

DECODING THE SUCCESS OF ATTACK ON TITAN

Dr. Vibha Jain*
Vedangi Bartaria**

ABSTRACT

Over the years, anime has become a global phenomenon and is considered a sub- culture amongst the youth in countries other than Japan. Some of the anime have become global trend setters over the past couple of decades. Attack on Titan, despite its multiple controversial views and questionable contents, is one the various series that has become synonymous with the term 'Anime'. It has its own theme park and it continues to amass viewers and is a winner of various accolades. The central themes and the elements attract a kind of loyalty that even the greatest of the mainstream shows on Netflix fail to amass. This sort of success is attributable to various non-financial promotions of the fans who continue to promote it and keep it relevant and popular. The research paper uses a mix of primary and secondary data to analyse the reasons behind the success of attack on titan.

Keywords: *Anime, Attack on Titans, Manga, Violence, Racism.*

Introduction

Story- telling has been a part of human culture- a way of human expression. Over the ages, people have used dance, music, literature, dramas, movies, art to narrate a story to the general masses. It is utilised for the purposes of entertainment, raising awareness, spreading faiths and beliefs, preaching etc.

With technological advances, various different forms evolved. Animation is one such method of storytelling that was developed around the early 20th century. A very unique form of animation is centred in Japan, known as "Anime", shortened from the word animation. Anime is often defined as an art form that comprises various genres found in other forms (ie Live Action, Theatre, Literature, etc). It was initially used to identify the animation that was created in Japan. Over time, the word 'Anime' is used to distinguish and identify anime specifically originating in Japan.

Over the years, anime has become a global phenomenon and is considered a sub- culture amongst the youth in countries other than Japan. During the Modern Era, manga artist and animator Osamu Tezuka, revered as the 'Father of Manga', 'God of Manga' and 'Godfather of Manga', brought around the changes in the expensive techniques of animation, making it cost effective and profitably feasible. Many animators from Osamu Tezuka's Mushi Production established major animation houses such as Madhouse, Sunrise, Pierrot etc.

Today, the anime industry consists of more than 430 production studios. Toei Animation, Gainax, Madhouse, Gonzo, Sunrise, Bones, MAPPA, Studio Ghibli, Nippon Animations are some of the most prominent anime studios. The global anime industry was valued at 24.8B \$ and is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 9.7%.

* Associate Professor, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.

** Student, Department of Commerce, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.

Some of the anime have become global trend setters over the past couple of decades. Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood, Attack on Titan, Hunter x Hunter, Naruto and Naruto Shippuden, One Piece, Bleach, Death Note, Dragon Ball Z franchise, Jojo's Bizarre Adventures and Boku No Hero Academia to name a few.

One such series that this research aims to study is Attack on Titan (Shingeki No Kyojin).

Attack on Titan is a Japanese Anime Television Series, based on the manga by the same novel, created and illustrated by Hajime Isayama. Falling under the genre of dark fantasy, it premiered on April 07, 2013 and is an ongoing anime. Set in a world where Humanity is cornered and forced to live in the three walls like livestock that protects them from man-eating humanoids, the series follows Eren Yeager, a young boy that is considered Humanity's last hope, swears to exterminate the giant humanoids called titans in the aftermath of the fall of Wall Maria, the outermost wall of the three.

The series is known for its massive success in both domestic and international markets, selling over a million copies of manga for the last volume. The franchise is considered a critical and commercial success.

The manga was serialised in Kodansha's monthly Shonen manga magazine Bessatsu Shonen Magazine from September 2009 to April 2021, with all its chapters and extras collected in 34 tankobon volumes. The anime adaptation of the series was produced by Wit Studio for season 1-3. The fourth and final season was produced by MAPPA in three parts, of which two have been broadcast and the third part is scheduled to be released in 2023. The series has 87 episodes, 4 OVAs and 4 anime films till date with 5 spinoff mangas aside from the main manga, 4 video games and 4 light novels. It also has a gag animated series in Chibi format Attack on Titan: Junior High.

The franchise has won a number of awards in the year of its releases. It was the most popular anime TV show in 2020-21 globally, with the demand rating 75.4 times more than an average TV show. Attack on Titan was the most In-Demand Animated TV show and most In-demand TV show overall. In 2022, it won the award of "Most in-demand TV series in the world 2021" in the Global TV Demand Awards. Attack on Titan also became the first ever non-English language series to earn the title of World's Most In-Demand TV Show, previously held by only The Walking Dead and Game of Thrones.

The show has been praised for its unique storyline and world- building by acclaimed critics. The series was praised for embracing mental health struggle, not glorifying conflicts despite being a battle anime, killing off significant, larger than life characters without hesitation and allowing its protagonist to commit omnicide, something no other anime creator would attempt. The show is unique in its six act structure, where the post- timeskip arc is independent of the events occurring before it. It is also important to note the genre fluidity of the anime. Attack on Titan lures the viewers into believing that the show is a post- apocalyptic show with man- eating humanoids, before lifting the veil to reveal elements of war fiction, action, adventure, fantasy, sci-fi and political drama, almost shedding away the post-apocalyptic mask nearing the end.

It is also one of the rare anime to use flashbacks to drive the plot and set power dynamics, instead of justifying actions or setting an emotional tone for a character that might die in the next episode. It addresses survivor guilt, manipulation and conditioning of children and over glorification of war soldiers.

Some of the anime fans thought that the show was over hyped and way too dramatic. It relied heavily on gore and the violent tendencies of Millennials and Gen Z to increase consumers. Over emphasis on death and emotionally charged music made it draggy. The focus on plot shock and too many characters dead led to many initial watchers lose interest in the show. Especially during season 2.

Some of the themes of the show also led to censorship in a few countries.

In 2015, China banned 39 animes including Attack on Titan which were deemed to feature scenes of violence, pornography, terrorism and crimes against public morality, in an effort to "protect the healthy development of youth"

In Malaysia, the terrifying, human-like titans can be seen wearing swimsuits as they wreak havoc and devour humans left and right. The censorship laws of Malaysia require for the indecent part of Titan's anatomy to be censored.

Literature Review

- “Attack on Fandom: How Attack on Titan Fans Use Tumblr” (Schcherbinina, Mariya)

This research paper studies Tumblr as a tool for the popularisation and reproduction of the Japanese animanga culture, with Attack on Titan in focus, in the western hemisphere. It dives into the interaction of fans and responses of the fans to the content on show and explores the toxic side and ship wars that are prevalent and most prominent in this particular fandom.
- “Conflict and Social Control in Shingeki no Kyojin” (Fransesco- Alessio Urisini)

This study explores the representation of control as a form of social conflict in SnK, in its several connected manifestations and how they bear on SnK’s plot. It also explores how titans act as visual representations of this social control. It explains how the people in power use filters and censorship to control the information and thus, the people in walled humanity. It investigates the three tropes that drive the plot of SnK, namely- Control, Social Structure and Titans.
- “The Body, Despair and Hero Worship- A Comparative Study of Influence of Norse Mythology in Attack on Titan” (Asuka Yamazaki, 2015)

This research paper investigates the relation between the world of Attack on Titan and its relationship with Norse Mythology. It takes the apocalyptic, militant worldview that ran rampant in Japan post 2011 Earthquake and the circular, eternal, timeless structure of Norse Mythology and reproduces a violent mythological plot. Although the initial conflict between Titans and humans seems reminiscent of the conflict between humans and Jotuns (Giants) in the Norse Mythology, the later arcs of the series deal with the concept of civil war at the vanguard.
- “Within and Without: Human- Monster Boundary in Attack on Titan” (Ya Han Chang, 2016)

The author of this research paper studies the geographical uncertainties present in Attack on Titan. They argue that isolated geographical locations act as a focal point for monstrosity. In the AOT verse, it is humanity that is isolated from the outside world. Ya- Han Chang argues that the lack of knowledge about the geography outside the walls blurs the line between humanity and monstrosity in human society and raises questions against the distinction between the two.
- “Attack on Normativity: A Queer Reaing of Shigeki no Kyojin” (Marta Fanasca, 2020)

Fanasca notes the queer angles of the series in this research paper. They offer three very notable distinct features of Attack on Titan:

 - The female characters subvert, redraw, or reinterpret the feminine notions, like Annie and Mikasa, setting a queer undertone for them
 - There exists a lesbian subtext between two of the characters, that is, Historia/ Christa and Ymir.
 - The ability of significant characters to shift between ‘humans’ and ‘titans’ disrupts the balance between the binary divisions in terms of normative and norm- defying body anatomies, providing an extra queer layer to the series.

They investigate how gender stereotypes, heteronormativity and dichotomy of normal identities and non- normal identities are portrayed in the series. They argue that Attack on Titan represents a significant case of non- normative and counter- hegemonic representation in a typically heteronormative genre of Shounen, which is often noted to be toxic and exclusive to both women and queer folks alike.
- “Discursive Construction of Freedom in Attack on Titan” (Fei Wong, 2022)

This research explores the concept of ‘freedom’ and the discourse that Eren Yeager, the protagonist, makes from it. It finds that the ‘freedom’ that was discursively constructed by the protagonist and the ‘civic freedom’ proposed by Orlando Patterson shared a similarity: “Freedom is the participation in public life and connections with others”
- “Political Representation in Animation: Attack on Titan As A Sample” (Salam Abbas Mahmood, 2020)

This research paper studies the parallels between holocaust and world war II and the treatment of Eldians and the power struggle in the AOT verse. The study concludes that Attack on Titan used Eldians to represent the misery of Jews under the Nazi regime. The series makes use of heavy symbolism to represent the violence and dominance of ruling government (stand-in for Nazi Regime under Adolf Hitler) over the poor weaker section (Jews).

- “Prey VS Predator: The Human Monstrosity in Attack on Titan” (Emily Griff, 2017)

This article inquires about the true nature of humanity as it dissects the acts of humans and titans alike. The article observes that one has to look below the surface and ask: what makes the monster a monster? The acts of a monster do not have to be reconciled with its appearance. It delves deeper into the central theme of the story in depth, through the gory and distorted human anatomy of giant monsters called titans, the predatory race in the initial phase of the story. It suggests that humanity itself is a monster.

- “Colossal Bodies: Re-imagining the human anatomy in Hajime Isayama’s Attack on Titan” (Alice Mary Vernon, 2017)

The study explores the various dimensions in which Isayama manipulates the construction and consumption of flesh. It observes that Attack on Titan problematizes the notions of ‘identity’ through the transforming and dissociating the human anatomy. Anime, known for its Mecha- heavy transformation, finds comfort in cyber pathology and piloted humanoid structures. Attack on Titan, through its organic and unsettling exploration of the body, creates a discomfort in the genre.

- “Themes, Focalization and Flow of Information: The Case of Shingeki no Kyojin” (Fransesco-Alessio Urisini)

The article discusses the interaction between the themes, narrative structure and focalization points as seen in Attack on Titan. It focuses on how the themes, especially *control*, that pin the narrative act as information filters for both - narrative structure and background of the AOT verse. The information flow remains the same for characters and readers, in contrast to the typical story telling where the readers know more than the characters. Internal focalization and Control Theme can conflate the perspectives of the characters and readers/ viewers. But control as a meta- theme has a limited impact as the readers can access information about crucial plot points of the story that they can “see” facts while the characters do not get any such advantage.

Objective of the Study

This research paper aims at analysing the effects of Attack on Titan (both anime and manga) and its spin offs on the Series’ viewers. This paper intends to analyse the fandom and general mentality of the crowd that consumes Attack on Titan media and to understand the characters in a neutral light.

The object of this research work stands as follows:

- To identify the demographic of the consumers of the Attack on Titan Series.
- To identify and analyse the theme of the Attack on Titan Series
- To study and interpret how the themes of the series mirror reality and what impact these parallels have on the viewers.

Research Methodology

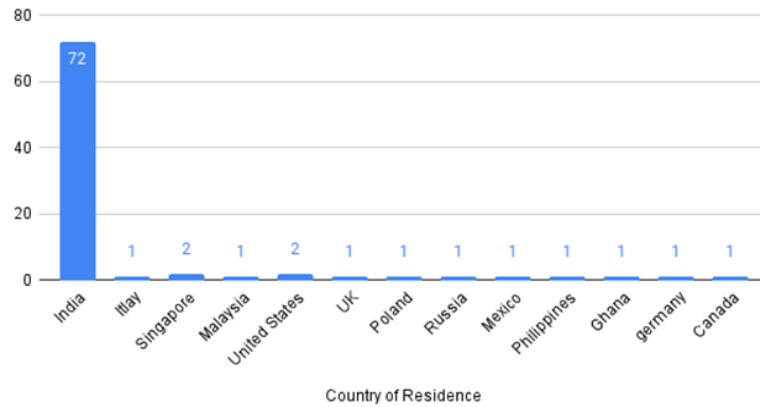
This study intends to make use of primary and secondary data, which is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Primary data has been collected from the viewers of the anime. It makes use of the questionnaire filled by them. The data collected is analysed for understanding the impact of the series on the viewers using a descriptive approach. Secondary data has been analysed to understand the commercial aspect of Attack on Titan’s success. It has been extracted from credible reports and news websites.

Data Analysis

Demographic Analysis

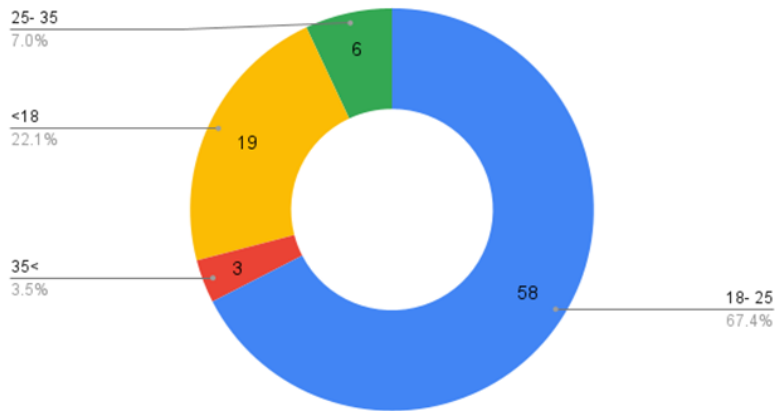
Out of the 86 respondents, 85.88 % of the users are from India while the rest of the respondents belong to countries like Canada, United States of America, Singapore, Ghana, Italy, United Kingdom, Russia, Mexico, Malaysia, Philippines and Germany. The majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 18- 25 (67.4 %), followed by those who are younger than 18 (22.1 %), 25-35 (7%) and those older than 35 (3.5%). Most of the respondents to the questionnaire identify as females (55.3%), followed by males (41.2%) and non- binary (2.4%), where as 1.2% of the respondents chose not to disclose their gender identity. Many of the respondents are students (84.7%), with a few in job (11.8%) and homemakers (2.4%). Out of all the respondents, 62.4% are pursuing an Undergraduate degree, with 22.4% still in school with 7.1% pursuing their masters and 3.5% in PhD. 54.7% of the respondents have read the manga while 84.9% of the respondents have watched the anime. Rest are assumed to be manga-only (15.1%) and anime-only (45.3%) fans.

Count of Country of Residence



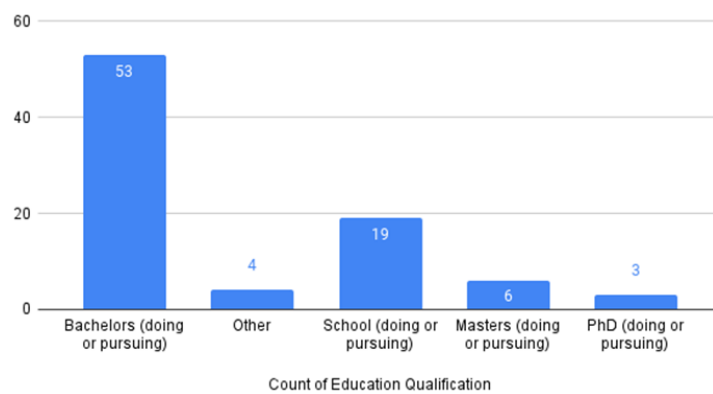
- Country of Residence of the Respondents**

Count of Age Group



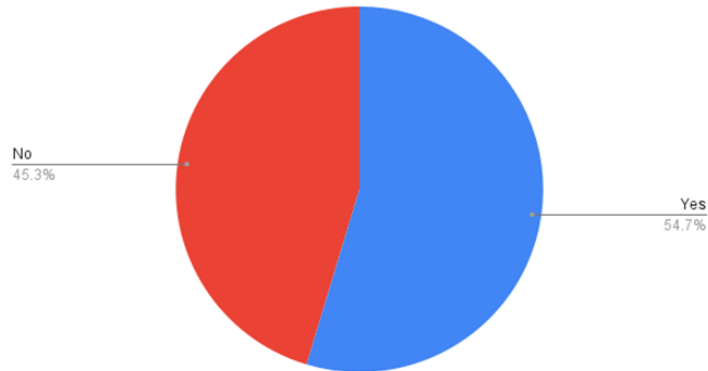
- Age Group of Respondents**

Count of Education Qualification



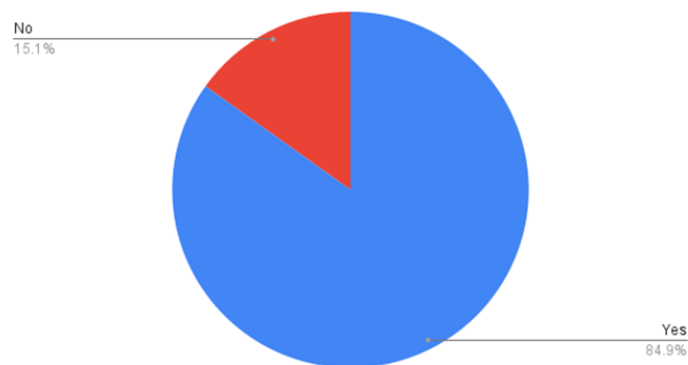
- Education Qualification of the Respondents**

Have you read the Attack on Titan Manga?



- **No of Manga Readers Among the Respondents**

Have you watched the Attack on Titan Anime?



- **No of Anime Viewers Among the Respondents**

Fig. 1 Demographic Analysis

For the scope of this research paper, only the fans who have watched the anime are focused on.

Central Theme

Most of the series are often created with an ideology in mind and even if they are not outright stated by the creators, the series comes to mean different things for different people. Same goes for the Attack on Titan franchise. A lot of fans always discuss what they consider to be the Central theme of the series.

71.2 percent of the respondents agree that 'Freedom' is the theme central to the plot of the series. The series opened with the following lines, "The dread that was a life under a rule..... The humiliation of being caged like words..... On that day, humanity remembered." Freedom has been an important concept in human history. Struggle for freedom from foreign states to struggle for freedom from an oppressive environment, almost everyone feels trapped and wants to be free. The characters in AoT desire that freedom with a tinge more desperation with the phenomenon of Titans the most obvious representation of their trapped existence. Some want freedom from the walls, some from the oppressive regime of the government, some want freedom from the mess that is life. The reasons vary but the desire for freedom remains constant.

Another major theme of Attack on titan is "perception of good and bad". It is not necessary that what one perceives to be good is agreed upon. Various circumstances and ideologies govern our morals and values. It is not absolute but it is dependent. Different people have different thought processes and different opinions. The world is not black or white but a grey area. 56.2% of the respondents consider it to be a major theme.

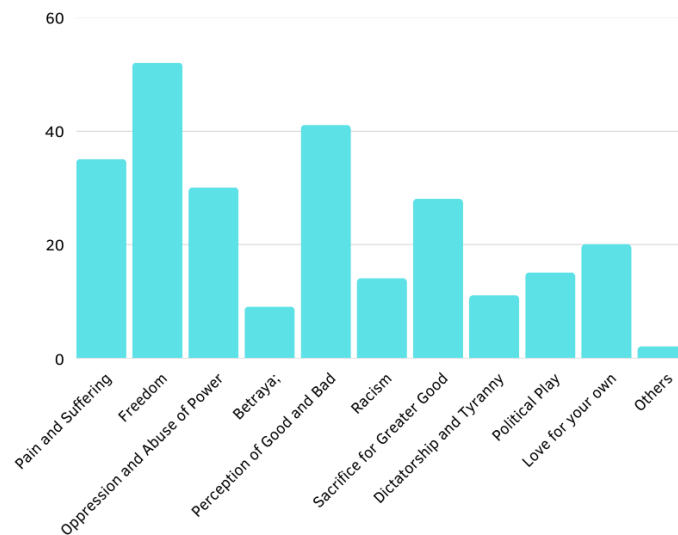


Fig. 2: Central Theme as marked by respondents

47.9 percent of the respondents consider 'pain and suffering' to be an important theme of the series. Everyone has different struggles in life. One suffers to get to a point in life while another person's suffering begins there. No one's life is devoid of pain. Different characters represent different kinds of sufferings. Reiner Brown goes through identity crisis and is suicidal, Mikasa suffers from abandonment issues and Historia has a Martyr Syndrome. Other characters exhibit various degrees of undiagnosed depression and obsessions.

Events of AoT take place because of powers and its abuse by various figures of authority. It started with King Fritz who abused his authority over Ymir, the First Titan and Eldians who used their power to shift into Titans for furthering their benefits. It was continued by Marley who overthrew Eldians and reversed the role of oppressor and oppressed. It was continued by the Reiss Regime in the walled humanity with absolute control over the people and brainwashing them into compliance. 41.1 percent of the readers consider 'Oppression and Power Abuse' a very significant theme in the universe of AoT as without this, there will be no Eren 'Tatakae' Yeager.

It may feel a bit cliché, and perhaps it is, Attack on Titan also highlights a need for sacrifice. The sacrifice is needed for a greater good. The 'greater good' is a pretty debatable concept within the show and fandom, but sacrifice is needed nevertheless. For saving civilians, for ending the cycle of hatred, for letting your friends live. It makes 'Sacrifice for greater good' a very subtle yet significant theme in the series as agreed by 38.4 percent of the respondents.

It is an animal tendency to love our own and condemn the other. Animals are capable of going through undefined lengths for their loved ones. Characters in AoT, especially the protagonist, are not above these instincts. Rumbling and genocide and other acts along these lines are not heinous if the stakes are on your dear ones. Love for your own takes you to lengths you previously deemed yourself incapable of achieving. 27.4 percent agree that 'Love for your own' is one of the themes driving the plot of AoT.

It is often remarked by the general public that everything in this world is a political play. Politics influences a lot of things, even creations of artworks. Politics plays a significant role on micro and macro level. Alliances, wars, power etc are just byproducts of these plays that happen around the world.

- 'Political Play', as accepted by 20.5 percent of the respondents, plays a very significant role as the plot driver and a theme in the series.
- Racism, as represented, can also be considered a pretty significant theme by 19.2 percent of the respondents. It is evident that racism is an almost universal theme in all countries and even the walled humanity. Mikasa's mother was the last descendant of the Asian heritage while Eldians are treated as livestock because of their race. It may not be obvious but racism simmers beneath the main plot.

- Another significant theme, according to the respondents (15.1 percent), is 'Dictatorship and Tyranny'. It can be considered an extension of Oppression and power abuse. The tyranny of King Fritz and his successors and oppression of other communities under their rule represented a rather accurate representation of other real life dictators and tyrants that have lived throughout the history and can be considered a representation of how colonialism functioned.
- 'Betrayal' (12.3 percent) becomes another key theme in the AoT verse. Reiner's betrayal took a toll on Eren and his merry band of friends, while Eren's betrayal started a domino chain that ended with more than half of the world population vanished. It is never easy to digest betrayal and that makes it a very important factor in any plotline.

All the above identified themes can be considered the central ideology behind the Attack on Titan.

Parallels

- **Middle East Crisis**

Many countries in the Middle East witness a constant state of unrest. It has become notorious for its constant state of conflict and tension. The causes of conflicts in the region are intertwined and complex. There exist a number of theories to explain this phenomenon but use of them to explain the crisis of the Middle East may prove to be culturally insensitive. This paper will therefore not discuss the reasons. Middle Eastern conflicts have mainly been civil wars. Attack on Titan does not outright associate itself with the Middle East Crisis and conflicts. Perhaps, it was never the creator's intention to portray it. But many of the viewers observe that the fall of Eldians and subsequent conflicts between Marley and other nations as well as complex politics over the Titans have a few shades of the ME crisis in it. Over 31 respondents found the Middle East crisis moderately relevant to the AOT-verse while 8 found it to be mostly relevant with 3, 20 and 11 people found it to be highly relevant, relatively relevant and least relevant.

- **Immigration Crisis**

Immigration is, as taught in school, movement of people from their home place to another place, in search of better prospects in regard to standards of living. Immigration however has a dark side to it. Many of the people from the developed areas feel threatened in the face of immigrants. Comments like 'they are stealing jobs.', 'they make the area unsafe.', 'they are making the area dirty!' are commonly associated with the politics of immigration. Many of the developed nations vote on this. Attack on Titan shows this conflict in the very beginning of the story. Refugees from the outer wall are held in camps and are treated like dirt. When the government did not have enough to sustain the extra population, they sent these 'extra' people out to the land littered with Titans to 'recapture the wall' and 'explore the area'. Over 12 respondents find this issue to be the most relevant and 11 find it to be the least relevant. 14, 21 and 15 respondents found it to be relatively, moderately and highly relevant to the storyline.

- **War for Resources**

Wars in the 21st century are started for one reason and one reason only. It can be disguised in various costumes, but the warring parties have one thing at stake and that is resources. Middle East Conflict is marked by a fight over oil reservoirs, American Invasion in Iraq and the fight over Israel and Palestine, as well as civil wars that many, many countries have witnessed over the years. Population boom in the recent years have made the resources scarce and the fear of not having enough has led to many crisis and international conflicts. If one traces the root cause for almost all the issues like immigration, civil wars, poverty, militarisation etc., one would always find remnants of resource war in it. Attack on Titan highlights it throughout the plotline. But in the opening sequence of Season 4 part I, it is outright referenced in the Marley- Middle East Alliance Conflict where the war is over the resources and Titans. 17 respondents consider it to be the most relevant parallel in the AoT verse while 9 find no relevance in it. 8 find the war for resources as relatively relevant and 23 find it moderately relevant. 16 respondents consider its relevance to be quiet high.

- **World War II**

The Second World War can be considered the worst phase in the human history often associated with mass genocide, cultural takeover, nuclear testing, experimentation and extreme poverty. The weird concoction of all factors wreaked more havoc than the WW I. Attack on Titan draws inspiration from the several factors of WW II like genocide of Jewish communities and the ethnic cleansing. There is an uncanny resemblance between the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany and Eldians in Marley and

other countries. It becomes evident in the last episodes of Season 3 part 2 and the initial episodes of Season 4 part 1. 16 respondents found it to be most relevant whereas 5 respondents struggled to find any respondents. 17 respondents found the theme to relatively relevant whereas 19 found it moderately relevant to the plot. 16 respondents voted it as highly relevant.

- **Ethnic Cleansing**

Ethnic cleansing can be better understood as systematic killing of people belonging to a particular ethnicity or culture. Throughout various points in the history of mankind, an ethnic cleansing of sorts has occurred. It is a part of a continuum of violence and genocide is the most extreme form of this. From the Armenian genocide, massacres of Poles in Volhynia, Jewish Genocide in Nazi Germany, Bushmen/ Saan expulsion in Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Ethnic Cleansing of Iraq by Shia and Sunni Militas, Assyrian Exodus, Rohingya Muslims Genocide and expulsion, Uyghur Genocide to the most recently, the Ukranian Depopulation, Ethnic Cleansing has been present in one form or the other throughout our history. Systematic oppression and genocide of rebelling Eldians in Marley and hunting down of the Ackerman Clan in Paradis are the two forms of ethnic cleansing present in the show. It highlights how threats to authority are systematically and meticulously oppressed and eliminated by the means of ethnic cleansing. The result is often impoverishment of these groups and death of their culture by legal authority bestowed to them by the rulers. While 22 respondents find this parallel the most relevant and 9 highly relevant, 25 find it moderately relevant and 7 and 10 find it relatively and least relevant respectively.

- **Corruption and Power Abuse**

When one looks at the military brigade and the nobles, one gets the image of power and authority. This is one of the most common recurring themes that get highlighted in almost all the popular shows. Power corrupts people, or so has been considered the universal truth. It is evident in the portrayal of the Military Brigade and the nobles that live in the wall Sina. It is not just limited to Paradis, the supposedly cornered humanity but also the humanity beyond the seas, where Marley officials abuse their authority to torment Eldians who live in walls like livestock and cannot step out with permission or yellow armbands. Humanity can be divided by walls, religion, region, animation but corruption unites them all. 24 respondents find the parallel most relevant followed by 21 who find it highly relevant and 15 who find it moderately relevant to the plot. 9 respondents find it relatively relevant whereas 4 find it least relevant.

- **Class Hierarchy**

Another thing that unites all the cultures across continents, religions, regions and mediums is the Class System. There always exists a privileged group and an underprivileged group in all forms of society. Class hierarchy is depicted in various manners throughout the show in almost all seasons to highlight the privilege one gets from belonging to a certain station and how people in other groups are willing to do anything to belong to that station. 20 respondents find this mostly relevant to the plot and 17 find it highly relevant whereas 20 find it moderately relevant. 11 find it relatively relevant and 5 find it least relevant.

- **Other Parallels**

A few parallels pointed out by the respondents include War's effect on normal people's life, racism, Militarisation, Change in relationships, Nuclear developments etc.

Conclusion

The Attack on Titans anime amassed such great stats for themselves for a concoction of factors. It primarily attracted young adults as its viewers. Its various ideological stands such as Freedom, Perception, Pain and Suffering, its take on power abuse and corruption and politics make it an attractive watch. Its ever changing nature and genre opens space for different types of people and the writers' non clarification on their ideas leaves it up for various interpretations. The stories' central themes are a mix of the generic 'betrayal', 'sacrifice' etc and some grey area themes like 'dictatorship and tyranny', 'racism', 'political play' etc.

Different people were introduced through different mediums to the series. The survey shows that the reason for starting the series is varied and oftentimes comes from interacting with other individuals that promote the series without any extra cost from the producers. Many of these fans have migrated from the manga of the series and have helped in creating a mature atmosphere, which can be considered somewhat toxic, as observed by Mariya Schcherbinina in their paper 'Attack on Fandom: How Attack on Titan Fans Use Tumblr'.

The show becomes more relevant as people find parallels in the show and identify the said parallels as it becomes increasingly realistic despite including pseudoscience and paranormal elements like Titans and the children of Ymir. Its unapologetic reference to the holocaust and the treatment of Jews during the second world war is the most obvious parallel. One can also easily identify subtext of ethnic cleansing and genocide in the series. It also highlights the lack of resources and the conflict that arises out of it and the unrest in the middle east. Because of these parallels, the story becomes interesting and real. Many of the fans stayed in the fandoms, contributing to the massive figures it has amassed. The characters have a distance from the stereotypical portrayal. Each character plays a key role and holds a relevance in the plot. It provides representation to all sorts of people. The rare 'post apocalyptic world that turns out to be not post apocalyptic' premise of the show makes it full of twists and turns and maintains a certain level of uncertainty. The art and animation style of the series also makes it a visual delight, especially since the colour palette makes it stay in touch with the emotions and the abundant casualties in the series. The action scenes are a particular treat. Few decided to stay in the fandom for FOMO, while others stayed for gore. The various reasons exemplify the differences in the viewers and their perspective.

The interplay of these elements create a cocktail for the commercial and critical success of the series. The meticulous world-building and plotting, comparable to the worldbuilding of the One Piece, its unique non-conforming elements like the mighty Titans, the unabashed death and violence and the associated gore, the body horror are just a few reasons to name it.

Attack on Titan, despite its multiple controversial views and questionable contents, is one the various series that has become synonymous with the term 'Anime'. It has its own theme park and it continues to amass viewers and is a winner of various accolades. The central themes and the elements attract a kind of loyalty that even the greatest of the mainstream shows on Netflix fail to amass. This sort of success is attributable to various non-financial promotions of the fans who continue to promote it and keep it relevant and popular.

Limitations

This work acknowledges the following limitations:

- The sample population was less than 100.
- The scope of this paper is limited to the anime only and does not consider manga readers.
- The scope of this paper is limited up to the season 4 part 1 of the series and does not include any gag mangas or spinoffs of the series.
- The respondents are primarily limited to college students and Indians.

References

1. *Floating worlds: a short history of Japanese animation* | WorldCat.org. (2018). <https://www.worldcat.org/title/floating-worlds-a-short-history-of-japanese-animation/oclc/1020690005>
2. *Oldest Anime Found*. (2005, August 7). Anime News Network. <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2005-08-07/oldest-anime-found>
3. Litten, F. S. (2014). *Japanese color animation from ca. 1907 to 1945*.
4. Clements, J., & McCarthy, H. (2015). *The Anime Encyclopedia: A Century of Japanese Animation*. Amsterdam University Press.
5. Brenner, R. E. (2007). *Understanding Manga and Anime* (Annotated). Libraries Unlimited.
6. 手塚治虫 TEZUKA OSAMU OFFICIAL. (n.d.). TezukaOsamu.net(JP). <https://tezukaosamu.net/jp/>
7. *Anime Market Size, Share & Growth Report, 2022-2030*. (n.d.). <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/anime-market>
8. *Hajime Isayama*. (n.d.). Hajime Isayama. <https://www.hajimeisayama.com/>
9. Cambosa, T. (2022, January 27). Attack on Titan Most In-Demand Anime and TV Show of 2021. *Anime Corner*. <https://animecorner.me/attack-on-titan-most-in-demand-anime-and-tv-show-of-2021/>
10. The Spring 2013 Anime Preview Guide - Rebecca Silverman. *Anime News Network*. <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/preview-guide/2013/the-spring-anime/rebecca>

11. The Spring 2013 Anime Preview Guide - Carlo Santos. *Anime News Network*. <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/preview-guide/2013/the-spring-anime/carlo>
12. *The Spring 2013 Anime Preview Guide - Carl Kimlinger*. Anime News Network. <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/preview-guide/2013/the-spring-anime/carl>
13. Speelman, T. (2019, June 18). *The fascist subtext of Attack on Titan can't go overlooked*. Polygon. <https://www.polygon.com/2019/6/18/18683609/attack-on-titan-fascist-nationalist-isayama-hajime-manga-anime>
14. *Forget Attack on Titan - China issues its own attack on anime*. (2015, June 16). South China Morning Post. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/blogs/article/1822255/forget-attack-titan-china-issues-its-own-attack-anime>
15. Li, N. (2021, February 9). *Malaysia Censors 'Attack On Titan' Manga With Underwear*. Hypebeast. <https://hypebeast.com/2021/2/malaysia-kreko-publisher-attack-on-titan-underwear-censor-info>
16. *Crunchyroll Announces Nominees for 7th Annual Anime Awards*. (2023, January 19). Anime News Network. <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/interest/2023-01-19/crunchyroll-announces-nominees-for-7th-annual-anime-awards/.193969>
17. Schcherbinina, M. (n.d.). *Attack on Dandom: How Attack on Titan fans use Tumblr* [Pdf].
18. Francesco-Alessio, U. (n.d.). *Conflict and Social Control in Shingeki no Kyojin*.
19. Asuka, Y. (2015). The body, despair, and hero worship—a comparative study of the influence of Norse mythology in Attack on titan. *Scandinavian journal of comic art (SJOCA)*, 2, 1.
20. Chang, Y. H. (2016). Within and Without: Human-Monster Boundary in Attack on Titan. In *Edgelands: A Collection of Monstrous Geographies* (pp. 1-8). Brill.
21. Fanasca, M. (2020). Attack on normativity: A queer reading of Shingeki no Kyojin (Attack on Titan). *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, 7(2), 255-270
22. Wong, Fei. (2022). Discursive construction of freedom in Attack on Titan.
23. Mahmood, S. A. (2020). Political Representation In Animation: Attack On Titan As A Sample. *Ilkogretim Online*, 19(4), 5048-5065.
24. Griffis, E. (2017). Predator vs. Prey: The Human Monstrosity in Attack on Titan. *Digital Literature Review*, 4, 153-165.
25. Vernon, A. (2017). Colossal bodies: re-imagining the human anatomy in Hajime Isayama's Attack on Titan. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 8(5), 480-493.
26. Ursini, Francesco-Alessio. (2017). Themes, Focalization and the Flow of Information: The Case of Shingeki no Kyojin. *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship*. 7. 21-39. 10.16995/cg.83.

