

The Good ‘US’ vs. the Evil ‘THEM’ as Fluid Constructs in the “Attack on Titan” Manga

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Abstract – Hajime Isayama’s manga “Attack on Titan” represents one of the artistic literary works that questioned the politics of co-existence in the world. The manga tragically depicted the polarized world of Good US vs. Evil THEM humans and human-eating Titans co-exist in. In this context, Nietzsche (1886/2009, p. 81) [9] once said that “What an age finds evil is commonly an anachronistic echo of what previously was found to be good—the atavism of an older ideal.” This is what this article tries to foreground; the fluidity of morals and the inconsequentiality of the separation between Good US vs. Evil THEM when humans’ existence is at stake. Indeed, Isayama showed us that we all have the Titan gene and we all transform to a Titan that destroys everything the moment our sole existence is endangered. This study is based on Nietzsche’s perspectival view of Good vs. Evil and on Van Dijk’s US vs. THEM polarized ideology coupled with a quantitative inquiry of the frequency of this polarization in the manga text using the semi-automatic annotation software, the UAM CorpusTool.

Keywords – Attack on Titan, Good, Evil, US, THEM

I. INTRODUCTION

Hooper (2016, p. 34) [7] advocates that, from a biological point of view, “Good and evil don’t exist in any real sense” and that the “evolutionary pressures that can make humans violent can also make us extremely peaceful”. He provides the example of Chimpanzees who sometimes help their siblings care for their offspring, but also sometimes commits infanticide and cannibalism and eat those offspring. In this sense, can we think of Chimpanzees as showing signs of Good and evil? Biologists have found an explanation that applies to human beings as well. Indeed, they claim that “Underlying good and evil is the neutral hand of natural selection”. Accordingly, Chimpanzees that help their siblings are doing it for themselves, for preserving their genes specifically, and these same Chimpanzees that eat chimps of their own coalition are also doing for themselves, may be because of shortage of food or any other threat to the survival of the fittest in the coalition. In this context, biologist Josephine Head claims that “the tendency for group violence between males, and the strong ‘us and them’ mentality we attach to everything, can be traced back to this adaptive behaviour in apes” (Hooper, 2016, p. 34) [7]. The questions that arise here is that if it is all for natural adaptive behaviour, can we consider selfish acts of goodness good and violent acts of survival evil? What are the boundaries between Good and Evil? Are good and evil universal for all people?

The aforementioned questions become more problematic when applied to the context of war where every people consider their soldiers the good people and the enemies’ soldiers the evil people. How can we tell who is good and who is evil then? Indeed, as Cantacuzino (2011) [5] state, “the hypothesis which separates “good” from “evil”—“them” from “us”—“moral” from

“immoral”—does not help explain why such atrocities happen or how we might prevent them in the future” (p. 771). In fact, for him, “it is too easy to think of those who do grave harm to others as different from us, but the truth is that reasonable people will act irrationally and peaceful people act violently when their sense of self and family are threatened” (p. 770). This explains, from a philosophical point of view, “Nietzsche’s perspectivism, which insists that our cognitive capacities are always directed by our interests or affects” (Clark & Dudrick, 2012, p. 172) [6] when considering good and evil.

The context of war that this article will focus on to study this perspectival fluid view of the “good US” vs the “evil THEM” is Hajime Isayama’s post-apocalyptic manga “Attack on Titan”. As Vernon (2017, p. 481) [13] summarizes, Isayama creates a world where “humanity was nearly wiped out by the sudden and inexplicable appearance of the human-eating Titans”, to which it found the solution of forcing themselves “behind a huge enclosure comprising three concentric walls” where “the remainder of humanity defended themselves and regained peace” until the destruction of the first wall by a Colossus Titan leading to the Titans rampaging through humans eating them and exposing them to the danger of extinction again (p. 481). Eren, the protagonist of the manga, witnesses the death of his mother, a cruel death of being eaten by a Titan. Thus, he and his friends joined the soldiers fighting against these giant cannibal Titans where he discovered that he himself can turn into a Titan. Throughout the manga, it is revealed that there are many people inside the concentric walls who turned into Titans, “raising the question of where humanity ends and the race of the Titans begins, if there is any separation at all” (Vernon, 2017, p. 481) [13]. This leads us to the question of separation of the “good US” vs. the “evil THEM” again, which is further complicated when the manga revealed that all the people in the concentric walls have the “Titan gene” and can turn into Titans anytime if their ruler wants them to. It is also revealed that the people inside these walls, called the Eldians, are kept there by their ruler, the Founding Titan who erased their memories, not to die themselves and not to cause harm to the normal people, people of Marley who defeated the Titans, outside those walls. However, the normal Marleyan people themselves are the ones who have been sending Titans, by transforming Eldians who wanted to revolt against them, to the people in the walls to attack them and keep them there. The Marleyans are also using what is left of the Powerful Eldian Titans outside the wall to win their wars against other countries with the pretext that they are the incarnation of evil and that they have to pay for their ancestors’ evil doings by serving the normal Marleyan people. These Eldians outside the walls, hence, seek acceptance from the Marleyans who put them in an internment zone in Marley and hate those Eldians inside the walls because they left them and because they are the source of their suffering. Reading through all these events leads us to the question: what is the dividing line between good and evil, US and THEM and morality and immorality in this manga? This is the question this article attempts to answer with a focus on Nietzsche’s perspectival view of Good vs. Evil and on Van Dijk’s US vs. THEM ideology.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is based on Hajime Isayama’s manga “Attack on Titan” (2009-2021) whose summary is aforementioned in the introduction. It covers the total 139 chapters of the manga which were accessed from KODANSHA website [1] which describes this manga as an “award-winning and New York Times-bestselling series that is the manga hit of the decade! Spanning the monster hit anime TV series of the same name, Attack on Titan has become a pop culture sensation”. The genre of Manga “has become a staple element of youth culture in a large number of countries around the world” (Kacsuk, 2018, p. 2) [8]. In this context, the ideas of Isayama about the politics of existence and co-existence of people in the world will be studied, given the effect they might have on their audience considering the incredible popularity of the Attack on Titan manga. In that sense, this manga is about all of us in this world and it will delve deep in the psyches of all of us, people trying to co-exist in this planet.

This manga will be approached from two paradigms. The qualitative paradigm will focus on the analysis of the concepts of Good vs Evil and US vs THEM throughout the manga. The theories to be used in this analysis are Nietzsche’s reductionist perspectival theory of Good and Evil (1886) [9] and Van Dijk’s ideology discourse analysis theory of US vs THEM (2006) [12]. This qualitative analysis will be complemented by a quantitative analysis of the frequency distribution of the words referring to Good vs. Evil and to US vs. THEM in the manga. It is to be noted here that since the manga is voluminous and it will take a very long span of time to write the transcripts from Kodansha, the transcripts of the anime episodes (all four seasons) available online are considered in the quantitative analysis [2]. The website I used to upload these transcripts is TV Show Transcripts. This decision was also taken given the almost total similarity between the anime and the manga transcripts. This quantitative analysis will be carried out using the UAM CorpusTool, “a software for human and semi-automatic annotation of text and images” (O’Donnell, 2008, p. 13) [10]. This CorpusTool is equipped with a concordance option which will help with the queries of this article.

III. GOOD AND EVIL AS FLUID CONCEPTS

In the manga "Attack On Titan", it can be seen that "great power of any kind has the potential for both good and evil; it is frightening" (Weller & Wu, 2016, p. 63) [14]. Indeed, when the Eldians were in power, "*Eldians used the Power of the Titans to trample and rule the world for millennia! They wiped out other cultures, forced them to bear their children, and murdered endless droves of people!*" as Gabi, an outside the walls Eldian, explained. However, when Marleyans defeated the Eldians and ruled, they not only built a concentration camp for Eldians, ironically called Liberio, but they also "*used the devils to oppress other nations and repeat the tragedy*" and win other lands for themselves. This means that whoever is in power always finds a way to legitimize evil in the purpose of good where evil equals good. Indeed, the rulers, whether the Fritz family of Eldia, or the Marley governors, are the ones who define good and evil. Nietzsche (1886/2009) [9] calls this master morality where "it's the masters who establish the idea of the good" (p. 180). It is also the master who "determines value and does not need to have other people's approval" (ibid, p. 181). The master or noble ruler "makes the judgment "What is harmful to me is harmful in itself." He understands himself as [...] someone who creates values. Whatever he recognizes in himself he honours. Such a morality is self-glorification" (ibid, p. 181). This is why King Fritz erased the memory of the Eldians and decided to keep them locked in the three concentric walls without feeling the need to discuss this with his people. He sees his idea of peace as the good idea and the right idea. The same goes for Marley's rulers who think that exterminating the Eldians is the good idea of peace, because they used to exterminate them before.

However, the truth, as Baker and Jones (2019, p. 10) [3] claim, is that these rulers use the security of their state as "a collective attempt to sanitize mass death and enact the erosion of democratic ideals through the manipulation of good and evil." In so doing, they rely on the morality they created themselves, "a morality as being a drive for power [...] where] "Every morality . . . is a piece of tyranny", Nietzsche writes." (Burnham, 2007, p. 110) [4]. From this perspective, Rhonheimer and Malsbary (2011, p. 6) [11] explains that "the dichotomy "self-interest" versus "morality" makes no sense. This is because here morality is placed right at the service of one's own interest in the good, [...] and thereby serves an interest in the success of one's own existence." Thus, the wars driven by what is "good" and what is "moral" in this manga is actually driven by the interests of the rulers of Eldia and Marley. The people of these rulers are left in ambivalence between what good is and what evil is and whether they try to follow their rulers or revolt against them. This idea is discussed by Kaya who was telling Gabi, a Liberio (outside the wall) Eldian who believes that the Paradise Eldians (Eldians of the concentric walls) are devils that need to be exterminated for what their ancestors did, about the atrocities committed by Marley against the Eldians and her mom:

Kaya: They say humanity outside the walls thinks that we're devils. But I don't understand why we're hated so much. Mia, Ben. Tell me. What exactly did my mom do? What did she do to be hated so much?

Gabi: Your kind slaughtered people for thousands of years! Thousands? Don't tell me you forgot it! Eldians used the Power of the Titans to trample and rule the world for millennia! They wiped out other cultures, forced them to bear their children, and murdered endless droves of people! Stop playing the victim!

Kaya: My mom was born and raised here. She never did anything like that.

Gabi: But a century ago, the sins of your ancestors were terrible and great!

Kaya: A century ago? What about the people who live now? How have we sinned?

Gabi: Not long ago, you guys trampled my home.

Kaya: My mom was killed four years ago, so it's not her fault.

Gabi: I'm telling you, your ancestors killed people all over the...

Kaya: My mom didn't kill anyone! Answer me, Mia! Why did my mom have to suffer like that?"

Thus, as Cantacuzino (2011, p. 770) [5] advocates, "the hypothesis which separates "good" from "evil" is unhelpful when trying to understand why people harm one another". Indeed, everyone is capable of evil when their "sense of self and family are threatened". This is why Eren, the protagonist of the manga who witnessed the death of his mother and people by Titans sent by Marleyans to protect themselves against the Titans of the walls, transformed into a Titan and did the same thing to people in Marley in order to protect his own people. He even activated the rumbling that would kill 80% of humanity to get his own freedom without caring about others' freedom. Hence, the line between good and evil and the oppressor and the oppressed is blurred in the Manga.

By way of illustration, figures 1 and 2 show the transformation of Eren from an oppressed person whose mother died to an oppressor who is committing mass murder.



Figure 1: The Murder of Eren's mom in chapter 2 of Attack On Titan (KODANSHA)



Figure 2: The Rumbling of Earth by Eren's Founding Titan in chapter 134 of Attack On Titan (KODANSHA)

These figures show Nietzsche's "perspectival" view of Good and Evil. Indeed, Paradise Eldians considered the atrocities Marley did to them inside the walls as Evil, but to defend themselves and gain their freedom, they did exactly the same and more by killing 80% of humanity. Hence, good and evil are just a matter of perspective, a matter of judgement of what best fits the interests of each party.

Another element of morality that helps control the people's definition of good and evil is religion. Indeed, Nietzsche believes that the church's role is to create "a product or act that "justifies" existence and/or makes it "bearable"" (Burnham, 2007, p. 111) [4]. From this perspective, "religion makes suffering beautiful and thus justifies the suffering" (ibid. 111) [4]. In the context of the manga, the church of the order of the walls considers the suffering of the people of Eldia good because it is only through this suffering that they will atone for their ancestors' evil deeds. This is why, like the Fritz ruling family, they hid the fact that Eldians are Titans and kept them within the walls because this is their definition of good and peace.

Thus, as Baker and Jones (2019, p. 11) [3] suggest, "there is no distinction between good and evil; they are inconsequential given the gravity of actions carried out in their favour". This is evidenced by the frequencies of good vs evil lexical density in the manga text as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Frequency of words referring to good and evil in the Manga "Attack On Titan"

Good and words referring to good		Evil and words referring to evil	
good	192	bad	54
Nice	48	cruel	30
comrades	46	devil	27
hero	22	evil	4
heroes	10	devils	56
friends	33	beast	49
friend	22	monster	14
Goodness	4	monsters	12
ally	8	enemy	104
allies	4	enemies	31
patriot	5	traitor	7
Total	394	Total	388

This table shows that the reference to good and evil in the manga is almost equal, which suggests that good and evil always co-exist to the point that you cannot differentiate between them anymore. You cannot tell who is good and who is evil and who is right and who is wrong. Indeed, Cantacuzino (2011, p. 771) [5] took account of "The Gulag Archipelago" depiction of the Soviet prison system under Stalin where the writer explained that humanity would want to find purely evil people and destroy them to destroy evil once and for all, "but the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human-being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?" In the context of the manga, this fine blurry line between good and evil is discussed between Jean, Floch, Eren and Mikassa, Paradise Eldians raiding Marley and the Liberio internment zone Eldians:

Marley Soldiers: "You damn devils! Shoot 'em down! Those morons!"

Jean: Hey! You gonna burn the whole zone down?! What part of keeping civilian casualties to a minimum don't you get, Floch?!

Floch: The only thing here are enemies and places they live! Did you forget how they massacred humanity inside the walls?! We were eaten alive, dammit! They've got it coming! You're still saying that? Look. Eren's telling us something... to fight! We shouldn't just wait for our deaths in the walls. What we need... is a devil like him!

Mikasa: Eren... Do you have any idea what you've done? You killed civilians. You killed children, too. You've done things that can't be undone."

This conversation shows that Paradise Eldians are committing the same “evil” deeds they once fought against. However, this time, it is in the best interest of their kind. Thus, it is legitimate as Floch explained. It is pay back at the enemy. The enemy itself saw killing Paradise Eldians as legitimate since their ancestors massacred them. This led to everyone being caught in a vicious circle of oppressor and oppressed turning to oppressed and oppressor. This shows that anyone is capable of “evil” when their interests are at stake and that “evil” is embellished as “good” for the benefit of the people and the security of the state. Accordingly, each state, in this context Eldia and Marley, justifies mass killing for the good of its people, and here appears the inconsequentiality of the separation between good and evil. This is the embodiment of Nietzsche’s perspectivism which “insists that our cognitive capacities are always directed by our interests or affects” (Clark & Dudrick, 2012, p. 172) [6].

Besides studying the lexical reference referring to good and evil, a study of the lexical subjectivity of the Manga is carried out using the UAM CorpusTool as the following figure shows:

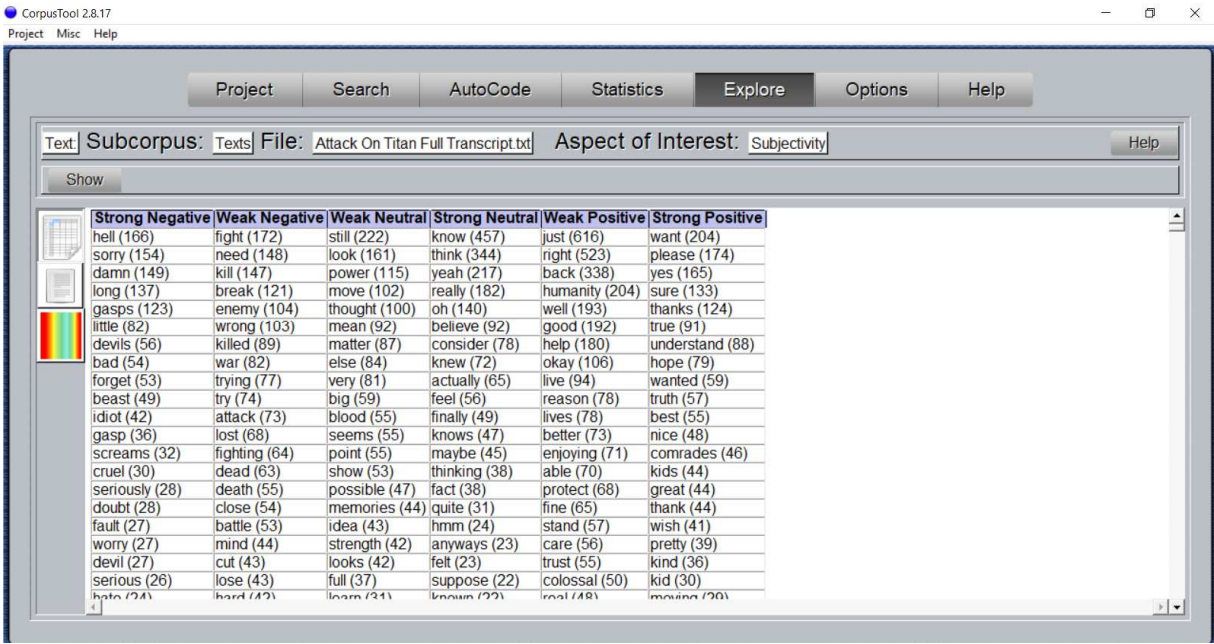


Figure 3: The lexical subjectivity of the Manga “Attack On Titan”

As figure 3 shows, the lexical subjectivity of the manga fluctuates between negative and positive subjectivity and, hence, between words referring to negative concepts like evil, hate, bad, monsters, death, etc. and words referring to positive concepts like good, better, hope, care, comrades, life, etc. This also shows that the whole lexicalization of the manga reflects the fluidity between positivity and negativity, good and evil included.

As an example, the lexical subjectivity strength of the last aforementioned conversation between Paradise Eldians is shown in the following figure along with the subjectivity and the subjectivity strength of the whole manga just above the conversation text. This operation is done using the UAM CorpusTool Explore pane:



Figure 4: The lexical subjectivity strength of the Manga "Attack On Titan"

Figure 4 shows how subjectivity changes throughout the manga with pale colors referring to positive concepts and dark colors referring to negative ones. This visualization is called heat visualization and it suggests, as the fluctuating colors in the figure shows, that the manga is based on the opposing concepts of positive and negative and, hence, of good and evil. The way this visualization works is clear in the selected short conversation shown in the figure where words such as killed, crushed, burn, devil are strongly marked as negatively subjective and words such as live, ensure, want and fun as positively subjective.

To conclude, the whole manga is based on the fluidity between good and evil where any detection of a defining line between the two is inconsequential. This fluidity extends also to how we see ourselves, US good and peace-loving people, and how we see the others, THEM evil and monstrous people, which will be explored in the manga in the following section.

IV. US VS. THEM IDEOLOGY IN DISCOURSE

This article aims to study the ideological polarization of US vs. THEM in the Manga "Attack on Titan". In order to study this polarization, it is necessary to understand the ideology behind it, and to do that, an understanding of what an ideology is is needed. According to Van Dijk (2006, p. 115) [12], ideologies are systems of ideas that reflect shared representations of social groups. Indeed, "as the basis of a social group's self-image, ideologies organize its identity, actions, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups". The people who share the same values, norms, actions, etc. form an "in-group" and the people who have different sets of values, norms, actions, etc. represent an "out-group" to the previously built "in-group". The "members of ingroups typically emphasize their own good deeds and properties and the bad ones of the outgroup, and mitigate or deny their own bad ones and the good ones of the outgroup" (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 115) [12]. Discourse is always structured around this polarization of in-group/out-group identities. This structuring happens by the boasting of in-groups and the derogation of out-groups in discourse at many levels like form, context, lexicon, etc. Before discovering these polarized discourse markers, an attempt at identifying in and out groups in the data of this article is done.

The ideological polarization in the Manga "Attack on Titan" is fluid. Indeed, the "in-group" US and the "out-group" THEM vary from one perspective to another and from one event to another and sometimes there is not even a line between these groups. The lines are so blurry to the point that sometimes it is not possible to tell US from THEM. The first polarized relationship is that which relates the humans inside the walls (US) and the Titans outside the walls (THEM). Tragically, though, the THEM turned out to be US since everyone inside the wall is also a Titan. The second polarized relationship is between Paradise Eldians (US) and everyone outside the wall (THEM) who wants to exterminate Eldians. This is also complex since the THEM has Liberio Eldians as members and non-members at the same time, which brings us to the third and most complex polarized relation between Liberio

Eldians and everyone else. Indeed, Liberio Eldians are both THEM to the world, Marley and to Paradise Eldians whom they normally belong to. However, they want to belong to Marley as "honorary Marleyans" and they sacrifice themselves to that end. They want to be an out-group different from the other Eldians though, deep inside, they know they are like them. All of these polarizations were shaken by the Rumbling at the end where alliances between the out-groups and wars between in-groups happened for the sake of one aim, saving everyone in the world, be it US or THEM. All of these ideological groups will be discursively studied to show the fluidity of polarization in this Manga.

To start with the first polarized ideology, the Manga starts with humanity, the in-group, facing an extinction danger by Titans, the outgroup. These two groups are in a reciprocal relationship of hunters and preys. The overall strategy in discourse is "positive presentation/action of Us" and "a negative presentation/action of Them" (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 125) [12]. Indeed, considering the lexicon used to describe each party, humans are depicted as survivors, fighters and heroes as Eren calls the Survey Corps (the soldiers exploring outside the walls) *"The heroes are back"* and the Titans are depicted as things, beings, monsters, etc. Considering actions, even though Titans have always had the upper hand over humans, their actions are always derogated and humans' actions are always boasted. Indeed, the passive voice is mostly used when talking about Titans to deny their agency. For instance, *"the Human Race remembered the terror of being dominated by them and the shame of being held captive in a bird cage"*. Oppositely, though humans have less power than Titans, the active voice is mostly used to report their actions. For instance, one of the Survey Corps said *"Let's teach this thing the power of the human race"* when they were facing a titan. Syntactically speaking, this gives power and agency to humans and, lexically speaking, there is an opposition between the good US human race and the bad THEM Titans. This opposition would go throughout the manga till the day humans discover that they are not the only humans out there and that the Titans whom they have always considered an enemy are good fellow Eldians who were forced to be Titans and who fed on them while having no agency or conscience of what they were doing. They have also discovered that any human inside the wall can transform into a Titan. Henceforth, the THEM Titans became part of US. This is exemplified by Sasha saying *"That's one of our compatriots"* when she and her friends saw a Titan while heading outside the walls. They did not kill the Titan or harm it. They rather pitied it and considered it one of their in-group, a compatriot.

The second polarized relationship is between Paradise Eldians and the world that wants to exterminate them. The Eldians inside the walls are considered the seeds of all evil. The whole world fears them including Liberio Eldians, their own. Thus, the world with all its diversity and conflicts came together to fight this common enemy, this threatening dangerous out-group. In an international summit held at Liberio to declare war on Paradise, the three walls island, Paradise Eldians were depicted as rebels against peace, "doom", people with cursed blood, "devils", etc. Paradise Eldians see the world the same way the world sees them, an enemy that might end their existence. Each party sees the existence of the other an extinction of itself. Thus, each party wants to end the other first. Eren understands this very well and this why he addressed Reiner before he storms into the summit in revenge saying: *"I'm the bad guy. I might just destroy the world. But to me, you were the bad guys, too"*. For Eren, he is doing to the world what was done to his people. He also said *"Reiner, I'm the same as you. Sure, there're jerks here, but good people, too. Across the sea, within the walls... It's the same. But you guys were taught everyone in the walls was a devil."* Here, Eren refers to what every polarization of US and THEM is based on i.e., ideology. Indeed, Willy, the leader of the summit, is structuring that ideology by depicting Paradise island as different from US the world, as devils, as a threat that must be dealt with once and for all. This is a reflection of the world we live in, a world where we are instructed whom to hate and whom to love, who is like US and who is different bad THEM. This always leads to a fight where each party thinks they are the good guys while, actually, we see each other as bad guys. In this context, Cantacuzino (2011) [5] documented the experience of Primo Levi, an Auschwitz survivor who described his concentration camp guards saying: "These were not monsters. I didn't see a single monster in my time in the camp. Instead I saw people like you and I who were acting in that way because there was Fascism, Nazism in Germany". He also added that "Were some form of Fascism or Nazism to return, there would be people, like us, who would act in the same way, everywhere." (pp. 771-772). Special members of this second polarization are the Liberio Eldians who share the same blood as Paradise Eldians but consider them *"island devils, threats to world peace, right? And anyway, they are not like us. They are savages. It's normal to kill them. It always has been."* as Gabi says, which brings us to the last and most complex polarization in the manga, Liberio Eldians and everyone else.

The third polarized relation in the manga is a special case since its members are in-groups and out-groups at the same time in many groups. Indeed, Liberio Eldians want to be acknowledged as "Honorary Marleyans" and for that end they sacrifice their lives in Marley's wars. They long to belong to Marley, but Marley is only using them for its benefits. Indeed, Marleyans have

always considered them monsters and carriers of the cursed blood and the shame of their ancestors. This is clear in their rejection and derogation by Marleyans throughout the whole Manga. Indeed, they suffered from Apartheid as they were forced to wear arm bands identifying them as Eldians. This band makes them not only less than a citizen in Marley, but also less than human, and this will justify anything Marleyans would do to them. They cannot even object because, for Marley, this is payback and atonement for the atrocities of their ancestors. There are a lot of instances in the manga that tell of painful stories of apartheid against Liberio Eldians. One of these many stories is that of doctor Tom Ksaver, an Eldian who removed his arm band and married a Marleyan. When his wife found out he is an Eldian, she slit her son's throat and her own. She preferred to die and to kill her son over being tied to an Eldian. Another story is that of Faya, Grisha Jaeger's little sister who was killed just for wondering a bit out of their "Liberio" internment zone. This has made Grisha a Restorationist who went for Paradise and had Eren as a child. Gabi, a Liberio Eldian warrior who wants to be an honorary Marleyan and to better the situation of her family and of her kind says *"because I am an Eldian born in this internment zone, people would spit at the sight of me walking around town"*. She also said *"I was able to make it this far because I believed that eventually the day would come when I wouldn't this armband [...] I wanted to prove to the world that Eldians are good"*. This is what Liberio Eldians seek, acceptance from Marley that rejects them for things they are not responsible for. In order to be able to live with all that hate and rejection imposed on them, Liberio Eldians had to direct all that suffering to a cause. That cause is Paradise Eldians, their blood, their own, their US normally. However, Liberio Eldians consider Paradise Eldians as THEM, as the source of all evil and as the cause of their suffering. They even hate them more than they hate Marleyans who have been subjugating them to the most inhumane apartheid ever. Indeed, they use their Titan Power in wars against the world, and hence the world considers them a dangerous out-group. They also use them to fight their own in Paradise, whether, unconsciously, by transforming them to Titans endangering Paradise existence, or, consciously, by sending them to Paradise to destroy their walls and kill them. This has created a crisis of identity to Liberio Eldians. Reiner, Gabi and Zeke went through this crisis each in their own way. To start with Reiner, he is a Liberio Eldian who wanted to be an honorary Marleyan and to do that, he has to betray his own, Paradise Eldians and to be a spy among them. In his mission, he ended up loving the people he is spying on and this has created a serious identity crisis for him. He divided his consciousness into two, one that is the spy and one that is the friend, which made him suffer mentally and emotionally. Part of him is Liberio and part of him is Paradise and he is torn between both parts, between both identities. Gabi started out as a firm believer that Paradise Eldians are devils and deserved to die, but when she went there, she came to realize at the end that they are people like them. Pieck has summed up the problem of all Liberio Eldians to Gabi:

Pieck : Gabi. Are we Marleyans or are we Eldians? What do you think?

Gabi : We're... Honorary Marleyans.

Pieck : Wrong. We are Subjects of Ymir. That's the one truth we can't escape. No matter what we're called, we're a race that turns into Titans. But like we saw at Fort Slava, Titan power is on its way out. As soon as Marley can't use us, they'll slaughter us all. Even if we prove we're "good Eldians," there's zero chance that we're freed.

As for Zeke, the one with royal Eldian blood, he has deceived everyone into believing he is with the people of Marley. He even went to the length of mass genocide against Paradise Island for the sake of one aim. He wants to euthanize all Eldians by changing their gene and denying them procreation. In so doing, he believes he will save the world. Thus, Zeke belongs to a group that he wants to wipe out genetically. All of these cases prove the existential and identity crisis of Liberio Eldians who are always out-groups that do not belong anywhere, which makes them always long for belonging somewhere. This longing comes with a lot of pain and shame that they and their descendants have to suffer just because they have Eldian blood.

To sum up, all the polarized relations in the Manga are based on the boasting of US and the derogation of THEM. Besides the aforementioned examples, there is also a numerical proof of this assumption. This proof comes in the form of Table 2:

Table 2: Frequency of words referring to US vs. THEM in the Manga "Attack On Titan"

Pronouns	Frequency
US (We, us, our/ours, etc.)	3567
THEM (They/Them/their/theirs, etc.)	1628

Indeed, Table 2 shows that the frequency of using US words is more than a double of the frequency of using THEM words. This proves that the manga is ideologically marked “in such a way that our good things are emphasized and our bad things de-emphasized, and the opposite for the Others—whose bad things will be enhanced, and whose good things will be mitigated, hidden or forgotten”.

Eventually, all these polarized entities; Paradise Eldians, Marleyans, Liberio Eldians and the world, put aside their differences for the sake of existence and formed an alliance against Eren and Jaegerists to save the world and to stop Eren from activating the Rumbling and exterminating all humanity. However, the moment the objective behind this alliance is achieved, the moment they turned against each other again. Indeed, Marleyan soldiers raised arms against Eldians and the world started preparing to take revenge on Paradise. This takes us to the fundamental question of the whole Manga: If we eradicate the “THEM”, can we as “US” leave in peace? Can we remain all “US”? This question was answered in the Manga and this answer can be summed up by Nietzsche’s quote: “Under conditions of peace the warlike man attacks himself.” (Nietzsche, 1886/2009, p. 72) [9].

V. CONCLUSION

Hajime Isayama’s Attack on Titan is based on the inconsequentiality of the separation between the good US and the evil THEM. Indeed, throughout the manga unfolds a cycle of oppressor/oppressed. The Eldians were oppressing Marley and the whole world in the distant past. After Marley defeated the Eldians, or thought so since it is the Eldians themselves who chose to back up in the concentric walls, Marleyans oppressed the Eldians. When the Eldians discovered the whole story of their walls’ imprisonment, they oppressed Marley and the whole world. Even, at the very end of the manga, when the Eldians are no longer Titans, the world started preparing for revenge and for oppressing Eldians. Along with this oppression cycle, fluid polarized relationships between Eldians, be it Paradise or Liberio, Marleyans and the whole world questioned the idea of group belonging and the construction of identity. Liberio Eldians, for instance, suffer from an existential identity crisis related to the fact that they are left to suffer in Marley by their own, Paradise Eldians, and they are segregated against in the worst form of Apartheid in an internment zone in Marley which is home for them. This has created an in-between identity state for them since they do not belong to either mentioned groups, which makes them inconsistent in categorizing either group as an in-group or an out-group. This brings us to the conclusion that the constructs of good US and evil THEM are fluid and that we adopt them depending on our benefits solely. Indeed, people in the manga or in our real world are willing to be good or evil to preserve their existence. This Nietzschean perspectival fluid view of morals determines the politics of co-existence in this world.

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