By the Bomb's Early Light*, points out that, like the Japanese, Americans' response to the use of nuclear weapons against Japan was anything but simple. He writes, "'Hiroshima' and 'Nagasaki' stand as signposts marking both a gash in the living flesh of our historical consciousness and a turning point in our ethical history: the concluding events of a 'good' war, the opening events of a murky era of moral ambiguity and uncertainty through which we still wander" (182). Boyer references the contradictions among the American response. He notes that most Americans turned a blind eye to the facts but suggests that such obscuring of the bombing alluded to feelings of guilt across the country. Boyer also points to a number of surveys taken by Americans immediately after the Japanese surrender. These surveys revealed that the majority of Americans admitted to believing that the use of the bomb had been the best choice, or that more bombs should have been used. Additionally, many Americans justified the bombs use as a means of ending the war sooner than later, and ultimately saving more American (and Japanese) lives. A significantly smaller number of Americans felt that the wrong choice had been made, preferring that the bomb had first been used on an unpopulated area and then used on a city if Japan had not surrendered, or preferring the bomb had not been used at all (181-87). It is safe to say that, like Japan, the American response to the use of the atomic bomb was a complicated one.

The 1980's turns out to be a significant turning point in both Japanese and US history, although for very different reasons. With the withdrawal of the last remaining legal remnants of the US occupation in the 1970's, Japan began to thrive as an independent nation in the 1980's. Historian Andrew Gordon provides evidence that "through the 1970's and 1980's Japan's industrial productivity increased at the fastest rates in the world" (298). The Japanese growths in production also lead to an increase in exports, and by the 1980's many American markets were overwhelmed by Japanese competition. For example, Gordon points out that of fifty-five American television manufacturers in 1955 only one remained in business in the 1980's due to Japanese competition (293). With a booming economy, Japan was able to increase and renew ties with other countries, although Gordon notes that unsettled wartime issues led to some

tensions in many of these relationships, mostly throughout Asia. As historian Carol Gluck points out, the Japanese had long considered themselves to be a postwar nation, and this continued through the 1980's, effectively avoiding confronting Japanese responsibility throughout "prewar, the war, and the postwar eras" (95). However Gluck also suggests that the 1980's mark the beginning of a post-postwar period in Japan, and the beginning of an examination of wartime responsibility. Gordon supports Gluck's assertion by providing evidence that Japan was beginning to accept some war responsibility. For example, he points out that some Japanese began to place the blame on the Japanese government and military who hadn't thought of the suffering brought upon the people. However, it is important to point out that many other Japanese defended Japan's position in the war as purely motivated, claiming "that the nation led a war to liberate Asia from the grip of Western imperialism" (298).

While Japan enjoyed the benefits of an economic boom, the US was faced with economic decline and heightened Cold War tensions. Shapiro references two prominent events that brought US nuclear anxieties to the surface in the 1980's. The first is the accession of President Ronald Reagan in 1981. Reagan's policies brought the specter of nuclear war to the forefront and "provided the final decisive push back toward antinuclear activism and revived cultural awareness" (170). In 1983 Reagan proposed the *Strategic Defense Initiative*. The proposal envisioned using space-based defensive systems as opposed to solely ground-launched interceptors. The plan eventually gained the popular nickname "Star Wars" based on the George Lucas films. It also had the ambitious goal of providing a near total defense against a massive sophisticated intercontinental ballistic missile attack, as opposed to previous systems which were limited in defensive capacity and geographic coverage.

Secondly, the release of the Jane Fonda movie *China Syndrome* in 1979 helped to bring American antinuclear movements to a more visible position. It is also important to point out, although Shapiro does not, the 1979 Three Mile Island accident. The accident was a partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. It was the most significant accident in the history of the

American commercial nuclear power industry. Shapiro adds that major economic changes in the United States included cuts to social welfare programs. The economic changes largely affected the middle class for whom “two-income/career families were no longer a luxury but a necessity” (182). Despite these changes in the economy (or perhaps causing them), under Reagan the military saw its highest spending since World War II, as the President lead troops into Lebanon, Grenada and Libya. Many of Reagan’s policies and increased military spending escalated the Cold War.

These historical events lead to a series of questions regarding the representation of nuclear holocaust in Japanese anime and American live action films of the 1980’s. How do anime films represent nuclear holocaust? Is this the same or different then American live action representations? How are issues of guilt and responsibility handled in the representation of nuclear holocaust? Does guilt and responsibility function differently in Japanese anime and US live action films? How might the historical events occurring in Japan and the US during the 1980’s account for the films’ expressions of nuclear anxieties? To what extent do these films reveal the ideologies of these nations in this time period?

The Japanese anime and American live action films of the 1980’s examined in my study each deal with representations of nuclear holocaust. Although many anime use displacement to project the horror of the atomic bomb onto another threat, these anime employ a historical framework to present images of World War II Japan which convey their antiwar theme. On the other hand, the American live action films portray antiwar themes through realistic depictions of nuclear attacks against the US but do not employ a historic framework within their narratives. While the filmic styles of animation and live action are drastically different, it becomes clear from these 1980’s films that both Japan and the US had major concerns about nuclear war, despite the fact that both countries were in very different positions. The films of each country ultimately use representations of atomic war to repress questions of national responsibility.

The methods used in Cultural Studies are employed in my study. Cultural Studies is an ideal approach for a variety of reasons, including its willingness to look at a wide

variety of texts, its incorporation of Marxist theory with its focus on ideological analysis, and its refusal to be limited to traditional concepts of “high art.” For example, the work of post-structuralist Marxist Louis Althusser is important to my study because of his exploration of the functions of ideology. Althusser’s writing not only elucidates ideology, but also articulates how it maintains itself. For Althusser “[t]he ultimate condition of production is the reproduction of the conditions of production” (127). He demonstrates this in the workings of capitalism, but also in the reproduction of the ideological mindset, specifically through education. In other words, in order for a system such as capitalism to maintain its existence, it must constantly ensure that the conditions that allow it to exist are upheld. Althusser writes that the education system is what recreates the conditions of capitalism.

...besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the ‘rules’ of good behavior, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is ‘destined’ for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination... To put this more scientifically, I shall say that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order.... (132)

Although this seems obvious enough once pointed out, it must be acknowledged that this system exists without awareness among society. Althusser maintained that we are all living within cultural ideology and even if we become aware of the system, we can never step outside of it.

Althusser’s student, Pierre Machery, took Althusser’s work a step further by attempting to apply his ideas to literature. Machery argued that the way to understand ideology through a text is not through what is said, but from the silences, or what is not said. He writes, “in order to say anything, there are other certain things which must not be

said” (85). These silences in the text reveal what the text cannot attempt to deal with. Machery specifies that the text has its own unconscious which is separate from the author’s. To uncover the ideology of the text the critic must look past the surface meaning and the author’s intention to uncover what is not said. By revealing the hidden silences of the text the critic can unveil what the text has to say about the ideology of the culture in which the text was produced. In Marxist theory, ideology is always hidden in plain sight. “[T]he work is not hiding what it does not say; this is simply missing” (86). Although Machery specifically deals with literature his methods are easily applicable to film.

To demonstrate how Marxist methodology, and particularly Machery’s work, applies to my own study, I will briefly analyze a 1962 Hollywood feature film, *Panic in the Year Zero*. The film presents the aftermath of a nuclear attack on Los Angeles, and focuses on Harry Baldwin (Ray Milland), his wife, and their teenage son and daughter, as they struggle to survive. The family initially survives the nuclear attack by leaving the city early in the morning on a camping trip. When they realize what has happened, Baldwin takes charge of his family and takes them to the camping grounds to hide out until things calm down. While in hiding, the family regularly listens to the radio and at one point hears a broadcast revealing that “countermeasures have been taken on European and Asian targets.” At the close of the film, the family is forced to retreat from the campsite when the son, Rick (Frankie Avalon), is shot in the leg and needs medical treatment. The family reaches an Army encampment and learns that order has been reestablished. The film never answers the question “Who did this?” The viewer knows that the United States is attacked but the question of who perpetrated the attack is glossed over with a vague morsel of information.

Although this silence about culpability seems like a minute detail in the plot, it is actually very revealing about America’s cultural ideology in the early 1960’s. During the film’s production in 1961, The Berlin Crisis was at an escalated period. The crisis began in 1958 when the Soviet Union demanded that the western forces withdraw from West Berlin. The United States, along with Britain and France, refused. Although the crisis

revolved around Berlin, there were undoubtedly feelings of tension among Americans, and fear of the actions the Soviets might take. *Panic in the Year Zero* avoids placing any blame or confronting any realistic threat, and instead leaves the viewer with only the indistinct suggestion that the threat was European or Asian. Machery would say that this silence, coupled with the film's surface treatment of nuclear war, reveals that Americans were indeed quite afraid of the threat of nuclear attack. This fear was so imbedded in the cultural ideology of America in the 1960's that the film text cannot even address this issue directly.

Stuart Hall, one of the founders of Cultural Studies, has noted that Cultural Studies has moved away from, or at least expanded upon, Machery's approach of analyzing silences and the largely Marxist theory on which it is based.

There was never a prior moment when Cultural Studies and Marxism represented a perfect theoretical fit... [T]here was always-already the question of the great inadequacies, theoretically and politically, the resounding silences, the great evasions of Marxism – the things that Marx did not talk about or seem to understand which were our privileged object of study: culture, ideology, language, the symbolic. (Hall 279)

Marxism proved to be too Eurocentric and rigidly committed to explaining ideology through economics for Hall and his peers. Marxism also insisted that the texts were largely under the sway of the dominant ideology. Scholars felt that they were locked into a rigid methodology they could escape. Cultural Studies represented a new approach that would allow scholars to adopt a more open methodology, keeping a political dimension to their studies, but one that would not lock them into a strictly economical model (Hall 277-94).

This amended version of Marxism, the basis of Cultural Studies today, is exemplified in Cultural Studies film scholar Graeme Turner's *Film as Social Practice*. Turner not only describes the Cultural Studies approach, but brings it directly to film through description and example. For Turner a text is influenced by several ideologies circulating in a culture, including the dominant ideology.

[T]he text is a kind of battleground for competing and often contradictory positions. Of course, this competition usually results in a victory for the culture's dominant positions, but not without leaving cracks or divisions through which we can see the consensualizing work of ideology exposed.... Often the formal problems we might discern within a film are traceable to the intransigence of the ideological opposition; an unsatisfactory ending in a film may emerge from the failure to unite the ideological alternatives convincingly. (171-72)

In other words, ideology is not exposed through silences alone, but also through contradictions within a text. Through these contradictions cultural ideology can be uncovered.

Returning to *Panic in the Year Zero*, I will use Turner's Cultural Studies approach and particularly his focus on contradiction to explore another theme of the film: family. Although Harry Baldwin quickly takes charge of the situation, his decisions are not always to his family's liking. As soon as the family realizes their home has been destroyed, Harry's wife, Ann (Jean Hagen), expresses her desire to return to look for her mother. Baldwin refuses to go back despite his wife's pleas. Tension between Baldwin and his wife intensify as he continually puts his son, Rick, in compromising situations, such as having Rick hold a gun to a store owner when they can't afford their purchase. When Rick expresses excitement at the change in their environment, Baldwin scolds him and effectually belittles him. Rick's choices often lead to his father's disapproval, and Harry suggests that Rick is not as competent as he is. The Baldwin daughter, Karen (Mary Mitchel), mostly keeps quiet and does as her father and brother tell her, but when it is implied that she is raped late in the film, she cannot bear to face her father's judgment. And Harry is similarly unable to face her.

On the surface of the film the message is clear. The nuclear family must stay together and be united in order to survive the holocaust. However, many contradictions in that surface message emerge revealing its buried ideology. Harry's behavior and inability to take full control of his family clearly contradicts the image of the strong nuclear family

the film wants its viewers to aspire to. Harry and his wife, Ann, are at odds with one another until very late in the film and their bickering exposes the unhappiness between them. Harry belittles his son, in whom, it is clear, he is deeply disappointed and he cannot comfort his daughter. Additionally, Harry, the strong father at the head of the nuclear family, spends so much time forcing his family to follow his plans that he becomes a completely unlikeable character. The film ends as Rick is seriously wounded and the family must rush to an army camp to save his life. Through this dire circumstance the family reunites at the last minute. Although the Baldwins reach the army encampment, the film does not reinstate the nuclear family and it denies the viewer any closure in terms of Rick's recovery. Despite all the efforts of the film, the nuclear family is never restored.

Looking at these contradictions within the film suggests that the nuclear family in 1962 was not as stable as the film wants its viewers to believe. The surface of the film makes it clear that the father must be a strong leader who protects his family, and that survival means the family must rely on each other. However, the contradictions in the film suggest tensions within the American psyche that undermine the nuclear family. Certainly, Baldwin's constant yelling at his family and lack of compassion for them as well as the bickering between Baldwin and his wife and children not only make Baldwin an unlikable character, but expose the futility of the nuclear family itself. And yet the family is forced to follow him. What might happen if Baldwin listened to his wife, sympathized with his daughter, let his son have more responsibility, or took the time to explain his reasoning to his family? The film can't allow this scenario to play out because it might undermine the more dominant ideology that tells us the nuclear family must remain together under the leadership of its male authority figure. And yet we are left with the instability of that nuclear family as evidenced in the film's many contradictions.

Finally, in her recent publication *James Dean Transfigured*, film scholar Claudia Springer simply sums up Cultural Studies as follows: "Cultural Studies opens up textual analysis to all cultural phenomena; television, professional wrestling, the World Wide Web, rap music, grunge clothing, tattoos, popular dance, and fan clubs and their fanzines, to name a few, are all considered texts worthy of serious, rigorous analysis by Cultural

Studies scholars” (6). Her meaning is clear. Why limit scholarly studies to the “high art” many critical approaches, including Marxism, have limited themselves to? The products of our popular culture have so much to tell us about the ideology in which they are produced. Both Japanese animation and American live action bomb films are often marginalized and considered unworthy of serious scholarly study. The Cultural Studies approach provides a method with the resources to take these texts seriously and investigate the ideological mindsets of the cultures in which they were produced.

Despite the fact that there is an overabundance of material on live action nuclear films, and that similar materials on anime has steadily increased in recent years, there is surprisingly little material of serious critical substance. It is not until 1996, when Mick Broderick’s anthology *Hibakusha Cinema: Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the Nuclear Image in Japanese Film* is published, that these bomb films begin to be recognized as having some value (Hibakusha refers to survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on both Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945). In his introduction, Broderick even points out that “the Godzilla series of Japanese films have been critically marginalized” and “serious study of the fecund Japanese animation addressing nuclear themes is equally rare” (7). In an interesting echo of Broderick, Andrew Gordon writes, in the introduction to the anthology *Postwar Japan as History*, that it wasn’t until the 1980’s that historians began to take an interest in Japan’s postwar era (ix). *Hibakusha Cinema* provides the first major collection of essays dealing with these films, although only a small subset deal with anime.

Within the growing body of literature dealing with both Japanese anime and US live action nuclear films, only a handful has proved useful as critical tools. Of these, few manage to sustain a Cultural Studies approach. For example, Jerome F. Shapiro’s *Atomic Bomb Cinema* is an impressive text that looks at the history of the bomb in American film throughout film history. Shapiro includes films that he titles “prototypical bomb films” made between 1895 and 1945, and breaks down the time between 1945 and the book’s publication in 2002 into several chapters in which he examines key bomb films during those time periods. Shapiro also includes a final chapter dealing with Japanese atomic

bomb cinema from 1945 to 2002. Although Shapiro sets up his material in a way which often suggests he is going to address ideological concerns, he never quite makes it to that level. Often he is too concerned with how the film fits (or doesn't fit) into the Jewish apocalyptic narrative tradition he describes in the book's opening.

Similarly, Japanese Literature scholar Susan J. Napier's text *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle* attempts to address anime across its entire history, an honorable attempt given the wealth of anime produced in Japan. She categorizes anime into three general classifications (the carnival, the apocalyptic, and the elegiac) and devotes her chapters to specific themes. However, she doesn't get much farther than Shapiro in addressing the ideological content of these films. For instance, in her chapter "No More Words: *Barefoot Gen*, *Grave of the Fireflies*, and 'Victim's History'," Napier provides intriguing analysis of the films, and she often implies that she is going to push to an ideological level that she then promptly avoids. While these readings from Shapiro and Napier are on some level disheartening, since they do not provide a model of ideological readings of these films, they allow me the opportunity to take that step.

Articles in scholarly periodicals dealing with nuclear apocalyptic film texts through a Cultural Studies methodology are few and far between. While I have found that some films, such as *The Terminator*, have spawned an avalanche of critical material, I have been unable to identify any that deal with the film through Cultural Studies. Other Hollywood films such as *The Day After* or *Testament*, have received little or no serious attention in periodical literature. Similarly anime has received little scholarly attention, the exception being *Akira*. Like *The Terminator*, the articles that critique *Akira* make no attempt to examine the film in the context of Japanese culture and thus lack a Cultural Studies approach.

Some very recent developments in scholarship on Japanese film suggest that this situation may improve. *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*, the first anthology to include important Japanese scholarship on Japanese films translated into English, has just been published in 2007. While the majority of the articles in the anthology focus on live action cinema, the last chapter examines the globalization of anime through the specific

example of Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (*Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi*, 2001). Although the article is not relevant to my study, it is promising to see an interest in anime in a collection of serious scholarly studies of Japanese film. Of additional interest is the translation of a Japanese essay on *Godzilla* (*Gojira*, 1954). Despite being largely unrelated to my own research, it is reassuring to see these often marginalized genres beginning to be taken seriously. Perhaps more importantly, the translation of Japanese studies grants English language scholars access to previously inaccessible texts.

Additionally promising is the recent publication by the University of Minnesota Press of an annual collection, *Mechademia*, dealing with anime, manga (Japanese comics), and other forms of Japanese popular culture. First published in 2006, the publication currently consists of three volumes. A glance at the three reveals a noticeable increase in size from the first to third volume. Like *Japanese Cinema*, these volumes promise continued scholarly interest in anime and further access to translated Japanese studies. Unfortunately, like *Japanese Cinema*, the current publications offer little for my own study of the Japanese representation of nuclear war in anime.

The history of atomic bomb films in Japan and the United States is a long and fascinating one that provides an important context for understanding the atomic bomb films of the 1980's. With the Allied occupation following the Japanese surrender, the Japanese film industry was not free to explore the atomic bomb tragedy. The first films produced in Japan about atomic bombs were released as early as 1950 as the occupation began to draw to a close. Starting with documentaries such as *Hiroshima* (1950) and *Nagasaki After the Bomb* (*Gembaku no Nagasaki*, 1952) the Japanese film industry rapidly broadened its production of atomic bomb cinema. One of the most important of these early films is, of course, Ishirō Honda's *Godzilla*, which provides a surprisingly obvious attempt to address the use of the nuclear weapons against Japan.

Godzilla tells the story of the monster Godzilla (or Gojira, in Japan) who emerges from the ocean and begins terrorizing Japan. It is also the story of Emiko Yamane (Momoko Kôchi) and her relationship with her fiancé, Professor Daisuke Serizawa (Akihiko Hirata), and the man she actually loves, Hideto Ogata (Akira Takarada). For

Japanese scholar Yomota Inuhiko the entire film is “a metaphor of post-war Japanese society that has survived the catastrophe caused by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (106). As Inuhiko writes, “Like the nuclear bombs and the American military bombers that delivered them, the monster appears invulnerable as it ignores the immense firepower of Japan’s conventional weapons such as artillery, tanks and aeroplanes” (106) and according to Inuhiko, “[Godzilla] reminded Japanese audiences of the US military bombers that had reduced their cities to flaming ruins only a few years earlier” (105). Despite parallels between the monster and the American military, “Godzilla is as much a threat menacing Japan as another victim of nuclear attack itself. That is, he is defined as a metaphor of post-war Japanese society that has survived the catastrophe caused by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (Inuhiko 106).

In addition to the use of the monster as a metaphor for the atomic bombs, the film also includes another more obvious reference to the bomb which is often overlooked or ignored by film scholars. This is the creation of the Oxygen Destroyer by the scientist, Daisuke Serizawa. Not only is Professor Serizawa reluctant to use his invention against Godzilla, he is obsessively afraid that the discovery will be misused. He vocalizes his concern about the morality of his creation, and questions the humanity of having invented such a powerful weapon. Ultimately the professor uses the Oxygen Destroyer to kill, not only Godzilla, but also himself, in order to prevent its recreation. Through Serizawa the film quite blatantly questions the use of the atomic bomb as well as the inhumanity of inventing such a weapon. Honda continued to direct Godzilla films throughout the 1950’s and 1960’s. The series has continued since that time under new directors for a total of twenty-eight Godzilla films (including the 1998 US version), the most recent of which was released in Japan in 2004.

Other well known directors also explored the affects of the atomic bomb through film. Akira Kurosawa directed *I Live in Fear*, also known as *A Record of a Living Being* (*Ikimono no Kiroku*) in 1955. The story concerns an elderly factory owner whose fear of the atomic bomb becomes so great he decides to move his family, and ultimately his employees, to Brazil in order to save them from the bomb, only to have his family appeal

to the court to have their father committed to a mental institution. The filmic interrogation of the effects of the bomb continued into the 1960's with films such as *The Final War* (*Dai sekai taisen*, 1960). It is of interest to note that Osamu Tezuka's anime television series *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atom*, or literally translated *The Mighty Atom*) debuted in 1963. Although not explicitly linked to the atomic bomb, *Astro Boy* is often regarded as the first anime series and is generally attributed with starting the anime craze in Japan. The story of a child robot created to replace his inventor's dead son and abandoned as inadequate, *Astro Boy* similarly brings to light Japanese concerns with the use of the atomic technology and the morality of such technology. It is also interesting to point out that Tezuka introduced the *Astro Boy* character in a manga series in 1951, just as the atomic bomb and its consequences began to become more common in Japanese film.

The 1970's appear to have produced a lull in atomic bomb cinema in Japan with the possible exception of the Godzilla films produced during this period. During the 1970's however Japanese anime began to develop rapidly. Anime series, such as *Space Battleship Yamato* (1974), *Gatchaman* (1978), and *Mobile Suit Gundam* (*Kidô senshi Gandamu*, 1979) each found success not only among Japanese audiences, but also among American viewers. Although not as explicitly concerned with the use of the atomic bomb as films such as *Godzilla* or *A Record of a Living Being*, these anime undoubtedly continued to probe questions regarding war and the use of technology demonstrated in *Astro Boy*. A strong example can be seen through *Space Battleship Yamato* in which the earth is under attack by a distant, dying alien race who wishes to make Earth their new home. In order to defend their home from the invaders, the people of earth borrow the technology of another alien race to convert the World War II Japanese battleship Yamato into a space battleship that can travel to the enemy planet to counter attack. The series is not only explicitly reminiscent of events in World War II, but also demonstrates an underlying theme of the Japanese as victims of war. However, in this second voyage of the Yamato, the Japanese no longer find themselves helpless.

In the US, atomic cinema had a brief head start. Jerome Shapiro's *Atomic Bomb Cinema* provides a robust look at the history of the atomic bomb genre in America. He

marks 1945 to 1950 as an important time in the history of US atomic bomb cinema, for it is a time in which “the United States did its damndest to convince itself that it possessed a secret, and this secret made the country feel unique and more secure” (53). Importantly, during this time there was no threat of nuclear attack to America, but the films produced during this period do express concerns about future nuclear attacks. As early as 1946, Alfred Hitchcock’s *Notorious* concerns itself with the threat of nuclear war, although as Shapiro points out, “[t]he threat of a nuclear attack on the United States is never even considered” (61).

Shapiro places particular emphasis on the 1947 film *The Beginning or the End*. The film tells the stories of graduate student Matt Cochran (Tom Drake) and Colonel Jeff Nixon (Robert Walker) and their involvement in the creation and use of the atomic bomb. In Shapiro’s reading the film “offers many justifications for the use of nuclear weapons, including racism, revenge, progress and theology” (65). “Indeed,” continues Shapiro, “*The Beginning or the End* acknowledges that Americans began building the bomb because they were afraid the Nazis would develop one first, yet used the weapon against the Japanese” (65). But Shapiro also points out that the film highlights the bomb as technological progress that “will bring about a new age for all humanity” (66). In fact, through the character of Matt, the film gives the audience the impression that nuclear energy is the power of God. Unlike *Godzilla* which visibly depicts the threat of the nuclear bomb, *The Beginning or the End* celebrates the technological achievement of the United States in successfully developing nuclear power.

With the Soviet Union’s successful detonation of a nuclear bomb in 1949, the United States was forced to face a real threat of nuclear war. Shapiro argues that the bomb films produced between 1950 and 1963 remain optimistic, but become increasingly complex. Because the period presents such a varied and complex response to the threat of nuclear war, it is impossible to make a generalized statement about the era. Even Shapiro writes about the thirteen year period across two chapters in order to explore different vantage points on this time frame. He argues that the films remain optimistic by “express[ing] confidence in humanity’s ability to overcome the temptation to use the new

weapons, or at least the confidence that a better world could be built following a full-scale nuclear war” (73). Regardless, the 1950’s saw continued production of atomic bomb films such as *Rocketship X-M* (1950), *Five* (1951), *Red Planet Mars* (1952), *Them!* (1954), *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil* (1959), and *The Time Machine* (1960) to name a few.

Historian Paul Boyer argues that following 1963, with the ban on nuclear atmospheric testing by the three nuclear superpowers, there was “a sharp decline in culturally expressed engagement with the issue” (355-56). Boyer characterizes the period of 1963 to 1980 as “the years of the Big Sleep” (355). However, Shapiro argues that Boyer “grossly oversimplifies Hollywood’s role in whatever problems he sees in American culture” (143). Shapiro does concede that fewer bomb films were made in this period, but provides figures to show that there was “only a statistical difference of less than 6 percent, or just one film” (142) per year. Whether or not a decline existed, Hollywood continued to produce important bomb films throughout the remainder of the 1960’s and the 1970’s. *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* was released in 1964 and *Fail-Safe* was released later the same year. Additional films such as *Planet of the Apes* (1968), its numerous sequels in the early 1970s, *Dark Star* (1974) and *A Boy and His Dog* (1974) are important examples of the continued representation of the atomic bomb. Shapiro even references *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) as a less traditional form of bomb film, since radiation is held responsible for the reanimation of the dead. While the structure of the bomb films become vastly different from 1945 to 1979, Shapiro argues that the “apocalyptic [genre promises] rebirth and salvation following a period of trials and tribulations” (168).

For both Japan and America, the 1980s became a historical turning point, with Japan confronting its own wartime aggression and the US witnessing the final years of the Cold War. It is for this reason that we see the films of both nations repressing questions of responsibility relating to the nuclear bomb. While the Japanese anime is using representations of the atomic bomb to repress Japanese responsibilities for the World War II, the American live action films are using similar methods to evade

confronting the responsibility for bringing the threat of nuclear war into reality. It is clear through the films of the 1980's that both Japanese and American cultural ideologies are resisting questions of responsibility.

As previously stated, many anime films deal with apocalyptic themes, and often evoke nuclear imagery to do so. However, only a small number of Japanese anime actually represent Japan in World War II. Among them are *Barefoot Gen*, its sequel *Barefoot Gen 2*, and *Grave of the Fireflies*. Japanese film scholar Susan J. Napier devotes an entire chapter in her book *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle* to the first *Barefoot Gen* film and *Grave of the Fireflies*. "As many scholars have pointed out," writes Napier, "the Japanese version of World War II may generally be described as a 'victim's history,' in which the Japanese people were seen as helpless victims of a corrupt and evil conspiracy between their government and military" (218). According to Napier this version of history portraying Japanese citizens as victims came into being through the cooperation of the Japanese government and the American occupying forces after the war, in an effort to create an image of postwar Japan that was democratic and free of its military past. Napier continues, "[B]oth official and cultural versions of the war have played down citizen's involvement with the actual machinery of combat and aggression to the point that they ignore or elide Japan's aggression against China, which began in 1931" (218). Napier's focus on victim's history is enlightening, and she writes that the films "show little inclination to delve into issues of guilt or responsibility" (218). What Napier does examine are the ways in which the films reveal Japanese culture avoiding confrontation with responsibility, and what such avoidance may say about Japan in the 1980s. What she does not examine are issues of Japanese guilt or responsibility for the war which are deeply buried on the films' ideological level.

Most anime are based on manga publications, and *Barefoot Gen* is no exception. Written by Keiji Nakazawa, the manga version was serialized in several Japanese magazines beginning in 1973. These were eventually collected and published altogether in 1975. In 1976 the series was translated to English, possibly becoming the first manga to be published in the English language. Between 1976 and 1980 three live action

Barefoot Gen films were produced in Japan. The anime version of *Barefoot Gen* was directed by Mori Masaki and released in 1983. Its sequel was released in 1986 under directors Toshio Hirata and Akio Sakai. The plot of the first *Barefoot Gen* animated film with its dark turn of events and graphic portrayal of war may be surprising to audiences more familiar with Hollywood animation aimed at children. The story focuses on the young Gen Nakaoko living in Hiroshima in the days before the bombing and his survival following the attack. The first thirty minutes of the film portray Gen and his younger brother, Shinji, older sister, Eiko, his father, and his pregnant mother coping with the daily hardships of wartime. This opening section of the film particularly focuses on Gen and Shinji and, in Napier's words, "the boys' psychological unwillingness to be beaten down" (224). On the morning of the bombing, Gen heads to school ahead of his sister. By chance Gen happens to be bending over behind a wall when the atomic bomb is dropped, accounting for his survival. The film spends a lengthy amount of time focusing on the destructiveness of the bomb, visually depicting citizens literally melting, with eyes falling from their sockets and clothes burning off their bodies. Buildings are seen crumbling, with particular attention paid to Hiroshima Castle and the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall.

Gen awakes soon after the blast and is horrified to see the destruction and the gruesome zombie-like survivors wandering the ruined city. After a few moments he notices fire in the direction of his home and rushes to check on his family. He finds his father, sister, and brother pinned under the burning wreckage of his house, and his mother vainly trying to lift the heavy rafter trapping the three family members. Gen tries to help her, but eventually his father convinces him that he must take his mother to safety and protect the baby when it is born. Gen submits to his father's will and pulls his mother away as the fire engulfs the family inside the house. Soon after Gen's mother goes into labor and, unable to find a doctor, Gen delivers the baby. Gen and his mother and newborn sister manage to survive, and Gen eventually builds a house where his home had previously been. One night in their new home, a young boy sneaks into the house to try to steal some food. Gen realizes that the orphan boy, Ryuta, looks just like his dead brother

Shinji, and he and his mother open their home and share their food with the boy. Gen, who has lost his hair due to the radiation, and Ryuta begin to look for work so they can buy food for the baby, Tomoko, who is malnourished. They manage to do so, but return home to find Gen's mother clutching the deceased baby girl. Gen and family mourn the loss, but Gen soon finds new hope when Ryuta discovers wheat has begun to sprout in the fields and that Gen's hair is growing back. Discovering the strength to continue living, Gen carves a wooden boat which he, along with his mother and adopted brother, float downstream to commemorate their lost family members.

On the surface *Barefoot Gen* is a powerful story of hope in the face of adversity. In this and other ways it fits into Napier's description of victim's history. Gen's story is that of survival despite the constant bombardment of challenges, both before and after the bomb. Indeed, hope is emphasized early in the film through Gen's father who reminds Gen and Shinji of the endurance of wheat. "Wheat sprouts up in cold, harsh winters, is stepped on often, and is rooted deep in the earth. It resists frost, wind, and snow, grows straight and makes splendid ears" he tells his sons. "Become strong like wheat, boys," Gen finishes the sermon for his father. The film also directly targets the government and military as the cause of this hardship. This is made clear through Gen's father, who tells his sons that he actively disapproves of the actions of the government and that he believes Japan has already lost the war. When Gen asks why Japan keeps fighting if the war is already lost, his father replies, "Our current leaders are wrong. And something's wrong with the army heads." He then admits that he is proud to be unpatriotic: "This war, in which people kill each other, can't be right." Gen's father embodies victim's history in his unpatriotic speeches that place the blame for the suffering on the Japanese government and military. He also makes the film's anti-war message perfectly clear.

It cannot be denied that victim's history is on display on the surface of the *Barefoot Gen*. This history is revealed not only through Gen's father, but also through the vivid depictions of suffering the film presents. What becomes interesting for this study is the ways in which the film undermines victim's history to reveal the guilt and responsibility of the Japanese in World War II that was surfacing in the 1980s. Macher's

approach of looking at the silences of the text as well as Turner's methods of looking at the gaps and contradictions, prove useful to identifying the film's ideological undercurrents. The opening of the film provides a simple, but clear, example. Before the audience is introduced to Gen and his family, the film presents a series of images of American Boeing B-29's and the fire bombings that took place across the Japanese mainland. The names of the cities attacked and the dates in which the onslaughts occurred are displayed in white over the images of the assaults. While this is displayed, a voice-over narrator describes the attacks on Japan as the "first violent air raids the human race experienced." However, this voice-over begins with the line: "December 8, 1941. Japan entered World War II against American and the UK's allied forces." Meanwhile, the superimposed titles suggest that the images the audience is seeing are the March 9th and 10th attacks on Tokyo, Kawasaki and Yokohama four years later in 1945. The film neglects the fact that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th. Through this silence and the confusing chronology created by the unmatched images and voiceover, *Barefoot Gen* represses the issue of Japan's war responsibilities.

As noted, Gen's father serves vocally to inform the viewer that the Japanese government and military are the cause of the suffering of Japan's citizens. To maintain this vision, *Barefoot Gen* employs an interesting tactic. As Napier points out, "the [film] evoke[s] an unproblematic response of heartfelt sympathy on the part of the viewers by focusing on innocent children devastated by war's destruction" (218-19). *Barefoot Gen* not only focuses on children, it avoids adults. With the exception of Gen's parents, all of the adults in the film come and go in Gen's world, both before and after the bombing of Hiroshima: a priest who gives Gen and Shinji a carp; their neighbor Mr. Boku; a woman who shares her breast milk with Tomoko; and a wealthy, though heavily burned, survivor who Gen and Ryuta care for. None of these adults are seen again and no explanation is provided for their disappearances. The film silences the fate of these adults leaving the viewer to wonder if any of them survive. The film's characters do not show concern and subsequent reference to them is never made. Repressing adult characters is a logical approach for a film that wants to portray the citizens of Japan as the victims of war, and

more specifically the victims of their own government. In order to sustain this perception, the film keeps its focus only on those who can truly be considered victims regardless of who may be responsible for the war: children.

Although the graphic sequence of the severe consequences of the blast strongly condemns the use of nuclear weapons, it also obscures the facts of World War II as much as it illuminates the bomb's effects. After all, the film completely represses Japan's own military past, not only against Pearl Harbor and throughout the war, but also the Japanese aggression against China before the war. By silencing these facts the film can ignore other victims of war outside of Japan, who are, in fact, victims of Japan. The atomic bomb sequence certainly portrays Japanese citizens as victims of the bomb. Additionally, and more to the point, the graphic representation points to a deferral of all the violence in World War II onto this moment, glossing over Japan's own accountability in the war. The film cannot speak of Japan's actions in World War II without bringing up its own responsibility, and the portrayal of the atomic bomb is so extreme the viewer cannot even begin to think of any war time violence beyond what is displayed.

Gen's mother, the only adult character to survive with him, exposes contradictions in the film's narrative. Japanese film often portrays the mother character as a nurturing figure. This mother is portrayed in *Barefoot Gen* only before the bomb is dropped. For example, she gives her only potato to Gen and Shinji even though she is pregnant and she later cries when she eats the carp her boys procure for her, knowing that they too are hungry. While the rest of her family is trapped inside their burning home, she falls from a second story window, allowing her to survive and witness her family burning alive. After this occurrence, Gen's mother becomes nearly helpless, relying on Gen to find food and help her care for Tomoko. Napier notes, "[S]he is even shown in moments of near madness, as when, immediately after the bombing, she confronts the horror of her family's demise, her hair wildly undone and her face ravaged by screams, or when she responds to the death of her baby with a fixed glazed stare" (228). Indeed Gen's mother does appear to be driven mad by her family's death, not only screaming as Napier notes,

but breaking into a cold maniacal laugh that does not stop until Gen and Mr. Boku get her to safety beyond the fire.

The survival of Gen's mother creates some ambiguity on the film's ideological level as she is the only adult the film does not repress. She and Gen are equally victims of the atomic bomb, losing both their home and family. However, her change in role from nurturing mother to victim and her inability to care for Gen, Ryuta, and especially Tomoko, ultimately serve to emphasize the victimization of the children. It is, after all, Tomoko who becomes the real victim of her mother's inability to provide, when she eventually starves to death. It is surprising that the film places blame for Tomoko's death on Gen's inability to obtain milk for his sister on time. However, if blame is to be placed, it should be on the mother and her failure to provide or even make an effort to do so. In one instance, the film does portray Gen's mother finding someone to give milk to her baby, but she is never shown trying to make this type of effort again. This responsibility is somehow shifted onto Gen. While Gen is working to earn money to buy milk, his mother remains unseen. The film represses her activity during this time. In doing so, when Gen's mother cannot fulfill her traditional role of the nurturing mother, the film still avoids placing blame on her. Additionally, her seeming insanity is revisited when Tomoko dies (portrayed through her blank stare as Gen returns home) suggesting her unstable reaction to the loss of her family excuses her from caring for her family. In order to continue blaming the Japanese military and government for the tragedies of the Japanese people, the film goes to great lengths to keep responsibility out of adult hands. The contradiction between the nurturing mother and the victimized mother exposes the film's struggle to repress any responsibility of the Japanese people.

It is interesting to note how the Japanese military is repressed throughout the film. The few scenes portraying the military are generally filler scenes, showing the soldiers marching to war before the bombing, or of soldiers sent to clean up the numerous bodies throughout Hiroshima afterwards. The only soldier given any special attention is one Gen meets while looking for food in the city ruins. The man is complaining of cold, surprising Gen because it is a hot summer day. The man then unknowingly loses control of his

bowels, his pants turning red with blood. He takes off his hat revealing his balding scalp. Moments later he collapses, coughing up blood. Gen drags the man to a first aid clinic, but the doctor tells Gen the man has already died from *pika*, or radiation poisoning. This soldier only serves to display the effects of radiation on people who were not even in Hiroshima when the bomb was dropped. Like the adults who disappear without a trace, *Barefoot Gen*'s repression of the military suggests that on some level the film cannot convincingly portray the military to be at fault. By silencing the military, the film maintains the image of Japanese citizens as the victims of the military.

The repression of the Japanese military cannot be examined without also looking at the repression of the Japanese government. As little as the military is represented, the government is portrayed to an even lesser degree. The only portrayal of the government comes in the form of Emperor Hirohito's radio broadcast in which he informs his people of Japan's surrender. The film's placement of this broadcast sequence is significant. Just after Gen realizes he is losing his hair and begins to fear for his life, another voice-over narration begins informing the viewer that America had declared the use of a nuclear weapon as the cause of Hiroshima's destruction, that America warned of another attack, and that the Japanese government turned a blind eye and did not make the attack on Hiroshima public to its citizens. This is followed by a brief scene portraying a bird's eye view of an atomic bomb explosion in which the mushroom cloud grows until the screen is enveloped in white while black Japanese characters are superimposed which translate to "Attack on Nagasaki too." Following this, a radio is seen and the broadcast begins. As the broadcast is played, the film portrays the survivors of Hiroshima kneeling sadly. A naked child is shown crying besides his topless deceased mother. Finally the film shows Gen uncovering the skulls of his brother, sister and father from the ruins of their home. The broadcast voice-over stops when Gen's mother begins to talk to him. The Emperor's speech, coupled with the images displayed, are blatantly ironic. He says, "I would like you to endure intolerable things, put up with unbearable things, and make peace come true for the future," as the viewer sees the weeping child and his dead mother followed by

Gen unearthing the remains of this family, insinuating that the Japanese people had already endured intolerable and unbearable things.

The use of the atomic bomb as a weapon against the Japanese people was without a doubt an intolerable action, but the film again neglects to inform the viewer of some factual details. To begin with, the film draws particular attention to the date of the bombing of Hiroshima: August 6th. However, it does not inform the viewer that the raid on Nagasaki took place only a few days later on August 9th. The film refers to the warnings the United States issued to Japan but fails to note that they were delivered by radio and by leaflets dropped by aircrafts over Japanese cities on August 8th, two days after the initial bombing. Leaflets were not even dropped in the Nagasaki area until the 10th. Furthermore, the Japanese government and military were ultimately forced to surrender on August 10th, not only by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also by the Soviet Union's invasion of the Japanese Colony of Manchuria which also occurred on August 9th. The broadcast by the Japanese Emperor did not occur until August 15th. Granted the War had been going poorly for the Japanese for over two years and perhaps the Japanese officials should have put an end to the war sooner, but the film places the emphasis on the use of nuclear bombs. According to Paul Boyer, studies of the Japanese war efforts in 1945 suggest that even if the atomic bombs had not been used, and the Soviets had not entered the war, Japan would have surrendered before December of 1945 (186). The film completely represses key events ending World War II in Japan.

Interestingly, this silence not only allows the film to maintain its stance on the responsibility of the Japanese government, it silences any shadow of the responsibility of the US. It becomes clear that *Barefoot Gen* is attempting to maintain the version of history described by Napier in which the Japanese people are the victims of the Japanese government and military. Yet, in order to maintain this vantage point the film must avoid anything that might take away from this representation, and call forward Japan's broader feelings of guilt and responsibility. This is made clear through the silences in the film. Despite emphasis on the date August 6th 1945, the film cannot emphasize other important dates including Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, and the bombing of Nagasaki. The film

silences the fate of almost all the adults in order to keep any questions of adult responsibility from being raised, or in the case of Gen's mother, the responsibility is shifted to Gen himself. The military and government are virtually absent, allowing the film to shift the responsibility of the lives lost in the war, specifically in the bombing of Hiroshima, onto them. The film's focus on the nuclear destruction draws away any attention to violence by Japan that may have led the nation to war. The safest way for the film to portray Japanese citizens as innocent is through the innocence of its children.

The film's animated sequel, *Barefoot Gen 2*, deals with many of the same issues of responsibility. The sequel takes place three years after the initial film and portrays Gen and Ryuta's continued struggles for survival as Gen's mother's health deteriorates. The film begins with Gen's nightmare of the bombing and upon waking, he and Ryuta head to the remains of the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall to feast on pigeon eggs. The viewer learns that Gen's mother is working in a factory and the boys are going to school. To buy food the boys scavenge the city's ruins for scrap metal that can be sold. They eventually decide to polish shoes, leading them to meet and befriend a group of orphans. The orphans rely on pickpocketing to provide themselves with food. Masa, the group's leader, immediately respects Gen for his strength and perseverance, while Katsuko, the only female in the group, envies Gen and Ryuta's education. Gen helps his new friends build themselves a house and they invite an elderly man they meet to live with them when he confesses that he lost all his loved ones to the bomb and is waiting to die himself. When Gen's mother's illness becomes worse, Masa tells Gen they might be able to save her if they can buy penicillin from the black market. Gen struggles, but eventually makes enough to buy the medication. Reminiscent of the first film, Gen's efforts are in vain, and he returns home to find his mother collapsed. He tries to carry her to the doctor, but she dies in his arms. Gen mourns briefly but, recollecting his mother's reiteration of his father's speech about the strength and endurance of wheat, he challenges Ryuta and their new friends to a race home, ending the film on a decidedly positive note.

Victim's history becomes clouded in *Barefoot Gen 2*. The first film's blunt effort to blame the Japanese government and military for the suffering of the Japanese people

changes quite drastically. The accountability shifts to the United States military who dropped the bomb and then occupied Japan. Although no explicit mention of war responsibility is made in *Barefoot Gen 2* and the film largely leaves the audience to draw its own conclusions, it does suggest who should be blamed. The one exception comes late in the film after Gen, Ryuta and Masa have failed at their first attempt to steal enough metal to buy penicillin. They come across a group of American soldiers who are using bulldozers to gather and bury the remains of Hiroshima's victims. A crowd has formed, and one adult mumbles that the use of machines will keep the victims from reaching their final resting place. Gen begins shouting at the Americans, asking why they dropped the bomb and demanding they return his dead family. He starts throwing stones at the soldiers, and Ryuta and Masa join in. A group of soldiers chase the young trio but the three escape. This scene is the film's most blatant accusation of the US. Earlier in the film, when Gen and Ryuta meet the group of orphans, they encounter a group of American soldiers who are violently rounding up orphans to put them in a detention camp. Only Gen and Ryuta stand up to the soldiers, giving the orphans time to flee before they make their own escape.

Outside of these two scenes, the film pays little attention to the occupying American soldiers. Ultimately the film is still resisting any confrontation with Japan's own responsibility for the effects of the war, and uses many of the same silences to do so. The most obvious is the repression of adult characters. Gen's mother is again the only adult who receives any special attention, and more importantly, the only adult with any sort of relationship with Gen. Despite the fact that she is working in this film, she is still unable to provide for Gen and Ryuta and they must rely on themselves to survive. By the end of the film Gen's mother is dead, leaving him orphaned. The second most significant adult in the film is the elderly man the orphans invite to live with them. However, as an adult figure, the man offers little. His name is never given, and he does little to help the orphans. In a way, he is as much an orphan as the children, for he laments over losing his family and openly tells the children he has no motivation to do anything except wait to die. Significantly, at the end of the film when the children race home, they leave the old

man behind. Like the first *Barefoot Gen*, *Barefoot Gen 2* cannot portray adults because they bring forth questions of the responsibilities of the Japanese people.

Although the film attempts to place the blame on the Americans in this film, this too is undermined by contradictions in the film's plot. A clear example can be seen through Masa's reason for evading the detention camps. Gen and Ryuta ask the other orphans what is so bad about the detention camp which would provide them with three meals a day and a place to sleep. Masa replies, "In that place, I would be subject to strict rules, and I would suffocate. We don't fit well in there." The other orphans brag that Masa escaped a detention camp, and then he continues, "In short, we just want to live freely and happily with everyone, without anyone telling us what to do." The orphans reveal shortly after that they make a living as pickpockets. Masa's wish for freedom is no doubt intended as a metaphor for Japan's desire to be free of the American occupying forces. Yet the strict rules Masa can't abide also provide food and shelter, while his alternative lifestyle requires living in an abandoned air raid shelter and stealing to survive. Furthermore their lifestyle choice proves to be dangerous, as midway through the film the group attempts to steal vegetables from a farm, and, upon being found, one of the orphans is fatally wounded. This contradiction suggests that the American occupation may have been fortunate for the Japanese people, freeing them from a seedier alternative.

The film represses anything which might remind the audience of the reasons America is occupying Japan. Except that the film is obviously set in the immediate post war, there is little else within the context of the film to indicate there ever was a war. Like its predecessor, *Barefoot Gen 2* elides any references to the war that would draw attention to the role Japan played in the war, which, of course, ultimately led to the occupation of American soldiers. Ultimately both films demonstrate the ways in which the Japanese people in the 1980's struggled to come to terms with their own responsibilities that had been hidden from public view following the war through the efforts of the Japanese and American governments.

Although *Grave of the Fireflies* cannot strictly be classified as atomic bomb cinema, its depiction of wartime Japan merits at least a brief analysis. Unlike many

anime, *Grave of the Fireflies* is based on an autobiographical story by novelist Nosaka Akiyuki and not a manga series. The film was produced in 1988 and directed by Isao Takahata. The story revolves around a young boy, Seita, and his dependant younger sister, Setsuko, whose mother dies in an air raid. Their father is in the navy and they are forced to live with their unsympathetic aunt. Seita eventually chooses to take Setsuko out of their aunt's house to live independently in an abandoned bomb shelter. Despite himself, Seita is unable to provide for Setsuko, and she eventually dies of malnutrition. Seita's death is actually revealed at the start of the film, reuniting him with his lost sister. While *Barefoot Gen* and its sequel are outright optimistic, *Grave of the Fireflies* is an unsettling story of loss.

Of the three anime discussed up to this point, *Grave of the Fireflies* appears to come the closest to confronting the responsibilities of Japan in World War II. Largely, this can be seen through Seita and Setsuko's aunt. She is often portrayed patronizing Seita to go to school or to work, not only to get him out of the house, but more so to support the war. The aunt consistently compares Seita to her own daughter and a man boarding in her house who, as she is quick to remind Seita, are supporting their nation through their efforts. This is one of the few reminders in these films that Japan was actually a part of the war, and not just a victim. Japan's war efforts are also realized through the two children's absent father, who they write to, but never hear back from. Indeed these reminders of Japan's military involvement are stark contrasts to *Barefoot Gen's* clear disdain of the military.

Interestingly, unlike *Barefoot Gen*, *Grave of the Fireflies* seems unable to portray death. Although Seita, Setsuko, their mother and their father all die, not a single death is seen on screen. Early in the film when their mother is horribly burned in the air raid, the audience sees what appears to be her removal from the first aid clinic to be transported to the hospital. It is only much later that the viewer learns that she was actually already dead and being brought to be cremated. The children's father is never seen, and his death can only be assumed (by Seita and audience members alike) when Seita learns late in the film that Japan had surrendered and the Navy fleet decimated. Setsuko, who by the end of her

life has grown so weak she cannot lift food to her mouth, is only revealed to die through Seita's voice-over narration, "She never woke up." Even Seita's death, which occurs in the film's opening, is obscured by a maintenance man who says of another child nearby, "This one's a goner too. You can tell by the look in their eye," drawing into question whether Seita is already dead or so close to death he cannot respond. In utter opposition to *Barefoot Gen's* vivid portrayals of death, *Grave of the Fireflies* effectively silences it. In a film that alludes to Japanese responsibilities of war, its repression of death suggests its hesitation to completely link the death of Japanese people to Japan's participation in the war.

Despite the vast differences of *Barefoot Gen* and *Grave of the Fireflies*, their similarities are also substantial. Most obvious is the film's focus on children. Additionally, like *Barefoot Gen*, the adults in *Grave of the Fireflies* are incidental characters. Even Seita's aunt, who is the only adult in the film for any extended period, is never seen again once the children decide to leave her home. This repression of adults continues to function in a way that keeps the audience's focus on the real victims of war: the children. Like Gen, Seita becomes responsible for the care of his younger, and helpless, sister. Although Setsuko is not an infant like Tomoko, she is portrayed as young enough to be completely dependant on her brother. It is interesting that, like Gen, Seita is ultimately unable to provide for his younger sister. Although Seita does eventually go to the bank to withdraw his mother's savings in order to buy food, his actions are too late to save Setsuko. It is strange that both films, which clearly indicate that war is responsible for the suffering of these children, eventually indict their protagonists for their inability to provide. Again, this contradiction noticeably indicates the resistance of 1980's Japan to come to terms with its wartime responsibilities.

As Japan's postwar period grudgingly drew to a close in the 1980's, the US continued to face the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. It comes as little surprise that this threat was often represented on film. In 1983, three TV movies were produced which deal with the threat of nuclear war. In the following, pages two of these films, *The Day After* and *Testament*, will be analyzed. *The Day After* was written by

Edward Hume and directed by feature film director Nicholas Meyer. Produced by ABC Circle Films, the film was aired on November 20th, 1983 on the ABC network. As recently as 2006 *The Day After* was still reported to have been the most watched TV movie in the United States. As Jerome Shapiro notes, *The Day After* was “[t]he highest-rated [TV movie] in twenty-five years of television movies: capturing a rating of forty-six and share of sixty-two, roughly nine points higher than the next highest rated [TV Movie]” (186).

The Day After revolves around several families in and around Kansas City, which turns out to be a prime target for a nuclear attack due to the string of missile silos populating the vicinity. The two hour film focuses on Dr. Russell Oakes (Jason Robards) and his family, the Dahlberg farm family, and a host of other characters. The first half of the film is devoted to introducing the various characters and their daily lives. The Dahlberg’s are preparing for the wedding of their oldest daughter Denise (Lori Lethin) to Bruce Gallatin (Jeff East), while Dr. Oakes and his wife Helen (Georgann Johnson) are coping with their daughter Marilyn’s (Kyle Aletter) decision to follow her boyfriend to college in Boston. Other important characters are also introduced: Billy McCoy (William Allen Young), a missile silo technician; Steve Klein (Steve Guttenberg), a pre-med student at the University of Kansas where Dr. Oakes works; Nurse Nancy Bauer (JoBeth Williams) and Dr. Sam Hichiya (Calvin Jung) who both work with Dr. Oakes; and Allison (Amy Madigan) a pregnant woman at the University hospital. Throughout the introduction of these characters, tidbits of information are revealed through television and radio broadcasts regarding mounting tensions in Germany involving the Soviets, which finally erupt in a nuclear attack on Kansas City and the surrounding missile silos. The film does not inform its audience of the extent of damage the US sustained, although a radio broadcast from the President late in the film implies that various sites across the country were attacked and that the US attack on the Soviet Union caused equal, if not greater, damage.

Some of the characters are killed in the attack, including Denise’s fiancé, Bruce, and Dr. Oakes’ wife and children, and the remainder of the film focuses on the surviving

characters. Jim Dahlberg (John Cullum), one of the few characters with the foresight to prepare for a nuclear attack, takes shelter in his basement with his wife Eve (Bibi Besch) and three children Denise, Joleen (Ellen Anthony) and Danny (Doug Scott). However, the attack takes place before Jim gets Danny safely into the basement and Danny is blinded. Dr. Oakes, who was in his car trying to return to Kansas City at the time of the attack, proceeds to the University Hospital where he leads Nurse Bauer, Dr. Hachiya and other surviving staff members in their efforts to aid survivors. Billy McCoy disobeys his military orders and flees his station at the missile silo, knowing that staying promises death. Instead he finds himself wandering the wasteland, heading towards University Hospital in hopes of survival. Steve Klein, who was traveling home at the time of the attack, takes refuge with the Dahlborgs. When Denise becomes sick, Steve takes her and Danny to University Hospital. Jim Dahlberg is eventually shot in the back by a group of squatters on his land. At the hospital Dr. Oakes, McCoy, Denise, and Steve are each seen growing increasingly ill from radiation poisoning, while Danny remains blinded. Steve promises to bring Denise and Danny home although whether or not he does remains unclear, while Dr. Oakes actually returns to the ruins of his house in Kansas City, where he meets another man and his family. Dr. Oakes falls to his knees in tears and is comforted by the stranger, ending the film.

It becomes clear that the film cannot escape the shadows of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in its representation of nuclear war. In *Atomic Bomb Cinema*, Jerome Shapiro describes *The Day After* as “sheer torture” (186). He observes that the major motifs of the film revolve around its anti-war message, its “frighteningly confused and puritanical attitude towards sex” (189), and the theme of hope. Importantly, he also observes that “[t]he people seems as squeaky clean as the environment. No urban decay here, no racial strife, not even a hint of the economic crisis that was starting to depopulate the farm belt... The only intrusion is the military” (186). Of course the film does not portray racial strife when its only diversity comes from Japanese Dr. Hachiya and African American Billy McCoy. This lack of racial diversity, and this lack of racial strife, is not very surprising for a film set in Kansas in 1983 and the inclusion of these characters seems to

be the film's attempt to avoid charges of racism. Additionally there is a distinct, though impersonal, portrayal of the military prior to the nuclear attack, but once the bombs are launched the military all but disappears from the film. Shapiro's unmistakable distaste for the film hinders his ability to look at the film's silences and contradictions or what they reveal about American culture.

Dr. Sam Hachiya becomes very interesting here for a variety of reasons. Foremost is the fact that he never explicitly reveals his race. When he meets the blinded Danny, the young boy tells him he has a funny name and asks what kind of name it is. Dr. Hachiya asks Danny what he thinks it is and the boy asks if it's Italian. The Doctor jokes that he is. Later when Danny and Steve are preparing to leave, Danny asks Dr. Hachiya if he is really Italian. When the Doctor admits he isn't, Danny asks him where he's from, to which Dr. Hachiya responds, "Kansas City."

The repression of Dr. Hachiya's ethnicity is particularly noteworthy in light of Shapiro's observation that he is "an intelligent and sensitive homage to Dr. Michihiko Hachiya, director of the Hiroshima Communications Hospital, and a very important diarist of the nuclear aftermath" (187). The contradiction between the homage to Dr. Michihiko Hachiya and Dr. Sam Hachiya's repression of his Japanese roots draws attention to the film's own conflict of interest. As previously noted, historian Paul Boyer writes that following the nuclear attack on Japan "Americans apprehensively eyed the atomic future, [while] the events of the recent past were often blurred and obscured" (182). Boyer also notes that as early as 1946 it had been suggested that this vagueness about the past alluded to hidden feelings of guilt. *The Day After's* tribute to the real Doctor Hachiya is destabilized by the film's inability to state that Sam Hachiya is Japanese or even a Japanese American. This reticence calls attention to America's continued repression of guilt. By referencing Dr. Michihiko Hachiya it seems that the film wants to pay some form of tribute to those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Yet to explicitly do so risks exposing the guilt Americans have denied since the use of nuclear weapons against Japan.

The disappearance of the military should also be examined. The film actually opens on a US military aircraft where an unspecified authority figure is receiving a briefing on the actions of the Soviets. Later, just before the attack, the viewer is shown the activity in the missile silos as the United States prepares to strike. The military also maintains a presence through the constant feed of information on the mounting tension between the US and the Soviet Union via television and radio broadcasts. However, once the nuclear attack has been carried out, the military seems to disappear. Although the EMP, or electromagnetic pulse, accounts for the lack of power and thus the loss of broadcasts, the secret glimpses into the actions of the military seen earlier in the film, completely withdraw. In a late scene, a military truck is depicted providing food to a camp of survivors outside of the hospital. A soldier announces the remaining undistributed food is for another camp and the survivors cry out in protest and storm the truck. While this scene reveals the military is still active, it contrasts the film's earlier scenes which bring the audience directly into military quarters the general public would never witness. Like *Barefoot Gen*, *The Day After* avoids representing the military, focusing instead on the victims in the nuclear aftermath, in order to evade questions of responsibility. In this case, the dominant ideology appears to be repressing America's responsibility for creating the atomic bomb and thus creating the menace of the cold war.

"The antiwar theme is clear," writes Shapiro, followed shortly after by, "Also present is the theme of hope" (189). However, Shapiro manages to oversimplify both. He sums up the antiwar theme, "Clearly, because Jim Dahlberg carried a gun he was killed. Because Russ Oakes did not carry a gun, he found sympathy and compassion" (189). These facts in the film's plot may factor into the film's message of peace. It should be considered in addition to the numerous victims of the atomic bomb the film portrays. It is, however, of greater significance that Shapiro finds the theme of hope in Dr. Oakes and Allison, the pregnant woman introduced to the hospital setting before the nuclear attack. Shapiro writes, "[J]ust as Oakes finds the watch [he gave his wife] in his ruined home, the woman gives birth. Thus, not only is Dr. Oakes the pillar of the hospital, he is also the symbolically important oak tree of life to many" (189). Allison survives because she is in

the hospital at the time of the attack and remains there for the duration of the film. She tells Dr. Oakes that she is past her due date, and he suggests that she is somehow holding back. She points out how bleak and hopeless their situation is and that they knew all about the dangers of nuclear weapons but didn't care. Oakes concedes that he can't argue with her and she responds by grabbing his arm and saying, "Argue with me. Please. Give me a reason. Tell me about hope. Tell me why you work so hard in here." Oakes looks at Allison gravely and responds, "I don't know."

As Shapiro notes, at the end of the film Dr. Oakes returns to Kansas City and Allison finally gives birth. If this is the film's attempt at portraying hope, it is a failed endeavor. The baby is heard crying, but not shown on screen, and the look on Allison's face is one of dismay, not relief or satisfaction and certainly not hope. Similarly, if Oakes is intended to depict a pillar of life and hope, it must be noted that in the film's final scene he has been reduced to a withering old man. He has, after all, traveled to Kansas City to die in the ruins of his home knowing that he is no longer in any condition to be useful at the hospital. The antiwar theme is highlighted not by hope, but through an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. With the exceptions of Allison and her baby, Eve, Joleen, and the blind Danny Dahlberg, and ironically Dr. Hachiya, by the end of the film everyone is either dead or dying.

Despite the film's explicit anti-nuclear war theme and the hopelessness attached to it, the film cannot confront U.S. guilt over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Early in the film when the situation in Germany is escalating, one of Dr. Oakes' colleagues discusses the dangers of the situation with him. He tells Dr. Oakes, "We are not talking about Hiroshima anymore. Hiroshima was peanuts." Later in the film, when Dr. Oakes wakes up in the hospice of the hospital, after finally succumbing to stress and radiation sickness, he recalls his colleague's words, "Hiroshima was peanuts." By comparing the film's portrayal of nuclear war to Hiroshima, America's nuclear attack on Japan in World War II is intentionally played down. In doing so, the film stresses that a modern attack by the Soviet Union would be much worse. While a nuclear war in 1983 would undoubtedly be more severe than the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *The Day After* downplays the

past, repressing America's historic use of nuclear weapons. Once again the film represses America's guilt for introducing nuclear war, by displacing America's atomic bomb history with a seemingly newer and bigger threat. Additionally, in order to maintain a sense of hopelessness and convey its antiwar message, the film silences the fact that Hiroshima and Nagasaki did have survivors, and that both cities were eventually rebuilt. Significantly, the film silences the obvious fact that the Japanese had no knowledge of nuclear weapons and for all intents and purposes were defenseless against the attack. Whatever the scale difference may be between a full nuclear war and the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it pales significantly when paired with the realization that the Japanese had no warning or understanding of the atomic bomb. Projecting the horror of nuclear war into the future diverts the audience from the past and functions, like the absent military, to conceal American guilt and responsibility for establishing nuclear war as a very real threat.

According to historians Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell, in their book *Hiroshima in America*, the 1980's also witnessed the emerging of an unexpected group who had witnessed the atomic bombs in Japan and were "inspired to speak out by both events and a belated but powerful sense of mission" (258-59). They go on to write, "In this group were American physicians, photographers, filmmakers and other specialists sent to Hiroshima and Nagasaki... during 1945 and 1946, to study or document the bomb's effects" (259). Of particular interest is the color film footage shot by Herbert Sussan which was the only color footage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki recorded. Sussan tried for years to obtain the footage, hoping to have it televised to the American public to warn them of the horrors he had witnessed in Japan, but the U.S. government would not allow Sussan access to the strictly classified footage. It was not until the late 1970's that it was discovered that the footage was declassified in Japan. This footage was used in several Japanese documentaries and, significantly, in *The Day After*. This suggests that the filmmakers consciously choose to reference the horrors of the nuclear aftermath in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and express some guilt for the lives ruined there.

Whatever good intentions there may have been in using Sussan's color footage are undermined, first by the film's repressions of the source of the footage, and second by avoiding use of the most horrific examples of nuclear war. In fact, while viewing *The Day After*, it is unclear what footage is the alleged recovered material. The only footage that seems to come from Sussan's footage (and likely only for someone looking for it) comes late in the film, during a sequence in which the U.S. President broadcasts over the radio that a cease-fire has been reached, and that the United States has not surrendered. The sequence, which is eerily similar to the radio broadcast by the Emperor in *Barefoot Gen*, shows shot after shot of fictional victims while the broadcast is played as a voice-over. Eventually a pan over a pile of building debris stops when it reaches a young Japanese girl sitting on top of it. The girl, who does not appear to be injured or burned, stares directly into the camera. The sequence then abruptly returns to University Hospital and the victims struggling there to survive. Whether or not this footage of a young Japanese girl is Sussan's footage remains unclear, but is likely to be. That the footage used does not contain images of injured Japanese who were burned or otherwise maimed, or even those affected by radiation poisoning, ultimately undermines the purpose of using this historic footage at all. Like the character Dr. Sam Hachiya, the use of authentic color footage from Hiroshima and Nagasaki seems to be intended as some sort of homage to the only victims of nuclear weapons to date as well as a belated acknowledgement of U.S. responsibility. Yet the film's inability to inform its viewer of the source of this footage, in addition to its choices of what portions of the footage to use, functions only to repress America's feelings of guilt for the use of nuclear weapons against Japan. To paraphrase Pierre Machery, what the film cannot say ultimately indicates the inability of the dominant ideology of American culture in the 1980's to confront US responsibility for making the threat of nuclear war a reality through the use of atomic bombs against Japan in World War II.

Like *The Day After*, *Testament* was a made for TV movie produced in 1983. Based on a short story by Carol Amen titled "The Last Testament," *Testament* was adapted by John Sacret Young and directed by Lynne Littman. According to Jerome

Shapiro, *Testament* “was originally produced for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) *American Playhouse* series, but was successful enough to be rereleased in theaters and even received an Oscar nomination” (183). Shapiro is as critical of *Testament* as he was of *The Day After*. While both films may suffer from imperfections, their popularity indicates their relevance to the dominant cultural ideology of the era.

Testament revolves around middle-aged housewife Carol Weatherly (Jane Alexander), her husband Tom (William Devane) and their three children Mary Liz (Roxana Zal), Brad (Ross Harris) and Scottie (Lukas Haas). The family lives in Hamlin, California, a suburb not far from San Francisco where Tom works. The first 20 minutes of the film introduces Carol and her daily routine of cleaning the house and watching after her children. Carol is also directing Scottie’s school play, “The Pied Piper of Hamlin.” The nuclear attack occurs without warning, unlike the attack in *The Day After*, where the increasingly threatening situation in Europe is clear. In *Testament*, Carol is sitting at home with her children, checking the messages on the answering machine while they watch TV. One of the messages is from Tom, informing her he will be working late and won’t be home for dinner. A second message from Tom tells her things have changed and he will be home for dinner. The TV broadcast which the children are watching is suddenly interrupted by a newscast, notifying viewers of a nuclear attack on the East Coast. The signal is abruptly lost and the house is filled with intense white light. Carol gathers her children together on the floor.

Carol and a large group of her neighbors gather at the home of Henry Abhart (Leon Ames) since he has a working two way radio. They learn the West Coast was also attacked and Henry, an elderly man, notes that there seems to be no strategy to the attack, and declares that it must have been a mistake. The duration of the film witnesses the town’s steady decay. Many of the town citizens leave in an attempt to escape the fallout, but others, including Carol and her children, stay in Hamlin. They try to persevere, and the school even carries through on the Pied Piper play. Mary Liz continues her piano lessons and Brad takes his bike door to door daily offering his help to his neighbors. Carol takes in Larry (Mico Olmos), a boy whose parents were in San Francisco at the

time of the attack. Tom never returns home and Carol's children grow sick. Scottie is the first to die, followed later by Larry and Mary Liz. Brad finds Hiroshi (Gerry Murillo), a mentally handicapped Japanese boy alone at the local gas station and takes him home when he realizes Hiroshi's father Mike (Mako) has died. Carol attempts to commit suicide with Brad and Hiroshi by running the car in the closed garage but finds she is unable to carry through. The film closes with Carol, Brad and Hiroshi having a somber birthday party with peanut butter and candles on graham crackers. Brad asks his mother what to wish for and Carol tells him to wish to remember that they never gave up, and that they will one day "deserve the children."

Jerome Shapiro views *Testament* as a "thinly disguised pretext for other issues" (183), specifically "men's indifferent and abusive treatment of woman; and women's suffering" (184). He dismisses the film as a "postnuclear feminist weepie" and writes "[t]he reality this film celebrates is the heroine's powerlessness, her status as a victim who can only wait for a miracle – an allegory, so to speak, of the suburban feminine bourgeoisie" (185). Shapiro's summation of *Testament* is surprising dismissive of his own remarks of the changes in the U.S. in the 1980s of which he writes, "[e]conomically, the middle class was coming under increased pressures; two-income/career families were no longer a luxury but a necessity" (182). With this in mind it comes as little surprise that the film attempts to portray Carol as a helpless housewife who seems unable to make a decision without her husband. Shapiro takes Carol at face value and makes no attempt to relate her character to the changes in the US in the 1980's or what it suggests about the use of such a character in a film about the threat of nuclear war.

It must be acknowledged that Carol Weatherly, who at times appears strong, is indeed a helpless female. She is unable to leave Hamlin and protect her children. When making decisions she consults her son Brad. For example, at one point Brad tells her that a lot of people are leaving. Carol asks her son if he thinks they should leave, and he responds that they should wait and see if their father returns. Carol agrees and adds, "This is our home." She is even unable to take their fate into her own hands and follow through with her suicide attempt. The helpless heroine of *Testament* operates on two levels. First

she demonstrates US cultural ideology's resistance to women in the workplace, and second she embodies the film's version of victim. The Weatherly family does not appear to be the 1980's middle class family who are facing financial difficulties. Carol has no need or even ambition to have a career and instead takes the time to direct a school play. Carol's inability to make decisions without Tom, or perhaps Brad, additionally implies that she would be useless in the workplace. She cannot even run her home without a man to advise her, much less sustain a career. This ultimately adds to Carol's status of victim. Like the characters in *The Day After*, Carol and her children have no hope for survival. Similarly, this is important for the film's antiwar message. Portraying Carol as a helpless victim, *Testament* is in some ways echoing what is seen through the Japanese anime's focus on children. While the anime discussed here focus on children to avoid confronting the responsibilities of Japan, *Testament* uses Carol to focus on the hopelessness of nuclear war. In order to portray a bleak and hopeless future, the film removes the dominant father and observes the resulting collapse of the family, apparently unable to be cared for by the mother.

The film *Testament* is remarkably similar to its source, the original short story "The Last Testament." The written version begins after the nuclear attack, but once the film reaches that point the two versions become nearly identical. Indeed, lines of dialogue in the film can be specifically traced to the source text. However, a particularly noteworthy change comes in the form of the town gas station attendant and his retarded son, who in the written version are known as Slim and Teddy but who become, in the film, Japanese (Mike and Hiroshi). Shapiro only regards Hiroshi as "an obvious and crass icon for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the horrors of nuclear war" (184). To suggest that Hiroshi is a metaphor for the dangers of radiation, and perhaps mutation, seems extreme. While the name Hiroshi is an obvious reference to Hiroshima, the film itself is so close to the short story it seems more likely that Hiroshi's retardation is simply preserved from the short story's character Teddy.

Whether or not the film is attempting to display the effects of nuclear war through Hiroshi is debatable, but what Hiroshi indubitably adds is the film's only reference to

America's own nuclear past, and indeed responsibility for inventing the nuclear bomb. This is compounded by the complete absence of racial diversity in the film. *The Day After* portrays a greater number of non-whites in Kansas than *Testament* does just outside of San Francisco. Furthermore, it should be noted that the name Hiroshi and the Japanese actor Mako are the only indications that these characters are Japanese. While these indicators make it fairly certain the characters are intended to be Japanese, their Japanese ethnicity is not explicit within the context of film, and is only alluded to, much like Dr. Hachiya in *The Day After*. The inclusion of Japanese characters doesn't add to the plot and so it can be assumed that Slim and Teddy became Mike and Hiroshi to intentionally reference America's use of atomic bomb. *Testament*, like *The Day After*, seems unable to address nuclear war without referencing Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In doing so, it unconsciously draws attention to the responsibilities of the United States for inventing and using the first nuclear weapons, which the film represses through its inability to draw attention to the fact that the characters are Japanese.

While the previous films discussed repress representations of the military and government, *Testament* completely silences both. There is no presence of either the military or the government, or even the imagined enemy. Late in the film Carol breaks into tears while watching the burning of dead bodies. She falls to her knees and grasps a handful of soil crying out, "Who did this?" As Shapiro notes "Carol never even attempts to answer her own question" (184), which leads him to conclude that "the film celebrates the meaninglessness of her life outside of wife and mother" (185). However, on a larger scale, the film itself represses the question and completely silences the answer. Carol's cry is the only time the film vocalizes the question. Even early in the film, when Henry Abhart opens his home to his neighbors and announces which cities he's been able to contact on his radio and which have been unreachable, no one questions where the attack might have come from. As previously noted, Henry simply decides there was no strategy involved and that there must have been some accident. He also tells his neighbors, "We'll keep waiting for word from Washington, or where they've evacuated to. And it'll come." Interestingly, when it doesn't come, no one asks why.

What the film demonstrates is a series of repressed or unasked questions, the answers to which are all silenced: Where is the government? Where is the military? Who did this? For Shapiro “[t]he message of *Testament* is clear: Avoid politics, reflective thinking, and criticism; salvation is found by sticking close to the family hearth” (185). Yet, it should be noted that Carol and her family stay together and do not find salvation. Rather the film seems to be concerned with the future created for the children as exemplified in the film’s portrayal of the school play, “The Pied Piper of Hamelin.” Notably, Carol’s youngest son Scottie plays the crippled boy who does not leave town with the piper, and ends the play by telling the Mayor of Hamlin, “Your children are not dead. They will return. They are just waiting until the world deserves them.” The audience cheers and a series of shots reveal adults crying as they clap. The sound of the audience fades and is replaced by somber music as a slow pan shows the children taking their bows, suggesting that this world, with its threat of nuclear war, does not deserve its children. This is reiterated by Carol at the end of the film when she tells Brad to wish that they “deserve the children.” However, by silencing any reference to the government or military, the film ultimately avoids confronting the reason why the world does not deserve its children. Furthermore, the film does not suggest an enemy attack, but rather an accident, which in effect silences responsibility from any party. The film indicates that the threat of nuclear war promises a bleak future for the children. Like *The Day After*, *Testament* takes a clear stand against the use of nuclear weapons, but in doing so the film silences the responsibility of the United States for making the threat real.

While the cold war was drawing to a close towards the end of the 1980’s, the atomic bomb was still to be found in films of the era. *Miracle Mile* is one such film. Written and directed by Steve De Jarnatt for Columbia Pictures, the film was first seen at the Toronto Film Festival in 1988 and was released theatrically for American audiences on May 19, 1989. The film opens with a documentary style video explaining the creation of the universe and the evolution of man, pointing out that it took tens of thousands of years for modern civilization to form. It becomes clear that the video is being shown in a museum and that the film’s protagonist, Harry Washello (Anthony Edwards), is watching

it. The film also introduces Julie Peters (Mare Winningham) as the two wander around what turns out to be the George C. Page Museum at the La Brea tar pits in Los Angeles, California. Harry and Julie glance at each other across the museum, but don't talk until Julie finally approaches him outside of the museum. Harry is a trombone player and is in town with his band, the Glen Miller Impersonators, but he reveals through a voice-over narration that he is beginning to think he should settle down in Los Angeles. Julie introduces Harry to her grandparents (John Agar and Lou Hancock), who haven't spoken to each other for fifteen years. At night Harry walks her to the diner where she works as a waitress and they agree to go dancing after her shift ends. Harry heads home and sets an alarm clock, but fate intervenes, and his hotel loses power. As Harry sleeps, Julie eventually returns home, heartbroken, where she takes a valium to go to sleep.

When the power in the hotel returns, Harry's alarm goes off and he eventually realizes what has happened. He heads to the diner and a payphone outside begins ringing. He answers it hoping it will be Julie and listens in confusion as a frantic man warns of a pending thermonuclear missile attack within the hour. The man panics realizing he dialed incorrectly, and hasn't called his father. Harry listens as the man is shot by his superiors in the missile silo, and then another voice tells Harry to forget what he heard and to go back to bed. Harry goes into the diner and shares what he heard with the patrons and employees inside. Landa (Denise Crosby), a mysterious professional woman, starts making calls on her cell phone and reveals that a handful of government officials are heading south. Landa gathers everyone in the diner to head to the airport, declaring that they will head to a valley in Antarctica with little precipitation but enough snow to have water, and she begins making calls to arrange for supplies. Harry refuses to go without Julie and Landa tells him that there will be a helicopter heading to the airport with her things and that he should be on it with Julie if he wants to escape the city. The rest of the film chronicles Harry's often hindered efforts to, first find Julie, then to get her to the helicopter, and lastly to find a helicopter pilot. Through insurmountable odds Harry manages to accomplish these goals, but is moments too late. The missiles arrive as the helicopter takes off and the electromagnetic pulse causes the helicopter's controls to fail.

As a result, the helicopter crashes in the La Brea tar pits. Julie panics, telling Harry she doesn't want to die in the tar pits, but Harry promises her it is worse outside the helicopter. He attempts to comfort her by telling her that if they're lucky they might get a direct hit that will cause enough pressure to instantly transform them into diamonds. Harry and Julie exchange vows of love as the helicopter sinks into the tar pit ending the film disturbingly.

Miracle Mile is notably different from the other atomic bomb films previously discussed. The most obvious difference is its focus on the time preceding a nuclear attack, rather than its aftermath. The film also seems to lose the antiwar theme found in previous atomic bomb films of the 1980's. This is replaced with a satirical view of American culture and self-reflective critique of other atomic bomb films. For example, late in the film when Harry realizes the missiles should have already arrived, Julie laughs in relief and says, "They'll probably make a TV movie out of this." Another difference is the film's refusal to portray the effects of the nuclear bomb. While *Barefoot Gen* graphically portrays people literally liquefied, and *The Day After* contains images of people incinerated, *Miracle Mile* favors death in a tar pit to depicting the horror of a nuclear attack. While *Testament* also avoids graphic images of the nuclear attack, it also lacks the darker and often graphic violence that is demonstrated in *Miracle Mile*. Despite these differences, the film still expresses concern for the fate of the human race. This becomes apparent through the film's opening, which reminds us of the billions of years it took for man to evolve and form modern civilization, and the irony of this as the audience witnesses the undoing of evolution by man's own hands in a much smaller amount of time. The film's ending promises some form of preservation for the human race, or, as Jerome Shapiro notes, the film embraces "continuance and perfection after the end" (209).

In clear contrast with *The Day After* and *Testament*, *Miracle Mile* focuses on the underbelly of American culture. The focus on family and American values seen in the previous films is gone. Instead the film concentrates on two rather peculiar individuals, in a city filled with immoral and corrupt citizens, as defined through the perceived

deviances of race and sexuality. Harry doesn't meet any wholesome and upright citizens, but is instead surrounded by the opposite: Roger (Danny De La Paz), a cynical transvestite at the dinner; Wilson (Mykelti Williamson), an African American car radio thief; an unnamed bodybuilder (Brian Thompson), who pilots the helicopter, but insists on bringing his feminine boyfriend Leslie (Herbert Fair). Even Harry and Julie seem outside of the norm, Harry easily falling into the band geek category and Julie escaping the typical feminine figure with her short cut orange hair and flat frame. It should also be noted that Harry who appears to be moral and upright in his efforts to save Julie, consistently lies about this situation: first he tells Wilson that there has been a meltdown at a nuclear power plant, and he later tells the bodybuilder pilot that a chemical fire is spreading and will soon reach the city.

While *Miracle Mile* is remarkably different from the other atomic bomb films, it still manages to carry the same messages of its predecessors on its ideological level. Much like *The Day After* and *Testament* the military and government are conspicuously missing from *Miracle Mile*. The only reference to the military comes from the misdialed call, alerting Harry to the impending danger. Additionally, the few representations of authority are of incapable police. Early in the film a pair of police officers are drenched in gasoline and shoot their guns causing them to be engulfed in flame. Later, when a SWAT team is chasing Wilson, the car radio thief, they completely desert their positions upon learning about the incoming attack, even leaving one of their own behind. The only representation of the government comes from Landa's undisclosed sources which inform her that four out of five of her friends in Washington are "in transit to the extreme southern hemisphere." Who Landa's five friends are is unclear, but it is implied that they are government officials who are fleeing for their own safety.

Unlike Carol in *Testament*, Harry doesn't even ask who or why. And for the most part, neither does anyone around him. The cast of characters simply accept that the nuclear attack is happening (or in some cases completely deny it). In this way, American responsibilities for the bomb are even more repressed. Similarly, while *The Day After* and *Testament* contain more obvious references to America's use of nuclear weapons in Japan

through characters such as Dr. Hachiya and Hiroshi, *Miracle Mile* only very subtly references Japan through displaced representations of the Japanese in ways which are very easy to miss. For example, when Harry breaks into Julie's apartment he encounters her grandmother, who is wearing a robe that looks very similar to a kimono and has a red sun like pattern on it, subtly referencing the Japanese rising sun. Similarly, the helicopter pilot's boyfriend Leslie wears a white bandana with a red rising sun on it. These delicate and virtually unnoticeable touches bring Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the surface of the film, while simultaneously repressing these real examples of the use of nuclear weapons.

The surface level of *Miracle Mile* indicates that the degeneration of American culture could lead to the end of the human race, and might even warrant the end of civilization, as indicated by the film's focus on Los Angeles and the racial and sexual aberrations there. Despite this, the film can still be read as repressing American guilt for the use of nuclear weapons in many of the same ways as *The Day After* and *Testament*. These films are linked by their repression of the government and military, as well as their repression of America's use of nuclear weapons against Japan. Additionally, the films' representations or repression of the horrors of nuclear war overshadow the history of America's development and use of atomic weaponry. Although radically different from the other films, *Miracle Mile* is equally demonstrative of America's ideological inability to come to terms with its nuclear guilt.

The films discussed in my study largely deal with direct references to nuclear war. It is interesting to note that there were films in both Japan and the US which offer displaced representations of nuclear war, such as the anime films *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Nausicaa*, 1984) and *Akria* (1988). While these anime are very different, both take place in post-apocalyptic futures. *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* takes place in a world where the majority of the world has become uninhabitable due to the spread of a "toxic sea of decay," which is in fact a forest with deadly spores due to the toxins in the soil. Nausicaa's world is additionally threatened by a slumbering, man-made monster left behind from the great war which destroyed the world. It would be difficult to deny that the monster and the sea of decay are displaced representations of the

atomic bomb and the effects of radiation. Similarly, *Akira* takes place in the dystopia Neo-Tokyo thirty years after the Third World War, which was started inadvertently by the destruction of Tokyo in a nuclear-like blast. Here the atomic bomb is displaced onto children, including Akira, who developed telekinetic powers through government and military experimentation.

While neither *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Winds* nor *Akira* directly portrays nuclear war, they are similar to the other anime discussed here in their focus on children, their overall repression of adult characters, and their inability to clearly provide any history that lead to their post-apocalyptic visions of the future. Admittedly these films focus on adults more than *Barefoot Gen*, *Barefoot Gen 2*, or *Grave of the Fireflies*, but they still largely avoid adults in favor of victimized children. Using displacement, rather than direct references to the atomic bomb, allows the films to get closer to the question of Japanese responsibilities for World War II, yet ultimately both films also repress confronting Japan's history.

American live action films also present cases of displacement, such as *The Final Countdown* (1980) and *The Terminator* (1984). *The Final Countdown* takes place on the USS Nimitz, the world's largest aircraft carrier. The film finds the Nimitz stationed in the Pearl Harbor area where it is mysteriously transported to December 6th, 1941. The ship's captain (Kirk Douglas) faces the difficult decision to interfere in Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, thus altering history. However, the Nimitz is returned to the present before it can interfere. Interestingly, the film never reveals that, in reality, the Nimitz is a nuclear powered ship. In *The Final Countdown*, the USS Nimitz and the unexplained time travel function as displaced representations of the atomic bomb. What the film does show are ruthless Japanese soldiers, making it clear that the Japanese needed to be stopped, thus smothering questions of American guilt. The film surprisingly deals directly with the military, yet it completely represses any information regarding their activity in present day Pearl Harbor, and, as previously mentioned, the Nimitz's nuclear-powered engine. Although, the film takes a different approach than the other films described here, it equally represses America's responsibility for the use of nuclear weapons. Instead it

recreates stereotypes of the Japanese that were prominent in the US during World War II, in effect justifying aggression against Japan, while simultaneously repressing references to the nuclear bomb and the threat of the cold war to the United States.

The Terminator also deals with time travel, and the inability to change the past. The Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is a humanoid machine who travels to the past from a post-nuclear future to prevent the birth of John Connor, a resistance leader in the future, by killing his mother Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) prior to her pregnancy. While Sarah ultimately stops the Terminator, he embodies the threat of the future and thus becomes the object of displacement for the nuclear threat. *The Terminator* takes an approach closer to the other American live action films by repressing representations of the government or military, while authority figures such as the police prove to be incapable in a similar fashion as *Miracle Mile*. Additionally, *The Terminator* creates a post-nuclear future that is bleakly inevitable, and places the blame entirely on the machines while repressing their human origins. It becomes clear that even large uses of displacement function in both Japan and the United States to repress both nations' confrontations with guilt and responsibility surfacing in the 1980's.

While the American film industry of the 1980's would never have conceived of an animated film dealing with nuclear apocalypse, the Japanese animated films which do, function in ways remarkably similar to the US live action films of the same era. Although the two nations are both repressing different issues of responsibility, it becomes apparent that this is what the cultural ideologies of both Japan and America are attempting to do. It is also notable that both countries are faced with their responsibilities in the same era, when the two nations were in very different positions. It might be suggested that both nations eventually manage to come to terms with the questions of responsibility posed in the 1980's. For example, the anime series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (*Shin Seiki Evengalion*, 1995) deals with victimized adolescence, but focuses a great deal on young adults and older government officials, interestingly in both Japan and Germany, more explicitly faulting the government, science, and perhaps even rigid family structures for the post-apocalyptic future. Similarly, the second season of the animated series *Ghost in*

the Shell: Stand Alone Complex (*Kôkaku Kidôtai: Stand Alone Complex*, 2005) ends with a close call nuclear attack by a US Submarine against Nagasaki, resulting directly from the manipulation of Japanese government officials. Although this sounds similar to Susan Napier's victim's history described in my study, it functions differently through its focus on Section Nine, a top-secret government organization, and a female Japanese Prime Minister, who work together to stop the conspirators. Similarly, US films such as *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) and *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003) both exhibit an interest in avoiding a nuclear future, by stopping the people responsible for bringing that future to fruition. *Terminator 3* becomes exceptionally interesting due to its focus on the military implementation of the artificial intelligence that decides to eliminate mankind upon its activation.

Although these readings of more recent films are not in-depth analyses, they demonstrate how different they are from their 1980's predecessors. Further investigation would be necessary to argue the point, but it seems plausible from the plot details described, that the 1990's come closer to dealing with questions of responsibility than the 1980's films and that the 2000's witness films which on an ideological level are capable of placing blame and accepting responsibility. While the films of the 1980's are unable to address these concerns, they demonstrate that both Japan and the US repressed confronting questions of national responsibilities in their films.

Through the example of cultural studies, I have examined the silences and contradictions of atomic bomb films to uncover the cultural ideologies of Japan and the US in the 1980's. Despite the fact that the problems confronting Japan in the decade (massive economic and social change) were quite different from those confronting the US in the same decade (the threat of war and the use of nuclear weapons), the films of both countries come loaded with antiwar themes that repress questions of responsibility. The kinds of responsibility are also quite different: Japan repressing its own responsibility for entering World War II and the US repressing responsibility for creating and using the atomic bomb. Although these responsibilities are different, they are repressed through eerily similar methods, specifically through focus on victims and avoidance of the

government and military. The films of both countries also have unique methods of repression such as the anime's repression of adult characters, and the live-action film's repression of Japanese characters. Despite these differences, Japanese anime of the 1980's and US live action film of the 1980's ultimately function to repress guilt and responsibility. While Japanese and American cultures often display major differences, their representations of nuclear holocaust reveal remarkably similar cultural ideologies.

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