



Semiotic Analysis Of The Anime “Attack On Titan” As A Symbol Of Power In The Bstation App

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Abstract

Aims. This study aims to analyze the semiotics in the anime *Attack on Titan* as a sign of power on the Bstation app. Produced by WIT Studio in the first season and MAPPA Studio in the final season, directed by Tetsuro Araki in the first season and Yuichiro Hayashi in the final season, it is adapted from the manga by Hajime Isayama.

Methods. This study employs Roland Barthes’ semiotic method within the framework of the Order of Signification, which divides meaning into two stages: denotation—such as military control of evacuations, battles between soldiers and Titans, the king’s presence on the throne, the use of the Founding Titan’s power, Eren’s transformation into a Titan, dialogues rejecting authority, and the Rumbling event that devastated vast regions— Connotation, which carries deeper meanings regarding power relations, domination, and legitimacy.

Result. The military is interpreted as a symbol of social control; the death of soldiers reflects individual sacrifice within the system; the puppet king signifies the illusion of formal legitimacy; the manipulation of memory demonstrates control over collective consciousness; Eren’s transformation affirms a shift of power into the individual realm; while the Rumbling represents destructive supremacy. Myths such as heroism, state authority, and individual freedom reveal how power operates, both structurally and personally.

Conclusion. The units of analysis in this study consist of key scenes in the anime Attack on Titan that signify practices and power relations, with data sources comprising visual documentation and dialogue from episodes on the Bstation app.

Keywords : Semiotics, Attack on Titan; Signs, Anime Film; Visuals



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INTRODUCTION

Attack on Titan, or Shingeki no Kyojin in Japanese, has two meanings: “Attack on the Titans” and “Attack of the Titans.” The story follows humans living behind giant walls to protect themselves from the threat of man-eating Titans. Humanity—often referred to as the

Eldian race—lives in fear behind three walls: Maria, Rose, and Sina. Among the Eldian race is a boy who longs for freedom: Eren Yeager. He wants to reclaim the freedom taken by the Titans and uncover the truth about history, which was falsified by the first king who erased the memories of the Eldian people—a race deliberately confined within the walls.

Bstation is a video streaming platform popular among today's youth that offers a variety of entertainment content, such as anime. The platform is popular in Southeast Asia and offers anime with Indonesian subtitles, as well as HD video quality, and features a community section that allows users to interact. The app is officially available on the App Store and Play Store, and can be used for free by users who want to watch entertainment like anime, as well as Indonesian and Western movies.

The current development of digital media has brought about significant changes in how people access entertainment and information, particularly among teenagers and the younger generation. (Tri Yanti Monika et al., 2025) One of the most widely used platforms is Bstation, also known as Bilibili. This platform functions as a video-based media platform that offers a wide variety of content, such as anime, video games, music, vlogs, educational content, and live streaming. This diversity of content allows Bstation to attract users from various backgrounds and with diverse interests. Not only is it used as a source of entertainment, but the platform also serves as a space for creators to express their creativity and build digital communities through engaging and communicative visual content.

In addition to offering a wide variety of content, Bstation also features communication tools that facilitate interaction among users. One of the platform's distinctive features is "danmaku," which are comments that appear directly on the video screen as the content plays. This feature provides a more active and interactive viewing experience, as users can share their opinions or reactions in real time regarding the video content. Not only that, but there are also comment features, live chat, and a "follow" feature for creators, which facilitate communication between viewers and content creators. The presence of these various features makes Bstation not just an entertainment platform, but also a digital communication medium and a space for building online communities.

In terms of accessibility, Bstation can be accessed via various devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. The app is available for free and features a simple interface that makes it easy to use for a wide range of users. Subtitle support in multiple languages, including Indonesian, further enhances the user experience when enjoying the

available content. This ease of access allows Bstation to reach a broader audience without being limited by location or the type of device used.

In terms of legality, Bstation strives to provide official content through partnerships with copyright holders and licensing providers. The availability of legal content is a crucial step in curbing the spread of pirated content, which remains rampant on illegal platforms. Through an official licensing system, users can enjoy higher-quality content while supporting the creative industry and content creators. As such, legality is a key factor in building public trust in this digital platform.

Meanwhile, the business model implemented by Bstation combines free and premium services. Users can access most content at no cost through ad-supported viewing, while premium services offer additional benefits, such as higher video quality, faster access to the latest episodes, and an ad-free viewing experience. In addition to generating revenue from its premium system, the platform also earns income through live streaming features, user donations, and promotional partnerships with various parties. The implementation of this business model demonstrates that modern digital platforms can leverage a combination of technology, content, and user interaction to build a sustainable media ecosystem.

Anime popular among today's youth is not merely entertainment, but also a vehicle for representing ideology and power. For instance, **Attack on Titan** depicts domination, military and political control, as well as resistance. It is important to examine how signs of power manifest through denotation, connotation, and myth. This certainly has relevance for understanding constructions through media messages, particularly in the field of communication studies. Themes of power are clearly evident in the consistently bleak plot presented in the story.

Attack on Titan often presents a plot that reveals the corruption within the story. It depicts domination, the manipulation of history, and the extermination of half the human population—all justified in the name of nationalism to reclaim territories plundered by the “Titans”—in order to achieve the goals or interests of a select group of stakeholders. This is a form of manipulation to achieve a goal where power remains in the hands of a select few. Additionally, the anime *Attack on Titan* implicitly illustrates how this power is used to manipulate the society of Paradis Island, which is isolated by colossal walls. By manipulating history and ideology—that is, by burying the past, such as burying historical facts—when King Fritz first exploited Ymir's power and then covered it up with a different narrative to protect Eldia's power.

The kings abused their power by oppressing their people and prioritizing their own egos over the safety and comfort of the individual, disregarding the safety of humanity. This occurred in the third season, when Commander Erwin Smith was falsely accused and was to be executed. The fourth season introduces another race living far from Paradise Island across the sea: the Marleyans. They are depicted as a nation with a more advanced civilization and the world's most powerful military, relying on Titans as their primary military force. The Marleyans treat the Eldians as volunteer soldiers, using them as frontline troops and suicide bombers. The Marleyan government requires every Eldian family living in Marley to instill in their descendants the belief that the Eldians who fled to Paradise Island, isolated themselves, built the colossal wall, and live within it are devil-descended Eldians—heartless, cruel, and devoid of morality. Meanwhile, the Eldians within Marley are considered “good” Eldians, subject to Marley's coercion to serve on its soil. They are forced to become volunteer soldiers and utilize their Titan powers, thereby bearing the world's hatred toward the Eldian race. Based on the narrative, many speculate that the story presented by the anime *Attack on Titan* is a representation of power and is also related to the presence of fascism within it, which was championed by the dictator Adolf Hitler (Hidayatul Hasanah & Fauzan Aulia, 2023)

Semiotics is a method of analysis or a social science that seeks to understand signs. Semiotics examines how signs can be used to convey a message, forming a system through which that message or a specific meaning can be communicated to an audience. Sometimes, the meaning of language or symbols can create tension in and of itself; when linked to ideology, it can even become the communicator's underlying context, influencing those who interpret the message. According to (Wibisono & Sari, 2021a) Semiotics studies how humans interpret various meaningful elements in objects—elements that do not explicitly intend to communicate. Barthes identifies three dimensions: the signifier, the signified, and the act of signification, with the audience playing a central role in the interpretation of meaning through two stages: 1. Denotation, which is the meaning perceived through the senses—such as seeing a green light meaning “go”; 2. Connotation, which occurs when a sign is infused with emotion, culture, and ideology—such as the rice stalk in the Pancasila; and finally, Myth. According to Barthes, a myth is a “communication system within a message”—meaning a form of message whose truth must be believed but cannot be proven. A myth is a way for a message to convey meaning. Barthes posits that mythological discourse is not merely oral speech; it can also take the form of writing, photography, film, scientific reports, sports, performances, advertisements, and paintings. Essentially, a myth is something that possesses a mode of representation. Myths

and semiology are both related to the concept of signs—that is, signifiers, signifieds, and the sign itself.

From (the representation of moral messages in the film *A Silent Voice* (Charles Sanders Pierce’s *Semiotic Analysis*, n.d.) in his study titled “Representations of the Background of the Nazi-Jewish Conflict in the Anime Series *Attack on Titan*”), it is evident that a work can imply, incorporate, or be associated with a conflict similar to historical events that occurred in the real world. A conflict involving the pursuit of freedom, justice, and revenge.

The purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of how the symbols of power—denotation, connotation, and myth—are portrayed in the anime *Attack on Titan*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Concept

Communication is a process in which a message is conveyed from a communicator to a recipient. The communicator conveys the message indirectly, whether implicitly or explicitly. There are various media that communicators can utilize to convey a message; one such medium is film. This film was chosen because it possesses distinctive characteristics: it is a modern medium and simultaneously contains meanings within the film that we can interpret through signs, symbols, and meanings. (Maulana, 2023) Communication is the transmission and reception of information, news, or messages between two or more people so that the intended meaning or message can be understood. Communication is the process by which an idea is conveyed from a source to one or more recipients with the aim of bringing about a change in behavior (Nugraha, 2019)

Based on the above definition, the author concludes that communication involves exchanging information, conveying messages, and engaging in discussions between one or more people—either directly or indirectly—while receiving feedback. Furthermore, communication is not merely the exchange of information; it can also involve interpreting a sign, where a sign is a form of communication that contains its own message and meaning. What researchers must examine based on the theme to be addressed.

Two order of signification Roland Barthes

According to Roland Barthes, a denotative sign is formed by the relationship between the signifier and the signified. However, a denotative sign does not stop at literal meaning; rather, it can also serve as the basis for the emergence of connotative meaning. Thus, the

denotative sign functions as a material element that enables the formation of additional meaning at a subsequent level. In Barthes' view, a connotative sign not only introduces additional meaning but also retains the denotative elements that form the foundation of its existence.

Barthes distinguishes between denotation and connotation as two levels of signification. Denotation is understood as the first level of signification, which indicates the direct meaning or the meaning that is immediately apparent. However, Barthes argues that denotation is also related to certain limitations on meaning that are influenced by social and political conditions. Meanwhile, connotation is the second level of signification associated with specific values, emotions, and ideologies. In this context, connotation is often linked to myth—that is, the way society legitimizes the dominant values prevailing during a particular era.

Furthermore, Barthes explains that the process of signification occurs in two stages. The first stage takes place through the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which together form a sign and represent external reality. The signifier refers to the physical form or visible element, while the signified relates to the concept or meaning that is understood. The unity of the two produces a denotative sign. Subsequently, in the second stage, the sign evolves into a connotative meaning related to emotional, cultural, and ideological aspects.

In Barthes' theory, myths can emerge from various forms of signs that develop within society. Myths are not static; they can change with the times and be replaced by other, more relevant myths. Therefore, myths are understood as forms of meaning that arise from the cultural and historical symbols of a society, while also serving as a means to preserve and legitimize dominant values in social life. (Wibisono & Sari, 2021b)

Roland Barthes (Denotation, Connotation, Myth)

Semiotics is a human activity engaged in by everyone; while it plays a role in all aspects of human life, communication can also present obstacles and problems. As John Fiske noted, in the study of communication, we are confronted with two schools of thought: first, communication as the transmission of messages, and second, communication as the production and exchange of meaning (Saleha & Yuwita, n.d.)

In the concept of communication as the transmission of messages, Fiske examines the way a message is constructed—a process known as “encoding”—while the process of translating or interpreting the message is called “decoding.”.

Semiotics, or semiology, is the discipline that discusses or examines the meaning of a sign. The first philosophers to study signs from a linguistic perspective were Ferdinand de Saussure and Peirce. These two philosophers examined how the study of signs relates to the use of signs in language, which essentially involves analyzing the meanings found within language. Saussure placed greater emphasis on structured systems; according to him, these possess more meaning than when understood piece by piece, which is why Saussure is closely associated with structuralism. “The structuralist understanding of culture relates to the ‘system of relations’ within the structures that form the grammar, enabling the emergence of meaning.” (Nasirin & Pithaloka, n.d.)

As a successor to Saussure’s ideas, Roland Barthes emphasized the interaction between a text and the personal and cultural experiences of its readers, as well as the interaction between the conventions within the text and the conventions experienced and expected by its readers (Dan Marxisme & Sayyid Santoso Kristeva, n.d.)

Roland Barthes’ theory divides this model into three dimensions: the Signifier, the Signified, and the Signification, with the audience playing a central role in the interpretation of meaning through two stages. Denotation refers to the meaning that can be perceived through the senses, such as seeing a green traffic light on the road. This is the actual meaning, or a phenomenon perceived by the five senses, and can also be referred to as a basic description. Like a traffic light. Denotatively, it is simply a light of a certain color—red, yellow, or green—located on a highway. Denotation is also defined as the literal or primary meaning of a sign, which is clear and direct, such as the meaning found in a textbook or dictionary. This is a meaning that has a simple and clear layer, referring directly to reality.

Connotation occurs when a sign is intertwined with emotions, culture, and ideology—such as the chain and rice in Pancasila. Connotation also refers to cultural meanings that may emerge, or meanings that exist due to the influence of established cultural norms, resulting in a shift in interpretation while remaining intrinsically linked to the symbol or sign itself. In terms of connotation, traffic lights have different meanings; each color has its own specific meaning: red means stop, yellow means caution, and green means go. Connotation has a secondary system of meaning that refers to cultural, emotional, and ideological meanings that are

indirectly or hidden behind the literal meaning (denotation) of a particular sign. These are meanings interpreted subjectively through culture, values, and individual experiences.

Myths are part of discourse; that is, the discourse that takes place within a society is a form of interpretation of signs or meanings based on phenomena occurring within that society. The interpretation of these signs arises from a shared understanding among the community. It is from this discourse that myths emerge and become an integral part of a society's culture. Myths possess a system in which layers of meaning serve to naturalize ideology by transforming historical concepts into facts that appear natural. According to Barthes, myths do not always conceal; rather, they more often disrupt and provide ideological justification for reality, with the aim of perpetuating specific views or dogmas within society.

Myths are part of conversation. Conversations that take place in society are a form of interpreting meaning and signs, the fundamental basis of which is a phenomenon occurring within society. Such interpretations can arise due to a consensus reached through these conversations among members of the community. It is from these conversations that myths emerge and become part of the community's culture. Conversation is a distinct realm; myths are a form of discourse that can become myths as long as they are conveyed through discourse (Odyn et al., 2024)

The Concept of Power

(Siti et al., n.d.) Power is the ability to control certain individuals or groups through authority, influence, charisma, and physical strength. Power is the ability to influence the actions, beliefs, and behavior of others to align with the goals of those who hold power. This is the ability to use influence to achieve a goal; power can also be defined as an opportunity realized through one's own will and the ability to implement it, including overcoming resistance from others. Power also takes four forms: Political Power, which is the ability to influence public policy and the government. Structural Power is a form of power that regulates relationships between individuals or groups, such as between parents and children. Discursive Power is a form of power derived from categories and language that grants legitimacy to a particular group over others. Hard Power vs. Soft Power: Hard Power is a form of power that uses force to influence a group, while Soft Power is power that uses influence and persuasion to influence a group (Durrotulhikmah & Yuliana, n.d.)

Based on the above definition, the author concludes that power is the ability to influence groups or public opinion, whether through force or wisdom; power can also be defined as the

ability to influence people's beliefs, actions, and behavior to align with the goals pursued by those in power. (Habibi & Ms, 2023) Power also takes various forms, such as political, structural, and discursive power, as well as hard power and soft power.

Anime Attack On Titan

Attack on Titan, or *Shingeki no Kyojin* in Japanese, has two meanings: "attack on the Titans" and "attack by the Titans." The story follows humans living behind giant walls to protect themselves from the threat of man-eating Titans. Humanity—often referred to as the Eldian race—lives in fear behind three walls, namely (Maria, Rose, dan Sina). Among the Eldian people was a boy who longed for freedom: Eren Yeager. He wanted to reclaim the freedom that had been taken away by the Titans and uncover the truth about the history that had been falsified by the first king—a history that had erased the memories of the Eldian people, who had been deliberately confined within the walls.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method because it aims to explore in depth the meanings, symbols, and processes of how power is represented in the anime Attack on Titan on the Bstation app, which will be described in detail—starting with the symbols present in the anime, such as the walls, how power is depicted, and its connection to the political ideology of fascism. Qualitative descriptive research also provides space for researchers to understand individual responses through the Bstation app's comment section regarding how power is represented, as well as through groups of anime event enthusiasts. The research will be conducted online via the Bstation app, as it is directly relevant to the data and sources to be collected—such as descriptions from the app itself and other sources via the comment section

The subject and object are the sources of the research, which aims to identify where the data was obtained. The subject of this study is the anime Attack on Titan, which has a total runtime of 10 hours, spanning from Season 1 through Season 4, Part 2. The study focuses on the representation of power within the anime. The researcher also uses supporting instruments to delve deeper into the sources to be collected, such as interview guidelines, writing tools, and recordings.

The informant selection technique, which employs a criterion sampling approach, is the primary technique researchers use in qualitative research for non-probability sampling, where

samples are selected based on specific criteria, such as visual symbols of power featuring a dominant color and dialogue that conveys meaning.

The primary data analysis techniques—which constitute the main data to be used in this study—were obtained from the anime **Attack on Titan** with Indonesian subtitles. Secondary data consists of supporting data obtained from various sources, such as reference books, the internet, and articles related to the subject of this study.

Data Collection Methods: This study focuses on political issues, such as the exercise of power depicted in the anime *Attack on Titan*, where the Marleyans use their power for their own national interests, and King Fritz uses his power to uphold an ideology that manipulates the Eldians. The data analysis process will be conducted in chronological order from the beginning to the end of the study.

Reduction is the process of analyzing data by conducting a comprehensive review of the anime *Attack on Titan* and systematically synthesizing it into interpretable, meaningful insights without compromising the value of the collected data. Data Presentation is the process of explaining the overall results and data obtained by classifying specific scenes and presenting classifications regarding political issues such as Fascism, which is linked to Power.

DISCUSSION

Researchers took seven scenes and also some screenshot evidence from the many *seasons* and *episodes* in *the Anime Attack on Titan*, researchers analyzed the collected data to produce the following results:



Figure 1. The military is evacuating residents from Titan,
Copyright: Bstation
Season 1, Episode 1, 6:25

Scene 1

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The reason the researcher selected the footage in Figure 1 is that the military is organizing the evacuation of residents through instructions, and the military personnel guiding the panicked residents serve as a sign that conveys a denotative meaning—its literal meaning—and a connotative meaning—one that aligns with ideology—which serves to reveal underlying values. The presence of military personnel evacuating residents carries specific meanings at the mythical level.

Denotation

A scene showing military personnel organizing the evacuation of residents following the collapse of the Maria Wall. The military, giving firm instructions to the panicking civilians, who could only follow orders without resistance. Uniformed soldiers directing the evacuation of panicked civilians in a chaotic environment, standing in the middle of a residential area, with damaged buildings visible in the background, as the military directs the evacuation of civilians to a specific location while the civilians carry their belongings and display panicked expressions on their faces.

Connotation

The military, which is portrayed as authoritarian in a connotative sense, represents the highest level of the social hierarchy. Possessing weapons, uniforms, and a physical stature that places them above civilians, the military creates an unequal power dynamic in which civilians are positioned as inferior subjects who cannot resist this hierarchy and are entirely dependent on the authorities—in this case, the military. On a connotative level, this scene constructs the military as a representation of hegemonic authority that monopolizes social control in a crisis situation. The presence of armed soldiers, firm commanding gestures, and the panicked responses of civilians establish an asymmetrical power dynamic. Power is represented not merely through coercive instruments, but through situational legitimacy that normalizes compliance. The visualization of order produced by the military demonstrates how power operates through the production of symbolic stability amidst chaos

Myth

On a mythical level, this anime constructs an ideology in which state power is justified through the claim of protection. The authoritarian side (the military) is not only present as a protector but also as a controller of social life; power is considered “natural” and “necessary” as long as it is framed within a narrative of security. This scene reproduces the ideology of the state’s power legitimacy through narratives of protection and stability. The military is not merely represented as a security institution, but as a mechanism that is symbolically justified

to regulate, control, and discipline society. Citizens' compliance with military instructions builds the myth that state authority is an inherent, natural, and unquestionable entity, especially in crisis situations. Power is perceived as a legitimate social necessity



Figure 2. The sacrifice of rookie soldiers as a tool of state power, Copyright: Bstation

Season 1, Episode 5, Minutes 10:10–10:25



Figure 3. The sacrifice of rookie soldiers as a tool of state power, Copyright: Bstation

Season 1, Episode 5, Minutes 10:53–10:59

Scene 2

The reason the researcher selected the footage in Figures 2 and 3 is that these scenes depict rookie soldiers advancing to the front lines of the battlefield to retake a wall destroyed by a Titan; they are required to make sacrifices and must not retreat during the resistance efforts carried out by these rookie soldiers. This is because it shows a sign that presents denotation as the actual meaning of the soldiers' scene and connotation identical to ideology, which serves to reveal values. With the dialogue from the authorities to "sacrifice," there are certain meanings at the mythical level

Denotation

A scene showing rookie soldiers sent into battle against the Titans without a solid plan, resulting in mass casualties as many of the rookies were killed by the Titans. The Titans attacked and many rookie soldiers were killed; then, soldiers were shown using three-dimensional maneuvering gear while facing the Titans. Some soldiers are captured and eaten by the Titans, while others try to escape from the seemingly chaotic situation.

Connotation

The mass deaths suffered by the rookie soldiers are not merely the result of warfare against the Titans; rather, they reveal a system in which human bodies are exploited for the sake of state interests. These rookie soldiers are portrayed as expendable resources, sacrificed

as tools to maintain power. Scenes depicting the soldiers' deaths symbolically signify the human body as a commodity within a militaristic power structure. Soldiers, who are institutionally associated with state power, are instead portrayed as objects of extreme vulnerability. The visual violence depicted reveals a paradox of power: a dominant institution that relies on individual sacrifice. The soldier's body is no longer interpreted as a heroic subject, but rather as an entity that can be consumed by the logic of conflict and power.

Myth

What is constructed at the mythical level in this anime is a false sense of heroism. This can lead to the mass deaths of rookie soldiers—troops who are told they must sacrifice their lives as a moral duty. This anime critiques state ideologies that normalize the sacrifice of civilians or individuals as a legitimate price to pay for the stability of power. The depiction of soldiers' deaths at the mythical level constructs the ideology of sacrifice as the moral foundation of power. Soldiers' bodies are interpreted not merely as casualties of war, but as symbols of a normalized collective duty. The anime constructs a myth that the survival of the social and political system requires individual sacrifice. Thus, violence and death are no longer seen as structural failures, but rather as consequences considered natural within the logic of power.



Figure 4, The Unmasked Fake King,
Copyright: Bstation
Season 3, Episode 5, Minutes 10:47–11:35



Figure 5, The arrested aristocratic elite,
Copyright : Bstation
Season 3, Episode 6, Minutes 11:40–12:50

Scene 3

The reason the researcher included the footage in Figures 4 and 5—which reveal the king and the nobles captured in this scene—is to show that the king is merely a puppet controlled by the elite nobles, who manipulate the country's rules and systems while using the king as a mere formality. It is a sign that presents denotation as the actual meaning and

connotation as identical to ideology, which serves to reveal values. With the dialogue revealing that the king is a fake, there are certain meanings at the mythical level.

Denotation

It was revealed that the king was merely a figurehead used only temporarily by the aristocratic and military elite, who were the ones actually controlling the country's decisions. The king sat on the throne while other officials spoke around him; the king was seen wearing royal attire and a crown, surrounded by officials and nobles. The king appeared silent and did not move much, while the conversation took place among the officials around him; they appeared active in their discussion, while the king remained passive.

Connotation

The power represented is no longer personal in nature, but rather systematic and structured, with the king serving merely as a puppet—a signifier—indicating that he is not the actual holder of power. On a connotative level, this scene exposes the distinction between symbolic power and operational power. The king, as a formal figure of authority, is depicted in a passive position, while the political and military elites exercise actual control. The disparity between symbols of legitimacy and the practice of power conveys the meaning that power is structural and can operate independently of the figure who appears to be sovereign. This scene underscores that visual legitimacy is not always synonymous with actual control.

Myth

This anime constructs a mythical framework in which true power is held and controlled by a select few who hide in the shadows; the current modern political system is depicted as an illusion of democracy or monarchy—which serves as a symbol of the elite's dominant power, using the king as a puppet—while also illustrating that the true holders of power need not be visible to the public or conspicuous. This scene exposes the ideology surrounding the illusion of formal power's legitimacy. The king, as a symbol of traditional authority, serves to maintain the stability of public perception, while the actual exercise of power is carried out by the elite structure. The anime constructs the myth that modern power often operates through mechanisms of symbolic representation, where signs of legitimacy mask the actual relations of domination. Power is not always transparent; rather, it operates through the construction of social reality



Figure 6, The ties of the first king revealed,
Copyright : Bstation
Season 3, Part 1, Episode 8, Minutes 10:10–10:50



Figure 7: The noble kingdom descended from the first king is revealed, Copyright : Bstation
Season 3, Part 1, Episode 8, Minutes 11:35–12:45



Figure 8, It has been revealed that, all this time, humanity's memories have been manipulated, Copyright : Bstation
Season 3, Part 1, Episode 8, Minutes 14:42–15:24

Scene 4

The reason the researcher included the footage in Figures 6, 7, and 8 is the mass erasure of human memory, which ultimately revealed that all along, people had been living shackled by the walls surrounding them, as well as by a falsified history and memories that had been taken from them, leaving them unable to distinguish between fact and fiction. It is a sign that presents denotation as the true meaning and connotation as identical to ideology, which serves to reveal values. Through dialogue, the facts are exposed—that humanity's memories have been erased, and that certain meanings exist within the realm of myth.

Denotation

It is revealed in the dialogue that, all this time, humanity's memories and history have been manipulated due to the actions of the first king, who used the Founding Titan to erase the memories of all humanity and distort the true history of humanity regarding the world. The power of the Titan that was used, as well as the other characters who appeared confused,

showed expressions of bewilderment due to the effects of the Titan's power activation, even though there was no direct physical combat.

Connotation

Memory is a symbol that functions as human consciousness; the mass erasure of human memory is the most extreme form of ideological control exercised by those in power, who seek to control not only individuals but also their thoughts, opinions, and the authentic history of humanity. The act of manipulating memory, in a figurative sense, signifies power in the form of ideological control, which is used to shape public opinion so that humanity complies with and believes in a history that has been distorted.

Myth

On a mythical level, this anime asserts that history is not a neutral fact, but rather a form of absolute power that can only survive by manipulating memory, distorting the original history, and erasing alternative narratives. The scene depicting memory manipulation on a mythical level signifies control over humanity as a form of absolute power. Collective memory is interpreted as a political arena that determines identity, history, and social truth. This scene constructs the myth that reality is not objective, but can be constructed, modified, or even erased by the dominant authority. Power in this context is no longer limited to physical control, but encompasses control over consciousness and the production of meaning.



Figure 9, Panicked residents of Marley witnessing the Titan attack, Copyright: Bstation
Season 4, Part 1, Episode 5, Minutes 21:35–21:48



Figure 10, Eren's Titan attacking in the middle of the city. Copyright: Bstation
Season 4, Part 1, Episode 5, Minutes 21:55–22:00

Scene 5

The reason the researcher included the footage in Figures 9 and 10 is that the power of an individual outside the state is demonstrated by Eren's rampaging Titan, which uses its overwhelming power to display absolute authority as an individual. Eren attacks Marleyan civilians and people from other nations with his terrifying Titan power, causing the citizens in

the city center to panic and flee in chaos. It is a sign that conveys denotation as its literal meaning and connotation as its ideological significance, serving to reveal values, as evidenced by the visual sign of the terrified facial expressions.

Denotation

Eren transformed into a Titan and attacked the civilian district of Marley, as well as people from various nations. Eren Yeager transformed into a Titan and destroyed the urban area; before doing so, he spoke. Only after the transformation did the Titan appear in the middle of the urban area, causing buildings to collapse as a result of the Titan's transformation, followed by explosions and civilians fleeing as Eren, having transformed into a Titan, rampaged through the city center.

Connotation

Eren's transformation illustrates a shift in the source of power—from power previously regulated by the state to individual (absolute) power. Power is no longer recognized or even accepted by the law, but rather by a destructive force. Connotatively, Eren's transformation represents a shift in the locus of power from institutions to individuals. The resulting destruction affirms that power is no longer mediated by structural legitimacy but is manifested through the superiority of force. This scene constructs power as a destructive capacity capable of instantly redefining social relations. The individual emerges as the center of a new dominance.

Myth

On a mythical level, this anime deconstructs heroism, revealing that heroes are no longer synonymous with morality, but rather with the destructive consequences of violence and absolute power that can arise from an individual's self-legitimization through their own morality. Eren's transformation reflects an ideology of the ambiguity of heroism and power. A figure previously constructed as a victim of injustice transforms into an agent of destructive domination. The anime constructs a myth that the moral legitimacy of power is fluid and problematic. Power does not always arise from formal institutions, but can emerge from individuals who claim subjective justification. This scene underscores that the boundary between liberation and oppression is relative



Figure 11, Eren stated that he is free,
Copyright : *Bstation*
Season 4, Part 2, Episode 12, Minutes 20:12–20:45



Figure 12, Revealing that Eren will use the Wall Titan,
Copyright : *Bstation*
Season 4, Part 2, Episode 12, Minutes 20:55–21:12



Figure 13: Eren is going to destroy the entire world,
Copyright : *Bstation*
Season 4, Part 2, Episode 12, Minutes 21:50–22:01

Scene 6

The reason the researcher included the footage in Figures 11, 12, and 13 is that Eren, who rejects the control of authority and possesses absolute power over himself, is speaking to the Eldian civilians, stating that he will destroy the world with the massive Wall Titan army. It is a sign that presents denotation as its literal meaning and connotation as its ideological significance, serving to reveal underlying values. Through Eren's dialogue, in which he reveals that he is not controlled by any party, certain meanings emerge at the level of myth.

Denotation

Eren Yeager declares that he does not want to be controlled by anyone or any party. Eren engages in a serious conversation with the people of Eldia, with the camera focusing on close-ups of their faces. The dialogue takes place between Eren Yeager, the people of Eldia,

and several other characters; there is no significant physical action, as the scene focuses on the conversation between Eren and the other characters and the people of Eldia.

Connotation

This dialogue both explains and marks Eren's transformation from a hated and oppressed subject into a dominant and absolute one, as well as power represented not merely as a collective value, but as an individual right without limits. On a connotative level, Eren's dialogue constructs freedom as a paradoxical discourse. Rejection of external control does not merely signify resistance, but represents the articulation of absolute personal power. Freedom in this scene is interpreted not as collective emancipation, but as the legitimization of individual domination. The anime conveys the idea that extreme freedom can transform into a new form of totalitarianism.

Myth

What this myth explores is the paradox that absolute freedom will actually give rise to a new form of tyranny. The anime critiques the ideology of extreme individualism that leads to a dictatorial system of government, in which the state seeks to exercise absolute control over every aspect of public and private life. Eren's dialogue on a mythical level constructs the ideology of freedom as a paradoxical discourse. Freedom is represented not merely as an emancipatory value, but as a justification for the emergence of absolute individual power. The anime constructs a myth that the desire to be free from domination can transform into a new mechanism of domination. Extreme freedom is interpreted as the potential for personal totalitarianism.



Figure 14, A colossal Titan on the move,
Copyright : Bstation

Season 4, Part 2, Episode 12, Minutes 23:06–23:30



Figure 15, Mass destruction caused by ground
shaking, Copyright : Bstation

Season 4, Part 3, Episode 1, Minutes 06:34–07:55



Figure 16 shows a colossal titan trampling everything in its path,
Copyright : Bstation
Season 4, Part 3, Episode 1, Minutes 08:25–08:59

Scene 7

The reason the researcher included the footage in Figures 14, 15, and 16 is that these visuals depict a number of colossal Titans devastating the world on a massive scale and trampling everything in their path. It depicts human fear and the vast destruction, with people fleeing in terror as the world is thrown into chaos by the ground tremors caused by Eren and the army of thousands of colossal Titans. It is a sign that presents denotation as its literal meaning and connotation as its ideological significance, serving to reveal the values of the visuals presented, as well as the mythical meaning behind the terror caused by the colossal Titans

Denotation

It depicts a colossal Titan destroying and trampling everything in its path across the earth, which implicitly represents a narrative of absolute power achieved through terror and fear. The colossal titans emerging from within the walls march forward, devastating vast areas; the destruction is on an immense scale, affecting both the natural environment and urban areas, while people are seen fleeing with panicked expressions on their faces. As the colossal titans reduce buildings to rubble due to the ground tremors caused by their passage, the visuals depict the massive movement of these colossal titans.

Connotation

The rumbling or ground tremors caused by the colossal titans are a form of terror used as a tool of power, wherein the message of power is conveyed not through diplomacy or deliberation, but through destructive devastation and terror. On a connotative level, the rumbling represents power in the form of universal destructive supremacy. The scale of destruction constructs a visualization of total domination that transcends political, moral, and

humanitarian boundaries. The Colossal Titans function as a hegemonic metaphor for absolute power that negates resistance. Power appears as a mechanism of mass terror that affirms the powerlessness of the global subject.

Myth

On a mythical level, this anime constructs a narrative in which supreme power is achieved through visual depictions of global terror and fear—a world confronted with the reality that whoever possesses great and overwhelming power or influence is the ruler. Rumbling represents the ideology of power supremacy in the form of universal terror. Global destruction builds the myth that supreme power is achieved through the ability to completely eliminate resistance. The Colossal Titan serves as a metaphor for hegemonic power that transcends moral and political boundaries. The anime builds the myth that absolute power tends to lead to destruction, where domination no longer requires legitimacy but is enforced through mass fear.

CONCLUSION

The researcher approaches **Attack on Titan** not merely as a work of popular entertainment, but as a cultural text rich in constructions of meaning and ideology. Through Roland Barthes's semiotic approach—which unpacks layers of denotation, connotation, and myth—I seek to trace how representations of power are constructed, negotiated, and contested within the narrative. A systematic analysis of seven selected scenes was conducted to reveal the relationship between visual signs, dialogue, and narrative structure with the practices of domination and legitimization that are represented. Using this framework, this study not only identifies what is visible on the surface but also dissects the implicit meanings and ideologies at work beneath it. Based on the entire discussion, the following conclusions can be formulated.

Denotation

On a denotative level, the seven scenes in **Attack on Titan** depict events that literally illustrate the exercise of power through concrete actions, such as the military's control of evacuations, battles between soldiers and Titans, the king's presence on the throne, the use of the Founding Titan's power, Eren's transformation into a Titan, dialogues rejecting authority, and the Rumbling event that devastated a vast region. At the first level of meaning, all these scenes represent visual and narrative activities that can be observed directly without ideological

interpretation. Power at this level manifests as actions, positions, and events visible within the story's structure.

Connotation

On a connotative level, this sequence of scenes carries deeper meanings regarding power relations, domination, and legitimacy. The military is interpreted as a symbol of social control; the death of soldiers reflects individual sacrifice within the system; the puppet king signifies the illusion of formal legitimacy; the manipulation of memory demonstrates control over collective consciousness; Eren's transformation affirms the shift of power into the individual realm; while the Rumbling represents destructive supremacy. Overall, power in this anime is not merely present as a political structure, but as a mechanism of domination that operates through the body, discourse, history, and symbolic power.

Myth

On a mythical level, Attack on Titan constructs an ideological narrative in which power is paradoxical and problematic. Power is legitimized in the name of protection and freedom, but in practice tends to give rise to control, manipulation, and violence. This anime both reproduces and critiques myths about heroism, state authority, and individual freedom by showing how power—whether structural or personal—has the potential to turn into absolute domination. Thus, this text asserts that power is never neutral, but is always linked to the production of meaning, ideological legitimization, and destructive consequences.

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