

Is Godzilla a Dragon?

—The Differences between Godzilla and Dragons—

Mariya Yamamoto

Introduction

Japanese comics, fashion and subculture have recently enjoyed a rise in popularity in many foreign countries. In particular, Japanese animation (“Japanimation”) has become the most popular of its kind in the world. Government leaders in Japan have finally noticed the value of pop culture, and are beginning to use this tool as part of Japanese national policy¹. However, this trend is not in fact new - the Japanese culture boom has grown gradually in the U.S. since World War II through electronics, cars, Japanese special effects movies such as *Godzilla* (1954), comics and the animation *AKIRA* (1982-90).

William Tsutsui, an American historian, describes the influence of Godzilla in the U.S. in *Godzilla On My Mind* (2004)². In this book, he analyzes Godzilla from a historical viewpoint and from the viewpoint of American audiences. These reports give a very exciting and interesting examination of the subject matter. There are also many Godzilla fans all over the world, and some have written papers on the topic from their own points of view. When I read these articles, I was very proud of the fact that the original Godzilla was created by the Japanese in 1954. This Japanese-made Godzilla has been received throughout the world, and stands as the original example of the monster-as-film-star genre.

However, I was very surprised at the existing information on Godzilla because it is still categorized as a Modern Dragon (like a western dragon) in the book *Dragon* (2002)³, also created by Japanese writers. They bring up two points regarding Godzilla’s appearance and nature in their book. First, Godzilla looks like a Tyrannosaurs and has an irregular dorsal fin that can emit an atomic beam, so it seemed best to put it in the Dragon category. It is probably because the bodies of Godzilla and dragons are based on those of reptiles or dinosaurs that they are seen as the same genre of monster. However, there are clear differences between an artificial creature that was produced using scientific power and an imaginary animal created from natural phenomena. Dragons in particular come from nature or natural phenomena, and it is said that ancient people extracted their form from

floods and rivers. Can these differences in occurrence be dismissed as a trifling matter? Although Godzilla and dragons both have great powers to frighten people, I do not believe their powers and symbolism have the same implications.

Secondly, these writers seem to classify Godzilla as a dragon through the ideas of the psychologist Esther M. Harding, who tells us about dragons in the human mind or subconscious from a psychological viewpoint. However, it would be difficult to connect the symbolic value of Godzilla with that of dragons. Certainly, Godzilla would have some areas of similarity, but on reading the book I did not feel that her ideas were well suited to Godzilla.

In Japan, Godzilla is considered a *Kaiju*, which is an original group of creatures. *Kaiju* are familiar characters to the Japanese, and although definitions vary, it is a genre original to Japan. Hence, in this paper I will use my definition of *Kaiju* as a *monstrous, mysterious, unknown, ugly, enormous, grotesque and frightening creature, animal, or object that is very cruel, evil and deceitful to humans.*

Contrast is frequently drawn between the first Japan-made Godzilla and dragons in the western world because the Japanese *Kaiju* resemble western monsters in their appearance as dinosaurs or reptiles. It can therefore be said that they are in the same genre of monster, but their nature and symbolic values are very different. This is the reason for my examination of comparisons between the symbolic power of the Japan-made Godzilla and that of the western dragon.

In Godzilla's case, a series of Godzilla movies was created between 1954 and 2004. Due to the many versions of Godzilla in existence, I intend to mainly use the original Godzilla created in Japan in 1954, but where necessary will also refer to versions that appeared in subsequent movies. For comparison, I will use dragons that appear in children's books from various sources. Both the characters and the stories have many fans because they were mainly created for children.

The first section looks at occurrences of Godzilla and dragons, and we see that there are significant differences in their origins. Their bodies are closely connected to history and the environment, and as a result their development and identities differ significantly.

Secondly, I will investigate the natures between Godzilla and dragons. Their origins are connected to other species, and their respective behaviors particularly represent the characters of each, the customs of their lives and their minds.

Furthermore, I will focus on their linguistic factors. Godzilla does not

use human language, but dragons have a good command of language. What influence do these differences have on humans?

Finally, from the results of the above and by considering the features of *Kaiju* and dragons, I will prove that Godzilla is not a Modern Dragon.

1. The Occurrence of Godzilla and Dragons

1.1 The Birth of Godzilla

Godzilla is an artificial creature that was produced as a result of an H-bomb test.

Initially a dinosaur living peacefully under the seabed, Godzilla's body was created by mutation from the atomic effects of the H-bomb explosion, and it appeared as a giant beast among humans (see Picture 1).

Godzilla was monstrous in appearance, and appeared on the earth alone in the first movie. The first Godzilla did not have any companions, and its appearance in human society frightened people to death. This fear represents not only Godzilla's great power but also its very existence.

When Godzilla's creators were planning the film, there is a famous story detailing how the character was inspired by the case of damage to the Japanese fishing vessel *Dai-go Fukuryu Maru (Lucky Dragon No.5)*⁴. In those days, the U.S. tested an H-bomb on Bikini Atoll in the central Pacific, injuring 23 members of the ship's crew. The resulting sudden fear reminds most Japanese people of the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The creators of Godzilla incorporated the dread of the atom bomb into their monster to add to the sense of ominousness and reality as well as creating a serious nuance.

In general, scientific power brings convenience and improves the lifestyle of humans. *Doraemon* (1969-96) and *Astro Boy* (1951-66), which appear both as comics and animations, represent good examples of this. Science would earn people a highly developed society and lead to the advancement of human culture, and the convenience of civilization would benefit. However, in Godzilla movies, science has the opposite effect for humans. If the U.S. had not tested the H-bomb, Godzilla would not have appeared from under the sea. Sometimes, science puts people in danger – this is seen in the *Jurassic Park* series when genetic manipulation causes more danger for people. Humans try to use the

atomic bomb or genetic manipulation to their advantage, but in the process they cause a crisis for themselves. Radiation in particular can be frightening as people cannot know or see its presence, and as Godzilla is created by the effects of radiation, people are afraid of it. Scientific power is therefore closely connected to Godzilla. In short, science was necessary for Godzilla to exist, and it had to wait until the second half of the 20th century to make its appearance.

Moreover, in terms of paleontology, Kaneko Ryuichi presents some curious ideas in his book⁵. He argues that humans seem to have had a distaste for reptiles since ancient times. When humans were one of the primary mammals on earth, they shared their habitat with various dinosaurs. Our ancestors faced a constant struggle not to be eaten by these predators, and fought against their fear for a long time. Recent studies have concluded that as a result, we have a gene that tends to cause a dislike of reptiles. Accordingly Godzilla, which mutated from a dinosaur, may frighten people to death. In addition to this setting, scientific power works terribly for people in Godzilla movies, and Godzilla can be seen as a creature that embodies these fears. From this process, it gains its giant grotesque figure and identity as a *Kaiju*. It has strong symbolic powers, which are unfathomable and chaotic, but these factors also make it monstrous and create a weird character and atmosphere in the film.

Once Godzilla appears in the city, people cannot help but attack it because of their own dread. Consequently, they must fight against it, and they invent new weapons to defeat it. Ironically, this action leads to scientific progress. Their fight creates a hostile tension in the film along with up-tempo background music, and the speed of the story arouses the audience's enthusiasm.

1.2 The Origin of Dragons

Various types of dragons have been reported all over the world since ancient times. Just as our ancestors created dragon-like forms from natural disasters or rivers, these supernatural beasts mainly come from natural phenomena or from nature itself. Hence, their appearance was freely imagined by humans as they did not have physical bodies. In the western world, dragons frequently appeared to be linked to evil in Christianity. They were considered as demonic supernatural creatures because their powers were used to threaten people.

Children's literature produced the first appearance of a dragon in the form of the chimera-like Jabberwocky in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) by Lewis Carroll. Although the Jabberwocky is not one of the main characters, it has a mysterious and unique existence. It was illustrated by John Tenniel, and his pictures are still popular to this day (see Picture 2).

Before the Jabberwocky, the appearance of dragons was represented by chimeras such as snakes, crocodiles or reptiles, although they were sometimes found in the books such as *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) by Novalis and *Phantastes* (1858) by George MacDonald. Most dragons played the role of villains due to the influence of Christianity. However, their exterior image began to change drastically from the middle of the 19th century as a result of the Great Exhibition held in England in 1851. The exhibition venue at Crystal Palace displayed many samples and materials from natural history, giving people their first view of fossils and bone models of dinosaurs from the field of paleontology. They seem to have been surprised at the size and forms of creatures from those days. As a result, they recognized the existence of giant prehistoric animals and started to link dragons to dinosaurs in appearance. From around the 1850s⁶, this gave rise to the image of monsters with physical bodies like those of dinosaurs or reptiles with wings and long tails. Indeed, this change must have caused quite a shock in western society. Charles Darwin also published his theory of evolution in *On the Origin of Species* (1859). As Darwin's ideas violated Christian doctrines, some Christians would reject the concept of evolution, but thanks to his theory and natural history, dragons received a new identity.

Because dragons took on a dinosaur-like form, they could not keep their symbolic and supernatural powers; their physical bodies meant that their symbolic power gradually vanished. The dragon in *The Reluctant Dragon* (1898) by Kenneth Grahame looks like a dinosaur, and its character differs completely from the imaginary evil beast (see Picture 3).

Grahame's story is a parody of the conventional knight romance, and the reluctant dragon hates scuffling with the knight. Ultimately, the dragon and the knight pretend to fight in order to fool the villagers, and the dragon becomes a friend of the people. After this publication, other dragons in literature began to play various character roles. They often became the friends or pets of humans in children's books. An excellent example is the song *Puff the Magic Dragon* (1962),

made famous by Peter, Paul and Mary. Hence, the symbolic value of dragons also started to degrade from that of supernatural creatures to that of wild animals, and their role changed from creatures that manipulate humans to creatures manipulated by humans.

2. The Identities of Godzilla and Dragons

2.1 Godzilla – The Artificial Identity –

Since Godzilla was produced as a mutant creature through scientific power, it is not considered a natural animal. It is very hard for people to understand its mind because it does not communicate with other species. It does not talk with humans, and does not have time to master the languages of others. It never learns new customs or words even as the stories progress. A quiet character is one of the unique features of *Kaiju*.

Godzilla was produced through the effects of science, and its body and power grew stronger than before. As a result, people were frightened by its power and gigantic size.

In general, giant animals or objects cause people to feel fear, shock, wonder and a sense of magnificence and grandness — good instances of this include whales or pyramids, for example. Consequently, when people saw Godzilla for the first time, they were surprised at its height and grotesque body. However, the creature's behavior was somewhat unsophisticated, and its movement seemed to be that of an artificial monster. As an aside, the creators of the Godzilla movie did not have the funds to make a more detailed Godzilla rubber suit.

Now, to return to the main subject. Judging from Godzilla's muscles, a prehistoric dinosaur that lived underground was unexpectedly mutated through the power of science. Owing to this sudden change, it may not have been able to adapt itself to this state to move its muscles as a new creature. It could not adapt to its new body and situation rapidly enough, and its movement was slow but strong. However, this unsophisticated movement created an ominous lure and a sense of wonder, and its behavior helped audiences to enjoy the film. Since it did not mature in manner or mind, its way of moving remained primitive. Hence, can it be said that this awkward movement is also a feature of *Kaiju*? If it had been

able to master free movement and language, people would have become extinct.

Furthermore, Godzilla had no process of development for its customs and mind, as it just suddenly appeared on earth. Godzilla never worries about how it was born, has no time to develop its mind and does not have the chance to get to know other animals. In the same manner as an infant, it does not have much experience of life in the world. From this point of view, it can be said that its nature is an ingenuous state of innocence, childishness and naivety⁷. In addition, Godzilla's only experience is that of an H-bomb test, which would obviously be a big shock for the monster. Hence, Godzilla dislikes bright lights because they remind it of the H-bomb. That terrible experience appears to have made an impression on the monster's memory, and as soon as it sees a blaze it goes on the rampage. In terms of its mind, it can be said that it is scared of bad memories, but it seems to forget most things except for this experience. Hence, it does not have a mission to cause devastation or kill people — it fights with others to save itself only when they attack it with their weapons. Why is there a difference in awareness between the monster and humans? It can be thought that the reasons for this are twofold: Godzilla cannot speak the language of other creatures, and it has no communication with other beings.

Although Godzilla does not have time to master the languages of others, it is persuaded to save the earth by Mothra, a moth-shaped monster in *Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster* (1964)⁸. Mothra can probably communicate with Godzilla through *Kaiju* signs, as they are in the same category of *Kaiju*⁹. In addition to Mothra, Minilla (*Son of Godzilla* [1967]¹⁰) and baby Godzilla (*Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla II* [1993]¹¹), who are related to Godzilla, can talk with their parent (see Picture 4).

On the other hand, some women with supernatural powers can also communicate with Godzilla through telepathy, but their communication cannot be understood by others. However, once Godzilla meets other monsters in the rest of the series, it fights them for attacking humans. It does not in fact hope to help humans themselves but to defend itself and its habitat. It is a natural instinct to save itself from its enemy¹². However, this action is incidentally very helpful for the survival of people, so they respect the creature because it saves a lot of things and creatures living on earth in other Godzilla movies. Its existence is elevated as a result, and in short it is made into a hero. From the shift in its symbolic value,

Exchanging imaginary bodies for those of dinosaurs enabled dragons to live with humans. Their character changed from that of supernatural beings or protectors of people to that of creatures to be defended.

Chart 2. Dragons' position: represented by an "I" shape From upper rank (imaginary beasts) → general image develops (dinosaurs) → degradation → to lower rank	
Heaven (upper rank: symbolic world)	God/Satan (supernatural beings) in western thought — Christianity— ① Dragons = imaginary beasts (without a real body) ↓ = chimera/snake-style, representing evil ↓
Human world (middle rank)	↓ From the middle of the 19 th century → trend of natural ↓ history ② In England: The Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851 ↓ (fossils, animals, dinosaurs) ↓ — Drastic change in the image of dragons - ↓ Dragons' bodies = like dinosaurs or lizards with wings and long tails
Underground (lower rank: monsters or fantasy world)	③ Dragons (1) are evil animals as monsters = villains ↓ (2) are people's friends/pets as wonderful beasts ↓ = comical characters ↓

Chart 2 identifies the status of dragons. There are three turning points in their characters. The arrows go straight down — I will call the motion of this change an "I" shape. Comparing the movement of dragons with that of Godzilla, both charts take different directions. Whereas the arrows for Godzilla were seen in an up-and-down motion, those of dragons point only downward. From this point of view, it can be said that Godzilla and dragons experienced different processes.

Furthermore, dragons have different minds and behavior from Godzilla. Their character and manner are mature and sophisticated, and these points are original features of dragons. It is said that dragons have longer lives than humans in many stories. The information and knowledge they have means that their minds and habits progress. They have the chance to see other species and learn about other creatures' customs. They gradually become intelligent, wise, cruel and sly, and their nature consists of a complex mixture of good and bad. Their abundant knowledge and experience are the reason for the maturation of their nature, minds and overall being. Hence, their minds and nature have developed,

and they master sophisticated behaviors despite their dinosaur-like bodies.

On the other hand, dragons with dinosaur-like bodies start to lose their supernatural or symbolic power. However, they hold a new attraction related to the human tendency to be fascinated by ancient times. Yasuo Nagayama, the Japanese critic, describes how humans tried to discover their origins in dinosaurs in his book when he analyzed Godzilla¹³. Though his idea was used to explain *Kaiju*, it can also be adapted to the case of dragons.

Humans are fascinated by prehistoric times and dinosaurs due to the need to prove their existence and consider ancient times freely. Some may imagine living in the same habitat as a variety of dinosaurs in the past and try to understand the giant creatures. This positive image can be seen in dragon stories such as Grahame's *Reluctant Dragon*, Nesbit's *The Book of Dragons* (1900) and Baum's *Oz* series (1900-19). These dragons can talk with humans, and often communicate with other creatures. Their bodies are bigger than people's, and although they are strong, they do not attack others easily so their nature is very calm and gentle. They hope to get to know one another, and cooperate with each other to overcome their problems. From the end of the 19th century, dragons began to be seen as people's friends or pets.

From the above two examinations of Godzilla and dragons, two different aspects appear as features; spiritual maturity and identity. First, in Godzilla's case, its nature and judgment are ingenuous and simple, like those of an infant. Since it was created suddenly as the result of an H-bomb, it has little experience or opportunity to learn the culture or language of others. Consequently, it cannot gather information about others and master new things. In contrast, dragons have a long history and tradition, and can learn numerous manners and the languages of others. As a result, their mind and nature improves through experience.

Secondly, the identity of Godzilla changes in the "J" shape shown in Chart 1, and its status is elevated by people. Its role incidentally shifts from villain to hero. On the other hand, dragons change from imaginary beasts into wild dinosaur-like animals, and their supernatural power declines. Their position goes down from the previous high rank, and their identity decreases in the "I" shape shown in Chart 2. It can be seen that these two features take different directions, and thus are very important in comparing Godzilla with dragons.

3. Why do People Like Dinosaur-type Creatures?

If people feel nostalgia or adoration for dinosaur-like animals, can they like all of these creatures? In this case, Godzilla was created as a hideous mutant as the result of an H-bomb, but the character's image drastically changes from villain to a kind of hero as the series progresses. In fact, fans of Godzilla may feel nostalgia for the dinosaur's style or for prehistoric life on the earth's surface. When they see how freely it behaves, they may wish they could become this kind of figure. Interestingly, the first and the second Godzilla offerings were created as horror movies for adults, but the character and movies were shifted for a child audience by the creators of subsequent series. However, the first Godzilla seems to be the most popular among fans. Audiences like this mutant because it has enormous power, a huge body and the ability to revive itself over and over⁴.

Godzilla is also an imaginary creature, and the role is in fact performed by an actor. This is one of the features of *Kaiju* — most have grotesque exteriors, but human actors are inside their bodies. That is, it can be said that *Kaiju* have a double nature. Due to their construction, *Kaiju* are somewhat removed from both monsters and humans. Accordingly, as they are neither man nor monster, their actions are uneasy (although the awkward movement of *Kaiju* may also be due to the rubber suits involved). Additionally, Godzilla has no facial expression due to the limitations of the movie's production budget. Although the creature lacked spiritual depth, audiences may form an emotional connection with Godzilla despite its face. It is easy to see that audiences empathize with the beast even without the movement of facial expression. This technique is currently used in characters such as "Hello Kitty" goods or Dick Bruna's *Miffy* picture books. Although their faces always remain the same, people can interpret these characters from their circumstances. Hence, fans of *Kaiju* can identify how the creatures are feeling according to their situation at any time. This may explain why fans of Godzilla like the creature and feel an affinity with it.

Moreover, though Godzilla does not use language, this rule of character does not preclude communication. This setting appears to have been frequently used in *Kaiju* TV series and current animation. Susan Napier, the American researcher of modern Japanese literature and animation, pointed out this effect in her book *Anime: from Akira to Princess Mononoke* (2001). Napier uses the

example of Totoro in *My Neighbor Totoro* (*Tonari no Totoro*, 1988) who never uses language. She compares Totoro with animal characters that can speak extensively using human language in animal stories. She explains that May and Satsuki, the girl protagonists of the story, can freely interpret this creature because it is a quiet character. As a result, she says, it can control the fantasy world of the story¹⁵. Napier's suggestion is very interesting, and would also apply to Godzilla as a quiet character. The rule that Godzilla does not speak except for its roar (which is also one of the features of *Kaiju*) would represent an effect similar to that of Totoro. In brief, Godzilla's nature and behavior are closely connected with the setting of its fantasy world. Its character throws the lives, rules and minds of humans into confusion, thereby ruining their time schedule. The lighting sometimes suggests that it is morning, afternoon or night in the movie, but nobody seems to care what time it is. This temporal and social disorder is produced by Godzilla, thus creating the feeling of a fantasy world.

As the movie series continues, Godzilla takes on more of a role in support of people. Then, its unexpected offspring means that it must act as a caretaker for its child (see Picture 5).

The sudden change in nature from that of the first Godzilla would shock audiences. Until that time, there were no scenes showing it eating, running away or reproducing, but its sudden parental status meant that it began to bring up its child.

In other stories, Godzilla's identity and nature start to shift to those of a hero that saves the earth and people as if it were a friend of humans. However, this change is a complete departure from the first Godzilla. It becomes a creature that is advantageous to people in spite of being respected. That is, these points created a paradox in the Godzilla series, and these contradictions brought some unpopularity for Godzilla. Consequently, the first Godzilla is preferred by most fans as it never tries to gain the favor of humans. Its attitude is accepted by them, and they hope to assimilate it.

On the other hand, people rarely wish they could metamorphose into dragons, even though these beasts are wise and gentle. For instance, Eustace, a boy who is turned into a dragon in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952) by C. S. Lewis, was surprised at his change and cried big tears. On becoming a dragon, he despaired of himself.

...He [Eustace] realized that he was a monster cut off from the whole human race. An appalling loneliness came over him...

When he [Eustace] thought of this the poor dragon that had been Eustace lifted up its voice and wept. A powerful dragon crying its eyes out under the moon in a deserted valley is a sight and a sound hardly to be imagined. (Lewis 106)¹⁶

Eustace's change represented the effect of punishment in the story. In particular, authors from the western world might be influenced in their stories by European culture and thought. It would be difficult for them to readily accept dragons due to the influence of Christianity, and they therefore still tend to dislike them. If they became dragons, they would strive never to lose their minds as seen with humans such as Eustace.

As a similar instance, *The Dragon and the George* (1976)¹⁷ by Gordon Dickson should be noted. In the story, Jim, who is a young man, goes to a medieval world in order to rescue his girlfriend. When he arrives in the fantasy world, his body turns into that of a dragon. While surprised at the situation, he notices that his own mind remains in the body. Sometimes, although he clashes with other dragons in mind or nature, he maintains his reasoning. This was his only point of pride— that he became another species. In short, humans do not want to lose their mind or reasoning even if they were to metamorphose into a monster. From this point, it can be seen that dragons are received as an otherness by humans, and people do not hope to equate with them. Humans may admire them as wonderful and magical beasts, but they do not hope to assimilate with dragons in the way that they do with Godzilla.

Dragons mostly have families, unlike Godzilla, even if they die. One example of this is seen in *Lavender Dragon* (1923) by Eden Phillpots, and another in the *Elmer and the Dragons* series by Ruth Gannet (1948-51). In particular, Gannet's the third book, *The Dragons of Blueland* (1951), tells of a child dragon that tries to return to its family consisting of parents, brothers and sisters (see Picture 6).

If dragons have families, it is natural that they can have children. They are able to increase the size of their families by themselves, so it can be said that their existence is a natural occurrence. As they can breed by

themselves, they rarely vanish from the world. Their bodies were formed as a result of the spread of natural history around the second half of the 19th century, but their traditional genealogy was not disturbed by scientific power.

This is why Godzilla and dragons have similar dinosaur-like bodies but have very different trends in terms of being accepted by people.

4. The Story Endings

Godzilla rarely dies in its series. Other than the original Godzilla, most return home or to the "southern island" in the last scene. As people are afraid of the creature itself and its power, they cannot help but try to banish it from their society. Accordingly, it has the chance to revive itself whenever it needs to. At the end of the movies after the original version, it is always sent away somewhere (nobody is interested where) or is locked frozen deep in ice by humans. In short, it is extinguished from human sight because it cannot live with people.

In contrast, there are three patterns for the final scenes of stories involving dragons. The first is where they are killed as villains by human heroes. Examples of this include Smaug in *The Hobbit* (1937) by J. R. R. Tolkien and *Conrad and the Dragon* (1973) by L. P. Hartley. The second pattern is where they go back to their own world to solve their problems. Such works include the *Oz* series, the *Elmer's Dragons* series, the *Earthsea* series (1968-2001) by Ursula K. Le Guin and *The Dragon of an Ordinary Family* (1969) by Margaret Mahy. The third and final type is where they stay in the human world and live with people. This type of ending is seen in *Green Smoke* (*R. D. Dragon* series (1957-1980)) by Rosemary Manning, and the *The Fire Within* series (2001) by Cris D'Lacey. In the case of dragons then, authors have a choice of three ending patterns, unlike those for Godzilla.

Although Godzilla's ending resembles that of the second type for dragons, there is a difference between them. Godzilla has no family, but it goes away to live peacefully because it does not like being attacked. On the other hand, the second pattern of ending for dragons sees them going back to their own world to finish their mission. When they solve their problems they improve themselves, and those that develop return to their own world to meet their family. After Godzilla's battles though, its nature and mind remain unchanged in contrast to the case with

dragons. Although Godzilla and dragons may be categorized together as monsters, their mental disparity suggests that they differ significantly in that Godzilla never matures. These points highlight the ways in which Godzilla varies from dragons.

Conclusion

From the above analyses, it can be said that Godzilla is rather a *Kaiju* than a modern dragon, and it is an original Japanese character. It was created as an artificial creature through the power of science, so lacks sophisticated manner and movement.

Godzilla's unsophisticated movement may remind audiences of their childhood. As a mutant, it has a very strong body but also possesses the *Kaiju* feature of an immature mind. Additionally, it cannot use language or improve its nature because it was unexpectedly created as the result of an H-bomb according to the story's setting. In short, its lack of experience and information means that its mind, nature and manner cannot develop.

Furthermore, Godzilla as a quiet character has two aspects of good and bad. The good side is that people can freely interpret its mind for themselves. In turn, the human characters in the film and the audiences recognize its symbolic value, which increases its attraction as a *Kaiju*. Thanks to this, the world takes on an original atmosphere of fantasy in the films.

In contrast, the inconvenient aspect is that people cannot read its mind or feelings, and they are afraid of it. This terror causes them to attack first in order to defend themselves. However, because its mutant body is drastically strengthened, their offense is ineffective. Yet, when its power is used to fight other monsters, humans are impressed by its ability and its status changes from that of villain to hero. Its identity and symbolic value are elevated in the "J" shape shown in Chart 1, and humans set it up as a hero. In short, its existence is enhanced. The features of the Japanese-made *Kaiju* are that the characters are liked in spite of their awkward movement, they are spiritually immature, and they maintain a resolute attitude without trying to gain people's favor.

On the other hand, dragons are received as friends or pets by people, although their symbolic power has diminished from that of supernatural creatures to

wonderful beasts since the second half of the 19th century. This change is shown in Chart 2, and the shift follows a straight downward direction unlike Godzilla as a *Kaiju*. Their status therefore falls to the bottom of the “I” shape seen in Chart 2. However, they never abandon their knowledge and sophisticated manners, and it can be said that their way of living is also excellent. After becoming dinosaur-like animals, they continue to improve their abilities and minds. Once they became companions to people, dragons attained a status similar to that of protected creatures, but the change does not necessarily mean that they are unimportant. They strike out by themselves through their knowledge and tend to overcome all problems, which gives rise to the three possible story ending patterns.

Godzilla and dragons have very different processes in terms of spiritual maturity and the way they are identified. Accordingly, the Japanese-made Godzilla belongs in the *Kaiju* classification, and dragons should be placed in the “Dragon” category. As a result, it can be said that Godzilla is not a modern dragon.

Notes

1. Aso Taro, a former Foreign Minister, seriously considered and planned the use of Japanese comics and animations as a diplomatic tool while he was in office (*The Daily Yomiuri*, May 8th 2006). He did in fact use them on a diplomatic visit to Brazil during his term (August 18th 2007, <http://sasakima.iza.ne.jp/blog/enter/283703>).
2. Tsutsui, William. *Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters*, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
3. Kubota, Yura et al. *Dragons: Truth in Fantasy 56*, Shinkigensha, 2002, p. 226.
4. See note 2, p.18.
5. Kaneko, Ryuichi. *Shirarezaru Nihon no Kyoryu (The History of Unknown Dinosaurs in Japan)*, Shodensha, 2007.
6. Prickett, Stephen. *Victorian Fantasy*, Harvester P, 1982, pp. 83-4.
7. Nakazawa Shinichi analyzed Godzilla as a freakish beast using the theories of Rudolf Steiner and Francis Bacon in his book *Godzilla no Raigou (la science angélique)*. He pointed out that Godzilla has a tendency for schizophrenia between immaturity and monstrosity. Moreover, he outlines the tendency of giant reptilian creatures to maintain an angelic infantile nature and eternal immaturity. In my opinion, Godzilla’s behavior shows an infant-like immaturity.

8. Toho Video. *Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster* (1964), 2001.
9. Sato, Kenji. *Godzilla: The Final Strategy, Analysis & Proposal*, Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 1993.
10. Toho Video. *Son of Godzilla* (1967), 2003.
11. Toho Video. *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla II* (1993), 2002.
12. Reference to Sato, Kenji. *Godzilla: The Final Strategy, Analysis & Proposal*, Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 1993.
13. Nagayama, Yasuo. *Kaiju ha Naze Nihon wo Osounoka? (Why do Kaiju Attack Japan?)*, Chikumashobo, 2002.
14. See note 2.
15. Reference to Napier, Susan. *ANIME: from Akira to Princess Mononoke*, 2001, trans. Kamiyama Kyoko: Chuokouron-Shinsha, 2002. pp. 252-3
16. Lewis, C. S. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, London: HarperCollins, 2001.
17. Dickson, Gordon. *The Dragon and the George*, 1976, trans. Yamada Junko: Hayakawa Publishing, 1998.

Bibliography

- Aramata, Hiroshi. *Kaibutsu no Tomo: Monster Hakubutsukan*, Shueisha, 1994.
- Carroll, Lewis. *Through the Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There*, London: Macmillan Children's Books, 1872.
- Higuchi, Masao et al. *Genso Bungaku 39: Dai Kaiju Bungakukan*, Genso Bungaku Shuppankyoku, 1993.
- Musolf, Peter. *The Godzilla Question (Godzilla toha Nanika)*, trans. Ono Kosei: Kodansha, 1998.
- Nakazawa, Shinichi. *Godzilla no Raiggou (la science angélique)*, *Seppenkkyokusenron*, Chuokoron-sha, 1988.
- Nomura, Kouhei. *Godzilla Dai Jiten (The Dictionary of Godzilla)*, Kasakura Shuppansha, 2004.
- Surf Rider 21 + Kyokugen-Seibutsukaiseiki Project. *Shin Godzilla Seibutsugakujosetsu (Godzilla in Nature - Neo)*, Nesco, 1996.
- Takahashi, Toshio. *Godzilla no Nazo: Kaiju Shinwa to Nihonjin (The Secrets of Godzilla: the Myth of Kaiju and the Japanese)*, Kodansha, 1998.
- Yatsumoto, Masayuki. *Kaiju Shinwa Ron (The Mythology of Kaiju)*, Seikyusha, 1998.

Pictures

Picture1.



Godzilla (1954), Toho Co.,Ltd.

Picture2.



Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There (1871)

Picture3.



"The Reluctant Dragon(1898)," Illustrated by E. H. Shepard

Picture4.



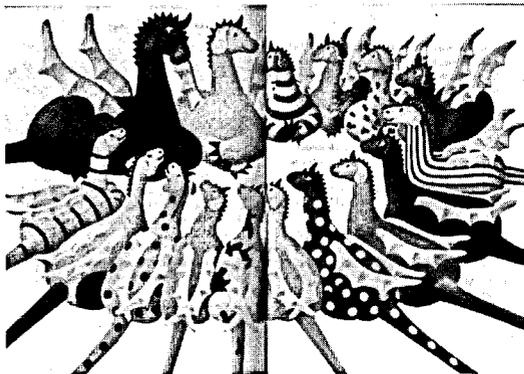
Minilla, Godzilla, Mothra, and King Ghidorah in *Destroyed All Monsters* (1968), from *the Dictionary of Godzilla*, p.321

Picture5.



Baby Godzilla and Godzilla in *Godzilla vs. Destroyah* (1995), from *Young Selection*, p.99

Picture6.



Family Dragons in *The Dragons of Blueand* (1951), pp.58-9