



**STUDYDADDY**

**Get Homework Help  
From Expert Tutor**

**Get Help**

# 1st Reading Response

In *The Last Dinosaur Book*, W. J. T. Mitchell writes that

the problem with this survey of the dinosaur as “cultural symbol” or symbolic animal is that it has too many meanings, and too many of them are contradictory. If one treats this subject as an anthropologist would, and interviews “native informants” about the meaning of dinosaurs and the reasons for their popularity, everyone seems to have a ready answer: it's their bigness, ferocity, rarity, antiquity, or strangeness; it's their uncanny appearance as erect reptiles, their commercial exploitability, or just because, as dinosaurologist Gregory Paul puts it, “dinosaurs look neat.” It's because we can admire them as a world-dominant species, or feel superior to them because they died out. It's because they are a riddle and an enigma, or because they are a universally intelligible symbol (89).

Godzilla seems likewise to be invested with too many possible meanings. In the reading for this week, for example, Chon Noriega treats Godzilla and the Godzilla movie franchise as manifestations of the relationship between Japan and the United States. The Godzilla films, he writes, “symbolically re-enact a problematic United States-Japan relationship that includes atomic war, occupation, and thermonuclear tests” (*Hibakusha Cinema*, 61). To Noriega, then, Godzilla “belongs” to the nation of Japan (or a little more complicated, to the relationship between two nations, the US and Japan).

On the other hand, Susan Sontag, although she doesn't speak of Godzilla (film or creature) directly, treats the genre as one that doesn't belong to any one nation. Her discussion ranges across national cinemas, as she considers Japanese, American, and European films. Godzilla in this analysis represents a general, human anxiety: “the inadequacy of most people's response to the unassimilable terrors that infect their consciousness.”

Following on to our preliminary discussion of Godzilla's “nationality,” I'd like you to respond to these positions. You are free to agree with Noriega or Sontag, or to disagree with both. You might want to argue that Godzilla is Japanese or American or neither. Using the film as your evidence, please respond to the question: To whom does Godzilla belong?

Your response should be 1 - 1 1/2 pages long, double spaced. It is due, Wednesday, Sep 19. The film is available here: [pt 1](#), [pt 2](#).



**STUDYDADDY**

**Get Homework Help  
From Expert Tutor**

**Get Help**