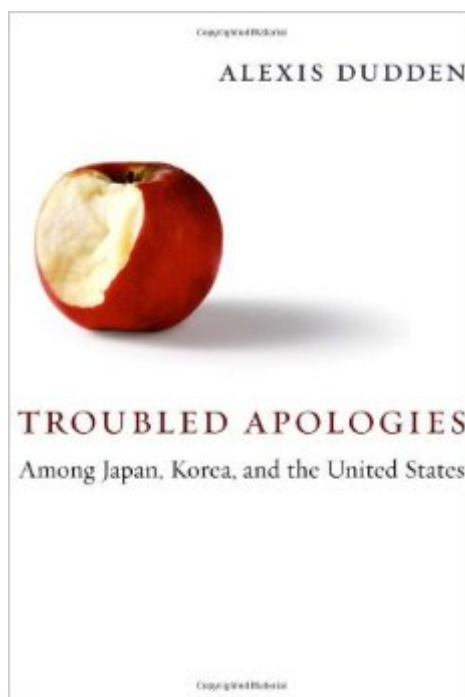


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Troubled Apologies Among Japan, Korea, And The United States



Synopsis

Whether it's the Vatican addressing its role in the Second World War or the United States atoning for its treatment of native Hawai'ian islanders, apologizing for history has become a standard feature of the international political scene. As Alexis Dudden makes clear, interrogating this process is crucial to understanding the value of the political apology to the state. When governments apologize for past crimes, they take away the substance of apology that victims originally wanted for themselves. They rob victims of the dignity they seek while affording the state a new means with which to legitimize itself. Examining the interplay between political apology and apologetic history, Dudden focuses on the problematic relationship binding Japanese imperialism, South Korean state building, and American power in Asia. She examines this history through diplomatic, cultural, and social considerations in the postwar era and argues that the process of apology has created a knot from which none of these countries can escape without undoing decades of mythmaking.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

At just under 200 pages Dudden's book on international relations is short, almost too short given the complexities of the issues. This is not to say that the author did not conduct thorough research on the subjects of his chapters. He offers valuable insight and introduction to interest groups and political figures in ways that contextualize the significance of their political force in their respective country. For example, the comparison of a Japanese political critic to Bill O'Reilly really connected the issue he was discussing. Dudden's writing is articulate, educational, but also engaging in this way and I did not find it a dull read in the the least. However, I can not help but feel that he only

scratches the surface of diplomatic apologies between the three countries. Many incidents and facts that he places within his chapters have the potential to incorporate more detail and help paint a fuller picture between the two countries. To contrast this critique, it has to be understood that international relations is vastly complex and the information demands that authors pick which issues to focus on to paint a picture of the dominant issues between these countries. Nonetheless, Dudden mentions issues and incidents that beg to be explored more thoroughly. And at its current size I can't help but think that it wouldn't have hurt to do just that, especially given its current listed price (\$50 at time of writing.) 'Troubled Apologies' is broken into four chapters that involve international issues between Japan, Korea, and the United States. He covers a wide-array of issues to explain the complex and politically charged atmosphere, any of which is insightful and worth studying.

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