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Representation of the Political Monster in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (2005 – 2008) and in *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2001 – 2010)

Mestrado em Estudos Comparatistas

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to contribute to the debate on the representations of the political monster in two Japanese types of cultural art media, namely: manga, with recourse to *Fullmetal Alchemist*; and anime, with recourse to *Avatar: The Last Airbender*—although the latter may not be considered an anime series, it has been animated in South Korean animation studios.

In *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, we focus on the Fire Nation's Fire Lord Ozai and his lineage. Ozai is represented as the monster in charge, the most fearful of them all, who sought territorial conquest and power above everything, creating other monsters along the way.

In *Fullmetal Alchemist*, there are several monsters spread all over, who are part of a single entity: Father. Father has, as their goal, to obtain utmost power and become the perfect being.

From these two representations, one can draw a number of links with the political monster in real life, such as that of Adolph Hitler, whose means of getting to power via force, fear, and propaganda led to an event of genocide. An event that is represented in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, with the annihilation of the Air Nomads; and in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, with the Ishballan genocide.

Bearing in mind that these two works of fiction were conceived in two different geographical opposites, i. e. *Avatar: The Last Airbender* is a work of fiction written and directed in North America, whereas *Fullmetal Alchemist* is a work of fiction written and drawn in Japan, they are also to be considered as works of imagology.

Keywords: Monster, Politics, Fullmetal Alchemist, Avatar The Last Airbender, Representation.

Resumo

O objectivo principal deste estudo é o de encontrar representações do monstro político num estudo comparatista de dois trabalhos da cultura e arte japonesa, nomeadamente: a manga, por meio de *Fullmetal Alchemist*; e do *anime*, por meio de *Avatar: The Last Airbender*—ainda que este último não seja bem considerado *anime*, foi animado num estúdio Sul Coreano.

O monstro político é descrito como um líder nacional que comete atrocidades, com foco em expansão territorial sem misericórdia para com aqueles que encontra pelo caminho.

Neste estudo comparatista, vários comportamentos em ambos os líderes foram encontrados, desenhando um padrão semelhante àquele encontrado no advento de vários eventos como genocídio, escravatura e abuso de poder.

Grande parte destes eventos resultou de um acto culminado pelo receio, por parte do monstro, que não conseguiu fixar a ideia de perder uma posição de poder e escalou a governança ao ponto de usar a violência e cometer crimes de guerra.

Tendo em conta que os dois textos a estudar foram concebidos em dois pontos geográficos diferentes, i. e. o *Avatar: The Last Airbender* é um trabalho de ficção escrito e dirigido nos Estados Unidos, enquanto *Fullmetal Alchemist* é um trabalhos e ficção escrito e desenhado no Japão, estes são, também, considerados trabalhos na área da imagiologia.

Keywords: Monster, Politics, Fullmetal Alchemist, Avatar, The Last Airbender.

1. Introduction

1.1. Pieces, concepts, and motivation

History is written on tombstone for scholars to study and minimize the severity of the massacres by turning the names of individual victims into numbers, as if they're all the same. Humankind should feel ashamed.

The afore written had been a post-dream epiphany. Many a genocide has been recorded on paper, on stone, engraved in many people's memories; and yet, what people say about it is, at max, 'an unfortunate x number of people died', as if the higher the number, the sadder the happening. Every single life matters.

Reasoning with these words by means of working with the works of Hiromu Arakawa, mangaka and creator of *Fullmetal Alchemist*, and of Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko, directors of the animated series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, may seem, in a way, a parody of the situation, but they are not. Manga¹, as well as 'anime'² is viewed in Japan as "an intellectually challenging art form"³. It also seems controversial, since it has an economical side to it, as 'anime was the "chief cultural export" that allowed japan [sic] to enter the global cultural economy'⁴, leaving no continent "unharmmed" by the expansion of the art form that is the Japanese animation; taking advantage of a close relationship with different types of media, such as television, anime and videogames⁵, it would only

¹ Comic books or graphic novels considered collectively as a genre, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manga>.

² Japanese films made using characters and images that are drawn rather than real, or one of these films, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/anime>.

³ Djihed Cheraifia, "Western and Japanese Mythology in *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*," (master's dissertation, Larbi Ben M'hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi, 2016), 32.

⁴ Djihed Cheraifia, "Western and Japanese Mythology in *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*," (master's dissertation, Larbi Ben M'hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi, 2016), 33.

⁵ Erika Freitas e Janaína Nunes, "A Comunicação Visual dos Mangás," *XVII Congresso das Ciências da Comunicação na Região Sudeste – Ouro Preto – MG (28 – 30 June, 2012)*, 3.

be expected that manga would also ascend in popularity the same way it happened with anime.

This cultural expansion could be seen as some kind of massacre, a cultural erasure of other cultures, in a subtle and strategic marketing way. It even ‘goes beyond Japanese exports of actual tapes (...)’, it also goes to filling ‘American museums where anime-inspired artists can be found to give (...) critical comment’⁶. This expansion-like process is related to a term named soft power, which Japan as subtly exploited via animation, as one can read in Tishi’s text, ‘the key to becoming a “loved and respected” nation lies in “cultivating the ability to desired results (...) through Japan’s attractiveness, namely cultural power”’⁷.

The differences betwixt soft and hard power are the following.

Hard power (...) can rest on either inducements or threats, or both. “Soft power, (...) is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment”⁸.

Although one can read it in a violent way, that of the ascent of the Japanese art form overlapping other cultures’ means of expression, anime and manga too share a reflective message, in which one can look at the message from an alternative perspective and conclude that it tends not to erase any culture or media whatsoever, but rather, instead, value the different types of existing cultures and forms of expression.

In that sense, contrary to many pieces of art, the type of line used in paintings throughout many a culture—such as those of Realism—does not work in a positive way with manga,

⁶ Djihed Cheraifia, “Western and Japanese Mythology in *Fullmetal Alchemist* Brotherhood,” (master’s dissertation, Larbi Ben M’hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi, 2016), 33.

⁷ Shuhrat Tishi, “*Fullmetal Alchemist* Brotherhood and the Cool Japan Strategy; Exercising Soft Power with Brilliance,” (master’s thesis, East West University, 2017), 3.

⁸ Shuhrat Tishi, “*Fullmetal Alchemist* Brotherhood and the Cool Japan Strategy; Exercising Soft Power with Brilliance,” (master’s thesis, East West University, 2017), 6.

for ‘it “steals” the readers’ attention to the messenger, instead of the message’⁹. The reader, then, will end up heeding to details on the drawing, instead of reading through the narrative, and the message will then be lost for whatever details the artist puts in their drawings, rather than the message the creators try to convey.

Anime; manga; soft power; massacres. These are not concepts or terms randomly written, but they are intended to be worked on in this dissertation. Its main goal is, then, to show how dictatorial power and genocide are represented in the anime and manga series of *Fullmetal Alchemist*, by Hiromu Arakawa, and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzsko.

What these two works of fiction show, both *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *Fullmetal Alchemist* are stories of loss, war and genocide, dictatorial regimes, and territorial conquest. The same subjects people are reading on the newspaper and hearing on the television—may it be the last mandate in the United States, which brought to power a destructive mind such as that of Donald Trump’s, the never ending rule of Russia by Vladimir Putin, the alienated nation under the strings of the puppet master Kim Jong-Un, Brazil’s erasure of Amazon indigenous communities, among others. Interestingly, this text comes at a time of semi-darkness, when, even after two World Wars and a period of genocide directed mainly to a people that had been for more than a millennium persecuted. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, Europe is living a war between Ukraine and Russia.

These two works of fiction share one feature, they both represent the annihilation of a community at the extent of genocide, from superior orders. Although they differ in a characteristic, which is the time period represented, one can see the similarities between both regimes. The ruling from a single entity, associated with the monarch figure of the

⁹ Erika Freitas e Janaína Nunes, “A Comunicação Visual dos Mangás,” XVII Congresso das Ciências da Comunicação na Região Sudeste – Ouro Preto – MG (28 – 30 June, 2012), 10.

king (in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, the dictatorial character in power is referred to as King Bradley)—Tishi states that the ‘story is set in 18th century Europe, both have a Führer as the national leader’¹⁰; and the figure of a superior and divine being, as in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*’s Fire Lord Ozai. The extermination represented in *Fullmetal Alchemist* has been repeatedly mentioned in previous works, such as Tishi’s, in which the author writes that ‘Nazi regime commits heinous crimes against the Jews that are shown through the atrocities committed against the Ishvalans’¹¹; and as can be read the complete decimation of the Air Nomads in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.

Not only is it important to analyze the event of genocide and perpetual persecution, but also to consider the context in which it happens in both works. The work of Arakawa and the metaphor of Alchemy, which, ‘[u]p to the 18th century, (...) was taught in England as a Christian Science and form of medicine’¹². This form of medicine seeks a major goal: the creation of something beyond understanding, the Philosopher’s Stone, made out of human lives, enabling to achieve any power desired by its user.

In *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, although there is no ultimate goal to achieve power through the acquisition of a Philosopher’s Stone of some sort, eliminating the one divine creature that roams the Earth, the Avatar, stands as a goal. The Avatar is a hybrid figure that bridges the common world where humans live in and the Spiritual world. The closest comparable figure from the world of non-fiction there is to the character and the idea of the Avatar may be the Dalai Lama, and the long chain of spiritual life through times; there are other descriptions of this spiritual being, such as,

¹⁰ Shuhrat Tishi, “*Fullmetal Alchemist* Brotherhood and the Cool Japan Strategy; Exercising Soft Power with Brilliance,” (master’s thesis, East West University, 2017), 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Hope L. Boyce, “The perpetual reminder: a narrative analysis of the beginning and end of the *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2003) anime series by Hiromu Arakawa,” (master’s thesis, The University of Texas at Tyler, 2021), 24.

a human spirit, like a Bidhisattva, has chosen an endless cycle of reincarnation rather than to reach personal Nirvana, in order to help others find enlightenment and to protect the balance of the world and the balance between the four nations¹³.

By eliminating this being, the Fire Nation will be able to achieve territorial domain over the whole globe, and to be the only nation in the world to exercise dominance.

Basically, both regimes try to acquire power via unorthodox methods, seeking utmost power and dominance over others; something that regimes such as Hitler's Nazi regime sought during its rule in Germany.

This dissertation, then, will be organized per sections, in which more theoretical sections precede more interpretative ones. It is also provided a character list for both the anime series *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and the manga series *Fullmetal Alchemist*; these come as an aid to the reader.

On some of the main traits of a monster and its evolution through time, the first section will do its part.

Then, there will be a different section regarding the victim and how the latter is affected by the monster's decisions, to enable bridge-building between the characters resembling the monster and other characters from each series.

Thence, the dissertation will advance to the analysis, in which the monster will be thoroughly analyzed and traits of the monster to be found in each series, starting with *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, moving to *Fullmetal Alchemist*. These two works of fiction will be kept in constant dialogue between each other.

In order to keep gender neutrality, and avoid any kind of offense to the reader, the usage of the pronoun "they" sounded preferable, but when quoting.

¹³ Kat Bakonyi, "The influence of Japanese Animation on *Avatar: The Last Airbender*," (UCLA School of Film and TV, 2010), 3.

1.2. Intertextuality and Imagology

Besides the fact that the objects of study in this dissertation focus on the same themes, massacre, genocide and extermination, it is of utmost importance to point out their characteristics as the pieces of work they are.

Japanese manga, ‘more generally (...) can be considered to be at least as monstrous as any of the characters within it’¹⁴, and ‘it is not simply the alchemy *in* the story that produces this monster; the story is itself monstrous because it emerges from an impossible transformation of words and pictures dispersed in panels separated by gutters.’

The dialogue between painting, or drawing, and literature postulates that the monsters’ voices within human are recorded over animated pictures, such as one can read in Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. A painting can only be a painting, indeed, but it is also a reflection of a person’s soul, of a person’s desires. If Dorian Gray saw impunity in himself, it had only been because his reflection was bearing all the malice. But the reflection was not to stay idle. It awoken the monster within Dorian Gray and made him commit the most horrible sins. But that dialogue is not mentioned anywhere. The reader only knows that it exists. Its liminality is what makes it the more monstrous.

Working with works of art such as *Fullmetal Alchemist* manga series and the series *Avatar: The Last Airbender* allows one to engage in with the occurrence and atrocities of the past—just like any work of art—, enabling it to be studied and analyze both these pieces of fiction as cultural and historical events. For instance, the laboring camps in which the Earthbenders have been submitted to hard labor may well be the representation of the continuous and unjust situation in which, at the end of the 1930s, ‘the Germans

¹⁴ Lesley-Anne Gallacher, “(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga,” *cultural geographies* 18, no. 4 (2011): 459.

began to use the prisoners as a labor force'¹⁵; or even at the time of the Herero genocide, where 'women and children died from dehydration, starvation, disease (...) and worked to death in concentration camps'¹⁶.

Moreover, there is also the perspective of whom is looking at the events and writing about them. Working with representations, a reflection of oneself, or, as Guerreiro puts it, using the idea of the double, is a way of preserving our flesh—or subjectivity—from the violence that may destroy it¹⁷. As Dimitra Bourontzi¹⁸ writes on Leerssen's theory, 'those images which characterize the Other'. This dissertation regards the image in this fashion. Two pieces. Then, two different perspectives. On one side, *Fullmetal Alchemist* looks onto Europe from an Eastern perspective, the eyes of Arakawa and the history Arakawa has researched and read; on the other side, *Avatar: The Last Airbender* looks onto Asia and Asian habits and religions from the Western perspective, Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko's knowledge on what is Asia and the East.

Machado argues that the series *Fullmetal Alchemist* has a hybrid characteristic, in which the piece becomes the more monstrous and richer due to its multiculturalism, since it is a Japanese work of fiction, written by a Japanese author, aiming towards a Japanese audience, but which geographic localizations and motives around the work of fiction—*Fullmetal Alchemist*—are inspired in Europe and its mythology¹⁹. This intertextuality

¹⁵ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 133.

¹⁶ Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, "Women and the Herero Genocide" in Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, 42.

¹⁷ Ricardo Guerreiro, "Melancolia e nevoeiro: Figuras do Medo do Cinema Português," (master's dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010), 1.

¹⁸ Bourontzi, "Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* through the perspective of imagology" (the paper shows no date of publication nor page numbers), https://www.academia.edu/51074942/Sir_Walter_Scott_s_Ivanhoe_through_the_perspective_of_imagology.

¹⁹ Sara Machado, "Intertextualidade endo e exoliterária em *Fullmetal Alchemist* de Hiromu Arakawa: A reescrita de modelos e materiais narrativos e discursivos da Banda Desenhada Literatura e da História Ocidental num *manga*," (master's dissertation, Universidade do Minho, 2016), 7.

between the image and text, and the multiculturalism provides a better insight on the content Arakawa seeks to explore and the message themselves try to convey.

This is relevant because, as O’Sullivan puts it, since ‘the end of the 1980s, work on orientalism, postcolonialism (...) has moved literary representation of what is “foreign” and “other” to the centre of cultural and literary studies’²⁰, and it is from this perspective that this dissertation stands, to reason and to get a clear image of how the victim is approached as a victim, and how the totalitarian had affected those who are below, at the lower levels of the *strata*. These two works, *Fullmetal Alchemist* and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, also try to attach themselves to the awareness that grew along with the challenge ‘to Eurocentric bias and expressions of racial of ethnic [*sic*] prejudice in children’s literature’²¹.

Approaching politics in manga has come as a remote tradition in order to give the readers a just and clear conscience, tolerance and humanity²². The image in *Fullmetal Alchemist* and the background and context of the narrative, where ‘Amestris is under a military dictatorship, in which corruption reigns in the higher *strata* (...) ruled by Führer President King Bradley, a man trained from birth to be the implacable ruler of the country’²³ is the same image got from the aforementioned regimes around the globe; the same regimes that lead to constant threats between nations, and where there are high chances of sparking conflict, such as the situation in the Ukraine.

²⁰ Emer O’Sullivan, “Imagology Meets Children’s Literature,” *International Research in Children’s Literature* 4, no. 1 (2011), 3.

²¹ Emer O’Sullivan, “Imagology Meets Children’s Literature,” *International Research in Children’s Literature* 4, no. 1 (2011), 7.

²² Sara Machado, “Intertextualidade endo e exoliterária em *Fullmetal Alchemist* de Hiromu Arakawa: A reescrita de modelos e materiais narrativos e discursivos da Banda Desenhada Literatura e da História Ocidental num *manga*,” (master’s dissertation, Universidade do Minho, 2016), 27.

²³ Sara Machado, “Intertextualidade endo e exoliterária em *Fullmetal Alchemist* de Hiromu Arakawa: A reescrita de modelos e materiais narrativos e discursivos da Banda Desenhada Literatura e da História Ocidental num *manga*,” (master’s dissertation, Universidade do Minho, 2016), 61.

2. Monster

2.1. Who and what are they?

In the words of Paré, among the thirteenth causes of monsters are those of ‘the glory of God. (...) his wrath [and] the imagination.’²⁴ Paré also points out how early writers and thinkers came up with causes for the creation of monsters such as ‘the ardent and obstinate imagination (...) that the mother might receive at the moment she conceived’²⁵, arguing that

goats and ewes [when looking at barking rods] of various colors, they might form their young spotted in various colors (...). [That is to say] imagination has so much power over seed and reproduction that the stripe and character of them remain [imprinted] on the thing bred²⁶.

The Middle Ages had, according to Ricardo Guerreiro, Humankind characterized as both a visible form and an invisible force. If there were to be an unbalance between these two, one would be before something monstrous²⁷. Guerreiro goes even farther as to point out that the physical space of Men shares a duality: a place in which there is order; and a place for the marvelous, the unknown, and the unexpected²⁸.

As these creatures can be a result of one’s imagination, indeed, ‘monsters can be unexpected, and often unwelcome’²⁹. Since imagination is far from limited, so is the monster. As monsters in kids’ imagination can take all the shapes existing, creep through every corner, thus do monsters in real life. As Fernando Pessoa once written, ‘Deus quer,

²⁴ Ambroise Paré, trans. *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 3.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 38.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

²⁷ Ricardo Guerreiro, “Melancolia e nevoeiro: Figuras do Medo do Cinema Português,” (master’s dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010), 2.

²⁸ Ricardo Guerreiro, “Melancolia e nevoeiro: Figuras do Medo do Cinema Português,” (master’s dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010), 3.

²⁹ Lesley-Anne Gallacher, “(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga,” *cultural geographies* 18, no. 4 (2011): 458.

o homem sonha, a obra nasce'³⁰; mayhap God's will was to create within men the monster he is so afraid of.

Indeed, as Canguilhem and Jaeger (1962) point out,

in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries imagination was credited with such power [the power to create monsters] (...). [M]en formerly lived with monsters, whose legends they confused with history (...) as they were to believe simultaneously that monsters existed because they were imagined and that they existed after they were imagined³¹.

Imagination is inherent in every human being, meaning that every single person can be themselves a monster of some kind. Having the bowl where one can cook this horrid dish that is the monster, one needs only to mix the ingredients and let the environment do its cooking. Such as in a classroom, where students were reading Mary Shelley's piece on monster creation, *Frankenstein*, a student 'suggested that Fritz's torturing the monster with the torch was his first taste of power'³².

In order to find out what are these monsters, one has to look unto individuals' behavior. However, a look at the etymology of the word "monster" may provide a better insight of what this text is looking for in the objects of study. Monster 'incorporates Old French and Latin words meaning to reveal or display, and secondarily, because of what was revealed, to warn'³³. In the words of Gallacher (2011), the 'etymology of the word monster (...) comes to English from the Latin *Monstrum*, in turn, is derived from a corruption of *moneo* by *monstrare*'³⁴, and as this corruption of the terms happened, links between the concepts

³⁰ "God wills, men dream, the piece is born" in Fernando Pessoa, *A Mensagem*.

³¹ Georges Canguilhem and Therese Jaeger, "Monstrosity and the Monstrous," *Diogenes* 10, no. 27 (1962), 33.

³² Bissonette, "Teaching the Monster: Frankenstein and Critical Thinking," *College Literature* 37, no. 3 (Summer, 2010): 115.

³³ Bissonette, "Teaching the Monster: Frankenstein and Critical Thinking," 112.

³⁴ Lesley-Anne Gallacher, "(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga," *cultural geographies* 18, no. 4 (2011): 458.

“advice”, “reminder” or “warning” with “showing”³⁵ have been created. A revelation, as Gallacher (2011) puts it, by the monster itself, of something surprising in the world which one finds ‘not as “ordinary” or “familiar” as it might have seemed’³⁶. Mori (2020) mentions ‘monotonically increasing functions [as covering] most phenomena of everyday life’³⁷, and when these fail to represent a phenomenon, people may end up puzzled. It triggers something like dread or horror, terms related to “the uncanny”; only because the function’s result was unpredictable.

The Greek philosophers have spent some time thinking and constructing the monster. Socrates goes as far as to ask about himself, ‘am I a monster more complicated and swollen with passion than the serpent Typho, or a creature of a gentler and simpler sort’³⁸? Well, the answer would be both. Socrates, at setting an

ideal image of the psyche (...) such as the Chimera [builds the tripartite—monstrous—figure of the psyche fashioning] the outside of [the many-headed monster, the lion, and the man] into a single image, as of a man, so that he who is not able to look within, and sees only the outer hull, may believe the beast to be a single human creature³⁹.

The human psyche depends, then, according to Plato, on the harmony of these three figures that represent three basic functions, i. e. ‘reason [man], emotion [lion], and appetite [multiheaded beast]’⁴⁰. Stephen Asma uses the example of the criminal whose harmony, or unbalance, between the three functions makes the man ‘a slave to his

³⁵ Lesley-Anne Gallacher, “(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga,” *cultural geographies* 18, no. 4 (2011): 458.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Masashiro Mori. *The Uncanny Valley*. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 89.

³⁸ Stephen T. Asma (2009). *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of our Worst Fears* (Oxford University Press), 51.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 52.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 52.

appetites whom everybody fears (...) [concluding that] the lowest part of the soul (the appetites) has become the ruling part of the soul'⁴¹.

Paré writes also about sorcerers and demons, and how these are able to do monstrous things, remarking that 'no one can be a sorcerer who has not first renounced God (...) and voluntarily made an alliance and friendship with the devil'⁴². To depict in the animated fashion this idea, the monsters in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, too, have made an alliance with the devil, in a way: Azulon, Ozai's grandfather, has rebelled against Avatar Roku, a being spiritually superior; in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, the Dwarf in the Flask creates a body for himself into Van Hohenheim's image, sacrificing hundreds of lives. These two monsters are representations of the "evil Angels", whose

nature always try to hinder the human race with their machinations (...), deceits and lies; and if they were permitted to exercise their cruelty at their will and pleasure (...) the human race would be lost and ruined⁴³.

In politics, then, these monsters within people emerged in the form of totalitarian regimes and ideologically unethical environments that focus all the power and decision in one man—the monster itself—whose only goal is to attain power and/or achieve world dominance. As Asma writes, if 'the lion (thumos) rises to the ruling position without the guidance of reason, then hot-headed, overly aggressive, and passionate "animals" result'⁴⁴. Fear of the monster attaining world dominance via their passionate aggressiveness is the heaviest of worries that possesses minority communities; mostly, because these communities cannot foretell the patterns in which things are to happen, for

⁴¹ Stephen T. Asma (2009). *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of our Worst Fears* (Oxford University Press), 53.

⁴² Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 26.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 87.

⁴⁴ Stephen T. Asma (2009). *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of our Worst Fears* (Oxford University Press), 54.

‘monsters allow us to glimpse the ungraspable’⁴⁵, but only at the moment it is happening, with no previous warning.

They reveal the processuality of the world, which is always-already becoming-otherwise. In this sense, monsters are not defined by the extent to which they fit into the world; the world is itself monstrous⁴⁶.

Seeking power and dominance can be a product of insecurity, and, as Rousseau suggests, ‘the idea of gigantism signifies a distortion of perception caused by man’s fear of others’⁴⁷. The Gothic novel, for instance, in the words of Jack Halberstam, ‘transform[s] class and race, sexual and national relations, into supernatural or monstrous features’⁴⁸, adding that the ‘threat posed by the Gothic monster is a combination of money, science, perversion, and imperialism’⁴⁹.

To understand this fear of others suggested by Rousseau, the case of Rwanda can be used as an example, where the conflict between the Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army has led ‘citizens commit genocide against innocent people categorized as enemies of the state’⁵⁰. This desire for dominance has always as victims the group that one finds the most vulnerable. In this case, ‘members of the Hutu extremist youth-wing, the Interahamwe, hunted down and killed “the enemy”’⁵¹. Intolerance has been built when there had been two different Rwandan cultures, whose ideals clashed. On one side, a culture ‘described as Rwanda’s “traditional culture”, (...) considered to

⁴⁵ Lesley-Anne Gallacher, “(Fullmetal) alchemy: the monstrosity of reading words and pictures in shonen manga,” *cultural geographies* 18, no. 4 (2011): 458.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Daniel Cottom, “Frankenstein and the Monster of Representation,” *SubStance* 9, no. 3 (1980): 61.

⁴⁸ Jack Halberstam, “Parasites and Perverts: An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity”, in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 165.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Georgina Holmes, “Gender and the Military in Post-Genocide Rwanda”, in Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, 223.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 225.

have been deeply misogynistic and characterized by unjust social relations that oppressed and marginalized Rwandan women'⁵²—and here we find the common victims of the massacres. On the opposite side, a culture 'described as Rwanda's "new, modern culture," which embraces gender equality and the empowerment of women'⁵³.

Such happens in colonialism, a 'settler colonial society operates through genocidal logics in which Native peoples must continue to disappear in order to minimize the threat they pose for the legitimacy of the settler society'⁵⁴. Seeing it in the way Smith puts it, it is deplorable, painful to know that what happens in these cases seem like people do only exist apart from everything else, as if they are created to serve a single purpose; and this gives people the sense that '[c]olonizers did not just kill Native peoples; they destroyed Native peoples' sense of even being people'⁵⁵. Victims of these kind tend to be totally neglected, as if the perpetrators were doing them the favor of letting them survive with the bare minimum, as they 'were given inadequate food and medical care, and overcrowding contributed to the spread of pandemics'⁵⁶; and that also led to 'children routinely [dying] in mass numbers of starvation or disease'⁵⁷.

Although there is mostly destruction when it comes to the monster, it still produces within men a kind of fascination. Guerreiro calls it a superabundance and an excess of presence⁵⁸. And this is represented in *Fullmetal Alchemist* by the Philosopher's Stone, within which there are lots of lost souls.

⁵² Georgina Holmes, "Gender and the Military in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, 228.

⁵³ Georgina Holmes, "Gender and the Military in Post-Genocide Rwanda", in Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, 228.

⁵⁴ Andrea Smith, "The Gendered Logics of Indigenous Genocide" in Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, 24.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 18.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 20.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 20

⁵⁸ Ricardo Guerreiro, "Melancolia e nevoeiro: Figuras do Medo do Cinema Português," (master's dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010), 3.

Is the monster only that who seeks destruction, or is there a monster in those who seek peace and harmony?

Wan Shi Tong, the guardian of the library in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, acknowledges the foolishness of war and conflict, remarking, ‘you think you’re the first person to believe their war was justified. Countless others before you have come here, seeking weapons or weaknesses or battle strategies’⁵⁹, right after Sokka tells them—Wan Shi Tong—about the ruthlessness of the Fire Nation. This remark says much about the monster inside each individual. Aang, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*’s main character, even says, ‘please! We’re just desperate to protect the people we love’⁶⁰. Is it not the same with the monster who seeks the decimation of other peoples and peoples’ cultures? They see the other as a threat—or create that threat so as to their followers believe they are being threatened. In the end, even Wan Shi Tong makes use of destruction to protect what they love, as they say,

I’m taking my knowledge back. No one will ever abuse it again. [Katara:] He’s sinking the building. We’ve gotta get outta here! [Wan Shi Tong:] I’m afraid I can’t allow that. You already know too much⁶¹.

After the latter remark, Wan Shi Tong releases a physical attack directed at the crew. In the same fashion, Edward Elric seeks Sheska⁶², the capital’s former librarian, for help, with her photographic memory, to recover all the information in the books lost in an attack carried out by Lust and Gluttony at the library. The scene can be read as a Gothic novel, in the sense that it ‘share[s] an almost obsessive concern with documentation, and

⁵⁹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 10, “The Library,” directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired July 14, 2006, Nickelodeon.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Sheska is a bookworm of a character that works as a librarian and has a perfect photographic memory. This ability came in handy to help Edward with his research on the Philosopher’s Stone.

they all exhibit a sinister mistrust of the not-said, the unspoken, the hidden, and the silent⁶³.

2.2. The political monster

According to Guerreiro, the monster is not something created at random, but it follows the human body's structure⁶⁴. The monster, then, has to follow that same structure, although it may suffer some dislocations within that same structure. In that sense, it is clear that Arakawa in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, and DiMartino and Konietzko in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* bore this feature in mind and sought to have the monsters represented in the human shape, even though they were non-human in the case of Father, in *Fullmetal Alchemist*; and one of the deadly sins, i. e. greed—for power—that had overtaken Fire Lord Ozai, in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.

How is the political monster born, then, one may ask.

As Dutton points out,

the process of generating slaughter is no different in the twenty-first century than it was in the eleventh century: define an enemy, accuse that enemy of horrible actions or the potential for the same, generate fear and a sense of a just cause, and accuse those who do not fall into line of heresy or a lack of patriotism⁶⁵.

Anyway, who are, then, these monsters, and how do they get to be what they are, and get to rule as they do?

⁶³ Jack Halberstam, "Parasites and Perverts", in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 165.

⁶⁴ Ricardo Guerreiro, "Melancolia e nevoeiro: Figuras do Medo do Cinema Português," (master's dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010), 4.

⁶⁵ Donald G. Dutton, preface to *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why "Normal" People Come to Commit Atrocities* (London: Praeger Security International, 2007), ix.

Taking the well-known example of Germany, one could look at Adolph Hitler as a figure of monstrosity, and of how he has become the monster he got to be known for. As soon as

World War I broke out, he felt quite differently [about military service], immediately (...) volunteering for the German army. The war gave him a sense of purpose, cured his restlessness, and saved him from his inability to provide direction to his life⁶⁶.

Feeling at a loss, like a wild animal, one can take measures far too extreme, and even individual thoughts begin to be seen as overcoming all others, as Hitler, ‘rather than conceive of his ideas as his personal opinion he held them to be absolute truths’⁶⁷, which can be as dangerous as pointing a piece of weapon to someone’s head—as it indeed is. Indeed,

Hitler (...) had noted that mass rallies blunt the individual’s judgment and intensify his zeal and that the effect is similar to hypnosis, which is why there is special importance to the speeches of people of brutal strength, who win out over sharper and subtler minds⁶⁸.

In *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, for instance, after Azula’s speech at the Dai Li soldiers, Tai Li says, ‘nice speech, Azula. It was pretty impoetic, but also scary in a good way. [Mei:] Yeah! I thought you were gonna make that one guy pee his pants’⁶⁹. It shows, then, how much of an effect the speech can have over peoples’ psychological. Of course, in the latter case, zeal is far from the effect had, but it had produced fear, which can also lead someone to engage in the atrocities of the regime, so these people can survive or protect their families and friends.

⁶⁶ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 45.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 46.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 49

⁶⁹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 20, “The Crossroads of Destiny,” directed by Michael Dante Dimartino, aired December 1, 2006, Nickelodeon.

Not only was the subject of rhetoric real, but also the visual symbolism had an importance to take into account. It was then that Hitler ‘also worked on developing symbols and other means of captivating the masses’⁷⁰, and it was by then that he discovered the swastika, and made it the symbol of his party. And the invisibility characteristic of the monster, too, creates a sense of fear in the population, as one can picture Mary Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein*, reading that ‘invisibility (...) [shows] another way in which representation is a monstrous affair’⁷¹. Freud points out that ‘the uncanny is that class of frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’⁷². Although it is familiar, Freud, going through the dictionary’s definition of the German word *Heimlich*, the second entry reads as follows: ‘Concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others’⁷³

Strategy and tactic; these monsters use those so as to take advantage of groups of influence to make themselves get the power they so desire, the same as ‘Hitler [who] was very adept at using the bourgeoisie to ascend to power. To this end he used terror, political tactics, and propaganda based on the racist ideology’⁷⁴; and the effect is that of domino pieces that fall one after the other. A person of influence has influence over their peers, and their peers influence the latter’s peers, consequently, and successfully. From small steps to big results, ‘Hitler joined [a] small group (...) and soon began to prepare the party for the great role he envisioned for it: a revolutionary party that would wrest unto itself the rule of Germany’⁷⁵. Ruling, then, is the ultimate goal these monstrous political fascist

⁷⁰ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 49.

⁷¹ Cottom, “Frankenstein and the Monster of Representation,” *SubStance* 9, no. 3 (1980): 66.

⁷² Freud. The Uncanny. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 60.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 62.

⁷⁴ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 52.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 47.

leaders are trying to achieve, governing over all the others through fear and force; and to attain that power, they are willing to do everything that is within their reach. Hitler made his voters believe that Jewish people were the enemy, saying that the ‘Jewish character was not only corrupt and evil; it was the essence of corruption and the principle of evil’⁷⁶, which is a way to demonize a community by use of a moralizing xenophobe speech.

Even if there was the possibility of asking if the Jewish community could get rid of that corruption and evil they were accused of having, ‘in the eyes of the anti-Semite, the corrupt nature of the Jews is static and in no way given to change’⁷⁷. As the origin of all evil, i. e. the old serpent—who had ‘said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die’⁷⁸—, “the Jew” remained a constant in the cycle of life and death of nations’⁷⁹, a creature that generated and perpetuated evil, whose life would never end. In a similar fashion to a curse, ‘[t]his immortality was declared, however, to be a punishment, as he was doomed to roam like the murderer Cain; he had no place of his own and lived off the natural lives of others as a parasite’⁸⁰; as the Jewish people wandered, from place to place, persecuted, striving for the community’s survival.

The rhetoric of Hitler created this division, so as to make himself the head of an ideology strong enough to enable him an ascension and stability in governance; and he says it clearly,

“I know perfectly well . . . that in scientific sense there is not such a thing as race. . . . I as a politician need a conception which enables the order which has hitherto existed on historic bases

⁷⁶ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 35.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ 3 Genesis: 1, The Holy Bible, KJV, Holy-Bible online, 2018 – 2022, <https://holy-bible.online/kjv.php?book=Genesis&chapter=3>.

⁷⁹ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 36.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

to be abolished and an entirely new and antihistoric order enforced and given an intellectual basis.” Thus the issue of rule was at the heart of the racist doctrine⁸¹.

The strategy worked so well, that he rose to power. To achieve that position, Hitler had to enchant a group of people with his ideals. On writing about Thomas Jefferson and understanding vision on nationalism and the latter’s actions, Bernstein tries to point out how wrong had Henry Wiencek been in the latter’s *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves*, a book written on slave ownership during the American Revolution⁸². Indeed, Wiencek could have been wrong in his arguments, but he does not fail to point out some monstrous characteristics, such as how ruthless and cruel a slaveowner Jefferson was, having ‘abandoned his position to slavery [and having slaves] to produce as much as possible, using such cruel means as slave collars and whipping’⁸³. Monster and trauma have a strong connection between themselves, which could be witnessed by the people in the courtroom when the SS Colonel Eichmann was being heard in court, for the crimes committed during the “Final Solution”, in which, ‘the audience (...) was filled with “survivors,” with middle-age and elderly people, immigrants from Europe, (...) “[a]nd there sits the monster responsible for all this”⁸⁴, and the victims had to listen, ‘[a]s witness followed witness and horror was piled upon horror, (...) in public to stories they would hardly have been able to endure in private’⁸⁵. Unfortunately, the ‘Jews in the Diaspora were to remember how Judaism (...) had always faced “a hostile world,” how the Jews had degenerated until they went to their death like sheep’⁸⁶. And more terrifying it becomes when the monster has impunity from all their actions, such as

⁸¹ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 37.

⁸² R. B. Bernstein, “Thomas Jefferson: Nationalist, Scientist, Politician, ... and Slaveowning Monster?” *Reviews in American History* 42, no. 2 (June 2014): 232.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 234

⁸⁴ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 8.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*.

⁸⁶ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 10.

in the middle of the court, in Israel, Eichmann, along with his defense, ‘would apparently have preferred him [Eichmann] to plead not guilty on the grounds that under the then existing Nazi legal system he had not done anything wrong’⁸⁷; such an important remark that, in its arrogance, if there is only a slight ray of hope in the eyes of the monster, there is also a cold shiver from the victims of the then monstrosity they live daily.

Coming up with a conspiracy theory of Jewish world ruling has been the catalyzer that allowed Hitler to ascend to power. The bringing of the piece *Protocols*—‘a fictional account of the proceedings of an allegedly secret Jewish organization that was planning to take over and rule the world’⁸⁸—by the White Army officers fleeing back to Germany, when fighting the Red Army, allowed these White Army officers to ‘charge that the tragedy of World War I was the result of a worldwide conspiracy of Jews hungry for power and destruction’⁸⁹. The results were clear, as “‘the effects of anti-Semitism gripped millions of hearts like an inexorable plague’”⁹⁰ during the Weimar era.

Having the portrait of Hitler as a model of the monster painted, one shall see, also, how does the monster’s political machinery works.

2.3. A monster’s governance

From the Greek, ‘*archōn* (literally “the one who begins”) was the supreme magistrate in Athens’⁹¹. This name may have originated from the Greek verb *archō*, that ‘means “to begin, to be prior to something,” but also means “to command, to be the leader’”⁹². This

⁸⁷ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 21.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 39.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 40.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 40.

⁹¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy: The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism* (Stanford University Press, 2019), Chap. 4, 46, <https://bgllib.org/book/5065542/de7da2>.

⁹² *Ibid*.

concept may well be applied to the tyrannic character of the monster and their rule, for what a tyrant does is basically to command—and silence those who stand against them.

The way a tyrant as described in the last chapter rules was not so much of an explicit type of ruling by command as one has in the *Bible*'s Genesis, in which “(...) God created the heavens and the earth” (...) by means of a command⁹³. If God has created by commanding the heavens and the earth before there was anything, human tyrants have but created a tough regime by subtly changing the paradigm into something they had envisioned for themselves as a world of order—in the eyes of the innocent, a world of chaos and injustice.

Violence and war are means used to cover criminal acts and justify community eradication, but what exactly is an act of war and how can it be understood has to be clarified. The act of ‘moving forces close to its border, (...) or blockading its ports (...) [constitute] an act of war’⁹⁴. In 1998, ‘Madeleine Albright (...) attributed the bombings of U. S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam to Osama Bin Laden, saying that because he had struck first he had “declared war on the United States”⁹⁵, which, further in the analysis of the work of fiction *Fullmetal Alchemist* will be shown a similar situation. Relevant it is to point out the definition of an act of war. Act of war, according to the encyclopedia of war crimes & genocide, has not been static through times, but has suffered slight changes ‘in the years since the end of World War II’⁹⁶. For instance, announcing that an adversary nation ‘had committed certain acts—moving forces close to its border (...) or blockading its ports—then these actions constituted an act of war’⁹⁷.

⁹³ Giorgio Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy: The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism* (Stanford University Press, 2019), Chap. 4, 46, <https://bgllib.org/book/5065542/de7da2>.

⁹⁴ Leslie Alan Horvitz and Cristopher Catherwood, *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, 2.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 3.

Among many possible examples there is that of ‘August 1998 Madeleine Albright, (...) [who] attributed the bombings of U. S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam to Osama Bin Laden, saying that because he had struck first he had “declared war on the United States.”’⁹⁸. This definition is good to have into account simply because the movements made by these tyrants start with the deployment of many a heavy weaponry on border territory—that act alone is, by itself, a threat.

Violent acts do not happen isolated from one another. ‘Adolf HITLER [*sic*] famously cited the annihilation of the Armenians when he made plans to carry out genocidal warfare against the Jews’⁹⁹; which means that one act of war is linked to another, i. e. the Armenian genocide is linked to the Holocaust, by way of tyranny, and maybe such acts will be perpetuated—as of recently, an Ukrainian PM said, quoting Vladimir Putin’s own “Mein Kampf”, that his (Putin’s) goal is to ‘exterminate Ukrainian people’¹⁰⁰. As recently as of today, ‘Russia amassed 144,000 troops around Ukraine’s borders’¹⁰¹—this in Europe alone. Indeed, it seems to share the exact same pattern, as recent Russia’s ambassador to the EU, Vladimir Chizhov said, “We will not invade Ukraine unless we are provoked to do that”¹⁰².

It comes to be that these types of conflict are predictable, as one can read in a *Fullmetal Alchemist*’s scene:

[Colonel Hugh:] Aw man... look at the death toll... The east area’s been full of trouble lately, what with the Ishbalans, these riots and everything else. [State Soldier:] It’s not just the East

⁹⁸ Leslie Alan Horvitz and Cristopher Catherwood, *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, 3.

⁹⁹ Horvitz and Catherwood, *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, C. (2022, April 9). “Putin detail pan to ‘exterminate’ Ukrainians in personal ‘Mein Kampf’ last year”. *Express*. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1593662/vladimir-putin-russia-ukraine-war-mein-kampf-war-crimes-latest-vn>.

¹⁰¹ Walker, Boffey, and Borger, “Vladimir Putin suggests dialogue is still possible on Ukraine crisis,” *The Guardian*, Feb 12, 2022, Vladimir Putin suggests dialogue is still possible on Ukraine crisis | Russia | The Guardian.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Area—the North and the West have been having their share of riots and border skirmishes. Who knows? This could be the start of the revolution, eh?¹⁰³

Through threats directed to the folks, strict policies, violence within and without the nation, and by performing acts of war, these tyrants govern their countries and, thence, they build a structure of centralized power, feeding the monster within. The monster fed, it will only grow in power and have more followers enabling them the accomplishment of their ultimate goal.

To achieve this goal, the monster sometimes makes use of peoples' beliefs. For instance, back in the epoch of Israel's monarchy, 'the United Kingdom lasted just long enough to establish in the mind of people north and south the idea that monarchical government was their destiny'¹⁰⁴; and they also play a bit with the idea that the monotheist 'God will send another messiah, a divinely "anointed one," his true deputy come at last to save his people'¹⁰⁵, the savior people have been long waiting, who will take down the country's enemies and protect the nation. That is the first move of the monster to deploy an army in enemy territory, ready for any event, as insignificant as it may be, to justify, somehow, a bloody confrontation. The "narrative of the ancestors" will become something of the past and 'the king will become just another figure of political power, often unreasonable, sometimes tyrannical, with nothing special to say'¹⁰⁶; this will happen only when people see themselves in the middle of the ordeal, hopeless, powerless, finding themselves at a dead end.

From a psychological point of view, a kind of instability, or limitation, may be found in some of these monsters. For instance, in the case of Eichmann, his speaking limitation, a

¹⁰³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 120). First Yen Press.

¹⁰⁴ Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels*, 148.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 149.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 149.

defect that ‘amounted to a mild case of aphasia’¹⁰⁷, was covered by repetition, ‘word for word [of] the same stock phrases and self-invented clichés’¹⁰⁸. Besides the clichés, this monster’s character has been built from lies, lying about

the profession that appears on all his official documents (...) [that had] about as much connection with reality as the statement that his birthplace was Palestine and that he was fluent in Hebrew and Yiddish¹⁰⁹;

it happened for he had been taken from school by his father, for “he had not exactly been the most hard-working” pupil (...) or (...) the most gifted’¹¹⁰, but ‘bragging had always been one of his cardinal vices’. Eichmann, the ‘unpromising youngster (...) was now about twenty-two years old and without any prospects for a career; the only thing he had learned, perhaps, was how to sell’¹¹¹, a trait common between the monsters, as has been mentioned: rhetoric, which helped the monsters gain some credibility.

However, monsters, too, have their share of feelings, and Eichmann was no exception. The case of Eichmann’s monstrous behavior had its heartfelt side, where his ‘repeated violent denunciations of Julius Streicher, the insane and obscene editor of *Der Stürmer*, and of his pornographic anti-Semitism, were perhaps personally motivated’¹¹², due to his life in Vienna, where ‘he had a Jewish mistress’. It was in Vienna that Eichmann had, in ‘four years (...) climbed quicker and higher than he had ever anticipated’¹¹³, granting him a recognition as an “authority”, for he ‘knew how to make people move’¹¹⁴; a key trait, when it comes to mobilizing and managing a regime in which the main goal is decimation of a community.

¹⁰⁷ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 71.

¹⁰⁸ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 72.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 51.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 51.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 52.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 53.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 88.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 88.

Monsters in politics do indeed a lot of damage to communities, especially those most vulnerable. This said, and moving into the next section, it will be described how the victim of these monsters' actions is affected.

3. The Victim

Fullmetal Alchemist's main characters', Edward and Alphonse, experience, resembling Tieck's story *Life's Superfluity*, where 'two penniless lovers (...) renounce all possessions and all outside life to the point they live closed up in their room (...) they burn the wooden ladder connecting their room with the rest of the house, and are left in isolation from the outside world'¹¹⁵; they did burn their house, rejecting the experiences of the past, so as to not regret their departure from their hometown, and this decision was definite, for they had nothing to go back to. The latter comparison is but a starting point to understand how come the victim had to accept their loss and begin their lives from scratch, creating a world only for themselves to build upon.

Thence, their knowledge through experience would start afresh; although it is not completely true, because they still got back to their hometown a number of times, even in search of what had happened during the alchemic process in their failed attempt to bring back their dead mother. However, the experience they had so far was not enough, but they knew where to seek more knowledge, and made up their minds, 'we're going to track down that bastard "truth"... and pull your body back from that place!'¹¹⁶.

Indeed, through this dissertation, the word attempt has been repeated sometimes, and what other thing attempt is than experience itself? Alchemy is experience, a trial and error-based type of science; it led *Fullmetal Alchemist*'s Elric brothers to the Capital City of Amestris, Central. Thence, knowledge and experience, both lived and manipulated via oratory and omission of facts, are several times represented through science—the various experiences in Chimera creation—, history—people's remembrance of the Ishbalan

¹¹⁵ Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, 15.

¹¹⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 11, p. 127). First Yen Press.

massacre—, philosophy—the discussion on whether using the Philosopher’s Stone is an ethic gamble or not.

The victims described throughout *Fullmetal Alchemist* are both those who lost their lives for the purpose of the creation of the Philosopher’s Stone and those who have their lives imperiled because of its creation.

3.1. Exodus

Persecution had had the victim migrating from one place to the other, in an endless and desperate strive for survival. Documented as early as the first scriptures of the Holy Bible’s Old Testament, as in the Jewish population’s fleeing from Egypt, led by the Messiah, Moses.

In the words of Cahill, ‘for profound psychological reasons human sacrifice was something that had to be done but could not be spoken of’¹¹⁷, and that may have been the reason why this people, the Jewish people, had been since forever persecuted. From the Bible’s Exodus to the Germany Nazi regime, there are lots of episodes documented. But in this chapter, the focus is on the Biblical Exodus, and the walking through the desert, as in *Fullmetal Alchemist* one has the character Scar who had been left for dead in the desert of Ishbal, thinking himself to be the sole survivor in the Ishbalan genocide.



¹¹⁷ Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels*, 190.

From whence they have started their journey, Egypt, the Jewish people were already victims of restrictive and abusive treatment, although, later, told Moses they were better off without him, for they had work and stability. By having a great share of their production taken by the Pharaoh, the Jewish people were slaves, and the Messiah could only follow the orders of a superior being, God, whose commands had Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

As the Israelites journeyed through the desert towards the promised land, they all shared a feeling of dissatisfaction, for never getting to the end of the journey, ‘like Moshe or Martin Luther King, though we may remember that we “have been to the mountaintop,” we do not enter the Promised Land, but only glimpse it fleetingly’¹¹⁸. The means, then, are the ends in themselves, because the end is unachievable, and while one can walk endlessly in search of fulfilling a promise, one is perpetually on the verge of its ending, a never conclusive narration. In the last book of the Torah, one can see the whole of ‘the sadness that all endings possess’¹¹⁹.

Cahill adds, ‘Moshe is standing on the peak of Mount Nebo in Transjordan, looking out across the Dead Sea and the River Jordan to Canaan, the Promised Land that he will never enter’¹²⁰.

But in the end, they know this God as

the God who never deserts his people, faithful to the end, patient with all our failings however dismaying, but reminding that a household (...) cannot escape the sins of the oldest generation; they necessarily infect the atmosphere¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels*, 122.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 120.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 120.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 116.

This comes as relevant for the writing of this dissertation because there is also a messianic character in both texts one is to analyze. In *Fullmetal Alchemist*, there is the figure of Scar, one of the few survivors of the Ishbalan genocide, whose arm, acquired from his dying brother to avenge his people; in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Aang, the sole survivor of the Northern Air Tribe and sole survivor among all the Airbenders in the world, the Avatar, who is to use his power to return balance to the world.

In two different ways they do lead the people through a desert, facing several ordeals and many insecurities, impatience, and questioning when will be the end of their pain. Scar, in a very peculiar way, leads May Chang, a young girl who holds the knowledge of healing alchemy, famous in the East.

May's story is also one of exodus, as well as Lin Yao and Lanfan's, although seen through different lenses and under different circumstances. The latter goes to Amestris in search of immortality, something they had heard could be achieved by use of the Philosopher's Stone. The symbology of Lin Yao's search for immortality, and his ending up as a Homunculus, more specifically, Greed, is read as a metaphor for self-indulgence and want of power. Later in the series Lin Yao comes to make a pact with Greed, who takes over Yao's body, but Lin Yao is always on guard, awaiting the best opportunity to take back control of his body—which he eventually manages to achieve; '[Wrath:] ...the prince of Xing?', '[Greed:] Lin, you bastard! Don't come out unless I tell you to!'¹²². The only difference is that Lin Yao, in the end, is able to find what he seeks.

¹²² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 24, p. 149). First Yen Press.

3.2. The victim and genocide

In Horvitz and Catherwood's *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, the authors point out the 'massacres of 1915 (...) described as "the murder of a nation"'¹²³. In 1914, when Russia declared war on Turkey, a small minority of Armenians living in Turkey rose up against the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks, a ruling group in Turkey, declared that every Christian was an enemy of the state, inviting them to leave. In 1915, then, the leader of the Young Turks ordered an 'execution of 250 leading Armenian intellectuals in Constantinople'¹²⁴. This organized genocide has been, against all morals, seen as 'a model for the prosecution of even more devastating genocidal programs later in the 20th century'¹²⁵. Those Armenian who tried to flee were pictured by witnesses as 'being removed without any of their goods and chattels, and to places where the climate is totally unsuited to them. They are left without shelter, without food, and without clothing'¹²⁶.

Bernard Lewis characterizes the events of 1915 as a dispute for territory, but that would not be fair, as the Young Turks and the Armenians were not on an equal foot, therefore, their campaign was that looking into extermination of a minority population¹²⁷.

As victims of genocide, these communities are usually the vulnerable ones, as happens, in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, with 'the racialized Ishvallans [who] are also visually depicted as disabled—they are frequently heavily scarred (...) or using canes'¹²⁸. Indeed,

¹²³ Horvitz and Catherwood, *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, 25.

¹²⁴ Donald G. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why "Normal" People Come to Commit Atrocities* (London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 27 – 28.

¹²⁵ Donald G. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why "Normal" People Come to Commit Atrocities* (London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 27 – 28.

¹²⁶ Horvitz and Catherwood, *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*, 26.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Sadler, "Disability and Biopolitics in Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood," 4.

[d]isability in “places of terror” cannot be acknowledged (...) because to do so would draw attention to the “material violence inflicted on disabled bodies” and denaturalize disability as a category¹²⁹;

and more could be said, for instance, that these, being considered disabled, would disable any justification for the oppressors to start any attack on them. So it does not happen, the opposition must be acknowledged as sharing a common ground when it comes to skill and power, sources and weaponry, etc., otherwise, every victory attained should not be considered a victory, but cheating in the game.

These victims belong in their whole in the same group, ‘the German forces did not discriminate between men, women, and children. If they came upon women stragglers in the Omaheke, they murdered them without mercy’¹³⁰.

According to Sadler (2013), ‘Hiromu Arakawa, based the Ishvallah genocide and oppression on the persecution of the Ainu people in Japan’¹³¹, ‘an indigenous population in Japan who have been subjected to colonization and cultural erasure through the construction of Japan as a monotheistic state’¹³². As one can see, here it is, again, as Hitler had also justified his persecuting Jewish people, ‘arguing that Germany was the elect of nations and should therefore rule the world and bring it peace’¹³³, religion plays a higher role. Hitler even ‘denied the Jews the designation of “human beings,” for he believed they were created not in God’s image but in Satan’s’¹³⁴.

Soldiers who fight on the side of the killers, too, can be victims, such as happens with Riza Hawkeye after the Ishbalan genocide. Hawkeye states, ‘inside me, the war isn’t over

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

¹³⁰ Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, “Women and the Herero Genocide,” in *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, ed. Elissa Bemporad and Joyce W. Warren (Indiana University Press, 2018), 46.

¹³¹ *Ibid*.

¹³² Sadler, “Disability and Biopolitics in Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood,” 6.

¹³³ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 41.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 44.

yet. No. It will never end as long as I live'¹³⁵, at Mustang's bid, '...let's go home. The war is over'¹³⁶.

Not only genocide, but also a constant persecution is a reality in which these communities have to live under. According to Kuosmanen (2014), "'persecution" [which] derives from the Latin verb "*persequi*" (...) refers to a particular type of human interaction that involves harm'¹³⁷. In a "relationship of harm", as Kuosmanen (2014) calls it, 'the persecutors are (...) "following" or "pursuing" the persecuted'¹³⁸. Indeed, through reading on various genocidal events of communities, the victims were constantly persecuted. In the Herero genocide by German troops, 'Von Trotha wished to destroy the Herero to the fullest extent possible—(...) "the nation as such should be annihilated"'¹³⁹, and adding to that, he had even forced the Herero to gather in one place, to make it easier to keep track of the community.

[H]e [Von Trotha] switched to a new policy of annihilation, one that involved defeating the Herero militarily and forcing the entire population into the Omaheke desert, where all points of exit as well as the watering holes were to be sealed off and the Herero nation starved to death¹⁴⁰.

Persecution, in Stuart Mill's and John Locke's opinion, 'is something special that is linked to the suppression of beliefs and opinions'¹⁴¹, which leads to the imposition of the persecutors' own beliefs and opinions as being the one and only truth. Imposition, indeed,

¹³⁵ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 15, p. 166). First Yen Press.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Kuosmanen, "What's So Special About Persecution?" in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17, no. 1 (Feb. 2014): 130.

¹³⁸ Kuosmanen, "What's So Special About Persecution?" in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17, no. 1 (Feb. 2014): 130.

¹³⁹ Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, "Women and the Herero Genocide," in Bemporad and Warren, *Women and Genocide: Survivors, victims, perpetrators*, 45.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Kuosmanen, "What's So Special About Persecution?" in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17, no. 1 (Feb. 2014): 131.

for even ‘Locke recognizes that persecution (...) requires “power”’¹⁴². This power, in the hands of the monster, can grow ever stronger if mixed with the monster’s charisma, and indulgence in watching others’ suffering. Locke addresses ‘institutionalised discrimination’¹⁴³, which was Nazi Germany’s reality, in which, for instance, there were some established rules for Jewish people, rules that Yahil enumerates in a list thus organized:

‘— Jews living in Germany have to be subject to the Alien Law and those from abroad are to be forbidden to enter or be expelled

— Jews have to be barred from holding public or administrative offices and be forbidden to become lawyers; Jewish doctors shall treat Jews alone

— The right to vote is to be accorded to Jews only within their communities

— Jews shall not serve in the army

— Jews are not to study in German educational institutions and Jewish teachers will not teach German children; German teachers who teach Jewish children will have their licenses revoked

— Jewish journalists will be able to publish only in Jewish newspapers and all their publications have to be approved by the censor

— Jews have to sell their holdings in agricultural land within a year; Jewish businesses have to be marked prominently by the Star of David

— Jews are forbidden to bear German personal or family names

— Jews cannot be members in German societies; for the protection they enjoy, they have to pay the same dues paid by Germans

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

— Jews who have been expelled and returned to the Reich will be executed by hanging; those who were sentenced to over a year in prison have to leave the Reich together with their families, within a month of their release'¹⁴⁴.

Each single strike leaves a mark, either visible or invisible. For instance, in the animated series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, several scars are inflicted on the characters, but the most profound are those that were already inflicted when the series had started. The Prince's scarred face is the first the viewer gets to see. Prince Zuko has been burnt by the Fire Lord, his own father; Aang's having left the Air Temple and every Airbender being killed by the Fire Nation is a scar Aang carries throughout all the series; Katara's and Sokka's having lost their mother to the Fire Nation another; Iroh having lost his child; Jet having lost his people to a Fire Nation raid; and many more scars have been inflicted before the present time of the series' chronology, such as Sang's, whose scar is revealed to Zuko, when she shows him her leg. The monster, too, can be scarred; and it happens that the Fire Lord has been scarred by his own son, when he feels Zuko, during the meeting which led to the Agni Kai the Fire Lord inflicted Zuko's face scar, had disrespected him in his own war room.

Aang and his crew, after making their way in Ba Sing Se and stopping the giant Fire Nation drill, are taken in a tour by an Earth Kingdom guide, Judi. During the tour, Katara asks, 'why do they have these people blocked off in one part of the city?'¹⁴⁵. In a way, this remark represents, on its own, the segregation which the victims usually live, being given a place apart from the rest of the people, in which, although they are part of the same nation, they have to live as a self-sustainable community. In the same way the German Jewish community had to live segregated from the other Germans—'We

¹⁴⁴ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 39.

¹⁴⁵ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 14, "City of Walls and Secrets," directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired September 22, 2006, Nickelodeon.

Germans of Jewish descent are being treated as aliens and enemies of the Fatherland'¹⁴⁶—, these people at Ba Sing Se, in one look by an outsider, are found being taken apart by the rest of the population, based on their economic status. Even Zuko recognizes it as such, remarking, 'this city is a prison. I don't wanna make a life, here'¹⁴⁷.

And some place else, there might be alienation by the heads of governmental organs. For instance, still in Ba Sing Se, one has access to several hints that the government is plotting something from the suspicious behavior of Judi and the other members of the Dai Li; and by watching Jet's brainwashing session, after being captured by the soldiers of the City; where both parties make the victims believe that there is no war happening inside the walls of Ba Sing Se, but only safety. Later, when Jet gets to meet his crew, in the company of the Avatar and his friends, one of his friends says, 'we were so worried! How did you get away from the Dai Li?'¹⁴⁸. How it worked well, the brainwashing, for Jet's memories of what was connected with his arrest were all erased. Even Toph, who could sense his heartbeat, was sure he was not lying when he spoke. '[Toph:] This does not make any sense. They're both telling the truth.'¹⁴⁹ When one comes to find out the government is brainwashing an army of Judi, and programming them to welcome people, it all makes sense how can not only a monster be that that starts a war, but also that that hides the truth from his own people and alienates them for the monster's own benefit, having recruited other monsters to work by their side—usually, the military, whose training had been that of receiving orders. When they are found out, Long Feng says, 'you have made yourselves

¹⁴⁶ Beyerchen, *Scientists under Hitler: Politics and the Physics Community in the Third Reich*, 17.

¹⁴⁷ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 14, "City of Walls and Secrets," directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired September 22, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁴⁸ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 17, "Lake Laogai," directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired November 3, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁴⁹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 17, "Lake Laogai," directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired November 3, 2006, Nickelodeon.

enemies of the state,¹⁵⁰, trying to keep the Earth King alienated, and unaware of the ongoing war, as a means to keep in control of the city.

In this way, not only can the population be a victim of alienation, but the upper classes and rulers too.

War is business. A worldwide business that connects everyone. Something that goes beyond suffering, and also brings accommodation and profit. As Pinako remarks, ‘(...) that’s irony. The war that took our family away is the same war that allows us to earn our bread’¹⁵¹.

The war had also brought some weight upon surviving Ishbalans who still fought on the side of the military. A sense of being pitied because of what had happened. It is what happened to one of the soldiers in Briggs, Miles, of Ishbalan descendancy. When confronting Edward, this soldier has a surprise. ‘You’re the first person who’s ever talked back to me like that. (...) I’m grateful to you for treating me as an equal. (...) They consider an Ishbalan to be an object of PITY’¹⁵².

Having into consideration these thoughts regarding the victim, it may be easier to understand the character’s arcs in each series due to the monsters’ actions throughout both works of fiction. Moving now to the next section of the dissertation, going through, firstly, DiMartino and Konietzko’s anime series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and afterwards, Arakawa’s *Fullmetal Alchemist*.

¹⁵⁰ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 17, “Lake Laogai,” directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired November 3, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁵¹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 3, p. 28). First Yen Press.

¹⁵² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 16, p. 158). First Yen Press.

4. *Avatar: The Last Airbender*

4.1. Plot

DiMartino's and Konietzko's animated series, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, is a work of fiction, created in the United States, mainly aimed at children and a juvenile target. Although it is a series created in the West, its fantastic world is a reflection of the Eastern side of the globe and has many a reference to Eastern culture and mythology, though from the eyes of western people.

As Emer writes, today's 'multicultural literature (...) aims to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of many cities and countries'¹⁵³. But imagology, as pointed out by Leerssen, can formulate, perpetuate, and disseminate national stereotypes¹⁵⁴. But it is not a constant, as 'O'Sullivan (1990) (...) [showed] how, for example, the depiction of Germans in texts (...) varied according to the date of publication'¹⁵⁵, i. e. 'time and context in which the texts are produced influences the interpretation of the period in which the narratives are set'¹⁵⁶; bearing that in mind, and knowing also that these texts are works of fiction created in the current century's last two decades, the texts look forward not into perpetuating a sense of nationalism, using 'imaginated [*sic*] discourse [to single out] a nation from the rest of humanity'¹⁵⁷, but by showing the pros and cons of each culture, the Eastern and the Western.

The Fire Nation 'harnessed [a comet's] incredible power and dealt a deadly first strike against the other Nations'¹⁵⁸, leading to the conquest of most part of the world, that is, by

¹⁵³ Emer O'Sullivan, "Imagology Meets Children's Literature," *International Research in Children's Literature* 4, no. 1 (2011): 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 – 11.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵⁸ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 1, episode 8, "Winter Solstice, Part 2: Avatar Roku," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired April 15, 2005, Nickelodeon.

the time Aang, the Avatar, gets out of the iceberg he's trapped inside, almost all the Nations are living under a totalitarian regime; with closed borders, and either in constant tension or in war.

The world is divided into nations, according to each one of the elements: the Air Nomads; the Water tribes; the Fire Nation; and the Earth Kingdom. In each one of the nations, there is a class or caste of people named benders who are able to bend each element¹⁵⁹.

Aang, the main character in the series, does not welcome the news of being the Avatar and flees from the Air Nomads' Temple where he used to live, and, due to a storm, he falls into the ocean; in the Avatar state, eventually creating an iceberg where he has been preserved for a hundred years. Those hundred years past, two Southern Water Tribe siblings, Katara and Sokka, find Aang, and from there they start an adventure to get Aang to master the four elements: Air, Water, Earth, and Fire. That accomplished, he is able to defeat the Fire Lord Ozai and bring balance to the world.

4.2. Analysis

As a way of establishing linking points with the political monster, Ozai will be the model used in this analysis, showing also how his behavior has shaped other monsters. Oddly enough should it be, for Ozai is not a character to show himself that much, and yet, his influence is all over.

Only in the book of Fire does the Fire Lord's face is shown to the viewer. The Fire Lord's first speech, after welcoming his son, Zuko, happens thus:

‘I am proud of you, Prince Zuko. I am proud because you and your sister conquered Ba Sing Se.

I am proud because when your loyalty was tested, by your treacherous uncle, you did the right

¹⁵⁹ Mascarenhas Muniz, “Avatar - A Lenda de Aang: Um Olhar Sobre a Forma e o Conteúdo do Episódio ‘A Faixa na Cabeça’” (Avatar – The Last Airbender: A Look at the form and content of the episode “The Headband”), 5.

thing and captured the traitor. And I am proudest of all of your most legendary accomplishment, you slain the Avatar'¹⁶⁰.

The latter remark by the Fire Lord comes due to one of Azula's mind games, whose testimony by the Fire Lord Ozai goes as: 'Azula told me everything. She said she was amazed and impressed with your power and ferocity, at the moment of truth'¹⁶¹. Talking to his sister, Zuko asks her to explain why has she told their father it was his doing, slaying the Avatar, to which Azula answers, 'call it a generous gesture. I wanted to thank you for your help, and I was happy to share the glory'¹⁶², but Zuko immediately sees through her lies, adding that she might have another reason. Indeed, it is a game of leverage on Azula's part, who had been suspicious of the Avatar's survival, and although she says she does not have an ulterior motive for sharing the credit with Zuko, she confesses that, 'unless, somehow, the Avatar was actually alive, all that glory would suddenly turn to shame and foolishness'¹⁶³.

See, then, how Ozai's influence created some monsters, before analyzing Ozai himself.

From an early age is Zuko put through various ordeals, thanks not only but too to his sister, Azula. In a similar fashion as of Hitler's youth days, Zuko grew 'out of sympathy with the kind of career [Hitler's] father had followed'¹⁶⁴. But it was not Zuko who has been produced as a monster, rather it had been Azula, and admittedly, as Hitler mentions in his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, 'when my political opponents pry into my life with diligent scrutiny, (...) to be able to prove what disreputable tricks this Hitler was

¹⁶⁰ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 3, episode 1, "The Awakening," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired September 21, 2007, Nickelodeon.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 3, episode 1, "The Awakening," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired September 21, 2007, Nickelodeon.

¹⁶⁴ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, New York, Melbourne: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 18.

accustomed to in his young days, I thank heaven that I can look back to those happy days'¹⁶⁵.

Azula is the monster who's unleashed after Zhao's fall during the Water Tribe invasion. In a speech directed to her crew, she lectures them on how they may have mixed feelings about attacking 'members of the Royal family [meaning Zuko and Iroh] (...), but I assure you, if you hesitate, I will not hesitate to bring you down'¹⁶⁶, which grants another layer of monstrosity, a person who sees only the Fire Lord, i. e. the governing monster, as having power above them, all the others are but below them. This layer of monstrosity, right after the speech is finished, show also a different level of arrogance, when the Captain of Azula's ship addresses her, warning her of the tides not being favorable to sail safely into port, to which she answers,

'I'm sorry, Captain, but I do not know much about the tides. Can you explain something to me? [Captain:] Of course, Your Highness. [Azula:] Do the tides command this ship? [Captain:] Ah. I'm afraid I don't understand. [Azula:] You said the tides would not allow us to bring the ship in. Do the tides command this ship? [Captain:] No, Princess. [Azula:] And if I were to have you thrown overboard, would the tides think twice about smashing you against the rocky shore? [Captain:] No, Princess. [Azula:] Well, then, maybe you should worry less about the tides, who've already made up their mind about killing you, and worry more about me, who's still molding it over'¹⁶⁷.

This monster, too, knows how to interact with the crowd and give use to speech, as she stands in front of the people and shows a leaflet, proffering the words, 'anyone who

¹⁶⁵ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, New York, Melbourne: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 20.

¹⁶⁶ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 1, "The Avatar State," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired March 17, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁶⁷ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 1, "The Avatar State," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired March 17, 2006, Nickelodeon.

harbors these traitors will face the wrath of the Fire Lord. There will be no place left to hide'¹⁶⁸.

Azula is a clever monster, and with the help of her counsellors, her acuteness improves n-fold. The counsellors speak to her about the element of surprise when pursuing her brother and uncle. Indeed, the persecutors became persecuted. Azula, when realizing how her plans may be compromised, agrees with her counsellors, adding, 'if I want to catch my prey, I must be agile, nimble. I need a small elite team'¹⁶⁹. This elite team, as Hitler's Nazi party, was divided into secondary parties, such as the SS, and other departments, such as the deporting department, coordinated by Eichmann¹⁷⁰.



In the process of recruiting her new Elite team, Azula makes use of her leverage, or rather work by indirectly forcing her recruits to join her on her quest. To Tai-Li, who says she is happy to be living far-off the city, performing in circus' tents, Azula says she is going to see her show. At addressing royalty, Azula, the master of ceremonies, Tai-Li speaks thus: 'tell us if there's anything we can do to make the show more enjoyable'¹⁷¹, to which Azula asks to set the safety net on fire and release all the animals in the circus. That way,

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 3, "Return to Omashu," directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired April 7, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁷⁰ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 63.

¹⁷¹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 3, "Return to Omashu," directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired April 7, 2006, Nickelodeon.

Tai-Li surrenders to Azula's request, telling her that 'the universe is giving me strong hints that it's time for a career change. I wanna join you on your mission'¹⁷².

Further in the series, Aang and his friends become a third target of persecution on Azula's mission. The continuity of the Avatar's persecution shows some of the monster's intentions of eradicating the minorities from the world, such as the intense and perpetual persecution of Jewish people throughout the times, since the Exodus in the Bible.

History is an important matter for the sake of humanity's future, a way to think of past events that led to one's bad experiences, in order to avoid committing the same mistakes. Important it is to avoid such fate, but the monster knows better than to let history interfere and prefers to write history from scratch. The picture of burning books, an old tale as of the Crusades, repeated also during the Nazi regime, with the forbidden, or "un-German", books¹⁷³, one is able to witness the same portrait when Aang and his friends get in Wan Shi Tong's library and find every information about the Fire Nation burned¹⁷⁴. '[Katara:] Firebenders! They destroyed everything having to do with the Fire Nation'.

Does propaganda work? Indeed, it worked, as far as it comes to getting the attention of bounty hunters, for instance, such as those contracted by Toph's father to seek her out and escort her back home. At laying their eyes upon Zuko's and Iroh's pictures, 'Hey, look! Fire Nation wanted posters!'¹⁷⁵.

¹⁷² *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 3, "Return to Omashu," directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired April 7, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁷³ Rittenberg, "The History of Nazi Book Burning," Book Riot, accessed June 6, 2022, <https://bookriot.com/nazi-book-burning/>.

¹⁷⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 10, "The Library," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired July 14, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁷⁵ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 11, "The Desert," directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired July 14, 2006, Nickelodeon.



There has to be, as Hitler himself has written, a single entity rising from among all the others ‘who is capable of liberating his people from some great oppression’¹⁷⁶. In this case, the oppression being Prince Zuko and former General Iroh having escaped. This sounds like a threat to Azula. As a monster searching for something similar as the others, i. e. to satisfy Fire Lord Ozai by capturing a third entity—the Avatar—, it also arises what Hitler finds as a second cause for similar movements that share similar characteristics to strive along different ways for the same goal, and that is ‘a sad mixture of envy, jealousy, ambition, and the itch for taking what belongs to others’¹⁷⁷.

And whenever the monster fails, once and twice, thrice they try, and n-fold, until their strength is drained off them altogether; and after Azula’s crew’s encounter with the Kyoshi Warriors¹⁷⁸, Azula, Mei and Tai Li disguised as Kyoshi Warriors, so they could get inside of Ba Sing Se’s walls. In the section dealing with the victim, the paragraphs regarding the Dai Li’s conspiracy¹⁷⁹ were relevant because it is from there that Azula’s plan will have its greatest impact, as she says,

for a hundred years, the Fire Nation has hammered away at Ba Sing Se from the outside, but know we’re on the inside, and we can take it by ourselves. (...) From the inside, we’re in perfect

¹⁷⁶ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, New York, Melbourne: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 392.

¹⁷⁷ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, New York, Melbourne: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 394.

¹⁷⁸ The Kyoshi Warriors are an all-female army named after Avatar Kyoshi to protect the Kyoshi Island, an independent island in the Earth Kingdom.

¹⁷⁹ This thesis’s section “The victim and genocide”.

position to organize a coup, and overthrow the Earth King. The key is the Dai Li. Whoever controls the Dai Li, controls Ba Sing Se¹⁸⁰.

The monster made use of the *heimlich* to unleash their monstrous power, showing up as something familiar, but unfamiliar at the same time. And that is not the end of it, for at Azula's capture by the Dai Li and Long Feng, they tried to make themselves *Heimlich*, i. e. 'belonging to the house, not strange, (...) tame'¹⁸¹, revealing to her their motivation: 'It's time that I regain control of Ba Sing Se, and you have something I need (...), the Earth King's trust'¹⁸². Long Feng had turned the monster *Heimlich* as the first meaning of *Heimlich*, shown in point '(b) Of animals: tame, companionable to man'¹⁸³. There is a power struggle, because the monster does not want to let themselves be overpowered. The Dai Li recognize it thus: 'She's really taken charge. She's terrifying, and inspirational at the same time'¹⁸⁴.

Fear is common in all, as read above. The monster who had started the war, Fire Lord Sozin, whom Roku was close friends with, shared his idea of expansion and share the Fire Nation's prosperity with the world. Roku ends up annoyed by the idea. Although Roku had warned Sozin not to go on with his plans, later he finds out that the Fire Nation had expanded its territory. It had been at that time that the monster in Sozin had awakened.

[Roku:] I see in a colony, Sozin. How dare you occupy Earth Kingdom territory?

¹⁸⁰ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 19, "The Guru," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired December 1, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁸¹ Freud, "The uncanny," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 61.

¹⁸² *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 19, "The Guru," directed by Giancarlo Volpe, aired December 1, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁸³ Sigmund Freud, "The uncanny," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 61.

¹⁸⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 20, "The Crossroads of Destiny," directed by Michael Dante DiMartino, aired December 1, 2006, Nickelodeon.

[Sozin:] How dare you, a citizen of the Fire Nation, address your Fire Lord this way? Your loyalty is to our nation first. Anything less makes you a traitor.

[Roku:] Don't do this, Sozin. Don't challenge me! It will only end badly. It's over.¹⁸⁵

As aforementioned, by the time a monster feels threatened is when they are the most violent and ruthless. At Roku's warning, 'I'm sparing you, Sozin. I'm letting you go in the name of our past friendship. But I warn you: even a single step out of line will result in your permanent end'¹⁸⁶. But it backfired. Literally. When a volcano, in Roku's Island, erupted, Roku battled it by himself, and for some time he could handle it, but not for too long, and Sozin came to his aid. They fought the volcano together, but Roku had been hit by poisonous volcano toxic gas expelled through a geyser, which left him weak, barely able to stand, asking for Sozin's help, but Sozin's monster had been too strong. '[Sozin:] Without you, all my plans are suddenly possible. I have a vision for the future, Roku'¹⁸⁷. Sozin knew the next Avatar would be born an Air Nomad and proceeded to wiping out the Air Nomads' Temples.

Ozai, in a similar fashion as the other monsters that appear throughout the series, is a master of speech. Speeches are all over as a hint for the monster, such as Hitler's use of speeches to get the attention of his crowd. As Joachim Fest points out, 'it was the curious coupling of delirium and rationality that characterized his oratory. Gesticulating in the glare of spotlights, pale, his voice hoarse as he hurled charges, tirades, and outbursts of hatred, he remained always the alert master of his emotions'¹⁸⁸. It has been through a kind

¹⁸⁵ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 6, "The Avatar and the Fire Lord," directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired October 26, 2007, Nickelodeon.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 6, "The Avatar and the Fire Lord," directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired October 26, 2007, Nickelodeon.

¹⁸⁸ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 49.

of delirium, indeed, that Ozai claimed, in his arrogance, he was the Phoenix King, ‘the supreme ruler of the world’¹⁸⁹.

Speech is indeed all over the series, and not only voiced by Ozai, but also Commander Zhao, whose speech directed to the Fire Nation military resembles Hitler’s speeches, as can be found in the figure below.



Hitler's and Zhao's speech

As Yahil writes, ‘Hitler (...) acquired some of his knowledge of mass psychology (...), [and] had noted that mass rallies blunt the individual’s judgement and intensify his zeal and that the effect is similar to hypnosis, (...) there is special importance to the speeches of people of brutal strength, who win out over sharper and subtler minds’¹⁹⁰. In his speech, Zhao talks about his folks’ superiority and of the element Fire. A kind of anti-Semitic speech, much like the ideal ‘that the “Aryan” peoples were (...) superior to the “Semitic” ones’¹⁹¹. This superiority of the peoples over the minorities, for Himmler, for instance, did not make him ‘content with encouraging the propagation of what he considered the superior race in Germany alone; he also wanted to save the offspring of so-called pure Germans through the world and replant them in their homeland’¹⁹². During the speech, Zhao mentions the invasion and successfully entering Ba Sing Se and burning ‘the city to

¹⁸⁹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 18, “Sozin’s Comet, Part 1: The Phoenix King,” directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired July 19, 2008, Nickelodeon.

¹⁹⁰ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), 49.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 144.

the ground'¹⁹³, remark that is received with great cheering by the Fire nation soldiers, emphasizing the Fire Nation's supposed superiority to other nations. The importance of the speech is also recognized by Zhao, who asks for 'a full transcription of my speech sent to the Fire Lord, along with glowing testimonies from all ranking officers present'¹⁹⁴.

It is through speech that Azula gets Zuko to join her side, turning him against Katara, who trusted Zuko and was about to use her sacred water to heal his scar. Azula goes as far as to tell Zuko that 'At the end of this day, you will have your honor back. You will have father's love. You will have everything you want'¹⁹⁵

Azula, during her commanding of the Dai Li, shows Long Feng, via the power of speech, that she is the victor. It is via speech that the monster is able to hypnotize and conquer, to make their opponents know they have been defeated. Long Feng ends up admitting his own defeat. 'You've beaten me at my own game'¹⁹⁶.



Now Zuko, too, inherits some monstrosity from Ozai. In the beginning of the series, Zuko captures the Avatar. This came to happen even after Iroh, Zuko's uncle, had told him that

¹⁹³ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 1, episode 13, "The Blue Spirit," directed by Dave Filone, aired July 17, 2005, Nickelodeon.

¹⁹⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 1, episode 13, "The Blue Spirit," directed by Dave Filone, aired July 17, 2005, Nickelodeon.

¹⁹⁵ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 2, episode 20, "The Crossroads of Destiny," directed by Michael Dante DiMartino, aired December 1, 2006, Nickelodeon.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

none of the people in the lineage were able to capture the Avatar, but Zuko argues against that idea stating that ‘their honor didn’t hinge on the Avatar’s capture’¹⁹⁷, whilst his honor depended on them capturing the Avatar. But Zuko’s monster had been nurtured outside of the cradle, unlike his mild side, which had been neglected due to his mother’s disappearance. Zuko’s mother had always been by Zuko’s side, either in success or in failure, such as at the time for demonstration, where Zuko fails completely in front of the Fire Lord. When Zuko’s mother leaves, all that is left for Zuko is Uncle Iroh. But even Iroh, at some point, ends up in a prison cell, almost forgotten by Prince Zuko, later in the series. But how come Zuko turned out to be the monster the viewer comes to face during the first episodes in the series, with no context? It goes back to the War Room, when Zuko makes a remark and shows disrespect towards Ozai, his father. Even after being burnt and scarred by his own father, Zuko still seeks his father’s acceptance, and sets sail in search of the Avatar, whom he comes to find. But the fight within him does not allow him to think and act clearly. The monster had that effect on Zuko. When Zuko comes to dominate his monster, he confronts Fire Lord Ozai, telling him that

for so long, all I wanted was for you to love me. To accept me. I thought it was my honor that I wanted, but really, I was just trying to please you. You! My father! Who banished me just for talking out of term. My father, who challenged me, a thirteen-year-old boy, to an Agni Kai (...)¹⁹⁸.

This realization is the final awakening, the one that shows how Zuko understood he was not living for himself, feeding only the monster within himself by living his life trying to satisfy a person who wanted only his obedience and submission. Zuko also makes use of

¹⁹⁷ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 1, episode 1, “The Boy in the Iceberg,” directed by Dave Filoni, aired February 21, 2005, Nickelodeon.

¹⁹⁸ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 11, “The Day of the Black Sun, Part: 2: The Eclipse,” directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired November 30, 2007, Nickelodeon.

the speech, and this one, not one seeking people to submit to his position, but directed to the Fire Lord, as means to reason with him,

[G]rowing up, we were taught that the Fire Nation was the greatest civilization in history, and somehow the war was our way of sharing our greatness with the rest of the world. What an amazing lie that was! The people of the world are terrified by the Fire Nation. They don't see our greatness! They hate us! And we deserve it. We've created an era of fear in the world. And if we don't want the world to destroy itself, we need to replace it with an era of peace and kindness¹⁹⁹.

This power play is a horrific one. Using Julia Kristeva's term, this behavior provokes some fear, due to its "abjection", i. e. "something rejected from which one does not part [and] does not protect oneself"²⁰⁰, for they are connected anyway by family bonds.

Some of the monsters created by Fire Lord Ozai have been met. Now it is time to understand how Hitlerian a monster is Ozai himself.

Making use of speech—as has been seen, one of the favorite weapons in the monster's arsenal—, Ozai tells Zuko about his mother and her fate and her treacherousness that led to her banishment, a consequence she had easily accepted.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, Ozai is a figure unknown but by name until later in the series. Weinstock asserts that monstrosity 'is reconfigured as a kind of

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Jack Halberstam, "Parasites and Perverts: An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 162.

invisible disease that eats away at the body and the body politic manifests visibly through symptomatic behavior'²⁰¹. Weinstock suggests that monstrosity surfaces

through the psychopath (...) who lives among us and could be anyone; (...) through the faceless corporation or government agency that finds its impetus in greed and corruption (...); (...) through the virus that silently infiltrates and infects the body; (...) through the conceit of the revenge of an anthropomorphized nature that responds to human despoilment of the environment in dramatic and deadly ways'²⁰².

These manifestations are connected via its invisibility and ubiquity, 'and the response that they elicit is a form of paranoia most evident in contemporary conspiracy theories'²⁰³.

During a war meeting, Zuko reveals what he had witnessed. As one of the generals gives a report saying that in Ba Sing Se, 'earthbender rebellions have prevented us from achieving total victory in the Earth Kingdom'²⁰⁴, suggesting transferring more men into the Earth Kingdom. Prince Zuko comments on the situation, saying that 'the people of the Earth Kingdom are proud and strong. They can endure anything as long as they have hope. [Ozai:] Yes. You're right. We need to destroy their hope'²⁰⁵. To accomplish this goal, Ozai planned to use Sozin's comet to exterminate the Earth Kingdom. There would be a rain of fire, engulfing everything and turning it into ashes, from which a new world would be born, a world where Ozai would be the supreme ruler. Zuko, when Katara finds a portrait of a baby inside the Fire Lord's house thinking it is Zuko in the picture, Zuko

²⁰¹ Weinstock, "Invisible Monsters: Vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 359.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 18, "Sozin's Comet, Part 1: The Phoenix King," directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired July 19, 2008, Nickelodeon.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

remarks, ‘that’s not me. It’s my father. [Suki:] But he looks so sweet and innocent. [Zuko:] Well, that sweet little kid grew up to be a monster (...)’²⁰⁶.



Through violence does Ozai look forward to conquering all nations. And the violence is so extreme Ozai is surrounded by fire when on screen. Ozai’s motivation comes from ghosts of the past, i. e. Fire Lord Sozin, a similar approach as that of many ‘Nazis (...) who would occupy the East through violence (...) fighting in the name of “death and the devil” as inspiration’²⁰⁷.

Fire Lord Ozai, feeling the power the comet grants him, uses it, firstly, to burn a whole forest. Seeing himself as close to deity, Ozai says, when meeting the Avatar, who had been waiting for him, ‘after generations of Fire Lords failed to find you. Now, the universe delivers you to me as an act of Providence’²⁰⁸.

Even Aang’s monster ends up unleashed, when fighting the Fire Lord Ozai, Aang gets hurt on his scar, entering the Avatar state. At the moment Aang has Ozai on the ground, held still, open and vulnerable, the Avatar says, ‘Fire Lord Ozai, you and your forefathers have devastated the balance of this world, and now, you shall pay the ultimate price’²⁰⁹; but Aang, at the last moment of the strike, spares the Fire Lord of a deadly strike, and

²⁰⁶ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 18, “Sozin’s Comet, Part 1: The Phoenix King,” directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired July 19, 2008, Nickelodeon.

²⁰⁷ Kurlander, *Hitler’s Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich*, 224.

²⁰⁸ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 20, “Sozin’s Comet, Part: 3: Into the Inferno,” directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired July 19, 2008, Nickelodeon.

²⁰⁹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 21, “Sozin’s Comet, Part: 4: Avatar Aang,” directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired July 19, 2008, Nickelodeon.

instead, takes off Ozai's bending. Aang was able to control the monster and turn Ozai into something *unheimlich* to himself, i. e. without his bending, everything was all the monstrous, for he was now vulnerable, naked; whereas for Aang and the other nations, Ozai became *Heimlich*, i. e. 'tame, companionable to man'²¹⁰.

4.2.1. Other monsters

Monsters continue to appear, one after the other, in the series. A representation of what still is an act of persecution is that of June, when, using an animal's feral senses to track a "stowaway", hidden inside Zuko's ship.

In a similar fashion, episode twenty-eight shows a Fire Nation vehicle pursuing Aang's crew tirelessly, burning coal non-stop at full speed, making its way, tracking the furry clues Appa leaves behind.

A different kind of monster that the viewer gets to meet is Hama, an old lady that greets Aang's crew when they set camp near a village and tell ghost stories one another. Hama offers them a place to stay at her inn. This woman had grown in the Southern Water Tribe, the same as Katara and Sokka. Hama tells the story of waterbenders being wiped out from the Southern Water Tribe by the Fire Nation, and she was the last one that survived. Hama starts by showing some bending that sucks the water from flowers. That way, they wither and die, leaving a trace of darkness around the bender; and, after showing the skill to Katara, who pitied the dead flowers, says, 'they're just flowers. When you're a waterbender in a strange land, you do what you must to survive'²¹¹. Hama has mastered a skill so dark it only works when it is full moon. Held prisoner in a Fire Nation prison,

²¹⁰ Freud, "The Uncanny," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 61.

²¹¹ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 8, "The Puppetmaster," directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired November 9, 2007, Nickelodeon.

with no water to be seen and a dry air atmosphere. Guards would bind the prisoners' hands before giving them any water to drink. Hama then realizes that inside of her cell,

that where there is life, there is water. The rats that scurried across the floor of my cage were nothing more than skins filled with liquid, and I passed years developing the skill that would lead to my escape: bloodbending. (...) Enforcing your own will over theirs²¹².

While confessing to Katara how she had walked free for the first time in decades, Hama says, 'once you perfect this technique, you can control anything, or anyone'²¹³. The monster inside Hama had awakened and wanted to spread horror from within other waterbenders such as Katara via the bloodbending technique. '(...) it's your duty to use the gift you've been given to win this war. Katara, they tried to wipe us out, our entire culture. Your mother!'²¹⁴. The argument between the two waterbenders leads to a demand from Hama towards Katara to carry on with her "work", which Katara shortly refuses to do. The monster, then, gives use to their own abilities and forces Katara contradicting herself, who said she would not use bloodbending to stop Hama. '[Hama:] You are a blood bender!'²¹⁵.



The prisoners, and victims of Hama's bloodbending, at being freed by Aang, Sokka, and Toph, tell them that they were not abducted by a spirit, but by a witch. Witches are known

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 8, "The Puppetmaster," directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired November 9, 2007, Nickelodeon.

²¹⁵ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 8, "The Puppetmaster," directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired November 9, 2007, Nickelodeon.

to have been burned when found out practicing ‘malevolent witchcraft [and] should be punished by fire’²¹⁶. The irony in this representation is that these prisoners are all Fire Nation citizens, and Hama is a Southern Water Tribe civil, whose dark arts, from their perspective, should be turned to ashes at the fireplace, along with her own existence—for Hama herself felt the same way, being given the taste of prison during years, in harsh conditions.

Prisoners of war would be taken to the ‘Boiling Rock (...). The highest security prison in the Fire Nation’²¹⁷, ‘on an island, in the middle of the Boiling Lake. It’s inescapable’²¹⁸. This prison’s location is inside of a volcano, the same natural threat that took Roku’s life. The prison’s warden, at hearing that a prisoner had tried to escape and sent to the cooler, said, ‘no one has ever, ever, escaped from here. I’d sooner jump in the boiling lake myself than let that record fall. Don’t forget it. Now, go back to your shivering’²¹⁹. Putting prisoners through physical suffering is the main punishment the monster makes their threats face, putting them under very unpleasant conditions they are not acquainted with, and are lethal, as the Nazi regime’s concentration camps. The prison’s warden, as the monster he is, likes to keep in control of the situation, making use of violence and threats just like when monsters themselves feel threatened, ‘look me in the eye, when I’m talking to you. (...) I know exactly who you are, Hakoda of the Water Tribe, so strong will. But don’t worry, we’ll get rid of that in time. Now, look me in the eye!’²²⁰. When Hakoda

²¹⁶ Evan Andrews, “Were witches burned at the stake during the Salem Witch Trials?” accessed June 5, 2022, <https://www.history.com/news/were-witches-burned-at-the-stake-during-the-salem-witch-trials>.

²¹⁷ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 14, “The Boiling Rock, Part 1,” directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired July 16, 2008, Nickelodeon.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 15, “The Boiling Rock, Part 2,” directed by Ethan Spaulding, aired July 16, 2008, Nickelodeon.

looks the warden in the eye, the monster in him calms down, feeling the threat has disappeared.

The warden makes use of torture, too, to obtain information from one of the prisoners. Even though the prisoner had resisted for some time, torture had its way to get the information the warden had been looking for. When the act of torture ends, the prison's warden goes at the prisoner and asks if he 'had enough time to think about what I asked? [Prisoner:] Yes'²²¹. But this monster knows their place, and they bow down at Azula's appearance. A hierarchy of monstrosity is yet known to exist among the monsters in the series.

Again, Katara and her mystic arts of bloodbending—the *unheimlich*. The feeling carried in the hearts of persecuted people is externalized by Katara, indeed, who says, on their fleeing from the Fire Nation siege at the Western Air Temple, '(...) The Fire Nation can't separate our family again'²²². Given the chance to find the one who had taken her mother, Katara joins Zuko in search for the man in charge of the ship, the one who took her mother away from her. Katara, blinded by her rage, gives use to her bloodbending technique, but on the wrong man. When they find the man who took her mother away, he reveals that he was 'not taking prisoners, today'²²³. The episode is indeed full of monsters, from beginning to end. But there is also a lot of internal conflict, such as when Katara's monster is held by her consciousness, and she spares the man. And Katara justifies the man's behavior, remarking, after questioning herself about what kind of person could do such a thing as he had done, 'but now that I see you, I think I understand. There's just nothing

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 16, "The Southern Raiders," directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired July 17, 2008, Nickelodeon.

²²³ *Ibid.*

inside you. Nothing at all. You're pathetic, and sad, and empty'²²⁴, and adds, 'but as much as I hate you, I just can't do it'²²⁵.

²²⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, Book 3, episode 16, "The Southern Raiders," directed by Joaquim dos Santos, aired July 17, 2008, Nickelodeon.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

5. *Fullmetal Alchemist*

5.1. Plot

In a universe where the most advanced scientific techniques and knowledge is shown through alchemy live two kids whose passion is that of following their father's steps, learning the ways of alchemy. At the time of their mother's death, being left alone, by themselves, in the world, they try to make use of their knowledge of alchemy to bring back their mother, but it turns out that they could not bring her back from the dead, but had to pay a toll for having crossed forbidden path: Edward, the eldest of the siblings, had lost his leg; Alphonse had lost his whole body. To take his brother back, Edward, again, crosses the boundaries of the Truth and pays the toll with his arm, but, at least, he had succeeded in attaching Alphonse's soul to a suit of armor, which served as Alphonse's proxy throughout the series.

During the siblings' quest to get their bodies back, with the use of a powerful, though mysterious, object, they begin their search for the Philosopher's Stone and come to meet a series of ordeals twined with old events that go back to the time of the Ishbalan genocide, which was the beginning of a major plot to create a big enough Philosopher's Stone.

So as to understand, 'Ishbalans are a people from the east, who believe in one God, Ishvara'²²⁶. These people were in a constant conflict with the Central government, 'due to religious differences'²²⁷, something that is taken as a foreseeable spark for the conflict that followed, where people endured seven years of war. Those seven years past, 'they [at Central] used State Alchemists in an all-out genocide campaign'²²⁸.

²²⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 131). First Yen Press.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

The siblings' journey got them to learn a lot about how the world as they know it works, and they are always being tested. Not only their physical skills, but also their valor; dealing with death and ethical issues, such as the production of Chimeras and how are they pursuing an object made out of human lives.

5.2. Analysis

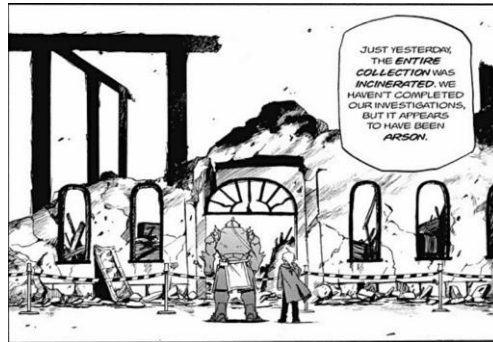
The real and most powerful monster in the series, Homunculus, also referred to by the seven other homunculi as Father—also known as The Dwarf in the Flask—, for they were born from a small part of himself, those parts that were a burden to him and raised only obstacles in his way to where he wanted to be. The homunculi, then, represent the seven deadly sins taken from the same person.

Father's main goal is to attain immortality. To achieve it, Father must perform alchemy and sacrifice human lives, so as to produce the Philosopher's Stone, an object that enables an alchemist to increase their power manifold.

Lust is the first homunculus the viewer gets to see, along with Gluttony. She is seen as one of the main plotters of Father's plans. It happens that Lust is able to track Dr. Tim Marcoh. Reading through this scene, a great deal of monstrosity occurs. Marcoh is well aware of the monstrosity the creation of Philosopher's Stones holds. '[Marcoh:] Are you still making those horrible things!?' [Lust:] Oh my... please. Don't forget that we were the ones who taught YOU how to make Philosopher's Stones'²²⁹. Lust was aware of Dr. Marcoh's threat to their plans, although he was unaware of the plan as it is, but of how important was the data Dr. Marcoh had taken with himself after he had resigned, as Lust

²²⁹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 170). First Yen Press.

points out, ‘but that data you took...! You started to have suspicions too, didn’t you? That’s why you left the lab...’²³⁰. Tim Marcoh got to know about what it costs to produce Philosopher’s Stones, as he says it himself about his research, ‘it’s the work of the Devil. And can only lead straight to Hell’²³¹.



The information Tim Marcoh had gathered was hidden in a safe place, until Lust got it from him. This led to an event as totalitarian politicized as the Nazi regime’s books burning. The scene can be read as a symbol of a ‘culture of fear and exclusion to support a flawed idea’²³², the idea that they needed to acquire a Philosopher’s Stone to attain power and immortality. ‘[Maria Ross:] Just yesterday, the ENTIRE COLLECTION was INCINERATED. We haven’t completed our investigations, but it appears to have been ARSON’²³³. And Lust’s monstrosity plays also in the same manner Creed writes, that of the ‘seductive aspect of abjection’²³⁴, i. e. ‘something rejected from which one does not part’²³⁵, as she spares Marcoh’s life, and yet threatens him not to escape, and saving him as an ingredient—sacrifice—to put forth Father’s plan.

²³⁰ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 171). First Yen Press.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 163

²³² Rittenberg, “The History of Nazi Book Burning,” Book Riot, accessed June 6, 2022, <https://bookriot.com/nazi-book-burning/>.

²³³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 3, p. 57). First Yen Press.

²³⁴ Barbara Creed (2020). Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 89.

²³⁵ Jack Halberstam. Parasites and Perverts: An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 89.

Speaking of which, at the Research Lab, Lust and Envy silence Number 48—an experiment with transmuted souls into objects, in the same fashion as Alphonse Elric’s—, so they cannot share more information with Edward. Cold-blooded killers they are; but not only because they felt like it, more that they felt the threat it was for Number 48 to share whatever information with Edward, as Envy puts it out, ‘just shut the hell up before you say something else you’ll regret’²³⁶, adding the importance of Edward’s existence so their plan succeeds, ‘(...) do you realize that the two of you almost killed our precious HUMAN SACRIFICE? (...) Not only that, but you were about to start revealing our secrets. You two could have totally wrecked our plans!’²³⁷.

As the plan maker and the head of this trio of homunculi, Lust thinks always of clearing any traces of their presence, only to make sure their plan goes accordingly and succeeds in the end, ‘we no longer need this facility to make stones (...). Let’s blow this place up to get rid of the evidence, shall we?’²³⁸ This leads also to the idea of the invisibility of the monster. A feeling of insecurity arises, for the ‘invisibility of the monster allows it to infiltrate the city, the countryside, even the intimate domestic space of the home’²³⁹, as had happened with Tim Marcoh, when Lust snuck into his house, or Lust’s trips around following Edward and Alphonse.

²³⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 10). First Yen Press.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 16). First Yen Press.

²³⁹ Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, “Invisible Monsters: Vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture,” in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 89.

Revealing herself in front of Jean Havoc and Colonel Mustang, Lust shows her heart. ‘It’s the PHILOSOPHER’S STONE’²⁴⁰, says Colonel Mustang at seeing Lust’s heart. ‘[Lust:] This stone is my heart... That’s how we were created! [Mustang:] ...You MONSTER!’²⁴¹. But Lust replies to Mustang’s remark thus: ‘How rude. We have the same appearance as you, the same five senses. The same emotions. We have the same love for the parents that gave birth us. We are human’²⁴². From this statement, it is clear that it takes a human being to be a monster, and that if Lust is part of a bigger and complete being, i. e. Father, it means that each one’s monstrosity is scattered throughout every individual characteristic that makes each one a person. It is both dealing with what we see and feel as Heimlich and dealing with the harmonic unbalance between the tripartite body Plato wrote about. Lust’s monstrosity is ultimately revealed when Mustang fetches the Philosopher’s Stone from her bosom, to save Havoc from the injuries Lust has caused him.

Abandoning the scene, after having severely injured both Havoc and Mustang, Lust still takes time to give Mustang a word, ‘enjoy watching your subordinate bleed to death. You’ll be joining him soon enough’²⁴³. Thirst for others’ destruction shows also, as Asma points out,

a frightening case of immoderate thumos, unguided by reason and self-control [letting] the multiheaded desires (...) rise to the dominant position (...) [and consequently] tortures [their] immediate social circle with crime, betrayal, and treachery²⁴⁴.

²⁴⁰ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 10, p. 40). First Yen Press.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 41.

²⁴² *Ibid*, 41.

²⁴³ *Ibid*, 60.

²⁴⁴ Stephen T. Asma (2009). *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of our Worst Fears* (Oxford University Press), 54.

Later, Lust gets to meet Alphonse and Lieutenant Hawkeye. In that scene, one witnesses not Lust herself, but the monster within her taking over, when she remarks, ‘you humans are such sad and weak... foolish creatures’²⁴⁵, right after acknowledging that she herself is human—aesthetically and psychologically—but her psyche is completely unbalanced, thus resulting in behaving as such.

Another homunculus born from Father is Envy. Envy is indeed a monster that takes into themselves the concept of Heimlich. It is so because Envy has the ability to shapeshift. With their shapeshifting ability, Envy is the one responsible for starting a lot of conflicts, such as the Ishbalan war. Envy themselves asks Edward if he knows what was it that triggered the outbreak of the war. Edward replies what he had heard and read from history books,

a military officer accidentally shot an Ishbalan child... [Envy:] Exactly!! I, Envy... am the one who shot and killed that child!! (...) I watched as the carnage of war rippled outward until it consumed the entire country. It was beautiful! Humans are such easy creatures to manipulate! It was very amusing!!²⁴⁶

Not only has Envy killed an innocent child, sparking a great war, they have also killed one of Colonel Mustang’s best friends. In the shape of Lieutenant Hughes’s wife, revealing to him the Heimlich, someone ‘belonging to the (...) family (...) members of the household’²⁴⁷, he stood petrified, even if the person in front of him was not really his wife, but the image had aroused a kind of fear that led ‘back to what is known of old and

²⁴⁵ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 10, p. 80). First Yen Press.

²⁴⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 13, p. 81-82). First Yen Press.

²⁴⁷ Freud. The Uncanny. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 61.

long familiar'²⁴⁸. In the same fashion as the devil, whom, envying the good in Anthony, 'endeavored to carry out against him (...) taking on the shape of a woman (...) and imitating all her beguiling ways'²⁴⁹. It was even scarier because, as the word Heimlich has it, one sees it as '[i]ntimate, friendly, comfortable (...) arousing a sense of agreeable restfulness and security'²⁵⁰, but it was also deadly. It had been that that kept him comfortable that killed Lieutenant Hughes, that which is '[c]oncealed, kept from sight'²⁵¹, but, when it came to light, it became unheimlich, resulting in fear. 'You wouldn't stab YOUR OWN WIFE, would you? Pretty good acting, huh... Lieutenant Colonel Hughes?'²⁵². Mercilessly, Envy shot Hughes at point-blank range.



Still on the matter of the Heimlich and the fear caused by the monster, Envy, too, shapeshifts into father Cornello, the priest from the first chapters who performed miracles by means of a Philosopher's Stone. When Envy takes the shape of Father Cornello, action witnessed by a priest, friend of Cornello, the latter's reaction was that of calling that shapeshifting creature a monster, because of the uncanny feeling they have provoked.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁴⁹ Ambroise Paré, trans. *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 104.

²⁵⁰ Freud. The Uncanny. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 62.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 130). First Yen Press.

‘[W]hat in God’s name ARE you?!’²⁵³ After being called a monster by the priest, Envy remarks, ‘he called me a monster. I am SO insulted’²⁵⁴. And it sounds hypocritical, for it has been the priest, too, along with father Cornello, who had been spreading false belief in the name of sun God Leto. Both of them, then, are as deceitful through the Heimlich as they can be, and can be in the same category as monsters, for deceitfulness and manipulation are, among others, a symptom of psychopathology²⁵⁵.

At some point in the series, Envy shows their true form, a giant creature whose body is made out of other peoples’ bodies, all of them, crying for their deliverance. The monster is gigantic; indeed, they are gross, growing heads within mouths where there are not scales. Lin Yao goes as far as to question, ‘how is that thing an artificial “human”?’²⁵⁶

This artificial human, who shows no fear in front of their peers, bows down, firstly, at one of the other homunculi, Wrath, as known as Führer President King Bradley.

King Bradley, the Führer of the country of Amestris, and head chief of the military in Central city, first appears as an innocent, humble, and friendly character, when visiting Edward at the hospital. This homunculus is the only one among the seven that ages. It is so because Bradley has been created by inserting a Philosopher’s Stone into a human being. All of the sudden, King Bradley shows his other facet, remarking,

²⁵³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 70). First Yen Press.

²⁵⁴ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 2, p. 71). First Yen Press.

²⁵⁵ Ambroise Paré, trans. *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 220.

²⁵⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 13, p. 90). First Yen Press.

I hear you've been doing quite a bit of SNOOPING into MILITARY COMMAND, Major Armstrong. (...) And YOU, Edward Elric... you're searching for the PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, are you not? How much do you know? A great deal depends on your answer²⁵⁷.

Bradley confesses that he was just kidding, but it is not as straightforward as it seems. In this attitude, there is a bit of truth to it. A monster's sleeve has always spare fabric to stretch. Picking up a sheet of paper in the mound Edward and the others were making while going through their research, Bradley starts reading 'a list of all the researchers who were involved with the stone'²⁵⁸; unfortunately, as Bradley comes to tell them, 'the whereabouts of all these individuals are [*sic*] currently unknown'²⁵⁹, adding, ironically—mayhap—, 'the enemy is always one step ahead of us'²⁶⁰. Bradley, then, tries to keep all of them out of the picture by instructing them not to 'speak of this to anyone or stick your neck in this matter any further!! This is truly a case where you cannot tell friend from foe. TRUST NO ONE!'²⁶¹.

Bradley is the perfect weapon, a trump to have on their side, 'as long as humans are concerned, he's one of them... the great KING BRADLEY. But actually, he's our [homunculi] sibling, created for the last stage of the plan'²⁶².

From an early age, Bradley had been subject to intensive training. The perfect "presidential candidate" to rule Amestris was being created. After the training phase, the team of scientists had to inject a piece of the Philosopher's Stone inside each potential

²⁵⁷ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 111). First Yen Press.

²⁵⁸ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 113). First Yen Press.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 114). First Yen Press.

²⁶² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 8, p. 70). First Yen Press.

candidate in the experiment. Bradley was the one who had survived. By the end of the successful experiment, the team had witnessed ‘the birth of a NEW TYPE of human being!’²⁶³ The great leader of humankind.



A linguistic aspect that may resemble much of Hitler’s behavior and approach, of the utmost importance in this comparison, is Bradley’s remark, when, at seeing Edward’s prosthetic limbs: ‘Ah, yes. Those Ishbalans put up quite a resistance’²⁶⁴. The way Bradley refers to the Ishbalans—“those Ishbalans”—shows indifference, as if the poor community had been created as an obstacle from the start, only to be eliminated.

Indeed, Bradley is very detached from human emotions. One gets to find that out when he commands a siege into the Devil’s Nest, where Greed—supposedly his sibling—is shaltered, orders the military men to ‘capture the man with the ouroboros tattoo on his hand’; ‘[soldier:] and the rest? [Bradley:] Eliminate them’. This only shows how heartless and indifferent King Bradley can be.²⁶⁵ It happens later that Dorchet, the Chimera, the one who uncovers, in the middle of the brawl, ‘He’s [King Bradley] the one that gave the order to kill the Ishbalans. He must be planning to wipe us all out’²⁶⁶; a remark that cost

²⁶³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 13, p. 148). First Yen Press.

²⁶⁴ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 6, p. 126). First Yen Press.

²⁶⁵ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 7, p. 133-134). First Yen Press.

²⁶⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 7, p. 157). First Yen Press.

him his life, taken by King Bradley himself. After having the chimera killed, he turns to Armstrong, and says, ‘stop showing mercy to the enemy. That’s why you’re never promoted’²⁶⁷, a remark that says Bradley’s recruits are meant to be an army of emotionless brutes, who seek only death and destruction, traits the SS officers shared.

And it is not long until Bradley reveals, as the monster he is, fear for the threat the people who stand around him represent, and assumes an aggressive stance.

Did you... make any DEALS with the man with the ouroboros tattoo? (...) Did you share any information with him? (...) If you made any DEALS with them or shared any of your EXPERTISE, I’ll execute you both right now²⁶⁸.

But even King Bradley, in the same fashion as Eichmann, who, ‘in Vienna, (...) had a Jewish mistress’²⁶⁹, had created bonds with the humans he so much defiled, for King Bradley was married to a woman who was serving as a mother for Pride.

Amestris is, indeed, a tough country but, as Edward states, ‘it was only when Bradley became FÜHRER PRESIDENT the war became our life’²⁷⁰. War has been a reality when there were monsters in power; as is the reality of today’s Ukraine, it had been the reality of the Nazi Germany, too. Maintaining his posture straight, his passivity, during the times of war with the Ishbalans, Führer President King Bradley ordered the arrest of every Ishbalan in the military, for there came out intelligence that proved insiders were providing weaponry to the Ishbalans, helping them to endure the war. It had been King

²⁶⁷ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 7, p. 161). First Yen Press.

²⁶⁸ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 8, p. 37). First Yen Press.

²⁶⁹ Hannah Arendt, *EICHMANN in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), 53.

²⁷⁰ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 8, p. 118). First Yen Press.

Bradley who gave order to State Alchemists to exterminate the people of Ishbal. ‘(...) President King Bradley signed “presidential decree #306.” The civil war will soon come to an end. The Ishbal prison camp is about to go into operation’²⁷¹.

Besides open wars, Bradley is good at plotting torture schemes, as Lust had done to Tim Marcoh. Bradley sure knows how to make use of his patience, scheming with Father, at letting Mustang live, during the quarrel against the homunculi, for, ‘he can open the portal for us’²⁷², something that makes Father extremely glad to hear, for it is something to be used for their benefit. Being sure of his position, and knowing that things can go wrong, King Bradley reassures Envy that there will be no place for mistakes: ‘He is accountable to military command. I will strip his power and see that he doesn’t go anywhere’²⁷³.

Bradley, then, too, arranges a meeting and uses their leverage to blackmail the Elric brothers, stating that Edward would still serve the military, mentioning, with no further wording, Winry’s existence and how they are such good friends²⁷⁴.

Although King Bradley warns those reunited at the meeting of their places, he still allows them to work on their ambitions—the brothers will keep on doing their research, and Mustang will not quit the military, so he can strive for the position of commander-in-chief. The more one reads into the series, the more these characters not only are recognized as, but also recognize themselves as monsters. During an exchange with Pride, King Bradley hears the former say, ‘don’t forget. We are the beings that those humans

²⁷¹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 15, p. 41). First Yen Press.

²⁷² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 10, p. 110). First Yen Press.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, 111.

²⁷⁴ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 14, p. 110). First Yen Press.

call “monsters”²⁷⁵. Monstrosity is so embedded in the military, mostly, due to King Bradley’s influence, that Roy Mustang, when trying to investigate King Bradley’s being a Homunculus, is led directly to a meeting with high generals of the military. ‘[Bradley:] Do continue. So what if I am a Homunculus? Is there a problem?’²⁷⁶. King Bradley spares Mustang, which may seem odd, as Mustang himself recognizes, ‘why do you bother to keep me alive, knowing what I know? [Bradley:] To make you realize how deep the waters are you’ve been swimming in’²⁷⁷. It sounds also as making it ridicule. This comes as that of the Merriam-Webster’s dictionary’s definition of Homunculus, ‘a little man’²⁷⁸, i. e. as if that fact was not that important. Also, King Bradley, Mustang states, ‘by revealing his true identity as a homunculus to me, it’s almost as if the president was saying... “you might defeat ME, but behind me is someone even more powerful.” He’s testing me’²⁷⁹.

As Asma writes, in the twentieth century ‘a new kind of monster emerges (...) one that (...) doesn’t seem to feel any emotions at all’²⁸⁰. This would one consider, at first, King Bradley, but the latter during Lieutenant Colonel Hughes’ funeral—now Major General Hughes—where he is standing upright, paying his condolences to Hughes, leading the military ceremony²⁸¹—, as the reader later comes to know was not even a bit empathetic towards Hughes, but mad at Hughes’ daughter crying: ‘Hughe’s child... what was her

²⁷⁵ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 12, p. 150). First Yen Press.

²⁷⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 13, p. 45). First Yen Press.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 99

²⁷⁸ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “homunculus,” accessed June 7, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homunculus>.

²⁷⁹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 14, p. 146). First Yen Press.

²⁸⁰ Stephen T. Asma (2009). *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of our Worst Fears* (Oxford University Press), 218.

²⁸¹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, pp. 143-145). First Yen Press.

name...? She made an unbelievable racket during the funeral... My fists were trembling with ANGER.²⁸² But there is, yet, another monster that really shows no emotion at all, and that one is Father, or the Dwarf in the Flask. Only later in the series, then, does one get to know from King Bradley himself that there is someone above him pulling the strings. ‘My “son” Selim was given to me by my superior. Not only my son... but my position as PRESIDENT, my SUBORDINATES and my POWER. In other words, I’m also PLAYING AT BEING A DICTATOR’²⁸³.

The kind of idea one gets from Father is that they may see themselves as an abortion, same as Frankenstein’s monster, because they feel like they had no infancy, had been abandoned as of early: Frankenstein’s monster, ‘at one point refers to himself as “an abortion” (...) and (...) he has a father, albeit an unhappy one, but no mother. It is the female which is missing in the authorship of the monster’²⁸⁴. The mother, in this sense, is being used as a metaphor for the loving side of the being, the nurturing and showing their value goes beyond what they may appear in the eyes of others; the missing piece.

But Father’s appearance is not as monstrous as the other homunculi. One has to bear in mind that the Dwarf in the Flask took the image of Van Hohenheim, as of early in history, when he got out of the flask. Their, Homunculus’s, appearance, then, sets an atmosphere of Heimlich even for the Elric Brothers, when they first meet. They get the idea that the Dwarf in the Flask is actually their father, Van Hohenheim, but it is only a doppelganger.

²⁸² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 13, p. 101). First Yen Press.

²⁸³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 20, p. 63). First Yen Press.

²⁸⁴ Cottom, “Frankenstein and the Monster of Representation,” *SubStance* 9, no. 3 (1980): 69.

Father has the power to transmute without moving a limb. Their power is hidden within the Heimlich, ‘belonging to the (...) family’²⁸⁵. It goes almost as what happened with Lieutenant Hughes and Envy, only Father does not kill the Elric brothers, but rather heals their wounds.

But how come one makes of this being a monster from this scene? Well, Father himself admits that being human is not in their agenda but being perfect. Scar points out that

Humanity’s seven deadly sins (...) in excess can lead to self-destruction... but on the other hand, those flaws are the very things that makes us human. So, why remove them from yourself?
[Father:] I do not wish to be human. I will become the perfect being²⁸⁶.

To the Dwarf in the Flask, humans are ‘only a small part of the life form that is our planet’, adding, ‘have you ever considered how much power one could acquire if a portal to such knowledge [knowledge of all matter in the universe] were opened?’²⁸⁷ The portal to the whole planet is Father’s main goal. But the monster is disorganized in their madness, as the Dwarf in the Flask remarks: ‘What a glorious cacophony!! It’s all I can do to contain it!’²⁸⁸ By something big, one could even risk saying God. To attain such power, the monster would never achieve their goal by themselves. That is something the Dwarf in the Flask is very thankful for²⁸⁹. ‘I thank you for your help. All of you’.

The difference between the evil monster, Father, and the other monster, Van Hohenheim, is that on Father’s side, there was no interest in getting to know the lives he has taken

²⁸⁵ Freud 2020. The Uncanny. in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. (University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 61.

²⁸⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 24, p. 39-40). First Yen Press.

²⁸⁷ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 26, p. 27). First Yen Press.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 37.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 58.

individually. The souls used to create the Philosopher's Stone were merely a tool for Father to attain his wished power. '[Father:] The stone has individual personalities within it that are helping you? But they're nothing more than energy!'²⁹⁰ Power came from use and abuse of force. On the other hand, Van Hohenheim 'had all the time in the world to converse with them... thanks to the immortal body that you [Father] gave me. (...) There are 536, 329 souls within me... and I've conversed in depth with all of them!'²⁹¹

The desire for power over everything and to play God is achieved by Father. At the time he comes to recognize how strong he had become, he remarks 'now that I am one with God... I can create worlds in the palm of my hand'²⁹². The Dwarf in the Flask does fuse the nuclei of atoms, creating a sun. They are also able to control the weather²⁹³. This scene also shows how does the monster have access to scientific advancement and uses it to their own advantage, without regarding for other peoples' safety and survival.

Van Hohenheim argues with Father thus:

Philosopher's Stones are made from humans, and Homunculi are born from the stones... but what can be made from Homunculi? (...) Can a being that can only destroy truly be called a God? You think you're the ultimate being but you're actually just a DEAD END²⁹⁴.

The Dwarf in the Flask then gives birth to the people from whom he had attained the power of immortality, but those are not the kind of beings one refers to when talking

²⁹⁰ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 24, p. 57). First Yen Press.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 58

²⁹² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 26, p. 78). First Yen Press.

²⁹³ *Ibid*, 93 – 97.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 186.

about giving birth, those are the lives already gone and rotten. A note on this scene: is the History of today the birth of the monsters that have ruled in the past?

To bring war and monstrosity to an end, one would be relieved if there was a character such as The Truth, which the Dwarf in the Flask later comes to meet, who reproaches them thus: ‘You thought you could make God’s powers your own? (...) You think stealing something powerful makes you great? (...) All you’ve ever done is use the strength of others to grab at godhood. You haven’t grown at all’²⁹⁵.

The homunculi can be as defenseless as any other being whose weapons and skills have been taken away from them, as happens to Envy, after being killed by Marcoh, or to Pride when he is trapped with Alphonse in a geological dome created by Hohenheim: ‘[Alphonse:] Is this really that same terrifying Homunculus? Now that he’s lost all his power, he’s nothing but a child...’²⁹⁶.

Humans, as Edward comes to remark, ‘are supposed to be so much weaker than you Homunculi, but no matter how often... we get beaten down... become discouraged... lose our way... (...) we keep on fighting. (...). That’s why you’re jealous of humans’²⁹⁷. Mayhap, the monster is, too, jealous of the freedom shared by the people, not being trapped within the constant need of power and control over everything.

5.2.1 Other monsters

As has been seen in the section above, Colonel Roy Mustang, even though he comes to know about the secrets within the military, does not quit and strives for a higher position,

²⁹⁵ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 27, p. 104-105). First Yen Press.

²⁹⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 22, p. 40). First Yen Press.

²⁹⁷ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 23, p. 157-158). First Yen Press.

from which he can change the political paradigm. Mustang says it himself, he '(...) will do ANYTHING that will help in my promotion... until the day that I become PRESIDENT and gain COMPLETE MILITARY POWER'²⁹⁸.

Roy Mustang shows his monster within when, during the Ishbalan war, he makes his appearance in the battlefield,

[Ishbalan soldier A:] a column of flame!? (...) [Ishbalan soldier B:] Is that the military's new weapon!? (...) [Injured Ishbalan soldier:] (...) So this... is how your people... would use alchemy? It should be used for the... benefit of mankind...²⁹⁹.

Hughes remarks that the look in Roy's 'eyes has changed. [Mustang:] (...) they're the eyes of a murderer'³⁰⁰. The conversation with Lieutenant Hughes resumes, and makes them both think, as Mustang remarks,

If its [the campaign] only purpose is to suppress the rebellion, then... doesn't the military expenditure seem a little... excessive? [Hughes:] I've been wondering the same thing. Ishbal has no significant natural resources, little usable land³⁰¹.

Roy Mustang is aware of himself a monster. He himself puts it thus: 'I'm a killer and no amount of denial or repentance can absolve me of that', and adds, 'this war has made me much too accustomed to burning people'³⁰². Being aware of his monstrous self, Roy Mustang entrusts Riza Hawkeye with a special role,

²⁹⁸ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 3, p. 59). First Yen Press.

²⁹⁹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 15, p. 61-62). First Yen Press.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 65.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, 67.

³⁰² *Ibid*, 166 – 168.

[Mustang:] I would like you to WATCH MY BACK. (...) Being entrusted with my BACK means that you may also SHOOT me in the back at any time. If I ever stray from the correct path, shoot me with your own hands³⁰³.

As a State Alchemist, Mustang had been used to fight in the Ishbalan war, using his alchemy to burn down every Ishbalan. When Mustang meets with an old friend of his, Doctor Knox, the latter recalls how it was during the Ishbalan war: ‘sure brings back memories... you’d burn them, I’d dissect them’³⁰⁴; and recognizes how much of a war crime it has been what they had done back in Ishbal, remarking, ‘Ishbal was nothing but a huge, bloody laboratory with human beings as the guinea pigs. We’re not comrades in arms. We’re ACCOMPLICES’³⁰⁵.

Roy Mustang shows himself as a fair man, with a pure heart, showing his love and affection for his friend, Lieutenant Colonel Hughes, carrying out Hughes’s case and avenge him. By the by, Mustang has released his monster. A monster, one might say, in slumber.

Mustang shows how monstrous he is, as he had been during the Ishbalan war, when on an open fight against Lust he cries, ‘when we met before, you said... “it’ll take more than that” to kill you. In that case... I’ll keep killing you until you stay dead’³⁰⁶.

The same has happened later in the series, when Mustang found out that it was Envy who had killed Hughes. The monster in Mustang is unleashed once again, and the flames of vengeance are used to tear Envy apart. Colonel Mustang almost destroys Envy for good,

³⁰³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 15, p. 172). First Yen Press.

³⁰⁴ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 11, p. 34). First Yen Press.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 34 – 35.

³⁰⁶ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 10, p. 89). First Yen Press.

was not for Riza's, Edward's and Scar's intervention, reasoning with him, saying that what drives him to commit such atrocity is 'cold-blooded hatred'³⁰⁷. Hatred had been what had sparked the monster's awakening; a monster who sought only destruction of those who had caused him pain.



As Roy Mustang remarks, people 'called [Roy Mustang] many names – “human weapon,” “monster” – (...) only when I'm fighting a REAL monster... that I feel truly human'³⁰⁸. Even if Mustang is a monster, when he is facing another monster, his human side shows itself.

There are unstoppable and ruthless monsters, too, who show no empathy even towards the fellow comrades and teammates. Solf J. Kimblee first appears in the series in a prison cell, with his hands stuck in a wooden stock, so as to keep him from using his alchemy. Kimblee is a character that gets excited by the sound of explosions. Kimblee himself is a specialist in explosive alchemy. During the Ishbalan war, Kimblee met Scar and

³⁰⁷ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 23, p. 149). First Yen Press.

³⁰⁸ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 14, p. 147). First Yen Press.

introduced himself thus: ‘I’m the STATE ALCHEMIST... responsible for the GENOCIDE in this region’³⁰⁹.

During the Ishbalan extermination process, Major Armstrong, pitying Ishbalan’s lives, allowed them to retreat through a hole in the wall he had opened—a wall that could be the representation of a reversed Berlin Wall³¹⁰ i. e. instead of preventing the Amestrian army to enter Ishbal, it worked as a means to prevent Ishbalans to escape their deadly fate—, and Kimblee simply exterminated the Ishbalans that were able to escape at Armstrong’s call.



In conversation with Riza Hawkeye, a gunslinger, Kimblee is as cold in arguing as follows:

When you drop an enemy... can you tell me in all honesty that you don't, for a moment, indulge in the SATISFACTION and PRIDE of a job well done (...)? (...) Is it EVIL to kill with ALCHEMY? Is it more VIRTUOUS to kill with a GUN?³¹¹

Endeavoring to amuse himself at watching destruction all over, and the opportunity arising to, the homunculi decide to free Kimblee from prison. The team homunculi

³⁰⁹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 4, p. 161). First Yen Press.

³¹⁰ History.com editors. (2009, December 15). *Berlin Wall*. History. <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-wall>.

³¹¹ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 15, p. 93-94). First Yen Press.

Kimblee had joined with no further questioning. Could it be that Kimblee saw, in the homunculi, some Heimlich.

Yet, the monster, Kimblee, believed blindly that he was doing something for a higher cause. '[J]ust as in Ishbal... we will kill the people of this land and CREATE something magnificent out of their blood and sorrow'³¹².

Destruction comes as a consequence of freedom, for Kimblee. As Kimblee himself says of why did he side with the Homunculi, '(...) because they enable me to use my talent to the utmost. (...) They've given me complete freedom to use alchemy in the service of my desires'³¹³.

³¹² Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 18, p. 56). First Yen Press.

³¹³ Hiromu Arakawa (2014). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (A. Watanabe, Trans.) (Vol. 18, p. 61). First Yen Press.

6. Last thoughts

What is it that unleashes a commander-in-chief's monstrosity? An inherited thought? Their upbringing? Is it having access to the tools of destruction?

As the monsters have no shape, at first, but are given the same at random, only then acquiring a human form, one can read it as an energy that came prior to the being, for instance. This shapeless entity is also the intellect that gains form and structure through time, as the monster acquires knowledge. This is the place where there is order within the unexpected. The unexpected is the imagination from whence monstrosity is designed. It is the place of birth of the atrocities that come out to the real world in human-shaped violence of numerous a nature. As the etymology of the word conveys, these monsters' monstrosity is shown to us through their actions, and what first action would they take if not, at playing God, make use of command? It is through command that these monsters acquire what they so much desire. The same way, as has been seen, the analyzed monsters acquired power and territory, so has Hitler, for instance, ran innumerable acts of violence and ruthlessness, taking the lives of many Jewish individuals. And each one of those individuals was a person, with a personality, wishes and plans for their lives, something Van Hohenheim tried to instruct Father, on listening to every single one of those lives, and reason with them. Their lives had already been taken, but they still suffered and sought the so deserved eternal rest.

The real monster is not an inhuman entity, then, but humankind possessed by their most sinful wishes and desires, such as greed for power, endless lifespan, and others. One can see that all right when Aang soothes Hei-Bai, the spirit of the burnt forest, by showing it the forest will be able to regrow healthy³¹⁴; or during their trip through the Cave of Two

³¹⁴ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 1, episode 7, "Winter Solstice, Part 1: The Spirit World," directed by Lauren MacMulan, aired April 8, 2005, Nickelodeon.

Lovers, several monsters attack the group, but to the sound of music, the two giant moles turn milder³¹⁵.

But the monsters we are dealing with in our reality are nothing as like the monsters of the Spiritual world in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, but more like the monsters we have analyzed, like Fire Lord Ozai, who possesses whole armies and great power and exerts influence, or like Father, in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, who plots grand plans behind closed doors.

Both texts studied and analyzed throughout this dissertation show, then, how the political monster is detached from humanity and cares nothing about those who dwell the Earth, seeking only power and attaining territory, so as to expand their influence, as the *Avatar: The Last Airbender*'s Fire Nation did in the Earth Kingdom, for instance; or as the State Alchemists did with Ishbal, in *Fullmetal Alchemist*.

These two texts show in many ways the goals, strategies, means of working, and the way of thinking common to a political monster. From *Avatar: The Last Airbender* it has been seen how little by little the Fire Nation was able to spread influence throughout the other nations by means of technological advancement, political speech, and brute force. Military expansion and the influence and power in the royal family, too, enabled the Fire Nation's expansion and territorial conquest. Knowledge and thinking ahead of the other nations have been another way of placing themselves in a better strategic position.

Having other people covering for the political monster and appearing only at the end of the series was another way of representing the immunity the political monster has, as well as their impunity when proceeding to commit the atrocities mentioned throughout the dissertation, such as the extermination of the Air Nomads in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, or the Ishbalan genocide in *Fullmetal Alchemist*.

³¹⁵ *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, book 2, episode 22, "The Cave of Two Lovers," directed by Lauren MacMullan, aired March 24, 2005, Nickelodeon.

From persecution to large scale conflict, a great number of monsters so far have we come across. Those monster who, little by little, reveal their true intentions. The importance of this dissertation resides in finding these common patterns—as the texts studied in this dissertation represent these leaders’ behavior—as a means of helping in the study of the rising of these regimes.

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Appendix A

Avatar: The Last Airbender's character list

To enable readers to move around this dissertation easily, here one may find a quick explanation on the characters and their relations. There are several other characters that will not be mentioned in this list. Would that be the case, it would only make it the more confusing.

Aang



Avatar Aang³¹⁶

Succeeding Avatar Roku, a Firebender, Aang has been born an Air Nomad, in the Southern Air Temple. Before the war had started, Aang fled the Air Temple, at receiving the news he was the Avatar, and had been frozen in an iceberg for a hundred years. During Aang's absence, the Fire Nation wiped out the Air Nomads, knowing the Avatar would be born an Air Nomad and thus breaking the Avatar cycle.

³¹⁶ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Aang at Jasmine Dragon*, 333 px x 250 px, <https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Aang?file=Aang+at+Jasmine+Dragon.png>.

Azula



Princess Azula³¹⁷

Fire Lord Ozai and Ursa's daughter, Zuko's sister. Azula had not a good relationship with her mother, yet she was her father's favorite.

Azula has been able to conquer Ba Sing Se, with the help of her crew, two of her best friends. Due to some planning and schemes, she was almost crowned Fire Lord.

Dai Li



Dai Li Sergeant³¹⁸

Elite secret police of Ba Sing Se. Founded by Avatar Kyoshi, the Avatar that preceded Roku, the organization was meant to serve and protect, but ended up in the hands of Long Feng. The Dai Li used many techniques to keep secret much information from the outside, for instance, they have brainwashed one of the rebels that Aang finds on his quest, so as to make him unthreatening during his stay at Ba Sing Se.

³¹⁷ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Azula*, 333 px x 250 px, <https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Azula?file=Azula.png>.

³¹⁸ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Dai Li sergeant*, 333 px x 250 px, https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Dai_Li_sergeant?file=Dai_Li_sergeant.png.

Long Feng



Long Feng³¹⁹

Long Feng was the leader of the Dai Li and worked as a secretariat of Ba Sing Se, hiding the war that was waging beyond the walls of Ba Sing Se with the help of the organization Dai Li.

Roku



Avatar Roku³²⁰

The Avatar that preceded Aang. Roku was born in the Fire Nation, and was close friends with Sozin, Ozai's grandfather, the Fire Lord that had started the war.

Roku works actively as Aang's guide through his adventure to defeat Fire Lord Ozai.

³¹⁹ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Long Feng*, 333 px x 250 px, https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Long_Feng?file=Long_Feng_scheming.png.

³²⁰ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Roku*, 333 px x 250 px, <https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Roku?file=Roku.png>.

Ozai



Fire Lord Ozai³²¹

Fire Lord Ozai has been the ruler of the Fire Nation at the time the series takes place.

Ozai was the second son of Fire Lord Azulon, and father of Zuko and Azula.

A scheme has been taken forth by Ozai to overthrow Iroh, his brother and rightful heir to the throne, after Iroh's son's death.

Married to Ursa, Zuko and Azula's mother, he ended up banishing her, Ursa, from the Fire Nation, accused of treason.

Zhao



Commander Zhao³²²

Commander—later Admiral—Zhao was the leader of the Fire Nation Navy. Trained by a great firebending master, he was one of the most powerful men in the Fire Nation, taking charge in the search for the Avatar.

Zhao was a rival of Prince Zuko, and they competed against each other in the capture for the Avatar.

³²¹ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Ozai*, 333 px x 250 px, <https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Ozai?file=Ozai.png>.

³²² Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Zhao*, 333 px x 250 px, https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Zhao?file=Commander_Zhao.png.

During his siege of the Northern Water Tribe, Zhao slayed the Moon Spirit, assassination that resulted in a dark moon.

Zhao had been taken by the Ocean Spirit, after slaying the Moon Spirit, to the Fog of Lost Souls in the Spirit World.

Zuko



Prince Zuko³²³

The rightful heir to the throne after Ozai, brother of Azula.

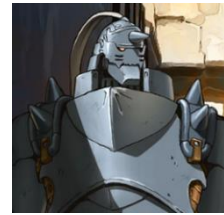
After refusing to fight his father, Ozai, Zuko had been scarred, and had been banished from the Fire Nation, as well as has happened with his mother. To regain his honor, Zuko set on a quest to find and capture the Avatar. Along with him was General Iroh, his uncle, Fire Lord Ozai's brother.

³²³ Avatar Wiki Fandom, *Zuko*, 333 px x 250 px, <https://avatar.fandom.com/wiki/Zuko?file=Zuko.png>.

Fullmetal Alchemist's character list

A characters' list is provided below on the manga series *Fullmetal Alchemist*, as way of making it easier who is interacting with who, and why some interactions do occur as they do, and also to further understand the analysis.

Alphonse Elric



Alphonse Elric³²⁴

Together with his brother, Edward, after a failed attempt to bring their mother back, Alphonse loses his entire body, being then attached by Edward to a suit of armor at the cost of Edward's arm.

Colonel Roy Mustang



Roy Mustang³²⁵

After the Ishval civil war, Roy Mustang had been known as a hero. In the military, Mustang is Edward's superior officer. Mustang's main goal is to grow higher in the ranks

³²⁴ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Alphonse Elric*, 300 px x 295 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Alphonse_Elric?file=Avatar+alphonse.png.

³²⁵ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Roy Mustang*, 300 px x 295 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Roy_Mustang?file=Avatar+roy.png.

within the military, so as to be able to overthrow King Bradley and take power to change the country for the best.

The Dwarf in the Flask



Father³²⁶

Also known as Father, or Homunculus, this character is the oldest Homunculus. Created by the Cselkcess' scientists, they look forward into becoming the superior species. Succeeding in getting free from the flask, Homunculus takes the shape of Van Hohenheim. Yet, Homunculus has a great variety of forms. This being is capable of performing great alchemy without much difficulty, due to their possessing a Philosopher's Stone within.

Edward Elric



Edward Elric (Fullmetal Alchemist)³²⁷

After a failed attempt to bring his mother back to life, Edward had lost his limb, only to lose another limb in an attempt to trap his brother's soul to a suit of armor.

³²⁶ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Father*, 350 px x 197 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Father?file=Fullmetal_Alchemist_-_44_-_Large_29.jpg.

³²⁷ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Edward Elric*, 1000 px x 915 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Edward_Elric?file=213254+1407532169190+full.png.

Later, Edward becomes a State Alchemist so as he can get on with his research to get his body back, as well as his brother's, Alphonse. On their way to get the data they need, they stumble upon the homunculi and their plans.

Envy



Envy³²⁸

In the same fashion as Lust, Envy, too, is an embodiment of a deadly sin. Envy has the ability to shapeshift. Not only does he shapeshift, he can also change the voice according to the being they have shapeshifted into. Their true form, though, is that of a giant quadruped. This homunculus is of a cruel personality and is constantly mocking humans for their weakness.

Gluttony



Gluttony³²⁹

Another embodiment of one of Father's seven deadly sins, Gluttony is able to eat anything, using this ability to clear up evidence. As mentioned, he usually partners with

³²⁸ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Envy*, 1000 px x 625 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Envy?file=7s_envy.png.

³²⁹ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Gluttony*, 300 px x 295 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Gluttony?file=Avatar_gluttony.png.

Lust, and it is from them that they receive most of the ordering. Gluttony is also an artificial portal.

King Bradley

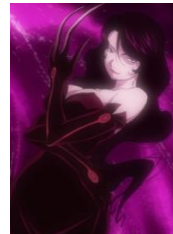


Führer President King Bradley³³⁰

A Father's creation, the Führer of Amestris, created, from a human being infused with a Philosopher's Stone, for the specific purpose of ruling over Amestris, wielding all the skills, trained to perfect, to be a suitable ruler.

Albeit a gentleman, King Bradley is ruthless on the battlefield, and his perception of space and anticipation make him dangerous.

Lust



Lust³³¹

One of the homunculi embodied directly from Father. The only homunculus bearing female appearance. Flirtatious yet sadistic, Lust has Gluttony alongside them, sharing a

³³⁰ FMA Wiki Fandom, *King Bradley*, 350 px x 197 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/King_Bradley?file=KingBradley1080p.png.

³³¹ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Lust*, 720 px x 998 px, <https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Lust?file=7s-lust.png>.

relatively strong bond, as of motherhood. Lust has the ability to pierce anything using her ultimate spear, using their fingers.

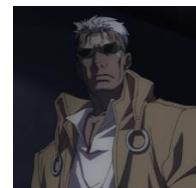
Pride



Selim Bradley (Pride)³³²

The first homunculus created by Father. Pride acts as the adopted son of King Bradley and Mrs. Bradley. Pride has the ability move around as a physical eye that lurks shadow-like.

Scar



Scar³³³

Scar is first Ishbalan to appear in the series, seeking to avenge his people, victims of the Ishbalan genocide. Scar targets State Alchemists, the same ones who put forth the genocide. His tattooed arm has been given to him by his brother, who studied alchemy, even though the Ishbalan people saw alchemy as heresy.

³³² FMA Wiki Fandom, *Selim Bradley*, 1000 px x 563 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Selim_Bradley?file=Pride.png.

³³³ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Scar*, 736 px x 720 px, Scar | Fullmetal Alchemist Wiki | Fandom.

Solf J. Kimblee



Solf J. Kimblee³³⁴

One of the State Alchemists who participated in the Ishbalan war. Kimblee is a sadistic alchemist, who seeks only destruction, using his explosive alchemy. Although others see Kimblee as a sadistic monster, Kimblee admits that he is only following orders.

Later in the series, Solf J. Kimblee is freed from prison by the homunculi and joins them in their cause.

Van Hohenheim



Van Hohenheim³³⁵

An ancient human who worked where the Dwarf in the Flask had been created. Hohenheim is a human Philosopher's Stone, i. e. does not age and has regenerative abilities. Van Hohenheim gets together with Trisha Elric, who gives birth to the two main characters, Edward and Alphonse Elric.

³³⁴ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Solf J. Kimblee*, 440 px x 487 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Solf_J._Kimblee?file=Jacob_kimbley.png.

³³⁵ FMA Wiki Fandom, *Van Hohenheim*, 300 px x 295 px, https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Van_Hohenheim?file=Avatar_hohenheim.png.