Character Design of Eren Yeager in Animated Attack on Titan Series from Season 1-4

D F Rosyid, R Maulina

Magister Design Department, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Indonesia

E-mail: Dzulfiqar.75321008@mahasiswa.unikom.ac.id

Abstract. Attack on Titan is a popular animated series from japan that was adapted from a comic book with the same title created by Hajime Isayama, this animated series is set in a fictional world where humans live surrounded by a huge wall that protects them from giant man-eating creatures called titans. The main character in this series is Eren Yeager, a young man who can be a "titan shifter". which is an ability to transform into a titan creature. One of the factors that influence the popularity of Attack on Titan is the visualization of the main character Eren Yeager, and his character in each season, making him an interesting and strong character to be discussed. This study was conducted to describe the development of the main character design from season 1 to season 4. The method is used to visually describe the character and personality built by the author. it's hoped that this research can be used as reference material in making a fictional character design for future needs.

1. Introduction

Animation is an entertainment medium that is well known and easy to find nowadays, the animation itself is a sequence of images formed into a certain movement [1]. In general, the animation is a drawing process by modifying the frame of each image that is formed with a certain period to produce a moving image. In addition, animation also has a meaning that makes the image look more alive, so that it can arouse the emotions of the audience [2]. With advances in technology and developments in the arts industry, animation media have become more diverse and provide their uniqueness. One of the countries that makes an animated film a popular cultural icon of that country is Japan. Japanese popular culture or commonly known as Japanese popular culture has managed to attract a lot of attention from people around the world [3]. some examples of popular culture include several cultures namely, comics, animation, video games, music, and drama. In general, Japan broadcasts animation in the form of a series that is determined based on each season that is aired. This animated series is aired at a certain time, the episodes shown in the art usually vary, depending on how the story is told by the animated series. Like films in general, animation is also used to convey an idea or a certain implied message that can provide its own experience for the audience [4]. Among the many animated series circulating, Attack on Titan or as known as Shingeki no Kyojin is an animated series that has its uniqueness in conveying the story it tells. Attack on Titan is an animated series themed on a fictional story which is described as a world guarded by a great wall but there is a large man-eating creature called a titan outside the wall. This animated series is adapted from the comic book of the same name by Hajime Isayama, animated by Wit Studio in 2013 as well as Studio Mappa in 2021.

Studies related to Attack on Titan have been done often before. But the study is focused on a fairly broad scope, the research that is usually carried out usually refers to the topic of a certain point of view, such as the political point of view depicted in the attack on titan series. In the series, how the Marley

people, which are described as the highest work, oppress the Eldia and think that the Eldia is a weak nation. This is how genocidal behavior is described in the Animated series [7]. On the one hand, the political depiction of the attack on titan series is shown in the form of a non-historical war inspired by real events, along with a star message in it. this is because the attack on the titan is a work of fiction. In 2010, Isayama, the creator of Attack on Titan, added on his blog that one of his characters was inspired by the character Akiyama Yoshifuru, who is a General of the Japanese Army [8]. During the plot of the story of the attack on the titan that raised the element of war, this series is often related to the world wars that occurred in human history. this can be seen in how the human figure is depicted as the victim and also the opposition. while the titan is described as a weapon used by the opposition to destroy certain parties [9].

Meanwhile, the large wall used in the core story of this series illustrates how the social structure is applied to the core of the story. The social structure explains how the government's relationship in managing its subordinates, isolation in the wall illustrates how the government emphasizes a monarchical system inspired by society in pre-industrial times in Europe [10]. several other studies discuss the personal point of view of good and evil. In the attack on titan series, it explains how great power can provide a huge potential that is beneficial and detrimental to humans, if that power falls into the wrong hands it will destroy mankind [11]. And there is also research that examines the representation of idol figures on these characters. Given the many characters who took part in developing the story, Attack on Titan has its uniqueness in the eyes of its fans [5]. This series also represents a form of self-efficacy, the research refers to the self-development of the character Armin Arleth who is a friend of the main character, Eren Yeager. Armin's character experiences development in his characteristics. Armin's development of efficacy makes him more able to develop his maximum potential [12].

This research will focus on the main Protagonist in the attack on titan series, namely Eren Yeager. This character was chosen because he is a key character of the series itself and this character has a different character development from the characters that have appeared in the attack on titan series. This research will examine the design composition, character background, colors, and costumes. The goal is to know the visual elements and characteristics that build the character.

2. Method

The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method. This method emphasizes providing details about certain descriptions, symptoms, and phenomena. Data in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers [1]. So later researchers can analyze the data based on these observations. Qualitatively, this research intends to understand the phenomena related to the research subject under study. The descriptive qualitative method on this problem is used to reveal the actual problem described in the character Eren Yeager in describing the character's personality. and provide an overview of the image with the character which later on the data can be concluded into an analysis

The data collected will use data collection techniques in the form of direct observation by examining the animated series Attack on Titan from the first to the fourth season. As well as good literature studies from reference books, journals, magazines, and internet sources.

In this study, it will also be studied using Hiroyuki's Manga Matrix theoretical approach Tsukamoto, to further research the elements of character design and the characteristics and personality in making character designs, as well as to examine what aspects of me influence the development of these characters.

3. Results and Discussion

Just like a movie, there are characters and characterizations in an animated series. Characterization is a display in describing a person's character in a story. While the characters themselves are shown to people and actors in a story [5] The thing that stands out in the animated series Attack on Titan is how the characteristics of the main character named Eren Yeager experienced developments and changes from the first season to the fourth season, not only developing in personality but also in character design. Eren Yeager is described as a naive and ambitious young man. Until one day the fall of Wall Maria, the wall

that protects humans from being surrounded by titans, has collapsed. At that moment he directly witnessed his mother being eaten by a Titan creature. This event will cause Eren's intense hatred for the Titans as he vows to wipe them all off the face of the earth.

Eren is shown as an ambitious young man, with a slender physical body and sharp furrowed eyes and eyebrows, making him look like a character who often causes trouble. it shows that this character has a strong determination in holding his goal [6]. Eren himself is a unique character, it is based on how he sees the world because he was born and grew up in the confines of a wall surrounded by titan creatures, Eren has the ambition to take revenge for anyone who dares to take his freedom. Eren went through many phase changes since the beginning of the series and as the series progressed, his personality continued to develop. However, his core personality remains the same, he is described as having the same characteristics as humans in general, has advantages and disadvantages, good or evil it returns to the view of his audience.

This is because when Attack on titan enters season 3, Eren finds out the truth that there is a mastermind behind all the creation of the giant man-eating titan. he felt that all this time he had been imprisoned in a wall that restrained him and his friends. from there he was determined to finish off the people who restrained him.

That's when Eren's characteristics began to change and become more serious in his storytelling, this can be seen from how the character's appearance throughout the series runs. What makes it interesting is how the storyteller portrays a character that was originally full of hopeful characters to become a darker character.

3.1. Eren's Character Analysis Yeager (Early Season)

In the early season, Eren Yeager is introduced to a small world that is confined to a wall that surrounds his village. At that time he did not know about the outside world until finally the wall that protected his village was destroyed by the titans [6]. In the end, Eren had to lose his mother and survive with his adopted sister Mikasa, and his best friend Armin. From there, Eren was determined to kill all the titans, and started his dream by entering the military academy.

Eren's character will be analyzed using the manga matrix technique which will be divided into several parts, which is:
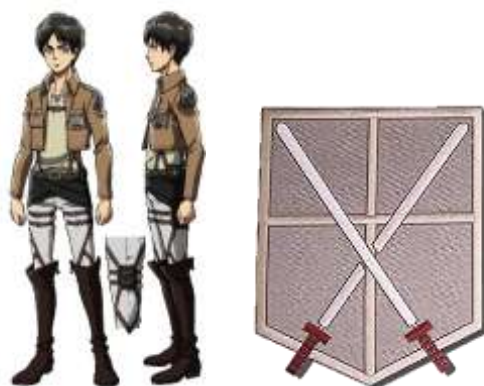
Figure 1. Eren Yeager (early season) with the Training Corps symbol

1. Shape Matrix
   Eren's stature is described by using the structure of the human body which is used as the basic form of the character. Eren Yeager is visualized with the posture of a teenager with a height of 183 cm

2. Costume Matrix

In the early season, Eren Yeager is visualized with the stature of a teenager, in this season Eren is determined to realize his determination to destroy all titans by joining the military academy. Here, Eren is introduced to wearing the "Training Corps" uniform. This uniform is the training uniform of a military academy dedicated to training and educating its soldiers to become members of the three main military branches.

The training corps is depicted in the form of a shield emblem with two swords in front of it. This emblem is affixed to the front of the chest, left arm, and back of the shoulder on the jacket. Some straps and high boots are used for safety reasons.

3. Property matrix

Eren Yeager, the main character in the Attack on Titan series is described as a stubborn, strong-willed, passionate, and impulsive young man, who is determined to protect humanity and eventually escapes from the Wall he has been living in. As a teenager, he was eager to join the military academy. Previously he had argued with his mother, calling the people in the village losers and comparing them to farm animals.

Eren cares about his best friend, Armin, and Mikasa. He risked his life to help them. In certain episodes, he often fights with children who usually annoy his best friend Armin. Like most teenagers, he tends to see the world in black and white, he has a high sense of humanity but considers people who take other people's freedoms, as trash. He also has a habit of thinking without thinking, even in situations where his life is in danger.

3.2 Eren's Character Analysis Yeager (Season Two)

In season Two, Eren debuted as a member of the Survey Corps, a branch of the core military tasked with overseeing the outer walls. In this season Eren learns that he can transform into a titan creature inherited by his father. Eren began to recognize that the outside world is a harsh world, at that moment he had to accept the fact that many victims had fallen during his duty in the Survey Corps [6].

Figure 1. Eren Yeager (season two) with the Survey Corps symbol

1. Shape Matrix

Eren's stature is still described as the same as the previous season.

2. Costume Matrix

Eren's costume. Eren is seen wearing a cloak that shows the emblem of one of the main military branches in the series. After graduating from the military academy Eren decided to proceed to one of the main military branches namely "The Survey Corps". The Survey Corps itself is the branch of the Military that is most actively involved in direct combat with Titan creatures,

Titan studies, human expansion, and outer exploration. They have the best soldiers who are most skilled in using combat equipment as well as vertical maneuvering tools. They are considered the "hope of mankind" with their badge known as the "Wings of Freedom." They hope that one day, their efforts will change the world and they will be able to recover what has been taken from humanity.

3. Property matrix

Eren's characteristic trait Yeager began to develop after he learned that, all this time he had kept the ability to transform himself into a titan creature, this ability was given by his father. He now focuses his anger on the Titans, harboring a deadly hatred for them, intending to rid the world of the Titans one day. Fueled by revenge, he vows to personally exterminate them all and return humanity to its rightful place.

This high self-confidence is what makes him a weakness for Eren, he tends to lose faith in himself and blames his incompetence when faced with situations where he can't do anything, and his naive decisions put his teammates in danger. This includes when Eren put his trust in the Special Operations Forces when he tried to fight the intelligent Titan in the form of a Woman, resulting in the deaths of all of his teammates. As well as the deaths of many veterans who died in Eren's rescue operation after he was caught off guard and kidnapped by his treacherous teammates, Reiner Braun and Bertholdt. Hoover.

3.3. Eren's Character Analysis Yeager (Season Three)

In the third season, Eren begins to learn the truth of his father's legacy that the titan was once a human as usual, and is controlled by one of the government countries out there called Marley. After knowing this, Eren's ambition is to destroy the people involved with the government [6].

Figure 3. Eren Yeager (season three)

1. Shape Matrix
   Eren went through some changes to his physique, his hair looks a bit longer and his height is starting to grow, and from the depiction of a cooler facial expression

2. Costume Matrix
   In this third season, Eren is seen wearing a long coat that shows his " Survey Corps" emblem

3. Property matrix

It took a lot of encouragement from his friends to overcome the desperate circumstances of the previous incident and it took time to regain his spirit. But at that time he also learned from the book left by his father that Titan is actually a human being forced to change by the Government outside the island, or what is commonly called Marley. Upon learning of this fact he redefined his goal by harboring his hatred for the Marley.

Here Eren's character develops, Eren is known to be quite charismatic and has a talent for delivering fiery speeches, often without realizing it succeeds in persuading the masses of his audience to sympathize with his point of view. After Eren finds out there are still enemies across the ocean. Eren wonders whether killing everyone across the ocean will bring freedom to the people within the Wall.

3.4. Eren's Character Analysis Yeager (Season Four)

In the Fourth season, Eren managed to infiltrate a country called Marley, there he learned the truth that the Marley people have a personal grudge against the walled nation formerly called the Eldia. The eldia themselves are a nation that has special blood that can turn themselves into titans in a certain way. Eren's determination to destroy the Marleys is getting worse. There he was also determined to kill all those who had brought down the Marley people utilizing genocide. His friends disagree with his goal and try to stop Eren.

Figure 4. Eren Yeager (third season)

1. Shape Matrix

   In this fourth season, several changes can be seen from the hairstyle he uses and the expression on his face that looks more moody and cold.

2. Costume Matrix

   In this fourth season, Eren looks different by wearing different clothes from the previous season, by wearing a gray T-shirt and a cloaked jacket as well as black trousers and black shoes, giving the impression of a different character than he has ever known before.

3. Property matrix

   After several years since the third season, Eren has shown tremendous progress in his analytical and tactical skills, both in and out of combat. In addition to maintaining his

disguise as a Marley soldier for a long time and obtaining a method of delivering his letters to the Survey Corps. His infiltration of Marley had given him a change in perspective on his foes. After spending time disguised as a Marley soldier, he begins to understand that his enemies are people no different from himself. Nevertheless, he still prioritized his mission to destroy the Marleyans for the freedom of the people of the Wall, no matter how many lives were lost on both sides. Eren slowly began to enjoy taking out his enemies, smiling when he was trying to torture or finish them off.

Eren believes that true goals sometimes require unethical means. He was ready and willing to use such a method himself when he declared war against Marley.

4. Conclusion

Based on the conclusions from the analysis above, it can be seen that the visual design based on the analysis of the manga matrix shows that the character Eren Yeager underwent several changes that were visible in terms of the characteristics of the characters depicted. Eren is slowly transitioning from the side of the protagonist who then turns into the antagonist. It can also be concluded that the creation of a character is not only seen from a visual perspective, but the references in the development of the story behind the altar can become a unique and interesting character.

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