

The Undergraduate Awards recognize outstanding academic work at an international level. This year the panel, composed of academics from universities around the world, received 5,514 submissions from students in 243 universities across 40 countries. As a Highly Commended Entrant, Benson's paper was recognized as being in the top 10% of all submissions in the Social Sciences: Anthropology and Cultural Studies category. Congratulations Benson on this outstanding achievement!

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Benson Cheung's essay "'Some Thing Attacked the City': *Godzilla*, *Cloverfield*, and the End of Fukuyama's End of History," written for Professor Krupa's ANT B36 Anthropology of the End of the World class, named a **Highly Commended Entrant** in the 2016 international Undergraduate Awards.

Benson's paper examines two blockbuster disaster films—*Godzilla* (1998) and *Cloverfield* (2008)—to compare American cultural anxieties surrounding global security and terror before 9/11 and after. Using Francis Fukuyama's influential "End of History" thesis as his foil, which posits a global triumph of U.S.-led liberal capitalist democracy in the post-Cold War world, Benson shows how the two pillars of this thesis—"technological superiority and American invincibility"—"could no longer be taken for granted in the post-9/11 world". A new set of cultural anxieties and new brand of apocalyptic thinking now sit at the heart of American life, moving from "Fukuyaman triumphalism" to the "paranoiac War on Terror". The films he compares, released a decade apart, capture this shift brilliantly. With *Cloverfield*, explicitly made as a parable for 9/11, we see how new concerns over the purportedly "unnatural and irrational force of the enemy quickly overwhelmed a longstanding narrative placing confidence in the military, technology, and American exceptionalism"—a narrative, as Benson beautifully uncovers in this paper, aggressively advanced in the pre-9/11 American remake of *Godzilla*. Benson also shows how the camera works to endorse these different ideologies. Akin to the pre-9/11 U.S. and its belief that "American power projection buffers the American individual from the dangers of the world, ... *Godzilla* follows this logic of safe distance, where wide camera angles of the disaster allows audiences to enjoy the aesthetics of disaster". *Cloverfield*, in contrast, exemplifies the traumatic awakening of a sense that "there is no longer safe distance between the spectacle and the audience" by using documentary-style film techniques to heighten "the interregnum of apocalyptic narratives where Americans participated in the apocalypse itself but could not articulate the *raison d'être* of their experience". By exposing the deep and political interconnections between America's cultural sensibilities and its cultural productions, Benson's paper showcases the very best of anthropological analysis today.