

# Film response

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The Host The Host is a remarkable film directed by Bong Joon-ho. The movie opens with a scene that is in a dark laboratory setup where a US military soldier orders a Korean military officer to discard several bottles containing toxic liquid into River Han. After two years, two anglers discover a strangely and disgusting-shaped tiny mutant creature in the river. Four years later, the copiously grown mutant monster gobbles a human being who jumps from a bridge into the dark waters to commit suicide. The monster emerges out of the water to come and kill people, causing chaos and fear (Nikki 34). The monster eventually disappears with a young girl who parents finally start following. The US government issues a warning regarding the dangerous virus from the monster that forces the Korean government to isolate its citizens and shut the area down to prevent the spread of the virus. The movie “ The Host” presents a political, societal, economic, and environmental aspect.

As compared to other Korean blockbusters, the film does not tend to draw overtly on nationalism or the notion of the Korean nation. The film provides evidence of a noticeable disconnection between the pro-self-rule philosophy that is suitable for the domestic film industry and its trade and industry interests. While featuring overtly nationalist sentiments and avoiding direct tackling of any specific national issues, the film provides multilayered entry points for viewers of different nationalities and social backgrounds, stretching from Korean multiplex audiences to international art-house audiences (Nikki 47).

Eminent for its “ messy” features, the film invites multiple readers. While drawing on specific historical memories of South Korean society, the film as

well touches on contemporary global political happenings. Therefore, most readers and viewers perceive the film as a political satire of the American government's latest military campaigns – War on Terror – and its relationship with South Korean government. Since the movie's monster is unnamed and does not have overt symbolic connotations – the movie does not serve an allegorical, nationalist function – the meaning viewers take away from the film are polygonal, not one-dimensionally nationalistic.

The movie conveys high-octane ecstasies while artfully exploiting modern political fears, with few inspired visual humor intensifying its overriding mood of popcorn-movie excitement. The movie may be born outside sociopolitical tensions such as the scares about avian flu, but it is also a print of a modern South Korea bordering regarding social anarchy. The biohazard roots of the monster permit for swipes at American hubris and SARS hysteria (Nikki 60). The movie is also an admonitory environmental tale concerning the cost of human folly and the domination of nature, and it may send chills up a viewer's spine.

Regardless of this circumstantial evidence revealing America's biases, the movie is a nuanced film whose conceptual stance is not a one-note song or a simplistic jeremiad, in the manner that most Hollywood blockbusters and television shows are televised. In as much as the US military-industrial complex remains a kind of spectral background presence in the movie, *The Host* satirizes several functions of the Korean Society; it police, its government, and its political activists among others. Notwithstanding Bong's modesty, the movie is simply not a popcorn entertainment but an ingenious sociopolitical satire masked as a Hollywood-style monster film.

Arguing whether or not the movie is anti-American is in certain ways an imperialistic approach, one that necessitates unpacking the Korean text from America-centric perspective. After keen consideration, both the reptile monster and the American empire turn out to be Hitchcockian McGuffins meant to distract the attention of the audience from deeper collective anxieties, contradictions, and doubts of a young civil democracy in the shadows of its not-so-distant authoritarian past (Nikki 63).

#### Work Cited

Lee, Nikki JY. "Localized globalization and a monster national: The Host and the South Korean film industry." *Cinema Journal* 50. 3 (2011): 45-61.