



# Semiotic Analysis

**The Signifier:** "Godzilla" a remake of the original films.

**The Signified:** "Godzilla" is an anglicized version of the Japanese term "Gojira," which is a portmanteau of the Japanese words "gorira" (gorilla) and "kujira" (whale).

**Diachronic Analysis:** The film takes the argument against nuclear weapons and brings it into the modern day through a science fiction lens. The biggest conflict of the film comes in our powerlessness against these beasts. Even nuclear weapons don't kill them, they actually make them *stronger* (much like the development/use of nuclear weapons actually makes the world *less* stable).

**Auteur Theory:** For being a monster movie, the monsters seem to take a back seat for much of this film (Godzilla only has 12 minutes of screen time), and instead the movie focuses on the human efforts to stabilize things (to no avail). This seems to be a directorial choice by Gareth Edwards, whose only previous major credit was the film "Monsters," a project he wrote, directed, and did all the visual effects and editing for. That film also focused more on the characters than the monsters, and he seems to have done something similar here.

**Denotation:** The film denotatively represents a reboot of the popular "Godzilla" franchise for the American market.

**Connotation:** The film connotatively represents the hopelessness of military firepower against an enemy that is actually doing more helping than hurting (in the grand scheme of things, at least).

**Ideology:** The film's moral backbone seems to actually be Godzilla himself. This monster may cause a lot of destruction, but overall he brings peace and balance to nature. We are right to fear it, but not right to stop it.

**Intertextuality:** The original films, made by the Japanese Studio Toho, used Godzilla as a visual metaphor for the United States' use of the atomic bombs on Japan. Originally, the beast (or *kaiju*, as they're called in Japanese) represented an unstoppable force coming from outside the country and killing millions of people. Godzilla is also famous for breathing radioactive fire. This film, on the other hand, does not touch on these metaphors, and instead takes the famous symbol and combines it with monster movies of the modern era, which means a focus on CGI destruction and terror.

**Images:** The film is technically a remake of the original 1954 film (and is much more faithful than the 1998 adaptation), and takes many of its cues, locations, and representations from the original. For example, much of the film takes place in Japan, and then Hawaii, and then San Francisco. Godzilla's design as a monster is a modern, CGI rendition that is very close to the original films in terms of shape and size. Here are some important images from the film:



The first Japanese "Godzilla" films were metaphors for the destruction of the atomic bombs and, since then, the radioactive symbol has become closely related to the monster. In this film, it was not created by the radiation of nuclear tests (as in the 1998 remake), but rather has already existed for millions of years, awakened by these tests. The nuclear test shown in the film was revealed in the film to be an attempt by the US government to kill the monster, but being ultimately unsuccessful.



Another interesting portrayal of the beast is its seeming villainous role teased in the trailer being completely changed in the actual film. In the film, Godzilla is not the main destructor of humanity, but rather appears when the world needs to be balanced once again. In this film, this occurs when two other “Ancient Beasts” (known as MUTOs in the film) awake and begin to wreak havoc. Simply put, Godzilla is the hero of this story.

**Icon:** This monster itself is an icon, and a highly recognizable one at that. This film revived the monster’s original look, while modernizing it with good CGI. Here is a comparison between the original monster and this reboot’s:

