

Depictions of Socio-Cultural Elements in the Anime Series *Attack on Titan* Through Content Analysis Method

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<p>ARTICLE HISTORY Accepted: 24 Juli 2023 Revised: 15 September 2023 Approved: 12 Oktober 2023 Published: 31 Oktober 2023</p> <p>*Corresponding nadafaradilla21@gmail.com</p> <p> 10.22219/satwika.v7i2.28147</p> <p> jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id</p> <p>How to Cite: Faradila, N., & Ahmad, H. A. (2023). Depictions of Socio-Cultural Elements in the Anime Series <i>Attack on Titan</i> through Content Analysis Method. <i>Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial</i>, 7 (2), 469-478. Doi: https://doi.org/10/22210/satwika.v7i2.28147</p> 	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>Attack on Titan (進撃の巨人), adapted from the shonen manga series written and illustrated by Hajime Isayama, was chosen as the subject of study due to its weighty themes and visually appealing presentation. Several elements of this anime touch upon socio-cultural conditions in the real world, allowing viewers to resonate with the fictional world of Attack on Titan. Moreover, its depiction of graphic violence and implementation of social phenomena such as war and politics, provoke controversy among its audience. The purpose of this research is to analyze the visualization and frequency of socio-cultural themes in the anime Attack on Titan, as well as to formulate an understanding of its relevance to the representation of socio-cultural conditions and issues both in Japan and the world. This qualitative descriptive research employs content analysis as the method to analyze the socio-cultural elements present in Attack on Titan and their frequency of appearance. The research utilizes Mayring's Step Model of Inductive Category Development, employing an inductive approach to identify and categorize the socio-cultural elements within the anime. The research findings show that Attack on Titan uses symbolism to effectively represent Japanese culture and socio-cultural conditions. This adds novelty and depth to the animation while conveying the creator's intentions and cultural themes.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Japanese Animation, Content Analysis, Socio-cultural Elements, Cultural Representation</i></p> <p>ABSTRAK</p> <p>Attack on Titan (進撃の巨人), diadaptasi dari seri manga shonen yang ditulis dan diilustrasikan oleh Hajime Isayama, dipilih sebagai subjek penelitian karena temanya yang berbobot dan presentasi yang menarik secara visual. Beberapa elemen anime ini menyentuh kondisi sosial budaya di dunia nyata, memungkinkan penonton untuk beresonansi dengan dunia fiksi Attack on Titan. Selain itu, penggambaran kekerasan grafis dan implementasi fenomena sosial seperti perang dan politik dalam anime tersebut menimbulkan kontroversi di kalangan penontonnya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menganalisis visualisasi dan frekuensi kemunculan tema sosiokultural dalam anime Attack on Titan, serta merumuskan pemahaman tentang relevansinya terhadap representasi kondisi dan isu sosiokultural baik di Jepang maupun di dunia. Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini menggunakan analisis isi sebagai metode untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur sosial budaya yang ada dalam Attack on Titan dan frekuensi kemunculannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan Model Langkah Pengembangan Kategori Induktif Mayring, menggunakan pendekatan induktif untuk mengidentifikasi dan mengkategorikan unsur-unsur sosial-budaya dalam anime. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Attack on Titan menggunakan simbolisme untuk secara efektif mewakili budaya Jepang dan kondisi sosial budaya. Ini</p>
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	menambah kebaruan dan kedalaman animasi sambil menyampaikan maksud pencipta dan tema budaya.
	Kata kunci: Animasi Jepang, Analisis Konten, Elemen Sosial Budaya, Representasi Budaya
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INTRODUCTION

Animated films are a form of visual communication technique with the fundamental potential to clarify complex matters, reveal the unseen, and convey information quickly and succinctly (Halas, 1976). Several studies have proven the effectiveness of animated films as a visual communication form, both in conveying traditional and contemporary cultural elements (Ahmad, 2008; Munggaran, 2020; Napier, 2005). In this digital era, as Yui, (2010) explains, all cultural products distributed through electronic media are connected to two contemporary cultural tendencies: postmodernity and glocalization. Glocalization is the process of globalizing a culture while adapting to local tastes or needs. Nowadays, accessing and learning about the culture of other countries can be done very easily through social media platforms and the dissemination of popular audio and visual content such as songs, fashion, novels, comics, films, and animations. The exposure to popular culture is abundant in our surroundings, so, directly or indirectly, everyone has been influenced by it. According to Ahmad, (2008) pop culture can be described as the widespread dissemination of cultural elements within a particular society, encapsulated through the community's everyday language or lingua franca (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Generally, pop culture represents easily adaptable and popular culture among the majority of the population. In Japan, anime (Japanese animation) is considered a popular culture (Craig, 2000). Through the processes of globalization and glocalization, anime has spread worldwide and has become a subculture in some countries around the world.

According to Denison, (2015), Animated films as popular culture can be observed from two perspectives: the West and the East. From the West, there are classic animated films from Walt Disney, such as *Fantasia* (1940), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). Meanwhile, from the East, there is Japanese animation, commonly known as Anime. The renowned classic Japanese animation studio is Studio Ghibli, responsible for creating masterpieces like *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989), *Princess Mononoke* (1997),

and *Spirited Away* (2001). The term "anime" originates from the Japanese pronunciation of the word "animation," which is "Animēshon" (アニメーション), later abbreviated as anime. The distinction in the country of origin for producing an animated film can be crucial in research concerning animated films because each region has different symbols and customs in behavior and how it is translated into visual language (Yui, 2010).

Napier, (2005) argues that animated films, in general, or anime specifically, may be an ideal artistic medium for expressing hopes and anxieties arising from contemporary life's uncertainties. Therefore, comprehending the social and cultural conditions of a particular era, region, and population becomes a significant element in researching the visual meanings contained within an animated film. This study will focus on Japanese animation, or anime. As elaborated in the book "Frames of Anime: Culture and Image Building" by TzeYue, (2010), despite anime's ability to portray high-tech imagery, it still retains characteristics of traditional art forms. TzeYue, (2010) argues that anime is not merely art created for "Art's sake" (art for the sake of art), but it also contains socio-political and philosophical meanings. In his research, Munggaran, (2020) states that animations in Asia, such as Japan, Korea, and India, tend to depict the environment in the background art as a form of symbolic relation to nature and as a representation of the nation's identity in animation. This is in contrast to the background characteristic in American and European animation, which focus on utilizing backgrounds as a stage to support the characters' actions in a literal (non-symbolic) manner.

Japanese animation can be described as a strong example of integrating foreign cultural influences into their own art and culture (Ahmad, 2008). In Japan itself, anime refers to all types of animated films without considering their country of origin. However, outside of Japan, the term "anime" is more commonly associated specifically with 'Japanese animation' (Budianto, 2015). MacWilliams, (2014) highlights two urgencies for anime research: first, anime is a crucial part of popular visual culture in Japan. Amidst the significant role of mass media in Japanese society, anime and manga (Japanese

comics) have become an inseparable part of the highly visual Japanese life. Second, anime plays a vital role in shaping the global mediascape, both in print and electronic media. The ongoing development of anime shows a trend where anime, as part of Japanese popular culture, evolves alongside the creative industry that derives from anime itself ([Vygotsky et al., 1997](#)). This includes consistent contributions from anime creators and practitioners, continuous scholarly examination and education about anime, as well as collaboration between the government and private sectors in packaging anime for acceptance within the global community.

According to [Burton, \(2012\)](#), representation is a way to define the distinctive characteristics of particular groups. Representation goes beyond the study of surface appearances and involves meanings associated with the construction of appearance. Therefore, based on the introduction provided, the question arises of how the visualization of socio-cultural themes in Japanese animation relates to the representation of socio-cultural issues in the real world. Research on the representation of social, cultural, and political conditions has been previously conducted. [Keene, \(2021\)](#) examined how anime by Shinichiro Watanabe reflects Japan's sociocultural conditions in accordance with its time. In his dissertation, Keene explained that representations are not always literal but can be conveyed through symbolism. In Shinichiro Watanabe's works, such as *Cowboy Bebop*, set in a futuristic world, the anime becomes a means to understand the future conditions of Japanese society. Conversely, *Samurai Champloo*, set in the Edo (or Tokugawa) period of Japan, provides insights into Japanese history, particularly during its isolation period. Keene argues that Watanabe's deliberate inclusion of historically inaccurate elements in his works is aimed at mocking prevailing Japanese identity constructs and questioning the self-perception of Japanese social and cultural aspects. Both anime were analyzed using an interpretative paradigm based on several theories, revealing various dichotomous relationships such as "westernization versus orientalism," "respecting tradition versus innovation," "masculinity versus femininity," and "good versus evil." These thematic categories provide insights into Watanabe's understanding of Japanese society and how he critiques established patterns within it. [Ahmad, \(2008\)](#) provides a more detailed analysis of the representation of cultural elements in animated films. In his research, focused on Asian animations, the context of cultural representation is divided into two categories: animations that focus on specific cultural themes and animations without specific cultural themes. The first

category is further divided into animations with traditional and contemporary themes, while the second category consists of five animation themes: apocalyptic, the art of interval, the elegiac mode and relation to nature, the culture of cuteness, and the representation of everyday life.

An example of contemporary cultural representation in Japanese animation can be observed in the anime *Genshiken* (2004), directed by Takashi Ikehata and based on the manga of the same name by Kio Shimoku. *Genshiken* not only centers on specific contemporary cultural themes but also provides an in-depth analysis to create a realistic representation of the otaku social group in Japan and anime and manga culture in general ([Galbraith, 2011](#)). By visualizing events and locations based on reality and depicting characters realistically, *Genshiken* offers a relatively accurate representation of anime and manga culture in Japan, challenging common stereotypes about the otaku community ([Brienza, 2016](#)). On the other hand, the representation without specific cultural themes can be seen in the Japanese animated film *Akira* (1988), directed by Katsuhiro Otomo. The film *Akira* is set in post-World War II Tokyo, portraying Japan's bleak condition after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that ended World War II. The strong connection to the theme of dystopia caused by mass destruction and the holocaust is effectively presented, drawing on Japan's real experience with the holocaust several decades earlier. The visual style in *Akira*, particularly the character design, differs significantly from the typical anime style. Characters in *Akira* are drawn more realistically, resembling actual human beings, rather than having the typical anime characteristics of large eyes, elongated legs, chubby bodies, and unrealistic hair colors ([Ryfle, 2018](#)). The overall realistic feeling is further emphasized by the depiction of Tokyo's devastated and crumbling environment ([Tetsuro & Bownas, 1961](#)). Despite its visual departure from conventional Japanese animations at the time, *Akira*'s apocalyptic theme represents Japanese culture and its association with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ([Shapiro, 2002](#)).

Attack on Titan was selected as the subject of study in this research due to its weighty themes and visually captivating presentation that has garnered global attention ([Yamazaki, 2015](#)). According to research conducted by [Ursini, \(2017\)](#) on the manga series of *Attack on Titan*, the themes explored in this series also touch upon real-world socio-cultural conditions, allowing the audience to resonate with the fictional world of *Attack on Titan*. The plot, themes, and visual

portrayal of fascism in *Attack on Titan*, created by Hajime Isayama, have prompted news channels, online discussion forums among fans, and debates on social media to attempt to discern the line between allegory employed by Isayama and his personal political beliefs in crafting the series. Despite Isayama never explicitly addressing these aspects, his silence allows the audience to engage in interpretation and project their own biases onto the fictional world he has crafted. In the final season of *Attack on Titan*, issues regarding race, ethnicity, and history become particularly evident, giving rise to intense arguments and questions about the meaning behind Isayama's thematic visualization and its connection to socio-cultural politics in Japan. Therefore, this research aims to approach the visualization of socio-cultural elements in the anime and its relevance to the representation of socio-cultural conditions and issues both in Japan and the world (Parrot Analytics, 2022).

This research encompasses all of the main series episodes (88 episodes as of July 2023) of *Attack on Titan* anime. Based on previous researches that proved Japanese animation could become an effective medium to represent Japanese culture and society (Ahmad, 2008; Munggaran, 2020; Keene, 2021). This research selects *Attack on Titan* as a case study to investigate anime as a medium representing Japan's socio-cultural conditions through symbolism. The choice is based on the fact that the world building and characterizations in the anime do not directly represent Japan, yet issues related to Japan's social conditions and history can be identified within the narrative. This makes *Attack on Titan* a compelling material for a case study, as it allows for the exploration of socio-cultural themes through an imaginative and symbolic setting (Benaim, 2018). Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to develop a comprehensive and analytical framework for creating animated works that effectively convey meaningful messages and represent prevailing socio-cultural issues in society. Analyzing the rich content of *Attack on Titan* will provide valuable insights into how anime can express and explore cultural themes (Fung et al., 2019). The research seeks to demonstrate the potency of animation as a medium to portray and discuss complex socio-cultural matters in a visually engaging and thought-provoking way. This research also intends to provide recommendations for Indonesian animators in creating animated works that can convey messages with elements of representation concerning socio-cultural issues in society, both explicitly and implicitly

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. The analysis is based on a literature review and related literature on anime as a medium of representation, anime as a medium of socio-cultural critique, and the socio-cultural conditions of Japanese society. Content analysis method is used to analyze the visual components found in the case study material related to the predetermined socio-cultural elements in the literature review. This method involves the process of coding and categorizing the text based on themes or concepts that emerge during the analysis. The analytical model used is Mayring's Step Model of Inductive Category Development. The choice of an inductive systematic research model is based on the nature of the research, which will examine each episode of *Attack on Titan* in detail, and explore the socio-cultural codes that appear in the anime to ultimately formulate the categories of socio-cultural themes in a more general form. In the content analysis method, the researcher collects and selects documents or texts to be analyzed, then conducts in-depth and repeated analysis of these texts. Therefore, the framework of the content analysis method to be applied in this research is as follows (figure 1):

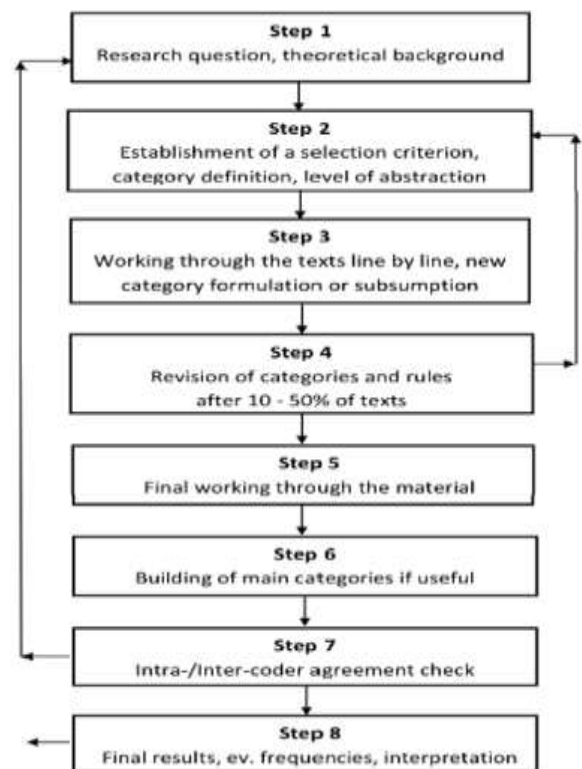


Figure.1 *Mayring's Step Model of Inductive Category Development (Mayring, 2014)*

The following are the steps in Mayring's (2014) inductive content analysis model applied to this research;

1. Step 1. Research Question

The first step after conducting a background study is to determine the research question and objectives. The research should also ensure that it can be conducted inductively, meaning it should be exploratory or descriptive. In the case of the anime *Attack on Titan*, the research aims to elucidate how socio-cultural themes are visualized in this animated work and its connection to the representation of issues prevalent in Japanese society. The choice of an inductive research approach is based on the nature of the study, which involves examining each episode of *Attack on Titan* in detail, closely observing the socio-cultural codes depicted in the anime, and ultimately formulating broader categories of socio-cultural themes.

2. Step 2. Ensuring the Ability to Define Categories and Levels of Abstraction

Categories are defined based on relevant criteria pertaining to the research topic, i.e., socio-cultural themes. This stage involves determining the levels of abstraction and relevant criteria that are applicable to the research topic. It determines how general or specific the formulated categories can be.

3. Step 3. Coding Process

The initial step of the coding process involves watching each episode of the *Attack on Titan* anime to identify the socio-cultural elements present in the subject of study. This stage may reveal new categories that were not identified in the earlier stage of defining categories.

4. Step 4. Revision

Revisiting the existing categories after analyzing 50% of the subject of study. If new categories are discovered, the identification process will be repeated, including the new categories in the sample research. This stage focuses on observing the frequency of appearance of the socio-cultural elements that were previously identified. The categorization and coding techniques are typically conducted iteratively, with data collection being repeated several times.

5. Step 5. Final Analysis

Analyzing the entire subject of study based on the identified categories and levels of abstraction. The final step involves describing the quantitative data obtained from the coding process and drawing conclusions from the conducted analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the 1990s, anime has gained significant recognition outside of Japan ([Leong, 2011](#)). Despite its visual resemblance to cartoons commonly associated with children's entertainment, anime often explores thought-provoking contemporary issues ([Napier Susan, 2005](#)). As [Price \(2001\)](#) expounds, Japanese animation offers a broader palette for selecting audiences and topics, appealing to a diverse age range from children to adults. The object of this research will examine anime with contradictory plotlines. One of the most popular anime in Indonesia is *Attack on Titan* or *Shingeki no Kyojin*, adapted from a shonen manga series written and illustrated by Hajime Isayama. The anime *Attack on Titan* ([進撃の巨人](#)) premiered on April 7, 2013, and is a fascinating subject for study. Its themes are notably weighty, revolving around humanity being "colonized" by titans, savage giant creatures resembling humans, oppression of minority races, political warfare, and more ([Attack on Titan Awards, 2023](#)). However, on the flip side, the anime also presents universal themes of adventure and transformation through the journey of its protagonist, Eren Jaeger. The narrative follows a classical Joseph Campbell's "The Hero's Journey" pattern, as audiences accompany the main character on a quest to achieve a grand goal after facing adversity. In this case, Eren aims to free humanity within the walls and exterminate all Titans to avenge his mother's death by a Titan attack in his hometown. Nonetheless, some debates within the *Attack on Titan* fandom on platforms like Discord, YouTube, and Reddit have arisen due to unexpected plot twists and the development of the main character Eren in the final season of the anime. Moreover, Hajime Isayama has demonstrated that these surprising elements were planned from the first season using foreshadowing in the story's writing. The thought-provoking themes, promising premises, and dynamic, aesthetically explicit visuals depicting scenes of violence add to the uniqueness and allure of *Attack on Titan* in the eyes of the public ([Titan Awards, 2023](#)).

Another topic of discussion among the anime fan community regarding the worldwide popularity of *Attack on Titan* is its references to historical events during World War II. The plot, themes, and visualization of fascism used by Hajime Isayama in *Attack on Titan* have led news channels, online discussion forums, and social media debates to attempt to understand the fine line between allegory played by Isayama and his personal political beliefs in the creation of *Attack on Titan*. Although Isayama has never spoken about this matter, his silence allows audiences to

interpret and project their own prejudices onto the fictional world he created. In the final season of Attack on Titan, issues of race, ethnicity, and history become explicit, igniting heated arguments and questions about the visualized themes' meanings and their connections to sociocultural politics in Japan. Hence, this research will approach the visualization of socio-cultural elements in this anime. With its thought-provoking premises, the anime series Attack on Titan has garnered numerous accolades worldwide. According to IMDb data, Attack on Titan ranks as the fourth most popular TV series worldwide. The anime has received 14 awards and 21 nominations across categories such as Best Animation, Best Screenplay, and Best Voice Acting. Its premier popularity has caused streaming service servers like Netflix and Crunchyroll to crash multiple times. As a result, Attack on Titan became the highest-grossing TV show in 2021, claiming the title "The World's Most In Demand TV Show," previously held by The Walking Dead and Game of Thrones. Attack on Titan is the only non-English language series to hold this title.

Data Collection

Based on the inductive content analysis process proposed by [Mayring, \(2014\)](#), the next step after defining the research questions and theoretical foundation is to define categories and levels of abstraction. Due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of this research, there are no pre-defined categories. Thus, the development of categories needs to be done inductively. Defining categories serves as

selection criteria to determine relevant material from research object; this includes explicit definitions and theoretical references. Based on the data obtained from observations of the reception of Attack on Titan anime within its community, previous research, as well as the research questions and objectives, the following criteria for categories and levels of abstraction are established:

Category Criteria:

1. The impact of sociocultural conditions on an individual's development.
2. The state between hope and despair.
3. Depiction of social constructs and self-identity.

Level of Abstraction:

1. Sociocultural factors and interactions between individuals and their surrounding environment.
2. Development of moral values between good and evil.
3. In relation to personal and social concepts.

After establishing the category criteria and levels of abstraction, the next step is to code the study material. The coding process is repeated to produce more accurate data analysis. The first coding stage is conducted to formulate categories that align with the designated levels of abstraction. The following are the ten categories formulated through the observation process of 25-50% of the material. The coding process will continue iteratively, refining and adding categories as needed, to ensure comprehensive and accurate analysis of the anime's socio-cultural representation.

Table 1. *Category and Category Definition*

No.	Category	Category Definition
1.	Terror and Trauma	Any event that causes an overwhelming feeling of danger and triggers trauma
2.	War and Military	All kinds of events and war figures that show or are a symbol of the identity of the Japanese nation
3.	People	Race, ethnicity, figures that can become symbols or representatives of Japanese society
4.	Religion	Religious practices shown that might become representation of Japanese society
5.	Language and Communication	All forms of expressions and communication movements that reflect Japanese society.
6.	Nature and Residence	Everything related to the geological forms of the earth, plants, animals and man-made objects that can represent or show the identity of the Japanese people.
7.	Agriculture	Everything related to knowledge, activities and results related to farming and animal husbandry in Japanese society
8.	Values	Ethics, norms, and social values agreed upon by the common people and reflect the Japanese nation
9.	Nationality	All forms of symbols, systems and behavior of figures that show or are a symbol of the identity of the Japanese nation

10. Social Class The division of society based on hierarchical levels whose members share similar values, interests and behaviors

Table 2. The Frequencies of Appearances of the Various Socio-Cultural Elements in Attack On Titan

No	Category	Total of Item	Frequency	%
1.	Terror dan Trauma	7	250	15%
2.	War and Military	11	347	20%
3.	People	7	160	9%
4.	Religion	3	25	1%
5.	Language and Communication	8	152	9%
6.	Nature and Residence	13	101	6%
7.	Agriculture	3	19	1%
8.	Values	25	525	30%
9.	Nationality	5	52	3%
10.	Social Class	5	91	5%
	Total	87	1722	100%

Based on the established categories, the research object will be reevaluated to identify the types, forms, and frequency of sociocultural elements in the 88 episodes of the anime Attack on Titan. To facilitate the search and categorization of the sociocultural elements identified in Attack on Titan anime, a grouping is created based on the types of elements that share similarities with each other. Therefore, within one category, there may be more than one type of sociocultural element that is still related to the main category. The complete data categorization can be seen in the appendix table. According to the analysis results, out of 87 identified forms/items of socio-cultural elements, a total of 1722 occurrences were found. As explained in the previous section, Attack on Titan is an anime that does not prominently present literal elements of Japanese identity. Instead, Japanese identity is represented through various elements such as norms, values, and socio-cultural conditions prevalent in its society at a particular time. For instance, in terms of narrative, the values, norms, and customs portrayed by the characters in Attack on Titan exhibit similarities with those in Japanese society. With a dominating frequency of appearance of 525 instances (30%) throughout the 88

episodes of the anime Attack on Titan, the “Values” category depicted in the anime serve as symbols of the influence of Japanese cultural heritage in shaping the narrative of Attack on Titan

In the following sequence, the categories with the next highest frequencies are "War and Military" (20%) and "Terror and Trauma" (15%). This is related to the premise of the Attack on Titan story, which revolves around the struggle of humanity within the walls against the terror posed by the Titans. The use of swords and the 3D Manuver Gear in the narrative is prevalent. Although these visuals do not have direct connections to Japanese culture, the dominance of sword usage is associated with Japan's traditional weapon, the Katana, which was used by Samurai in warfare and martial arts. The 3D Manuver Gear, enabling users to soar through the air using gas and momentum, also symbolizes humanity's fight for freedom. The premise of humans confined within their walls aligns with Japan's historical context during the Edo period (Konishi, 2014). From 1603 to 1868, Japan implemented the "Sakoku" policy, a nearly three-century-long period of isolation, aimed at preventing foreign influences from disrupting traditional Japanese customs, culture, and way of life. This isolation allowed Japan's unique way of life to flourish, fostering a self-sustaining economy and a society with self-sufficient resources, energy, and food. Moving on to the category of "Terror and Trauma," two items stand out with significant frequencies: "Witnessing Death and Massacre" and "Fear Reactions". Attack on Titan reflects the conditions of Japanese society during World War II, when Japan and the United States were still actively attacking each other, and civilians were the victims of the war. Many animated works were inspired by World War II. The Attack on Titan anime series does not depict the war between Japan and the United States in a realistic manner, but it portrays the determination, fighting spirit, and impact of wartime conditions.

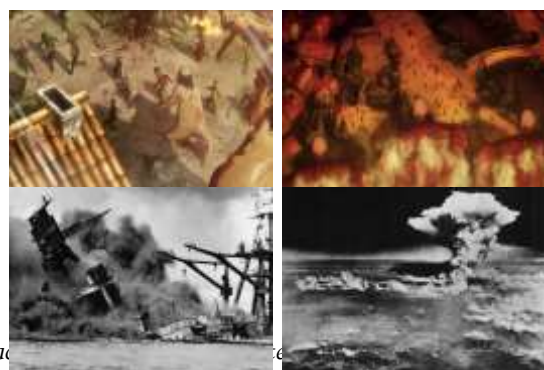


Figure 2. (a) *Marley's surprise attack on the Shiganshina district (top), Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor (bottom).*; (b) *The destruction of the entire Marley continent by the island titan Paradis (top), the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima by the United States army (bottom)*

Research Results

From the 10 categories that have been defined, a total of 87 items or forms of sociocultural elements were identified. Within the examined sample of 88 episodes, these sociocultural elements appeared 1722 times. These elements can take both literal and symbolic forms in representing the social and cultural conditions of Japanese society. This is what makes *Attack on Titan*, a fantasy and apocalyptic genre anime, still bear the essence of Japanese culture. This research has provided evidence that: there are sociocultural elements from the conditions of Japanese society present in the anime series *Attack on Titan*. The context of the content in *Attack on Titan* is influenced by Japanese culture, displayed through narratives and symbolism throughout the series. The characteristics of a society can be represented in a fantasy world and visual style that is not directly related to the society being depicted.

These findings demonstrate the dynamic relationship between anime, fantasy, and sociocultural representation, and how anime like *Attack on Titan* can serve as a platform for expressing and exploring cultural aspects while captivating diverse audiences. The utilization of symbolism in creating the fictional world of *Attack on Titan* provides significant artistic advantages. The adaptation of symbolism in this anime offers a simultaneous sense of familiarity and novelty to the viewers. Through the non-literal adaptation process, the creators successfully maintain a sense of freshness and distinctive creativity, while the audience still feels a sense of familiarity and comfort in enjoying this work. This phenomenon renders *Attack on Titan* as a unique anime that is well-received by various audiences. The use of symbolism adds an additional dimension to the story, bringing forth deeper meanings and arousing the curiosity of the audience. Through the symbolism embedded in characters, plot, and setting, the anime invites viewers to understand the hidden emotional and philosophical layers within the narrative. Through skillful adaptation, the creators are able to produce a complex and captivating narrative. In this regard, *Attack on Titan* demonstrates its ability to combine mythological aspects with postmodern storytelling,

creating an intriguing and captivating fictional world. Thus, as seen on Figure 3, the use of symbolism in *Attack on Titan* provides added value to this work. It establishes a profound emotional and intellectual connection between the audience and the story, enriching their understanding of the themes explored, and creating a unique and satisfying experience.

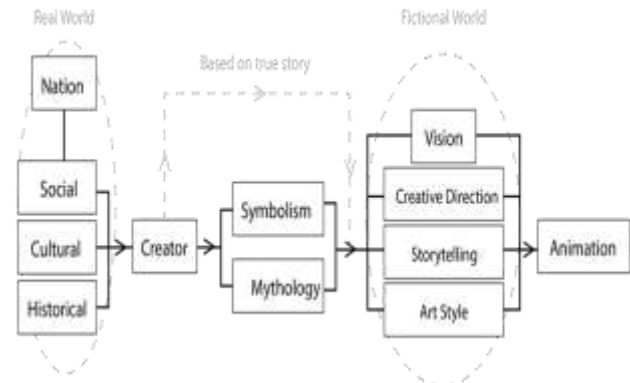


Figure 3. *The use of symbolism and mythology in animation for depicting sociocultural issues in the real world.*

CONCLUSION

From the conducted research the findings indicate that the context of the content in the anime series *Attack on Titan* reflects the influence of Japanese culture through narrative and symbolism throughout the series. This goes to prove that representation of a socio-cultural conditions of a society can be portrayed through various use of symbolism. This makes the animated film creation have elements of novelty and innovation while still maintaining a connection with cultural elements as well as representing the creator's intention and aspirations for the animation. The utilization of socio-cultural elements in the form of symbolism in animated films holds significant potential to enrich the audience's experience and deliver a more profound narrative. Socio-cultural elements encompass values, norms, and customs existing within a society. By incorporating these elements into the symbols employed and character portrayals in animated films, the intended messages can establish stronger connections with the audience's experiences and understanding.

Due to time constraints, this research focused solely on an in-depth visual analysis of the main series of the anime *Attack on Titan*, consisting 88 episodes, to identify socio-cultural elements and their frequency of occurrence. Therefore, it is recommended to examine the representation of socio-cultural elements in both national and international animations, as there might be similarities or differences that could complement the findings of this thesis. Additionally, it is highly possible that the representation of socio-cultural elements

through symbolism can also be found in works of indie animations and feature-length animations, not limited to anime adaptation series, as emphasized in this research.

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