

University of Texas at Tyler

Scholar Works at UT Tyler

Communication Theses

Communication

Spring 4-26-2021

THE PERPETUAL REMINDER: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST (2003) ANIME SERIES BY HIROMU ARAKAWA

Hope L. Boyce

University of Texas at Tyler

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uttyler.edu/comm_grad



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), and the [Television Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Boyce, Hope L., "THE PERPETUAL REMINDER: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST (2003) ANIME SERIES BY HIROMU ARAKAWA" (2021). *Communication Theses*. Paper 3.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10950/3676>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication at Scholar Works at UT Tyler. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholar Works at UT Tyler. For more information, please contact tgullings@uttyler.edu.

THE PERPETUAL REMINDER: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING AND
END OF THE *FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST* (2003) ANIME SERIES BY HIROMU ARAKAWA

by

HOPE L. BOYCE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Communication
Department of Communications
Jaclyn Marsh, Ph.D., Committee Chair
College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Texas at Tyler

May 2021

The University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of

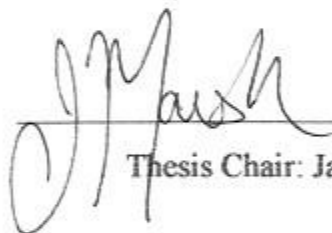
HOPE L. BOYCE

has been approved for the thesis requirement on

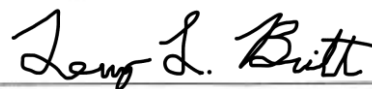
03/16/2021

for the Communications degree

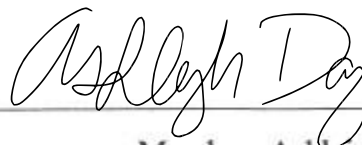
Approvals:



Thesis Chair: Jaclyn Marsh, Ph.D.



Member: Terry Britt, Ph.D.



Member: Ashleigh Day, Ph.D.

3/18/2021

DocuSigned by:



4E4BFC707ADA4E1...

Chair, Department of Communications

3/18/2021

DocuSigned by:



A1D7A503B8334DF...

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

© Copyright by Hope L. Boyce 2021
All Rights Reserved

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family, friends, committee, and department for their continued praise and support of my work. Without them this thesis would be a jumbled mess. They have spent countless hours listening to me talk about and construct what is the longest paper I have ever done. They offered priceless advice to me when I thought I could go no further with the topic at hand. They have also helped me realize that the topic I wished to research is enjoyable to an audience to read as well as scholarly in application. Everyone has so much of my gratitude and appreciation for their help on this project. I hope you find that the time and effort spent on this creation was well worth it. I surely did. I do hope you all enjoy.

Thank you.

Table of Contents

Abstract	09
Prologue: Consideration for Anime in Scholastic Studies	10
Pilot Study	11
Communicative Process	12
Social Identity and Community	12
Literature Review	12
Methodology	13
Sample Analysis: <i>Fullmetal Alchemist</i> (2003)	14
Questions and Answers	14
Expected Findings and Contribution	15
Deduction	17
Introduction	18
Anime's History	20
1940's	21
1950's	21
1960's and 1970's	22

1980's and 1990's -----	22
2000's to Present -----	22
Alchemy, Its Figures, Purpose, and Influence -----	23
Major Figures -----	24
Definition -----	24
Purpose -----	25
The Philosopher's Stone -----	25
Reputation-----	25
Literature Review -----	26
Manga and anime: Fluidity and hybridity in global imagery -----	27
Review of the book The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media, by Thomas Lamarre -----	27
(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga ----- -----	28
Applying Existential Philosophy and Popular Culture Images to Ethics: The Case for Fullmetal Alchemist -----	29
Seeing with Shinigami Eyes: Death Note as a Case Study in Narrative, Naming, and Control -----	29
Review -----	30

Methodology -----	31
Data Collection -----	31
Data Analysis Procedures -----	32
Narrative Lens -----	33
Results: Part One -----	34
Icarus, His Voice of Reason, and the Blind Follower: Episodes 1-2 -----	34
Episodes 1-2 Analysis -----	35
Text Selection -----	35
Descriptions and Interpretations -----	35
Setting -----	35
Characters -----	36
Narrator -----	38
Events -----	39
Casual Relations -----	39
Temporal Relations -----	40
Intended Audience -----	40
Moral Interpretation -----	40
Evaluation -----	41
Analysis -----	42
In Search of the Truth: Summaries of Events -----	43
Results: Part Two -----	44

A Lesson Learned: Episodes 50-51	44
Episodes 1-2 Analysis	45
Text Selection	45
Descriptions and Interpretations	48
Setting	48
Characters	48
Narrator	51
Events	52
Casual Relations	53
Temporal Relations	53
Moral Interpretation	54
Evaluation	54
Analysis	55
The Reminder: What to Take Away from <i>Fullmetal Alchemist</i> (2003)	56
Summary	56
Implications	57
Limitations	58
Future Studies	58
Conclusion	59
References	61
Appendix A	65

Abstract

THE PERPETUAL REMINDER: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE *FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST* (2003) ANIME SERIES BY HIROMU ARAKAWA

Hope L. Boyce

Thesis Chair: Jaclyn Marsh, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Tyler

May 2021

This paper's purpose is to explore manga and anime's potential to have a place in the scholarly community for media and literature due to its new media effects on its audiences. To do this, there will be an in-depth narrative perspective analysis of the first two and last two episodes of Hiromu Arakawa's anime series *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) to find the ultimate moral(s) of the story. There is a look into why the text is being studied, what alchemy is, what literature is out there, why the narrative perspective lens was chosen, and the actual analysis. Following the analysis will be a discussion of the ultimate moral of the text as well as implications of the study and future studies that could be drawn from it.

Prologue: Consideration for Anime in Scholastic Studies

Why should anime be included into scholarly study? Manga and anime are a global phenomenon that has impacted many forms of communications, including media and literature. This paper's purpose is to explore manga and anime's potential to have a place in the scholarly community for media and literature due to its new media effects on its audiences. It will be looking at a traditionally non-scholarly work in a scholarly way. This is done to shed light into researching and applying an academic lens to non-traditional texts and pave the way for future scholars who have unconventional research topics. Goals for this paper include giving an introduction to an otherwise niched topic not commonly reviewed in an academic setting, providing a comprehensive and applicable understanding of the academic lens, and shedding light into researching and applying an academic lens to non-traditional texts.

In order to further my argument for anime in scholastic studies, I will look more closely at film studies research and find examples where films are found by their audiences or by content analysts to carry some of the same thematic or instructive principles I am touting within various anime films or series. This will provide a foundation in support of my argument of anime as a form of media worthy of academic scholarship.

Anime has been a part of American pop culture for decades, yet it has been ignored as a topic of real study. Why? If we look at the definition of American popular culture it can be defined as the composition of "everyday objects, actions, and events that influence people [Americans] to believe and behave in certain ways" (Sellnow, 2017, p. 3). It can also be defined as "the everyday objects, actions, and events that [Americans] experience through a media channel that may influence [them] to believe and behave in certain ways" through mediated popular culture

(Sellnow, 2017, p. 3). This can be advertisements, radio, movies, or television. Popular culture pervades our day to day lives. One of these pervasive objects in America is anime.

So, what is anime? Anime is Japanese animated cartoons. It was introduced to America in the 1960s with the showing of Tezuka's *Astro Boy* (Dietsch, 2017). This was important because it started a new "pop culture" sensation across America. Anime really took off in America in the 1980s due to the introduction of *Robotech*, *Voltron: Defender of the Universe*, and the animated movie *Akira* (Dietsch, 2017). The reaction was highly positive and created a storm of new American fans due to the storylines not being solely targeted towards children. Because of its new horizons and innovations in storytelling, this was the turning point of anime and its popularity in American society. Presently, memorabilia, posters, figurines, DVDs, CDs, stickers, clothing, and even kitchenware of various anime and anime characters can be found all across America. Its influence is only made more prevalent with the online market that is available to anyone with an internet connection.

Since anime has become so widespread in America, it can be concluded that there is a connection between anime and American popular culture. It is important for this to be studied because there is a lack of research within the field. Anime has been a fairly noticeable phenomena within American popular culture since the late 1980's, and this paper will hopefully bring a spotlight onto this otherwise unexplored area of mass media.

Pilot Study

There is a changing dynamic within the anime genre and community. It is continually and exponentially expanding access and audiences through streaming services such as Hulu, YouTube,

Cruchyroll, and so forth. There are many communities and forums in anime. This will be a look into new media's and anime's effects on a potential audience base, including the following:

Communicative Process: The way members new and old communicate is through a multitude of forums and comment sections. Streaming services keep the community updated, connected, and thriving. Through this communication the community grows and becomes more bonded.

Social Identity and Community: Social identity is varied and ranges from general to specific. There are casual members of the anime community and avid members. There are genre-sporadic and genre-specific members. Members of the anime community are from all over the world and in all cultures. The one thing that brings them together is the interest in anime.

Literature Review

Jenkins (2004) in his article titled "Pop Cosmopolitanism" directly states that "Asian popular culture is shaping American entertainment" (p. 115). This is because the world is more accessible and more influential than ever before. A forerunner in being of the most accepted in entertainment *is* Asian popular culture. Due to the common distribution of anything on the worldwide market "...younger Americans are distinguishing themselves from their parents' culture through their consumption of Japanese anime and manga, Bollywood films and bhangra, and Hong Kong action movies" (Jenkins, 2004, 117). This consumption is what Jenkins refers to as "pop cosmopolitanism" (2004, p. 117). With this mishmash of culture converging onto the younger American generations, it is a wonder so few have taken in newer forms of literature, such as anime, in academia.

History and literature show that there is a clear correlation between anime and pop culture in America which can be seen in books such as *Anime: Japanese Animation Comes to America*

(2017) by Bartolotta and *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the U.S.* (2006) by Kelts as well as the article by Chambers (2012) “Anime: From Cult Following to Pop Culture Phenomenon.” All of them note that anime has made an impact on America and that it is something that cannot be ignored. Anime’s impact on American culture only seems to be growing greater and greater, yet there is a lack of research regarding this fact.

Methodology

To answer why anime should be considered for scholastic study, we first need to answer what makes a subject *studiable* for academic review. From there, we can produce criteria for which to apply to anime as a whole or to a specific title. If the subject meets most, if not all, the criterion, then we can conclude that it is worthy of thoughtful and meaningful review.

The method utilized in this proposal is qualitative survey followed by a content analysis that will assess repeating or emergent themes of the responses. This is done to address concerns of anime as a researchable media text while also establishing scholarship of anime. It is used to see or clarify the new media effects upon the anime genre and what qualities stand out in certain communities. This proposal will also mirror many other established studies performed on film as it is within the same realm of entertainment and communication.

The following questions have been curated to find whether or not the anime chosen should be considered for academic study:

1. Does the anime have a moral(s) or is it purely entertainment?
2. How well known is the anime?
3. What is the anime known for?
4. How does the anime affect the communicative process in the anime community?

5. How does the anime affect the identity of the anime community? Is it positive or negative?
6. Is the anime integral to the community's image?
7. Can a narrative analysis be conducted?
8. What is the moral(s) found within the anime – as found through the narrative analysis?

The first question is the most important to take into consideration. If the plot is purely entertainment, without any moral, then there is nothing to academically review. The questions that follow the first are to help with the analysis of the anime. The more popular and integral the anime is the more apt it is for review. The more positive or affirmative the answers are the better suited the anime.

Sample Analysis: *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003)

Questions and Answers:

1. *Does the anime have a moral(s) or is it purely entertainment?*

It has a moral

2. *How well known is the anime?*

It has consistently ranked among the top ten anime people must watch when entering into the anime community since its conception

3. *What is the anime known for?*

The story follows a pair of teenage brothers and their quest for the Philosopher's Stone in order to reverse the consequences of their actions. During their search for answers they face situations beyond their grasp of understanding. Despite their own

ability to reason their way through what they are doing, the brothers are constantly having their own understandings of the world around them dismantled and turned upside-down. Their ideals are questioned and shaken to their very core.

4. *How does the anime affect the communicative process in the anime community?*

It is one of the most highly rated anime out there, so it is often recommended as an introduction into the community

5. *How does the anime affect the identity of the anime community? Is it positive or negative?*

It is at the forefront of the community's identification. It is positively reviewed and revered.

6. *Is the anime integral to the community's image?*

Yes, due to its consistent high rankings

7. *Can a narrative analysis be conducted?*

Yes

8. *What is the moral(s) found within the anime – as found through the narrative analysis?*

Just the first two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) explicitly and inexplicably shows the audience the dangers of being naïve, that death should not be cheated, that the value of someone's life cannot be calculated or reduced to simple calculations, that no one should trespass on God's territory, that they should not have just blind faith in something, that they need to make their own way, that it is good to be kind, and that they should look at the positives.. The list will only continue to grow with the episodes.

Expected Findings and Contribution

This anime is worthy of academic review based on its inclusion of moral plot, its ranking among the community it is set in, and the influence that ranking has on the community as a whole.

Anime can make clear arguments and applications to media studies on real life topics such as the role of technology and how far humans are willing to advance said technology like what is seen in the 1995 hit anime film *Ghost in the Shell*. For example, in a previous paper my colleagues and I have stated:

“The 1995 film *Ghost in the Shell* explores what a future of technological advancements so high that it almost becomes or transcends humanity itself could potentially look like. *Ghost in the Shell* is directed by Mamoru Oshii and based on the manga (Japanese comic) of the same name written by Masamune Shirow. It is set in Japan in the year 2029 where cyborgs containing souls known as ‘ghosts’ and cybernetic augmentations are the norm. The movie follows the actions of Motoko Kusanagi, a cyborg that works for the federal agency. During the quest to hunt down the elusive ‘Puppet Master’, an enigmatic technological lifeform that has been hacking into the ghosts of various cyborgs, Kusanagi begins to question what makes her real in a world so engulfed and altered by technology.” (Boyce, Marquess, & Williams, 2019)

We then go on to iterate that:

In the film, there are six clear media ecology themes that are found including technology, interconnectedness, consciousness, environment, balance, and change. These themes can be discussed along with media models presented in the movie, a discussion of media models in everyday life, as well as the overall message of the film, what a possible media future looks like in *Ghost in the Shell*. (Boyce, Marquess, & Williams, 2019)

With its connection to media ecology, the film is a great example of what a scholastic study of anime could be. There are no limits to what could be drawn from research on anime. It is a medium that is continuing to grow and amass a huge following.

Ghost in the Shell (1995) is a piece that makes the audience think and question the interplay between humans, technology, and advancement. It does make its own statements through the perspective of its cyborg main character, but it is mainly filled with questions. The movie explores the questions of identity and what makes humanity human. It brings up poignant questions that we have tried to find the answers to for centuries. The film makes the audience think about how far is too far when it comes to technological enhancements onto the human body (Boyce, Marquess, & Williams, 2019). Anime like this can make us ask ourselves questions like: How much do we really fear that evolution will take us out? At what point does the person start being less of a human and more of a cyborg? Just how far can the consciousness of a being continue to be what makes it human? What would happen if technology advanced outside of our reach, like with *Puppet Master*? We have to question and define what is considered a living thing. What sort of limitations should be in place (Boyce, Marquess, & Williams, 2019)? So on, and so forth.

Deduction

These stylized shows can make poignant questions and statements on humanity and technology like in *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), how our minds are altered by traumatic events and the stress of trying to figure out what it means to be a living mortal being like in *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995), and what morals one should keep or the consequences of one's actions like in *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003). Anime is technically geared more toward young teenagers, but adults enjoy them just as much. Plus, there is a plethora of titles and subgenres geared towards adults, too. It only continues to rise in popularity across the world and grow exponentially in size through

various media and markets. It could be fair to say it is one of the largest media phenomena in America and possibly the world due to this fact.

So why is anime not being considered for scholastic studies? If it can have all these influences, interpretations, and popularity, why is it not taken seriously in American studies of media or new media?

I believe the answer could lie in the fact that it is such a versatile subject. There are so many genres and sub-genres within anime that it is nearly impossible to sort through all of them to give the OK to study one over the other. However, I believe the first step in anime's inclusion into scholarly studies or media studies is for scholastics and the like to choose a select few genres or titles themselves that could be considered and see where the research leads from there. It all starts with a small step.

Introduction

Anime is usually deemed as something geared more toward children with a rather shallow, surface-level plots by those who are unfamiliar with the genre. However, as seen with *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003), this is not always the case; anime can have mature plots with deep and meaningful messages, morals, and philosophical ideas. *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) covers the issues of morals and role models as well as the consequences for those who do or choose wrong throughout its running.

This paper is a narrative analysis perspective as applied to the first two and last two episodes of Hiromu Arakawa's anime *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003). This is done to find evidence of which morals are within *Fullmetal Alchemist's* episodes and attempts to share with its audience. Seeing that there are multiple audio versions of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003), for the

purpose of this paper, the English dubbed version of these episodes will be the one analyzed. The construction of the narrative analysis perspective is derived from the Sellnow (2018) text *The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture*. Why choose narrative analysis? Because it directly deals with morals as well as consequences for actions.

Fullmetal Alchemist (2003) is a Japanese anime, or animated cartoon, that aired from October 2003 to October 2004 and was adapted from the manga, or Japanese comic, series of the same name authored and illustrated by Hiromu Arakawa (“Fullmetal Alchemist (TV Series)”, n.d.). It is important to note that I am referring to the original anime adaptation of this series, as there are two and each began on two completely different situations. *Fullmetal Alchemist* aired in 2003 and deviated from the original plot halfway through due to it coming out ahead of the manga’s storyline, and *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* aired in 2009 to more closely follow the entirety of the manga’s story.

The story follows a pair of teenage brothers and their quest for the Philosopher’s Stone in order to reverse the consequences of their actions. During their search for answers, they face situations beyond their grasp of understanding. Despite their own ability to reason their way through what they are doing, the brothers are constantly having their own understandings of the world around them dismantled and turned upside-down. Their ideals are questioned and shaken to their very core. During its airing, the series covered the deep philosophical and moral questions of what is considered right and wrong, villainous and just, and the trials and tribulations of trying to grapple with the fact that sometimes it is not always black and white; good people can and will do bad things, bad people can and will do good things, and, eventually, they too will face these same dilemmas of choosing not what is considered right and just but what is the lesser of two evils.

Anime's History

To understand why this paper pushes for anime's inclusion into scholarly or media studies, there needs to be a look into its history. This portion will be looking at manga and anime and attempting to chronicle its history in Japan. "Manga is the Japanese term for comics. The word was first used in 1798 to describe the picture book *Shiji no yukikai*. The term showed up again in 1814 as the title of Aikawa Minwa's *Manga Hyakujo* and *Hokusai Manga*, books that contained drawings by the artist Hokusai" (Wood, 2017). Though it is an older term, it is relatively modern in use in today's societies. "In English-speaking countries, manga is a generic term for all graphic novels and comic books originally published in Japan. Manga is read either in serialized comic books, monthly magazines, or graphic novels" (Wood, 2017). They are serialized based on popularity, and each title is various in length; ranging from one chapter to more than 70 volumes.

To understand more about the history of manga and anime, we must look at the originator of the artform as we know it today: Osamu Tezuka. "Japanese cartoonist, Osamu Tezuka, known as the God of Manga and Godfather of Anime, invented the distinctive large eyes prominent in both manga and anime. His manga series, *Astro Boy*, went on to become the first Japanese television series to embody the aesthetic that became known worldwide as anime." (Wood, 2017).

Also, according to Brian Ruh, a reviewer and scholar of manga and anime studies, we must look at the three following texts to gain a more comprehensive chronicling of manga and anime overall. "For anime, the most comprehensive historical book is Jonathan Clements and Helen McCarthy's *Anime Encyclopedia* (2001). For manga, the oldest book is still the best: Frederik L. Schodt's *Manga! Manga!* (1983)... (Ruh, 2006)." However, "a new book is needed to keep up with recent trends in manga and manga scholarship" which Gravett's book, *Manga:*

Sixty Years of Japanese Comics, tries to do in a more up-to-date fashion and limiting manga to essentially a postwar phenomenon, with which I agree (Ruh, 2006).

1940s

Manga was a recognized art form before the 1940s, however, the medium as we currently view did not “begin” until after World War II. During the war, many bans were put on artists and publishing companies unless they were to create propaganda. These bans led to manga becoming a more underground business. Once the war was over “manga as a medium exploded once formerly restrictive bans for publishing were lifted” (Zeigler, 2017).

It is said that “[m]odern manga developed amid an explosion of artistic creativity during the U.S. occupation of Japan, from 1945–1952. During the occupation, U.S. troops introduced American comics and cartoons, such as Mickey Mouse, Betty Boop, and Bambi to Japan, inspiring Japanese artists to develop their own style of comics” (Wood, 2017). Thus, the great manga and anime artist Osamu Tezuka was brought center stage.

1950s

Increased globalization such as the invasion of Hollywood led to a decline in live action films in Japan (Zeigler, 2017). This was a massive hit to film companies in Japan. Many older filmmakers were out of a job, but this only made room for younger artists interested in animation rather than live action. Today, “modern anime is generally linked to the founding of Toei Animation in 1948 and their first feature film *Tales of the White Serpent (Hakujaden)* in October 1958” (Zeigler, 2017).

1960s and 1970s

Anime flourished in the '60s and '70s and saw great commercial success (Zeigler, 2017). Tezuka's *Astro Boy* first broadcasted in Japan in 1963 and was the first anime to be broadcasted outside of Japan (Wood, 2017). With the rise in interest in manga and anime there were more people willing to be an audience to their creations. Manga was in the books that they read and anime was in the television and film that they watched.

1980s and 1990s

As "anime began to deal with much more complex and nuanced stories meant for adults" the audience for anime began to grow and widen fairly rapidly (Zeigler, 2017). With more and more people willing to watch anime the more popular new titles and even older titles became. With the success of *Star Wars* there was a rise in "space opera" anime that revived older titles and made way for newer ones as well (Ziegler, 2017).

In 1988, the showing of *Akira* to Western audiences led to an increase in interest with anime and manga. *Akira* showed to the audience that anime could be geared toward an older audience with complex storylines and meanings. "The 1990s and early 2000s also saw the creation of Western fan favorites..." (Zeigler, 2017). And because of this boom of favorites there was even more demand for manga and anime not only nationally in Japan, but also worldwide in the West.

2000s to Present

Stories not only became more complex, but they also came to cover anything the imagination could conjure. Now, there is a story for anyone at any age that anyone can engage

in. Anime is so successful that it is seen almost everywhere in Japan. “Today anime is used in everything from music videos, advertisements, and clothing” (Zeigler, 2017). Anime and manga’s influence only continues to grow, and it might possibly be seen ever more pervasively worldwide as a staple in their industries. Anime was so influential at this time that the hit movie *The Matrix* was highly inspired by the animated movie *Ghost in the Shell* (Dietsch, 2017). Anime covered so many genres, topics, and audiences that the American audiences were consuming it as much as possible. By the time the 2000s came about it was clear that, as Dietsch puts it, “anime was going to be everything for everybody” (2017). The impact of anime in America has become so great since the 1960s, so it is important that it be studied.

Alchemy, Its Figures, Purpose, and Influence

Alchemy is the primary focus of the text of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003), so it is important to provide background into what it is as it affects the audience’s understanding of the subtle nuances mentioned throughout the series. Alchemy was a precursor to chemistry and some pharmacy. For most any reading from or based on the Gothic period about science or disease, the understanding of alchemy and its shifting in the paradigm of science of the time can help you understand why this science was treated the way it was and why in *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) it is treated as more of a magic-based science that can only be honed by a revered few.

Major Figures

Some major figures in Alchemy are Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, and Albertus Magnus. All three men were practitioners of Alchemy, and whose works and papers ‘modern’ alchemists study in reality.

Paracelsus, otherwise known as Paracelsus Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, was a major teacher of Alchemy in the 16th century and is the namesake of the Elric brothers' father – von Hohenheim (Walton, 2011).

Not much is known about Cornelius Agrippa, but he is often associated with the occult. Albertus Magnus was a fairly respected and prolific writer who studied alchemy and has many legends that surround the activities of his life (“ALBERTUS MAGNUS”, 1870). These two figures are probably why many people began to view alchemy as more of a ‘magical’ or ‘fantastical’ thing in reality and possibly why Arakawa made *Fullmetal Alchemist*'s alchemy scientific yet more magical.

Definition

Up to the 18th century, alchemy was taught in England as a Christian Science and form of medicine that is, according to Paracelsus, “the true chemical and natural science that adheres to the work of Genesis from the Bible” (Walton, 2011). They could only find the truth if they listened to God's word. This is important in *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) because it is by listening to Truth, or God as he refers to himself as one of his many names, that alchemists gain knowledge and understanding. Christianity is also alluded to through the use of the Flamel symbol brandished on Edward's coat, Alphonse's armor, and Izumi's, a character the audience sees later on, chest and is mentioned near the conclusion of the series as a basis for the study of alchemy.

Purpose

What were the alchemists' goal? One of them was to transmute baser metals like lead to the purest metal, gold. They also were interested in finding a "cure-all" to disease -- even death -- this was known by many names such as *the panacea*, *the elixir of life*, and *the Philosopher's Stone*.

As stated earlier, alchemy was a medicine and a natural science. The use of alchemy was seen as a catalyst to what already happens naturally, so it seemed to be a logical science to practice; hence why *Fullmetal Alchemist's* alchemy also has rules and taboos (Fekete, 2012).

The Philosopher's Stone

The Philosopher's Stone is also known as '*The Elixir of Life*', *the panacea*. It is the supposed cure all to disease and secret to immortality (Ziolkowski, 2015). It is what all alchemists strived to achieve. Though one has never been successfully created, it is said that it has to undergo multiple steps in order to reach completion. These steps are debatable in number, but I have reduced them down to three stages that correspond with the important alchemic colors the stone must undergo: Putridification / the black stage, Purification / the white stage, and Perfection / the red stage (Ziolkowski, 2015). So how is one made? Simple. All you need is Paracelsus' favorite material: urine. You could also use blood or semen -- if you felt like making your own homunculus, which is a humanoid being (Ziolkowski, 2015).

Reputation

Alchemy was quite revered until the 18th century. Many alchemists were employed by rulers and aristocrats. Alchemy has been studied and found across the world in places like "the Greek-speaking world of Egypt and Byzantium to the Islamic lands, and thence to Christian Europe" (Babory & Rampling, 2012) by the mid-12th century. Many people saw alchemy as an honorable and worthy science to study. However, once the 18th century came about so did the fall of alchemy in England. By then, the 4th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1810) even had the word '*ridiculous*' in its definition of alchemy.

From my studies, I have found no real reason or reasoning as to why English Gothics no longer respected alchemy. There are at least three potential factors. Somehow the Christian Science was twisted and misconstrued into an occultist-type work, so maybe ‘The Enlightenment’ played a role in it being shunned. Maybe it was due to the fact that it cost so much and had no real pay out, so eventually alchemists were seen as gold-diggers. Or maybe it could be because by now the English had started dissecting and autopsying bodies which took the guesswork out of what ailed people and how they are constructed. But this is all a slightly educated speculation as to why alchemy and practitioners of alchemy were looked down upon or dismissed as true scientists. However, Arakawa creates a world where alchemy was a successful science and was widely accepted and revered by most of the public in *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003).

Literature Review

The text is wrought with political, religious, philosophical, and social discourse. There is much to discuss when analyzing the text, so it is no wonder that *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) and its counterparts have been the topic of and analyzed through the lenses of the performance of reading and philosophy and ethics. Since these topics bear some relevance to the lens that will be utilized, their articles will be briefly summarized and reviewed in terms of how they further the need for the addition of a narrative analysis.

Manga and anime: Fluidity and hybridity in global imagery

“Manga and anime: fluidity and hybridity in global imagery” by Bryce et al. (2009) attempts to explain manga and anime’s influence in today’s world. The impact of these texts is aptly stated in their introduction that “[m]anga and anime have been central to Japan’s popular culture [, and] these powerful narratives, characterized by hybridity and fluidity, have spread out

from their local source to achieve global reach and appeal. They often involve their readers/audience in their creation and offer imaginary sites for the diverse needs of individuals of different ages, interests and backgrounds. Once translated, they are capable of connecting people from different cultures and languages, forming a new forum for entertainment, as well as cultural and social communication” (Bryce et al., 2009). It leaves one to wonder why it is not treated as a noteworthy text to study if it creates so many shifts in the forum and paradigm of media, mass media, and media ecology.

Given anime’s and manga’s world-renown impact, why are no texts within its realm like *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) being considered for scholarly study? Anime and manga transcend global lines and cultures, create new planes of communication, and meet the needs of countless individuals. Because of these reasons, these texts need to be focused on more.

Review of the book *The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media*, by Thomas Lamarre

In “Review of the book *The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media*, by Thomas Lamarre (2019),” Suter reviews Thomas Lamarre’s book by dissecting the way Lamarre proposes to look at media in the “post-television era.” Lamarre (2019) suggests that the audience look at Japan and anime in order to account for the “new age” of media. The review goes on to state “While previous studies of television have focused primarily on live broadcasting and the reality effect it generates, Lamarre shifts our attention toward animation as a more productive angle through which to understand the cognitive, social, and political effects of television. In this sense, too, Japan offers a compelling object of enquiry” (Suter, 2019). It takes notice of anime’s potential shift in the media world and possibly mass media as a whole.

“Japanese animation developed its distinctive visual and narrative style, specific enough to be described as ‘anime’ rather than just ‘animation,’ as a result of its connection with television” (Suter, 2019). It has become so specific as to become its own entity in media, and the review does well in taking note of that. This is important because it propels the notion that anime is a text that should be studied or analyzed in mass media scholarship which furthers the argument for the study of the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) anime series.

(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga

“(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga” by Gallacher (2011) discusses the transformation a text goes through during processing, especially when images are involved. This transformation is not seen in a positive light and is understandably founded when she applies it to the beginning of the text of the *Fullmetal Alchemist* manga, which explores dark themes, starting from the first page, and uses of the science-based magic of alchemy. She argues that this transformation is as “monstrous” as the text and the images are no longer separate things, but something not quite one or the other anymore once they are viewed together to create the story; it is only furthered in its monstrosity due to the main characters’ own deformities, grave situation, and use of transformative magic.

Gallacher’s article offers insight into the manga text of *Fullmetal Alchemist*. Considering that the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) anime is based on the beginning of the manga, her analysis of the story is relevant to the study of the series as a whole. The comparison to that of a monster when discussing some of the acts committed also has a connection, albeit loose, to the question of right and wrong explored within this paper. While the article makes a good argument for looking at the text in surface perception, it is lacking in a deeper analysis of what the text is

actually conveying. If a narrative perspective was applied, would the transmutation taking place seem just as monstrous?

Applying Existential Philosophy and Popular Culture Images to Ethics: The Case for Fullmetal Alchemist

“Applying Existential Philosophy and Popular Culture Images to Ethics: The Case for Fullmetal Alchemist” by Sementelli (2014) is an article arguing for the use of a process-based, existential approach to ethics in public administration. To make his claim, he look toward Jasper’s “*existenz-philosophie*” discussion over ethics and experience rather than ethics and the individual. In order to offer a more complete understanding of what this all means to an unfamiliar reader to the topic, he applies Jasper’s concepts of his discussion to *Fullmetal Alchemist*, since it would be better understood with a storyline. He also claims that *Fullmetal Alchemist* fits most, if not all, of Jasper’s concepts (Sementelli, 2014).

Sementelli’s article directly states *Fullmetal Alchemist*’s connection to ethics and philosophy that relates the research question as it pertains to morals. The article even explicitly states that *Fullmetal Alchemist*’s “storyline itself is best described as an existential morality play,” which ties directly to the article’s and this paper’s research question’s main topic and gives validity to the purpose of researching this topic (Sementelli, 2014, p. 29).

Seeing with Shinigami Eyes: Death Note as a Case Study in Narrative, Naming, and Control

“Seeing with Shinigami Eyes: Death Note as a Case Study in Narrative, Naming, and Control” by Hammonds and Hammonds (2017) covers an in-depth analysis of Ohba and Obata’s series *Death Note* through the use of “pedagogical theory to explore whether a legitimate

audience interpretation of *Death Note* content may be established, [...] a brief narrative analysis of *Death Note*'s major story arc, and [...] a reading of the text that emphasizes a view of communication in which language is a major power mechanism" (Hammonds & Hammonds, 2017, p. 95). Their findings concluded that there was a connection between language and identity and narrative and power. Within *Death Note*, words over a person's life narrative is the ultimate power and speaks to the power of language itself. What is deemed as just in this narrative is selected by the personal ideals of the protagonist since he is the one given the power of the death note -- the book that kills whoever's name is written in it.

Hammonds and Hammonds' article has a direct correlation to this paper's research question due to its use of narrative analysis and its use within anime that also covers the dilemma of right or wrong but in a different setting. *Death Note* focuses on someone with the ultimate power to bestow death upon anyone they so choose, leading to that person to form a major God-complex. However, *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) focuses on someone who tried to cheat death, leading to that person rejecting God. While the article does not solely focus on narrative analysis alone, it does have some semblance to what this paper's research question is trying to achieve

Review

While the *Fullmetal Alchemist* series has been explored in multiple areas of scholarly research, it has not been explored as a narrative in and of itself nor has the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) version been examined. Earlier works have touched on the complexities of the act of reading the text or the characters within the text, but they have not looked into the message of the text as a narrative to the audience and what it says about the morals the audience should have. The research does not cover what the text says about what is right and what is wrong or who exactly the audience should model in their day-to-day lives. Though the narrative approach has been

applied to similar texts it has not been applied to this text. A narrative perspective analysis is essential for adding to the discourse on *Fullmetal Alchemist* overall in order to fully review and comprehend the texts' importance and message as well as cementing some anime as meaningful topics of study.

Methodology

Data Collection

Specifically, I analyzed episodes 1 & 2 and 50 & 51 in their entirety using narrative perspective analysis based on Sellnow's (2017) breakdown; plus, I added summaries of the events that happened in between to help the jump between the episodes. I chose these episodes because they are the beginning and ending arcs for the series and carry the most relevancy to moral impact on the audience. A narrative analysis is constructed using Sellnow's (2017) example by looking at the text selection, descriptions and interpretations, setting, characters, narrator, events, casual relations, temporal relations, and intended audience. From that, moral interpretations and an evaluation could be drawn and conducted.

Though they are not analyzed at length in this paper, it should be noted that every episode in the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) series was reviewed, researched, and catalogued for their moral interpretations. The most common occurring morals are outlined in Table 1, and the morals found in each episode can be seen in Appendix A.

The reason for the use of this specific analysis is because the text has already been explored through a reading performance perspective and a philosophical and ethical perspective within its multiple counterparts, and it has been described as "an existential morality play," which I explored more in the literature review, so it only seems natural to add a narrative perspective about morals to the text of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) as the next step in furthering

the discourse and study of this series (Gallacher, 2011; Sementelli, 2014; Hammonds & Hammonds, 2017).

As stated above, *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) is rich in philosophical and moral strife, even within its first two episodes. There are rules, actions, reactions, and sanctions. This makes it ideal to analyze through a narrative lens because the narrative lens is about homing in on what morals of the story the audience should be made aware of and what the consequences are to various behaviors if someone were to disobey those rules or expectations.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to properly examine *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) using the narrative perspective there will be a justification of how the text is appropriate, an examination using the tool, and an evaluation of the text's conclusions and implications (Sellnow, 2017). Each episode was reviewed four times: The first time was to record actions; the second time was to record relevant quotes; the third time was to find applicable morals; and the fourth time was to be sure all data was correct.

I mainly focused on the verbal actions and mannerisms as cues for this analysis. This was done as opposed to a direct comparison inquiry or character and background analysis to avoid overlap with previous research and analyses that were reviewed on YouTube (Lowart, 2018). The research brought forth compelling arguments and offered new insight into the story, and I did not wish to, intentionally or unintentionally, copy what the narrator was saying/suggesting. Besides, I find the words and actions of the characters to have more merit on the moral of *Fullmetal Alchemist's* (2003) story since it focuses so much on characterization.

According to Sellnow (2017), “appropriate texts that can be analyzed from a narrative perspective must fulfill four requirements. They must (1) offer at least two events, (2) be organized by time, (3) depict a relationship between earlier and later events and (4) present a unified subject (story)” (p. 57). Once it has been outlined how the text is appropriate for this tool, the examination will then “[b]egin by describing the setting, characters, narrator, events, casual relations, temporal relations, and intended audience. Then interpret them in terms of the moral of the story [...] and, finally, evaluate the text as it might influence various audiences” (Sellnow, 2017, p. 57). This is all done to be sure the analysis is thorough and well-rounded. From that, moral interpretations and an evaluation could be drawn and conducted.

Narrative Lens

There is a give-and-take and an action-and-reaction type of relationship between the media and the consumers/society. Media shapes what the audience wants, and the audience shapes what is in the media (more or less). Media is always trying to understand or predict how or why people do, say, or act in a particular way, so it can learn how to persuade the audience to get them to do what they want (Sellnow, 2017). Lenses shed light on how any medium manipulates those decisions to a certain degree and what messages media are trying to convey to their audiences. In order to better understand what *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) is trying to say through its characters’ verbal actions and mannerisms to its audience within its first two episodes, a narrative perspective is needed to conduct the analysis.

Sellnow (2018), in the book *The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture*, defines the narrative perspective in order to “[help] us discover the underlying moral of the story—that is, its argument about how we ought to and ought not to believe or behave. Throughout the text, actions and consequences are offered as good reasons to accept the moral as being valid” (p. 12).

Specific to this study, I used this perspective to interpret the moral of the text of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003). In other words, I am using the narrative perspective to draw out how the audience could interpret after experiencing the series' episodes by dissecting the text piece by piece to find cause-effect relationships for each moral and its consequences. I would like to add that consequences are not always bad; they can be good too. The first and last two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) has plenty of examples of what is expected as the correct way to act and the consequences for going against what is expected.

Results: Part One

Icarus, His Voice of Reason, and the Blind Follower: Episodes 1-2

Since the beginning of a series always sets the foreground as to what to expect as it goes on, showcases the types and forms of conflicts and themes to be encountered, this portion of the paper will be exploring these concepts within its first two episodes. For the greatest understanding of these underlying themes and values, it is best to dissect these four episodes through the lens of narrative perspective analysis as it pertains to morals.

The following questions to be explored through the lens of narrative analysis are:

RQ 1: What do the first two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) state explicitly and inexplicitly about the morals of being naïve, cheating death, reducing life to only numbers, trespassing into God's territory, having blind faith, making your own way, being kind, and staying positive, and who should the audience view or not view as a role model in the series?

RQ 2: What is deemed right or wrong within these two episodes, and how is this shown?

These need to be analyzed because it proves that some anime, such as *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003), are not just shallow cartoons but something that can be scholastically analyzed due to having morally profound and deep underlying meaning, set in a more stylized, animated format.

Episodes 1-2 Analysis

Text Selection

Fullmetal Alchemist (2003) begins with 11-year-old Edward and 10-year-old Alphonse using alchemy to bring their mother back to life. There is a rebound, and Edward loses his leg and arm, while Alphonse loses his physical body and his soul is bound to a suit of armor. Flashforward three years, the two brothers are traveling to the town of Lior in search of the Philosopher's Stone to undo what had happened to them. Father Cornello is suspected to have this legendary stone after the brothers witness him performing his "miracles." Edward and Alphonse use one of Father Cornello's closest followers, Rose, to get closer to Father Cornello. It turns out that he was brainwashing the townspeople and locked up the brothers to stop them from sharing his secret. Edward broadcasts Father Cornello explaining his dubious plan. They realize that the stone he used was a fake, and he is later eaten alive by one of the homunculi that were working behind the scenes. Rose is left dismayed after these events, so she asks Edward what she should do to which he and Alphonse give her advice to stay determined despite her situation.

Descriptions and Interpretation

Setting. The show begins in, what is presumed to be, the brother's family home in a small town the audience later finds out to be named Resembool. After the flashforward, they are seen traveling to and in the desert city of Lior. It is set in a world where alchemy is a feasible science that is used to transform matter but can only be performed by select individuals. The story within

the first two episodes is complete and has a logical progression of events. The main characters are well thought out, relatable, and act as the audience would assume two young teenagers would act. Though alchemy is a fantastical, science-based magic within the series, it makes it plausible by offering exposition about its properties and having certain steps to follow to enact and use.

Characters. For the majority of the episodes, Edward is a 14-year-old teenager with a short stature from a small town. He has a bit of an ego when it comes to his triumphs in alchemy and his title as a state alchemist. He is short-tempered, snide, and overly cynical. This makes it difficult for others to like him. He disregards any belief that is not centered in science and anyone who does not think the same way as he does. He can also be seen as selfish.

Even though he is seen as somewhat of your typical rebellious teenager, he is considered a boy genius, is acutely aware of his mistakes and tribulations, and tries to do what is right, which makes him a fairly round character as the main protagonist of the series. He does not want others to commit the same mistakes as he has done, but he delivers that message in a very disagreeable way. Edward has a “make your own” mentality. He understands the gravity of his mistakes as seen when he compares himself to Icarus, “the man who flew too close to the sun and came crashing down,” but this comparison is meaningful given what the audience can derive from it (“Those Who Challenge the Sun,” 2003).

Alphonse is the quiet, younger brother who tries to act as Edward’s voice of reason. He is not your typical 13-year-old due to the fact that he is a soul attached to a rather large, empty suit of armor. While he also does not believe in a god, he is much more respectful of others’ beliefs. He is very kind and sweet natured. He understands his situation. He calmly and sympathetically explains what he and his brother have done and what they are trying to do. He is considerate of

others' situations and is selfless. Despite his brother's cynicism, he tries to remain hopeful and positive.

On the surface, Father Cornello is an older gentleman and a pious prophet sent to the city of Lior to spread the teachings of the sun god Leto. In reality, he is a manipulative con man under the guise of a holy man, who is actually being used as a pawn by the seemingly villainous homunculi: Lust, Gluttony, and Envy. He justifies his actions by saying, "Would a con man restore life into a dying town? When I arrived, this town was full of strife and I brought peace. They came to me with parched throats and I created water. I built buildings for them and even gave them money. They believed their god had forsaken them, but I gave them hope and became their prophet", but he has only done so to gain a faithful following ("Body of the Sanctioned," 2003). This was a scheme for attention and to do as he pleased without questioning. He wants to rebuild the nation in his name through the use of his followers, since, to him, they are nothing more than mindless pawns. As a consequence of his actions, he is figuratively consumed by the embodiment of an ouroboros and physically consumed by the ring that held the fake Philosopher's Stone and the homunculus named Gluttony. Since Father Cornello is seen as the villain in these two episodes, his actions, demeanor, and motivations are archetypal and very predictable.

The believers serve as a representation of blind following or trust, so they are flat by nature. Their actions do not deviate from what is expected of devoted and religious followers. They do not question the actions of someone of Father Cornello's stature because he has brought so much good into their lives. As followers, they depend on his words for guidance and hope and are lost and miserable without them when their faith is put into question.

Rose is a subservient and devout believer that looks to be about 18 to 20 years of age who is amiable and liked by those around her. She is a prime example of a true blind follower. To curry

favor of the sun god Leto, she “delight[s] in solving others’ problems” because it is what she has been taught as the right thing to do (“Those Who Challenge the Sun”, 2003). She has loyalty to a fault, though. Even after finding that Father Cornello is a schemer and that her wish to bring her fiancée back from the dead will never be fulfilled as promised, she hesitates as to what side she should take. In the end, she is left wondering what to do after her faith had been destroyed since it was the only thing she lived by and where she found her moral ground.

Narrator. There are two oral narrators in the first two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003). The first narrator is Edward at the beginning of episode one. He starts off by explaining the rules of alchemy and how it is a science and that it follows the natural order of things. One of the most important rules of alchemy is the law of Equivalent Exchange: “Humankind cannot gain anything without first giving something in return. To obtain, something of equal value must be lost” (“Those Who Challenge the Sun”, 2003). However, “[t]he value of some things cannot be measured,” such as the value of a human soul (“Those Who Challenge the Sun”, 2003). This is revealed as a mistake the two young brothers did not take into account as the audience witnesses them trying to bring their mother back. It is important that Edward be the narrator during this event because it puts into perspective for the audience his role as the main protagonist of the series, as the leader of the experiment that went terribly wrong, and as the eldest brother of the duo.

The second narrator is Alphonse. At the end of episode two he reiterates what alchemy is and the law of Equivalent Exchange. It is restated because it drives home what exactly motivates the brothers and serves as a reminder of what happens if they disregard this law. Alphonse is used as the second narrator to put forth his importance to the last portion of the episode where he reminds Rose not to lose hope. He also adds that: “we really believed that to be the world's one,

and only truth,” which implies that they too had a blind faith in something and that that “truth” had been altered in some fashion, so the brothers knew all too well where Rose was coming from (“Body of the Sanctioned,” 2003).

Events. The text begins with 11-year-old Edward and 10-year-old Alphonse transmuting their mother to bring her back to life. There is a rebound, and Edward loses his leg while Alphonse loses his whole body. Edward sacrifices his arm to bind his little brother’s soul to a suit of armor. There is then a flashforward of three years where the brothers are traveling to the town of Lior in search of something, which is later to be revealed to be the Philosopher’s Stone, in order to get their bodies back. Upon arriving, they are made aware of the city’s religious prophet, Father Cornello, who performs “miracles” which turns out to be just “cleverly disguised alchemy” with the aid of the Philosopher’s Stone (“Those Who Challenge the Sun,” 2003). Edward and Alphonse enlist the help of Rose, one of Father Cornello’s most devout of followers, in order to get closer to Father Cornello and his Philosopher’s Stone. It is revealed that Father Cornello was just manipulating the townspeople, attacks the brothers and locks them up to stop them from revealing his secret, and Edward concocts a scheme to make the people of Lior aware of Father Cornello’s nefarious ways. It is found that the stone was a fake, and he is later eaten alive by one of the homunculi that were using him. After these events, Rose is left disheartened and lost as to what to do with herself, so she asks Edward what she should do. Edward replies that she should create her own path, and Alphonse reminds her not to lose hope.

Causal Relations. In the two episodes, there are many cause-and-effect relationships that help the audience know what is seen as appropriate or the right thing to do. There are the laws of alchemy and going against them will have grave consequences. Trespassing on God’s territory only spelled disaster for the brothers because they thought they could cheat death and for Father

Cornello because he thought he could use God as a tool to manipulate people. Both Rose and the brothers have suffered due to blind following and were devastated by the results. Edward also gets treated poorly due to his cynical and short-tempered attitude as opposed to Alphonse or Rose who are amiable and respectful.

Temporal Relations. There is the use of flashback and flashforward at the very beginning of the series, so it starts off as paradigmatic; however, the rest of the two episodes are event driven, and, therefore, syntagmatic in presentation. Phrases such as “back then” and “we believed” used by the brothers who are narrating imply that the events/ episodes taking place happened in the past and are being retold by the brothers to the audience to experience and learn from (“Those Who Challenge the Sun,” 2003; “Body of the Sanctioned,” 2003). This is especially seen in the first two episodes because they are used as an extended example of what to do and not to do.

Intended Audience. As stated earlier, *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) is derived from the manga of the same name. The manga was published in *Enix*, *Square Enix*, *Madman Entertainment*, and *Viz Media* magazines whose target audiences are young, teenage boys, though they do garner a female audience of the same age range (“Fullmetal Alchemist,” n.d.). Therefore, the anime is assumed to target the same audience. The ages and gender, 14 and 13 years of age and male, of the two protagonists of the series assumes the presumed audience would form a relationship or connection to the characters due to the similarities and want to embody their actions and attitudes.

Moral Interpretation. The morals these two episodes convey are “do not be naïve,” “death cannot be cheated,” “the value of someone’s life cannot be calculated,” “do not trespass on God’s territory,” “it’s bad to have blind faith in something,” “make your own way,” “kindness is key,” and “stay positive.” The consequences of being naïve, cheating death, reducing life to only numbers, trespassing into God’s territory, and having blind faith in something are all seen in first

few moments of the first episode where Edward and Alphonse fail to transmute their mother's corpse into a living being and their loss of limbs and physical form. They became examples of what happens if someone disobeys the rules, goes against the natural order of things, and naively believes in something without question. Rose and her situation is also an example of what happens to a person who has blind faith. Father Cornello trespasses on God's territory by believing he can be like Him or have the same powers as He and is ultimately exposed as a fraud and killed because of it.

Edward embodies the "make your own way" notion because, in these first two episodes, he does not let anything slow him down or discourage him from doing what he needs to do or thinks is right. However, he is chastised for his temperamental demeanor and his comparison to Icarus alludes to the audience that he might not be the role model the audience should fashion themselves after given the implications of what it means to be like Icarus ("Those Who Challenge the Sun", 2003). Rose and Alphonse are kind and get along with those around them making them examples of the best role models of how to act towards others. Though what the brothers had gone through was tragic and traumatizing to say the least, Alphonse continues to keep positive and is deemed as the more thoughtful brother of the two and, thus, the true role model the audience should follow.

Evaluation

The narrations serve as world-building and character-driving expositions. They put forward the importance of both of the protagonists and their relationship to one another, albeit in a subtle way. Each narration is also used as a reminder to the audience the dangers of naivete.

Committing the taboo of transmuting human souls by trying to bring back their mother from the dead resulted in Edward losing his arm and leg while Alphonse lost his entire physical body and had his soul bound to a suit of armor. What they brought back was a monstrosity, all because they trespassed on God's territory. In this situation the brothers' loss of limbs, physical form, and the botched reanimation of their mother serve as a physical representation of the consequences of going against the rules and being naive.

At the end of episode two, where Father Cornello is exposed and Rose is at a loss at what to do, Edward explains to Rose that it is up to her what she does next. He states, "You have to figure it out. Stand up and walk. Keep moving forward. You've got two good legs. So, get up and use them. You're strong enough to make your own path" ("Body of the Sanctioned," 2003). This is important to take note of because both Edward and Rose come from the same mentality -- just on different ends of the spectrum. Edward blindly believes in alchemy and science while Rose blindly believes in miracles and Letoism, so him saying this to her was meaningful.

Both brothers serve as leaders or as a form of guidance to Rose or to someone else who has lost their way as she has. Edward shows to Rose and the audience that blind faith and going against the natural order of things has its consequences and that even without a faith to guide her, that her personal path and moral compass should come from within herself. Alphonse also adds that she can still hope and believe because it is better to focus on the positives than dwell on the negatives.

Analysis

The first two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) explicitly and inexplicably shows the audience the dangers of being naïve, that death should not be cheated, that the value of someone's life cannot be calculated or reduced to simple calculations, that no one should trespass on God's

territory, that they should not have just blind faith in something, that they need to make their own way, that it is good to be kind, and that they should look at the positives. Edward and Alphonse show the audience that the consequences of some actions, such as going against the order of things, can be great. Rose is amiable and kind, which is deemed as good to want to emulate, but she put too much faith into one thing and was left heartbroken in the end. In the end, Alphonse serves as an example of what the audience should want to copy as he is level-headed, thoughtful, respectful, kind, and still holds onto hope in spite of what has happened to him.

In Search of the Truth: Summaries of Events

This section is included to provide context and background for analysis and future studies. It is a comprehensive list of summaries of each set of episodes starting from episode 03 to episode 49 in order to lessen the time the reader of this meta-analysis has to spend figuring out what went on between the first and last episodes given that each episode is 24 minutes long on average. There is also an overarching list of many of the morals that can be found in each of these episodes at the end of this paper in Appendix A.

Two brothers, Edward and Alphonse Elric, try to resurrect their mother using alchemy. It backfires on the young boys and cost Edward an arm and a leg and Alphonse is now a soul bound to a suit of armor. Now, as teens, are trying to become State Alchemists for the military of Amestris so they can learn all they can about the legendary Philosopher's Stone. The Stone is said to have unequivocal power and can bypass alchemy's number one law of equivalent exchange. The brothers wish to find this stone to get their bodies back.

They are under the guise of Col. Mustang and are guided by his crew of subordinates. Their path the brothers walk is riddled with mysteries, loss, manipulation, and dark pasts. Along their journey to find the Philosopher's Stone they learn of humanoid creatures, who they later

find out are created by failed human transmutations, called Homunculi. Each Homunculi is a representation of the Seven Deadly Sins, and they know all about the Philosopher's Stone.

Edward and Alphonse find out the secret of creating the Stone- human sacrifices. This puts into play the morality of achieving their goals.

The duo decides that there must be a different way, but little do they know that they are being used by the ever-present Homunculi into creating a Philosopher's Stone for them and their master named Dante. They find that even the military they work for is corrupt and the country is being led by the Homunculi Pride, otherwise known as Fuhrer King Bradley. It seems everywhere the brothers turn there is another obstacle or life-altering event. Trying to fight fate the brothers are dumbfounded to find their father, van Hoenheim, who left the family when they were very young, is at the center of it all. As it turns out, he and Dante used to be lovers centuries ago and found the secret to immortality through the Stone.

Now, the questions that remain are: "At the end of destiny, after light and darkness have smeared into a dim gray haze surrounding your every thought... where will peace be found? When harsh lessons wrapped in blood and tears are learned and the journey has spread over eons and far-flung dimensions, is it possible for the mysteries to be made even murkier as the future begins? In between the rays of a warming sun, the brothers Elric will consider the answers that are left once the Philosopher's Stone has guided their saga to an end. True sacrifice, the deep love of family, the cruel truths of life and death... There is no great magic that soothes the pain and amplifies the joy of being human. As the Fullmetal Alchemist's tale draws to a close, our heroes and villains reap what they have sown" (Disc Set 13: "Brotherhood", 2005).

Results: Part Two

A Lesson Learned: Episodes 50-51

Episodes 50-51 Analysis

The ending of a series says exactly as to what the audience should have taken away from the conflicts and morals it has encompassed, and this portion of the paper will be exploring these concepts within its last two episodes. Again, for the greatest understanding of these underlying themes and values, there will be the use of narrative perspective analysis since it pertains to morals. The following questions to be explored through the lens are:

RQ1: What do the last two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) state explicitly and inexplicitly about the morals of equivalency, determination, perfection, making your own way, despair, truth, hard work, memories, and life?

RQ 2: What is deemed right or wrong within these two episodes, and how is this shown?

These need to be analyzed because these last two episodes tell the audience exactly what they should take away from its story which is unique for this type of text, and it furthers the cause for anime to be a scholastically studied form of media.

Text Selection and Events

Episode 50 starts off with Edward after going through the Gate of Truth in another person's body during World War I in London as zeppelins are bombing the city. Van Hoenheim explains that this is the other side of the gate. Mustang's crew is being surveilled to prevent an upheaval. From this we learn that Mustang has given them the slip. The scene then moves onto Fuhrer Bradley's home where his son Saliem admits to seeing Bradley's secret treasure. Instead

of getting mad Bradley entrusts the key to the treasure to Saliem. Afterward, Hawkeye distracts the guards and Bradley in order for Mustang to break into the premises. Meanwhile, Author is on a rampage trying to catch the dissenting soldiers along with Ross and Izumi who are trying to escape. Author then learns of the breach at Bradley's home.

Van Hoenheim explains to Edward that the lives of "those that have died and will die become the energy for alchemy" used on their side of the gate ("Death", 2004). This explains where the energy for transmutations comes from which baffles Edward, saying that van Hoenheim sounds just like Dante and her saying there is no equivalent exchange. Edward then confronts him about his past with Dante and their use of the philosopher's stone to soul jump body to body as well as Hoenheim marrying their mother and then leaving the family behind. Van Hoenheim reveals that he truly loved their mother, but his body is decaying and did not want them to see him that way.

While this is happening, Envy tries to get Gluttony to eat Alphonse, but Gluttony is too distraught over Lust's death. Because of this Dante erases Gluttony's mind so that he is driven by pure instinct to feed. Edward learns that van Hohenheim is trapped on the other side of the gate due to his full self, mind, body, and soul, having crossed over, but Edward can still access the Gate because his body is still within it which means he can return to his world. Van Hohenheim leaves and says goodbye, stating that there is no such thing as equivalent exchange but is happy of it because he got to have his children to which nothing can equal. Edward refuses to believe that there is no reward if you work hard enough. From this, he learns that he does need something to believe in, even if it is considered childish ("Death", 2004). After this revelation a zeppelin crashes atop Edward, killing the other Edward.

At the Bradley mansion, Hawkeye explains that Mustang is there to attack Bradley. There is a noise and Bradley goes to check on it. Mustang confronts Bradley.

In Dante's lair, Gluttony goes to eat Alphonse but is stopped by Wrath looking for them to bring Lust back to life. This angers Dante as any wrong move by Wrath can cause an alchemic reaction and ruin all that they worked for to get a philosopher's stone, so she opens the Gate to rip off Edward's limbs he acquired. Afterward they notice the Gate is still open to which they see Edward come out of. Envy toys with Edward as they fight. It is then revealed that Envy was van Hohenheim and Dante's son and the first Homunculus. The shock of finding this out gives Envy an opening to kill Edward. The suddenness of his death releases Rose from Dante's spell and she cries out for Edward.

Episode 51 begins with Edward's death and Rose and Alphonse reacting to it. The scene then pans to soldiers transporting Bradley's family and Hawkeye to then have Gen. Author crashing into them as well as trying to kill Hawkeye. Meanwhile, as Mustang and Bradley are fighting and it seems Mustang is about to lose his life, Saleim shows up with Bradley's secret treasure to save it from the fire the battle has caused. Once Bradley realizes what Saliem has he wrings the boy's neck and throws him to the side in anger. Mustang realizes this secret treasure is Bradley's one weakness and uses it against him, thus defeating him as well.

At Dante's lair, Gluttony is eating Alphonse's philosopher's stones, and Alphonse decides to use said stones to resurrect Edward even at the expense of his own life. Mustang finishes off Bradley and carries Saliem's body outside only to be greeted and shot by Gen. Author. Hawkeye finds Mustang's collapsed and bleeding body. At the gate Edward's soul is met by Alphonse and Envy. Envy learns that van Hoenhiem is on the other side of the gate and forces it open so he can find and kill him. Edward realizes what Alphonse has just done right

before he opens his eyes to see Rose over him. In Dante's escape, she is eaten by a deranged Gluttony. Edward asks Rose to bring Wrath to the surface along with her as he plans on sacrificing himself to destroy Dante's lair and bring Alphonse back.

There is a time leap with Shaska writing a letter to Whinry about the new government in Central and the reversal of the Ishvalan Policy. The audience then learns that Mustang survived the shot at Bradley's mansion and Edward was successful in bringing Alphonse back. However, Alphonse has no memories of the past four years and came back as his ten-year-old self.

Alphonse is working with Izumi again to learn alchemy so that he can bring back Edward. All the while Edward is on the other side of the gate in Munich, 1921 with van Hoenheim who is working with Prof. Haushofer. Edward wants to study liquid fuel rockets to go to outer space in order to possibly find another way to see Alphonse again. The show ends with life continuing on in the world with everyone working hard and living the best they can.

Descriptions and Interpretations

Setting. Episode 50 to episode 51 mainly takes place in four places: a fallen, underground church otherwise known as Dante's lair, at the gate, on the other side of the gate, and Central. Each setting has its main characters and their final arcs the story has been leading to. At each of them the characters must face a horrible truth that will test them immensely. Assuming the audience has watched the show up until this conclusion, it is safe to say that each character acts as expected and all questions the audience may have are answered through the story.

Characters. Edward Elric has grown as a character through the series. He went from a stubborn child to an introspective young adult. At the end of the series, he sees that there are

some things that are out of our control and accepts that fact while still holding steadfast to his own personal beliefs. He is still frustrated with what he does not know but is more willing to listen or notice when advice or knowledge has been imparted onto him. He acts as expected when given the opportunity to bring his little brother, Alphonse's, body back. He does so without hesitation. Edward also becomes the living representation of a second chance given that he dies in his world but is resurrected by Alphonse and given another life on the other side of the gate. Even though he is stuck in this new world he is still determined and trying all he can to see Alphonse again.

Alphonse Elric is the same mild-mannered and thoughtful younger brother who supports Edward though he has become more resolved. He selflessly brings back Edward even though it means his ultimate demise and has no regrets doing so. He, too, becomes a symbol of second chances when he is brought back to life in his original body with no memories of what went on during the series. He becomes a lot like his brother but without the stubbornness and haughtiness that impeded Edward early on. In a sense, Alphonse has become the ideal role model for the audience.

Van Hohenheim has been an absent figure until now. With his showing up, truths both big and small are unveiled. He has been hiding the truth in order to deal with it himself, but he has to bear it all in order to save his sons. He is a rather tragic character but turns into an invaluable source of information for Edward as well as a guiding force.

Fuhrer King Bradley/ Pride acts in accordance with his namesake of Pride when it was pride that caused him to show his true colors and act out. While he was a leader and was seen as an authority figure the audience finds out that all his actions were guided by his pride, and this makes him a rather flat character.

Saleim is like the other citizens of Amestris; naive and unaware of the evil that controls and has the authority over them. He also symbolizes what the military strives to protect and what would happen to that if Bradley continued to rule.

First Lt. Riza Hawkeye is the representation of loyalty. Without question, she follows Mustang but not without reasoning. She stands by and supports him unwaveringly.

Gen. Roy Mustang is the force needed to upheave the evil running the country. He is determined to do what is right for the country and citizens of Amestris as well as payback for the death of his friend, Maes Hughes.

Dante is a manipulative character that will do anything to better her situation and continue living on. Her long life has made her bitter and unfeeling towards others. She refuses to face the truth- that she is dying. It is a cruel truth that she continually fights. She no longer cherishes or enjoys life thus making her cold. Unable to face the truth and being unemotional became her downfall when her plans go awry, and she is eaten alive by a deranged Gluttony.

Envy is another representation of being determined. He will not let anything get in his way of his goal and will do anything to achieve it. He is unwavering in his convictions, and this is proven when the gate does what he wants when he commands it to bring him to van Hohenheim. This can suggest that with enough determination one can obtain their goals.

Gluttony shows us how emotions such as despair can affect us. He became down and unwilling to do anything. This can be a hindrance to the goals set out to be completed. Because of this he is punished by just becoming an instinctual being instead of a rational one. These instincts become the undoing of Dante, so it could be said that Dante's truth was that the emotions she found to be foolish are what could have saved her if she saw the value in them.

Rose is the reminder to the brothers to make your own way and keep moving forward, but she has been manipulated again this time by Dante. She is being used to manipulate Edward's heart. This shows the dangers of not going on or hesitating. Her wail at the sudden death of Edward serves as a reminder of the cruelty of the truth.

Rose's baby is everything innocent and pure in the world even among chaos. They serve as a catalyst to the gate and finding the truth. They also show how life continues on as they continue to grow even after the major events at the end of the series.

Wrath is a flat character, but he acts on his emotions and wants unbridled in place of the brothers since they had to grow up and mature so fast. He is what the brothers could have become since each of them had to grow up without a mother and father.

Izumi Curtis is the mother figure that the brothers were lacking just as they were the children she longed for. She is the one who brings up Alphonse after his body is returned and teaches him what he needs to know to strive for his new goal of bringing his brother back.

Gen. Author is a character that shows the dangers of extremist views or loyalties and how that leads to nothing but destruction.

Whinry Rockbell is the brothers' connection to a family and support.

Narrator. Edward Elric is now the beginning narrator for episode 50; however, there is no ending narration. His narration is quite serious in tone and different from previous narrations; instead of stating the Law of Equivalent Exchange he states that there is no law and that they have found their ever-coveted philosopher's stone. Edward being the narrator was most likely done to foreshadow the importance of his character in the episode.

While there is no beginning narration for episode 50 in order to create or stay in line with the serious tone; however, there is an ending narration done by Alphonse that is uplifting in tone to match the aspirations of the main characters.

A minor narrator is Sheska. She serves as an information relater to the audience once there is a time leap in the last episode. It is masked as a letter to Whinry, that way it stays in line with the context of the story.

Events. The episode begins with Rose being groomed to be Dante's new body, Alphonse being sacrificed as the new philosopher stone, and Edward being forced through the Gate of Truth to where his mind and soul ends up in London during World War I with van Hohenheim. Van Hoenhiem explains that this world's lives are the energy for their alchemy as well as the reason he left his family behind. Edward forces open the gate and tries to defeat Envy, but the shock of learning that Envy was van Hoenhiem's and Dante's son caused him to hesitate and Envy kills him. This breaks the spell Rose was under as she cries out for Edward. Dante waits for Gluttony to eat Alphonse's philosopher's stones to complete the ritual so she can transfer her soul into Rose's body, but he is too distraught over Lust's death, so Dante has his mind erased so that he only drives on the instinct to eat. After seeing Edward's death Alphonse uses the philosopher's stones within him to bring his brother back from the dead, this costs him his life in turn. During this Dante flees, but is eaten by Gluttony. After being restored to life Edward transmutes himself to bring Alphonse back to life and destroy Dante's lair. This causes Edward's whole self to be on the other side of the gate while Alphonse returns but as a ten-year-old boy with no recollection of the past four years.

Meanwhile, as this is all happening, there is an upsurge at headquarters where Lt. Ross and Izumi try to escape without getting caught by Gen. Author. Also, Mustang, with the

help of Hawkeye, confronts Bradley, who is the Homunculus Pride, and is almost killed by him if it was not for Saleim bringing forward Bradley's one weakness. Mustang uses this opportunity to defeat Bradley. Gen. Author hears the news about Bradley being in danger and comes upon Mustang carrying Saleim's body outside of Bradley's destroyed mansion, so he shoots Mustang.

After all these events there is a time leap where we learn the condition of the state and that Mustang survived, that Alphonse wants to learn alchemy to bring Edward back, and Edward is also working toward that same goal in Munich on the other side of the gate.

Causal Relations. Cause-and-effect relationships in these last two episodes show the audience the importance of persevering as well as what they can follow to guide them forward in life. Van Hohenheim is stuck on the other side of the gate because he could not face reality as well as his past. Dante is destroyed due to her selfishness and need to defy the laws of mortality. Bradley is weakened and ultimately dies because he was too sure of himself and his actions/decisions. Mustang tries to right his wrongs of turning a blind eye to corruption and is rewarded by the end. Edward tries to face the truth but is undone by it, but in the end uses it as a driving force to continue searching for a way to get back to his brother. Alphonse uses any means necessary to selflessly bring his brother back, even when it cost him his life. Through any adversity the brothers never stop trying to move forward and attain their goals.

Temporal Relations. The majority of these last two episodes are highly event-driven and character focused, making them syntagmatic in nature. There is the use of flash-forward to account for time passing in the ending of the last episode. This is mediated through the letter Sheska writes Winry. It gives a short summary of the past and new present goings on to move the story towards its conclusion.

Moral Interpretation. The morals these last two episodes convey are: “equivalent exchange is not always true,” “hard work will pay off,” “despair has many effects,” and “the truth can be cruel” in episode fifty, and “equivalent exchange is more of standard than an absolute,” “make your own way,” “nothing is perfect,” “memories have worth,” “there is a give and a take,” “life has a cyclical flow,” and “determination is key” for episode fifty-one. These last two episodes look into cause and effect as well as discovery. Despair and the cruelty of the truth can send anyone reeling; however, the brothers realize quickly that determination is paramount in recovering from this knowledge. They believe in their hard work and will do anything to make their goals come to fruition because of what they have already gone through. And even though it is not perfect, life continues on even after the brothers are separated in the end with new goals and new determinations.

Evaluation

The brothers learn a hard lesson in finding out the once infallible rule that they lived by, equivalent exchange, is now fallible. And when it seems like the bad guys were winning, they tried their best to win against them only to be hit by a sudden truth that altered their reality once again. In that hesitation, Edward loses his life; all because the truth was too much to bear in that moment and he did not have the determination to go forward.

Alphonse, however, keeps pushing forward and uses whatever means necessary to bring Edward back to life. Edward is brought back and with a newfound resilience gives up all he has to bring Alphonse back. He succeeds, but he is trapped on the other side of the gate without the use of alchemy to help him and Alphonse is without memories of what has occurred the past five or so years. Alphonse’s missing his memories in exchange for a new chance at life prove that memories have their worth in their world of give and take.

At the end of the last episode narration is key to finding out what exactly the audience should take away from the series. It directly states what morals were important. That is not to say that the morals reviewed in previous episodes are inconsequential, just that the moral of the story was stated at the end. In the end, the brothers realize that nothing is perfect, life continues to flow no matter what you do to undo the past, and having the motivation to keep going is what is important.

Analysis

In the conclusion of the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) series the audience has found that some truths can be harsh, that despair makes people do many things, that there is a give and a take, though it might not always be equal, but in the end your efforts will pay off and be rewarded in some fashion. The truth of his father's past caused Edward to hesitate and ultimately die because of it. Envy is consumed by despair at Van Hohenheim creating another family with Edward and Alphonse as his new sons, and that despair drove him to do whatever it took to get back at him. And the brother's mutual giving of each other's life for one another at the expense of something else proves that what is given may not always equal what is taken or given back, however, it is rewarded, nonetheless. The end goal the story shows is to never stop and to continue on in your determination to reach your goals despite what you might find ahead or the setbacks that lie in the way.

The *Fullmetal Alchemist* series as a whole has been analyzed from multiple different perspectives that show it is not some simple cartoon. It has been studied through its use of reading performance, philosophical and ethical aspects, and, with the inclusion of this paper, moral narratives. This analysis of the first two and last two episodes of *Fullmetal Alchemist*

(2003) offers some evidence in proving that some anime should not be deemed as just childish cartoons but morally profound and deep in underlying meaning that is worth studying.

The Reminder: What to Take Away from *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003)

Summary

In summation, this paper was created to shed light into an otherwise niched topic like anime and its inclusion in the academic world. It has concluded that if meeting specific criteria, such as the questionnaire in the prologue, then an anime can be considered for scholastic review. The majority of this thesis is focused on a narrative analysis of the first and last two episodes of the anime *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) as it has met the aforementioned criteria for serious analysis. The findings of this analysis were that the story had deep and meaningful morals and virtues to impart upon its audience and that this kind of review can be latent with content if given a chance. This was done to prove that an otherwise known ‘non-academic’ subject -such as anime- can be worth the effort of strenuous academic review and analysis because what is within it can be profound. If further analyses are created such as this one there will be a new field of studies to embark upon with its own set of ideas and discoveries the academic world has not yet given a chance to uncover.

Below is a list of the most occurring morals found in *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003). This relate to the narrative perspective of the story because the morals could be the same or different depending on the episode the viewer watches and interprets. These are important to take note of because one could say that these are the moral of the story in this anime, if not for the fact that the story clearly stating what the audience should take away at the end of the last episode. Also, keep in mind that I have also made interpretations of these morals -- meaning someone else may take away different meanings. However, these morals were imparted onto the audience more

frequently, and it could be said that that gives them more influence on what the audience takes away from the story.

Table 1: Top Morals Found in Fullmetal Alchemist (2003)

Most Often Found Morals in <i>Fullmetal Alchemist</i> (2003)	Episodes
Equivalent exchange	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51
Make your own way	1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 19, 28, 34, 36, 41, 51
The value of life	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 15, 22, 25, 41, 49
You should not trespass into God's territory	1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 27, 31, 40
Do not assume	9, 23, 24, 34, 36, 37, 43

Implications

Implications of this meta-narrative analysis are that a new text could be considered for review, analysis, or research, and better-informed commentary can be made on the impact of shows or, more specifically, anime. A narrative analysis “is valuable for studying popular culture texts because it proposes a systematic means by which to analyze how they function as stories and what underlying ideological messages are being conveyed in them” (Sellnow, 2017 pp. 52-53). Because of this meta-narrative analysis there is now more information and documentation on the subject of anime in communication studies. The goal is to show that there is something to studying anime in the academic field and to encourage future studies similar to or in honor of this analysis.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the language the series was reviewed in as well as the version that was chosen. I chose to watch the series in English dubbing because it was easier to follow for myself; however, watching this series in English dubbed over might have been a limitation of knowing the actual language/word choice to the moral of the story. Afterall, word choice is important to how some morals could be interpreted. Also, in comparing the information within the two versions of *Fullmetal Alchemist*'s anime there will be discrepancies as to what the moral of the story may be because, in essence, they are two separate stories about the same set of brothers who are after the same thing. I chose the original the original 2003 version because I felt it had more substance moral-wise. Another interesting limitation is the use of visual analysis. Visual analysis might confer/offer a different interpretation of my findings.

Future Studies

Future studies could include a narrative analysis of the second Fullmetal Alchemist anime, Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood to see if the morals are the same or differ with the new plot. The same could also be done to the Japanese dub of each version. That way any limitation this study has could be accounted for. A visual analysis of either or both of the series could cover this study's limitations as well.

Subjects for further research could also be to look at the commentary made on religion and politics within the series in any format, though the *Fullmetal Alchemist* manga and the *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* anime would be best, because they are currently unexplored topics. These topics could be examined using a different lens such as the Marxist lens to see the power relations seen between groups of people within the world of *Fullmetal Alchemist*. This

could be done by analyzing the distributions of power, happiness, money, or all three between two or more groups of people, such as the military, the Ishvalans, or the common people.

Conclusion

One is led to assume that the series' perpetual reminder is equivalent exchange given that it is reiterated in nearly every episode in the introduction (see *Table 1*). However, the narration states "...We *believed* that to be the one and only truth," meaning that was not the true truth (Fullmetal Alchemist, 2003). There is a truth *behind* the truth like the brothers uncovered when searching for the philosopher's stone. Yes, a moral that the audience can take away is that there is a give and take to life and things we earn, but another is that there is no equivalence to human life and to try hard in order to succeed or not to transverse into what is seen as God's territory because it will only lead to dire consequences. These top morals can be seen above in *Table 1*, and a comprehensive list of morals found in each episode of the series can be found in Appendix A.

The audience can see that the ultimate takeaway for them is in episode 51, "Laws and Promises", the last episode of the series. The morals are explicitly stated by Alphonse in the ending narration:

But the world isn't perfect. And the law is incomplete. Equivalent exchange doesn't encompass everything that goes on here, but I still chose to believe in its principle. All things *do* come at a price; that there is an eb and a flow; a cycle that the pain we went through *did* have a reward, and that anyone who is determined and

perseveres *will* get something of value in return. Even if it is not what they expected. (2004)

Ultimately, the audience should take away that there is a give and take to life, and that it may be unexpected but there will be rewards for your effort.

References

- "Alburtus Magnus." (1870). *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 30(770), 151-52. Web.
- Bartolotta, K. L. (2017). *Anime: Japanese animation comes to America*. Framington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Publishing LLC.
- Batie, S. Alchemy and Middle English Literature. *YouTube*, uploaded by Hendrix College, 24 Oct 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n90AGFA0Kk>.
- Bobory, D. & Rampling, J. M. (2012). Introduction alchemy on the fringes: Communication and practice at the peripheries of early modern Europe. *Early Science and Medicine*, 17(5), 467-77. Web.
- Chambers, S. N. I. (2012). Anime: From cult following to pop culture phenomenon. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 3(2).
- Dietsch, D. (2017). "The history of anime's journey to America." Retrieved from <https://www.fandom.com/articles/anime-history-america>
- Ellis, M. (2003). *The History of Gothic Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Fekete, I. (2012). "Family at the fringes: The medico-alchemical careers of Johann Ruland (1575-1638) and Johann David Ruland (1604-1648?). *Early Science and Medicine*, 17(5), 548-69. Web. 25 Feb. 2018.
- Gallacher, L. (2011). (Fullmetal) alchemy: The monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga. *Cultural Geographies*, 18(4), pp. 457-473.

- Hammonds, K. A. & Hammonds, G. (2017). Seeing with shinigami eyes: Death Note as a case study in narrative, naming, and control. *The Phoenix Papers*, 3(1), pp. 95-107.
- Jenkins, H. (2004). Pop Cosmopolitanism: Mapping cultural flows in an age of media convergence in globalization: Culture and education. In M. M. Suárez-Orozco, D. Baolian Qin-Hilliard [Eds.], *The new millennium* (114-140). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Kelts, R. (2006). *Japanamerica: How Japanese pop culture has invaded the U.S.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Lowart. "Fullmetal Alchemist VS Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood - Part 1 | Comparing FMA's Anime and Manga" *YouTube*, uploaded by Lowart, 11 Nov 2018.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdRIh0Em58A&list=PLOkPdsBkXACZWAQWz_ZYHKHKS4I00QJbK&index=1
- Mizushima, S. (Director). (2003). Those who challenge the sun [Television series episode]. In Bones, Mainichi Broadcasting System (MBS), & Aniplex (Producers), *Fullmetal alchemist*. Flower Mound, TX: Funimation.
- . (Director). (2003). Body of the sanctioned [Television series episode]. In Bones, Mainichi Broadcasting System (MBS), & Aniplex (Producers), *Fullmetal alchemist*. Flower Mound, TX: Funimation.
- . (Director). (2004). Death [Television series episode]. In Bones, Mainichi Broadcasting System (MBS), & Aniplex (Producers), *Fullmetal alchemist*. Flower Mound, TX: Funimation.

- . (Director). (2004). Laws and promises [Television series episode]. In Bones, Mainichi Broadcasting System (MBS), & Aniplex (Producers), *Fullmetal alchemist*. Flower Mound, TX: Funimation.
- . (Director). (2005). Disc set 13: "Brotherhood" [DVD]. In Bones, Mainichi Broadcasting System (MBS), & Aniplex (Producers), *Fullmetal alchemist*. Flower Mound, TX: Funimation.
- Punter, David. "1 Origins of Gothic." *YouTube*, uploaded by William Burn, 28 Feb 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvayCQWnGaI&index=1&list=PL7IUFUlKSyf_NmyXuByp43RfBQbaeOfCp.
- . "8 Life & Death in Gothic fiction." *YouTube*, uploaded by William Burn, 28 Feb 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6QvnJ6JvQ&index=7&list=PL7IUFUlKSyf_NmyXuByp43RfBQbaeOfCp.
- Ruh, B. (2006). Historicizing anime and manga: From Japan to the world. *Mechademia*, 1, 180-183.
- Sellnow, D. D. (2017). *The rhetorical power of popular culture: Considering mediated texts* [3rd ed.]. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Sementelli, A. (2014). Applying existential philosophy and popular culture images to ethics: The case for Fullmetal Alchemist. *Public Voices*, 14(1), pp. 28-42. doi: 10.22140/pv.42.
- Walton, M. T. (2011). *Genesis and the chemical philosophy : true Christian science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. Brooklyn, NY : AMS Press.

Wikipedia. "Fullmetal Alchemist". *Wikipedia*. [Accessed November 26, 2019]. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fullmetal_Alchemist

-- . "Fullmetal Alchemist (TV Series)". *Wikipedia*. [Accessed November 06, 2019]. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fullmetal_Alchemist_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fullmetal_Alchemist_(TV_series))

Wood, J. (2017). Manga and anime: The Japanese invasion. *Infoplease*. Web.

<https://www.infoplease.com/culture-entertainment/tv-radio/manga-and-anime-japanese-invasion#:~:text=The%20Rise%20of%20Manga%20and,picture%20book%20Shiji%20no%20yukikai.&text=His%20manga%20series%2C%20Astro%20Boy,became%20known%20worldwide%20as%20anime>.

Zeigler, G. (2017). A brief history of anime and manga: From zen cartoons to sailor moon.

Anime Chicago. Web. <https://animechicago.com/articles/brief-history-anime-manga-zen-cartoons-sailor-moon/>

Ziolkowski, Theodore. (2015). *The alchemist in literature: From Dante to the present*. Oxford University Press.

Appendix A

Table 1: “Morals Found in Each Episode of the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) Anime Series”

Episode 01 - "Those Who Challenge the Sun":	equivalent exchange, do not be naïve, you cannot cheat death, you should not reduce life to only numbers, you should not trespass into God's territory, be careful in having blind faith, make your own way, be kind, stay positive
Episode 02 - “Body of the Sanctioned”:	equivalent exchange, do not be naïve, you cannot cheat death, you should not reduce life to only numbers, you should not trespass into God's territory, be careful in having blind faith, make your own way, be kind, stay positive
Episode 03 - “Mother”:	equivalent exchange, you cannot cheat death, you should not reduce life to only numbers, you should not trespass into God's territory, make your own way
Episode 04 - “A Forger's Love”:	equivalent exchange, you cannot cheat death, you should not reduce life to only numbers,

	you should not trespass into God's territory, make your own way
Episode 05 - "The Man with the Mechanical Arm":	equivalent exchange, teamwork, respect authority, use things to your advantage
Episode 06 - "The Alchemy Exam":	equivalent exchange, learning is never a wasted effort, life is a marvel unto its own that cannot be recreated, hard work and dedication can lead to success
Episode 07 - "Night of the Chimera's Cry":	equivalent exchange, success is not without its losses, sometimes we fail, treasure the life you are given
Episode 08 - "The Philosopher's Stone":	equivalent exchange, some things are out of your control, sometimes we have to give more than we want to further our goals, not everything has an explanation, keep calm and do not dwell
Episode 09 - "Be Thou for the People":	equivalent exchange, do not assume, be fair, sometimes you have to do wrong in order to do what is right

Episode 10 - “The Phantom Thief”:	equivalent exchange, sometimes you have to bend the rules
Episode 11 - “The Other Brothers Elric: Part One”:	equivalent exchange, do not hide your wrongdoings
Episode 12 - “The Other Brothers Elric: Part Two”:	equivalent exchange, not all aspirations are commendable, take responsibility for your actions, chase your own dream, some solutions are not the most obvious, avarice is never a noble cause
Episode 13 - “Fullmetal VS Flame”:	equivalent exchange, do not let your temper get the best of you, think before doing, your past can haunt you, some things are best kept secret
Episode 14 - “Destruction's Right Hand”:	equivalent exchange, there can be differences between the same people, your past can haunt you, never miss a chance to grow, do not trespass on God’s territory, use your own strength

Episode 15 - “The Ishbal Massacre”:	equivalent exchange, do not go against God’s will, do not run away from your mistakes, forcing beliefs onto someone is not just, not all actions can be noble or just, one life does not equal another’s
Episode 16 - “That Which Is Lost”:	equivalent exchange, treat others with a bit of humanity, loss does not negate gain
Episode 17 - “House of the Waiting Family”:	equivalent exchange, relax whenever possible, family is not only blood, curiosity can be tempting
Episode 18 - “Marcoh's Notes”:	equivalent exchange, do not underestimate your own talents, adults are to nurture children
Episode 19 - “The Truth Behind Truths”:	equivalent exchange, the truth can be cruel, never give up, make your own way, it is okay to be frightened

Episode 20 - “Soul of the Guardian”:	equivalent exchange, impatience leads to defeat, all is fair in war, treat others with a bit of humanity despite their appearance
--------------------------------------	---

Episode 21 - “The Red Glow”:	equivalent exchange, some things are out of our control, fear should not stop you from learning
Episode 22 - “Created Human”:	equivalent exchange, all life has value, sometimes you will be manipulated, one life does not equal another’s
Episode 23 - “Fullmetal Heart”:	equivalent exchange, do not underestimate your own worth, be honest with your feelings, do not assume
Episode 24 - “Bonding Memories”:	equivalent exchange, be honest with your feelings, do not assume, the truth can be different than what is perceived, protect your own, keep faith, some questions do not have answers

Episode 25 - “Words of Farewell”:	equivalent exchange, every life has worth, revenge is never the answer
Episode 26 - “Her Reason”:	equivalent exchange, do not cheat, do kind deeds, appreciation goes a long way, it should not matter what others think of you
Episode 27 - “Teacher”:	equivalent exchange, think outside the box, do not trespass on God’s territory, life has a cyclical flow
Episode 28 - “All is One, One is All”:	equivalent exchange, take time to think, life has a cyclical flow, life is full of lessons, do not give up, make your own way
Episode 29 - “The Untainted Child”:	equivalent exchange, your past can haunt you
Episode 30 - “Assault on South Headquarters”:	equivalent exchange, not everyone should be dealt with the same, some things are best kept secret, not all choices are the easiest, going against God will have its consequences

Episode 31 - "Sin":	equivalent exchange, do not trespass on God's territory, the truth can be different than what is perceived, some things do not go as planned
Episode 32 - "Dante of the Deep Forest":	equivalent exchange, the truth can be different than what is perceived, everyone has sins that they bear, sometimes you will be manipulated, we can share the burden of the sins we bear
Episode 33 - "Al, Captured":	equivalent exchange, not all perceptions of the world are the same, there can be differences between the same people
Episode 34 - "Theory of Avarice":	equivalent exchange, do not assume, sometimes we have to give up more than we want, keep going, make your own way, help comes from unlikely places
Episode 35 - "Reunion of the Fallen":	equivalent exchange, help comes from unlikely places, be honest with your feelings, sometimes you will be manipulated
Episode 36 - "The Sinner Within":	equivalent exchange, do not go against God's will, do not assume, make your own way

Episode 37 - “The Flame Alchemist, The Bachelor Lieutenant & The Mystery of Warehouse 13”:	equivalent exchange, do not assume
Episode 38 - “With the River's Flow”:	equivalent exchange, plan ahead, do not be stubborn, curiosity can be tempting, revenge is never the answer
Episode 39 - “Secret of Ishbal”:	equivalent exchange, the truth can be different than what is perceived, the truth can be cruel
Episode 40 - “The Scar”	equivalent exchange, revenge is never the answer, treat others with humanity, do not trespass on God’s territory, do not go against God’s will

Episode 41 - “Holy Mother”:	equivalent exchange, the truth can be cruel, make your own way, every life has worth, revenge is never the answer, keep going
Episode 42 - “His Name is Unknown”:	equivalent exchange, keep going, sins or burdens to bear, sometimes you have to do

	wrong to do what is right, you cannot cheat death, forgiveness
Episode 43 - "The Stray Dog":	grief affects everyone, do not assume
Episode 44 - "Hohenheim of Light":	Intolerance can lead to your undoing, you can put your trust in others, the truth can be different than what is perceived, revenge is never the answer, you cannot cheat death
Episode 45 - "A Rotted Heart":	you cannot cheat death, uncertainty needs to be approached with caution
Episode 46 - "Human Transmutation":	equivalent exchange, souls make us human
Episode 47 - "Sealing the Homunculus":	equivalent exchange, taking responsibility, what it means to be human, the power of memories, do not be impulsive, learn from your past experiences
Episode 48 - "Goodbye":	do not lie, selflessness, be aware of our place in the world, desire is a powerful force
Episode 49 - "The Other Side of the Gate":	equivalent exchange is not always true, adults are to nurture children, nothing is black and

	white, no one life is worth more than another's, the world needs order
Episode 50 - "Death":	equivalent exchange is not always true, hard work will pay off, despair has many effects, the truth can be cruel
Episode 51 - "Laws and Promises"	equivalent exchange is more of standard than an absolute, make your own way, nothing is perfect, memories have worth, there is a give and a take, life has a cyclical flow, determination is key