

*Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* and the Cool Japan Strategy: Exercising Soft Power with  
Brilliance

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this work has been written entirely by me except for the references and quotations which I have acknowledged duly. Additionally, I have maintained all academic ethics and integrity while preparing this research.

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## Table of Content

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chapter 1.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Chapter 2.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Works Cite.....</b>	<b>41</b>

## Abstract

*Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood (FMAB)*, an anime adaptation of the famous manga *Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa, adopts the western elements of society and life, and adapts them according to the corresponding eastern values. By doing so, it attracts the viewers all around the world towards the eastern way of life, inspires them to explore the East and infuses the eastern ethics into them. It is an ideal representation of the Japan's exercise of soft power through cultural diplomacy. This research inspects the anime under various lights, especially philosophy and politics, to excavate how this anime is subtly transforming the masses' perspective of life. Simultaneously, it focuses on the Japanese strategy of alluring the international audience towards them, and changing their point of view about the country. Thus, in the two chapters, this dissertation explains, using *FMAB* as the text, how Japan is using its cultural elements, especially the creative industry to execute soft power and public diplomacy on the international audience.

## Introduction

In today's world, coercion is not the best method to influence the world. The pathway to world dominion, or to becoming a powerful international entity at least, requires the use of both hard power and soft power. In fact, in the present world of information and technology, where the power is a two-way road between governments and the mass, application of soft power and public diplomacy is much more influential in creating a public opinion around the world. One of the effective tools of deploying such power is the creative industry which includes advertising, architecture, art and antiques, crafts, design, fashion, movies and videos, video games, music, performing arts, publishing, computer software and services, radio and television ("Cool Japan Strategy (CJS)" - January 2012). When it comes to having an overseas influence through creative industry, quite a few major countries have acknowledged its importance and have taken steps under political leadership towards becoming leading creative industry nations. The US President Franklin Roosevelt announced the "New Deal" in 1929, the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair declared "Cool Britannia" in 1997, and South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung declared himself the "cultural president" in 1997 and initiated the "Cool Korea Strategy" with public-private collaboration ("CJS", January 2012). Therefore, as one of the most technologically advanced developed countries, Japan is no longer lagging behind. It has now an equal, or arguably a slightly larger share in the field than America. This is possible through the evolution of Japan's national branding from a 'corporate Japan image' to a 'cool Japan image.' It is important to understand the present growth of Japanese cultural industry in the international arena to realize the importance of soft power, and the tools that are being used, as they may seem insignificant to the general people, but in reality, play a significant role in the power play. Therefore, this thesis attempts to show a small glimpse into the success that Japan has achieved through this policy by



analyzing *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* from different angles through the lens of Joseph S. Nye, Jr's theory of Soft Power, and illustrates how the country is creating a philosophical and political influence on the international audience through this particular anime.

Japan is a country that has been flourishing over the anime (Japanese animation) and manga (graphic novels) in the international arena since as early as the 1960s. It started with the broadcast of *Astro Boy* in 1963 and *Speed Racers* in the late 1960s in the United States (Cannon 109). However, it was not till 2005 when the word "brand" was first used in a policy speech by Japanese Prime minister Junichiro Koizumi in the National Diet, "in which he notes the global appeal of Japanese animation and explicitly states a policy of "promoting businesses that capitalize on contents such as films and animation and strengthening the Japan's appealing brand message in area such as fashion and food"" (Cannon 109). By February 2005, the "Japan Brand Working Group," established on November 2004, published its first report. The report addresses the twenty first century as "the era of cultural power" and claims that the key to becoming a "loved and respected" nation lies in "cultivating the ability to desired results ('soft power') through Japan's attractiveness, namely cultural power" (qtd, in Cannon 110). According to "Intellectual Property Strategic Program 2005," to create a favorable environment for knowledge-based businesses, the Intellectual Property Policy Headquarters were established in March 2003. To facilitate such businesses that will focus on intellectual property and thus increase national wealth, The Headquarters developed the Strategic Program 2003 consisting of 270 measures. In 2004, it was developed to Strategic Program 2004 consisting of 400 measures (10, 11). The program has flourished ever since, and helped create a conducive environment for the creative industry.

Manga and anime, two intertwined spheres of the creative industry, naturally enjoy a lot of attention and favor under the Strategic Program. They have become not only one of the most popular recreation of the Japanese people, but symbols of the “Cool Japan Brand” in the international arena as well. According to Intellectual Property Strategy Program 2004, in 2002, in response to the significant decline in the international competitiveness of Japanese industry, the Japanese government introduced a new national policy that focused on the “intangible intellectual property in the form of innovative and creative products, spearheaded by Japanese media content such as anime, manga and game software” (qtd. in DALIOT-BUL, 248). In July 2007, the first international manga award, a ‘Nobel Prize’ for a foreign artist whose work has helped to spread the manga form internationally, was presented to Lee Chi Ching, a Hong Kong artist of historical comics (DALIOT-BUL 255) which paved the way for international artists to establish a bond with Japan. “Today, Japanese animations are borderless and people around the world can enjoy them simultaneously in their own language. To facilitate this, Anime Consortium Japan (ACJ) was established in November 2014. Cool Japan Fund has provided a billion-dollar fund” (“To Maximize the Value of Japanese Animation”). However, these actions do not only focus on the marketization of the Japan Brand to boost Japanese economy. According to DALIOT-BUL,

The Japan Brand represents a step up from the traditional explanatory and informational approach of former cultural policies targeting the international arena. It is no longer designed to introduce Japan to the world or to explain Japanese behavior to non-Japanese but to create soft power by producing an influential national message. (258)

Thus it becomes clear that the agenda of expansion of the cultural business is not only economic but political as well.

To provide an insight in this clever scheme of public diplomacy, the popular anime *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood (FMAB)* has been selected. *FMAB* is the second anime adaptation of a manga (graphic novel) series named *Fullmetal Alchemist* created by the famous mangaka Arakawa Hiromu. The first series retained the name of the manga, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, but differed from it as the manga was ongoing and the show moved ahead of it, and the show runners had to exercise their own imagination to keep the series going on. *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*, however, was adapted from the completed manga and thus the storyline was closely followed. The 64-episode anime, quite short compared to other legendary works in the world of anime, gained huge popularity among the Japanese viewers. With the release of English subbed and dubbed versions of the anime, it achieved an enormous world-wide audience. In fact, it was ranked the second best anime of 2010 on the “Top 10” list of Charles Solomon, writing for *The Los Angeles Times*, and the sixth best anime in the year span from April 2009 to March 2010 in the journal *Animage* in its April 2010 edition (qtd. in *en.wikipedia.org*). It is also ranked #2 in MyAnimeList in Spring 2009 with a score of 9.25 (“Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood”).

The story of the anime develops around the quest of the Elric Brothers – Edward and Alphonse Elric, to find a way to get their body parts back, which they lost when they committed the absolute taboo of alchemy – human transmutation, attempting to create or resurrect humans. According to their knowledge, the Philosopher’s Stone, a legendary substance of perfection fabled to fulfill any and all wishes of the user, is the only known way to retrieve their body parts. Due to his extraordinary talent in alchemy, Edward is given the status of a state alchemist, equivalent to that of a major in the army and with the privilege of conducting alchemic research funded by the state, at age 12, with the title “Fullmetal Alchemist” to bear. On their quest, the brothers come across a formula to create a Philosopher’s Stone. However, to their dismay, they

discover that the ingredient needed to create a Philosopher's Stone is living humans, and to add to their horror, they find out that this research is already being conducted in secret by the army. On their new mission of exposing this conspiracy, they come across the homunculi – Pride, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth and Wrath – and their creator, the creator of alchemy itself, Father. With the help and sacrifices of many of their friends and allies, the two brothers are able to defeat the homunculi and Father.

The anime is analyzed through the framework of 'Soft Power.' According to Joseph S. Nye, Jr., the pioneer of the concept of 'soft power,' there are two types of power – hard power and soft power ("The Changing Nature of Power" 5). Hard power is easier to understand as it can rest on either inducements or threats, or both. "Soft power," as Nye says, "is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment" ("Public Diplomacy and Soft Power" 94), and calls it "the second face of power" ("The Changing Nature of Power" 5). Soft power is much different from hard power as it mostly works through the intangible assets such as personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies with moral authority. There are three major resources of soft power of a country – culture, political values, and foreign policies ("The Changing Nature of Power" 11). However, to be a resource of soft power, the cultural aspects have to attract others, the country has to live up to the political views home and abroad, and the foreign policies have to be seen as legitimate and have moral authority. In addition to that, soft power is closely related to public diplomacy as it is the established means of promoting a country's soft power. Public diplomacy is a tool to mobilize the resources of soft power to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries. The effectiveness of public diplomacy can be measured through interviews or polls, which indicate the number or ratio of minds changed ("Public Diplomacy and Soft Power", 94,

95, 101). According to this theoretical framework, anime and manga becomes an important resource of soft power as they are well-known and well appreciated form of popular culture. The reason to select *FMAB* as the text is that even among numerous anime and manga, it portrays the aspect of soft power execution more perfectly than others, and is appreciated world-wide, as mentioned above.

The chapter “Soft Power of Sins: *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*” focuses on the philosophical aspects of life that *FMAB* covers. Arakawa begins with creating a sharp contrast between the East and the West, though keeping the West as the central setting, which attracts the Western audience in the first place. Focusing on Christian morals as the apparently visible theme of the show, *FMAB* cleverly questions the ideas and inserts Eastern religious beliefs as alternatives. It personifies the ‘seven deadly sins’ and goes deeper into the hearts of those ‘sins,’ showing that these emotions that are termed as ‘sins’ are not inherently corrupt and even necessary at times to succeed as a human being. Arakawa creates conflict in the audience’s mind about the fabled Philosopher’s Stone by creating a dark revelation about its creation. By showing human beings as its ‘ingredient,’ she puts a brake in the audience’s thoughts of coveting the “perfect substance.” *FMAB* raises questions on the idea of God, whether it is sarcastically comparing Father with the “Holy Father” imagery of God popular in Western religions, be it showing the twisted character of Truth who is “God” in the *FMAB* universe, or showing God being devoured by Father through obtaining an immense amount of energy and information by turning everyone in Amestris into a Philosopher’s Stone. The questions whose answers have evaded the western philosophers, this anime asks them all. However, the solutions to such questions have been skillfully offered here as well, which originally stem from the Eastern religious practices. There is no sin in emotions in Eastern philosophy except particular actions of

one that may directly harm others. There is no need for the Philosopher's Stone when there is truly equivalent exchange of action and result in life. There is no need for alchemy or extreme effort to know the 'Truth' or 'God', as they reside in every sentinel being. There is no direct good or bad. The world is not in black and white, but it is a gray area with some parts having slightly darker shades than others.

Moreover, by portraying the positivity of alchemic use in Xing, this anime allures the Western audience into being curious about the exotic East that most of them have only known about through the orientalized lens. The East is more advanced technologically as well as philosophically. The important technique about anime is that it adopts a Western look on the outside i. e. setting, plot etc., while values instilled in the characters are exclusively Eastern. In this regard, the author of the Manga: *The Hidden Treasure, The Artiface*:

[d]iscusses the concept of "soft power." This concept is the idea that Japan exports authentically Japanese content but imports content from other countries. Japan is able to slightly change their content to be popular in America and contain western things while still having Japanese values and ideals. For instance, manga artists will created characters that appear to look more western to appeal to western audiences, but when it comes down to values present, they will still have marriage values or religious content specific to Japan ("Japanese Manga and Anime influence on American culture vs. American comic influence on Japanese culture").

In "*FMAB* and Politics: Soft power in the Real World," the political aspect of the anime is addressed. The anime, though the mangaka does not confirm it, clearly draws inspiration from World War II. Japan being an active participant in the war as part of the Axis party, it is natural

to find credible, first-hand resources from the surroundings, and Arakawa takes complete advantage of the fact. The anime, through the filter of alchemy and homunculi, focuses on the horrors of the Nazi regime. It parallels with the real world history of Hitler's reign in Germany, consisting of the key elements. The story is set in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, both have a Führer as the national leader, both countries expand by annexing neighboring countries. The Nazi regime commits heinous crimes against the Jews that are shown through the atrocities committed against the Ishvalans. The immoral experiments done on the victims are depicted through the alchemic researches conducted by the army's doctors. At the same time, Xing in East is shown in the periphery, whose culture and social condition are far better and peaceful than Amestris, maintaining the theme of East vs West. However, the show's focus on the brutality of the war and the movement against it conforms to the idea of Japan's understanding and accepting its mistakes in the war. Moreover, the clear political views on government systems and the suggested East-West collaboration also send subtle yet strong messages to the audience.

Through the above mentioned arguments and evidences, this thesis aims to clarify the depth of soft power and public diplomacy. The success that Japan has achieved through exercising soft power via cultural diplomacy despite the bubble burst economy it deserves to be applauded. It is therefore important to understand the gravity of soft power, cultural diplomacy and creative industries, not only to be enlightened about the manipulation being implemented on the mass, but to follow the path to achieve such success in people'

## Chapter 1

### Soft Power of Sins: *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*

“Lust, greed, sloth, gluttony, envy, wrath, and pride. They say that a man has seven sins... on the other hand, all of those emotions are absolutely necessary to understand other humans” (Van Hohenheim, “The Adults’ Way of Life”).

Borrowing western ideas is a common phenomenon in the world of manga and anime. Among these ideas, though not too common, using the idea of seven deadly sins is quite a popular trend. There are several popular anime, for example *Soul Eater*, *Seven Deadly Sins*, *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*, which have used seven deadly sins as one of their base themes. However, instead of simply borrowing this western idea of Christian morality, they are adopting, reshaping and challenging it. Through such works, these anime are not only becoming popular in Japan, where it is an ‘out-of-the-box’ concept for the Japanese audience, as Christianity is not a part of their common education or practice (Seijitsu), but they are increasing their audience in the outside world as well, where such ideas are part of almost general lifestyle due to western influence on their culture. This paper attempts to weave Joseph S. Nye, Jr’s theory of soft power with the major elements of the anime series *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* such as the theme of the mortal sins, closely related theme of the Philosopher’s Stone and the setting, and prove that the East is counteracting the West in a cultural battle, and is gradually overwhelming them.

Nye, in his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in the World Politics*, discusses the functions of soft power, and its sources. According to him, soft power is getting others to want the outcomes one wants and it co-opts people rather than coerces them (“The Changing Nature



of Power” 5). He mentions that there are three primary resources of soft power of a country – “its culture (in places where it is attractive to others, its political values... and its foreign policies” (“The Changing Nature of Power” 11). Popular culture is certainly a source of soft power. In case of Japan at present, anime - a subculture of the country, is one of the most popular pop-cultural phenomena through which it has started influencing the audience all around the world, including the West. It attracts the children through its eye-catching art and the young adults with its complex plots and themes. In “Reversing Flows: Pop Culture, East to West”, Sameer Doshi mentions,

Japanese *anime* broke new ground with complex storyline and intricately drawn characters. Today *anime* is one of the fastest growing sectors of the US video industry, with sales in excess of US\$60 million, and the genre is popular on Western university campuses. (12)

Along with presenting Japan’s own culture to the world in an appealing manner, anime more or less consistently challenges popular western ideas and stereotypes, and tries to break the frame. *FMAB* is no different and more successful in this regard than many others.

Throughout the entire series of *FMAB*, Arakawa breaks stereotypes one after another - two physically challenged male protagonists with prosthetic body parts, a strong army officer with a gentle personality and a passion for artistic creation, strong and capable female characters who continually outstrip the men in their respective fields, and the biggest anti-stereotype, the core, humane desires of the homunculi, the sins. In the anime, there is no black and white definition of good and bad, no clear yin and yang. Everyone has their own reasons and own circumstances. Even all the crimes committed by the homunculi can be explained that as they are

not human, expecting humanity from them would be foolish. This logic is applicable for Father as well. In the end, Arakawa crafts the characters in such a skillful manner that the audience is forced to sympathize even with the homunculi and Father, a concept of antagonists that is very different from that of the Western culture. This norm of a ‘not-completely-evil villain’ in the anime attracts the audience more than most other things. It changes their idea of good and bad. According to Nye, “[s]oft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others” (“The Changing Nature of Power” 5), and that is exactly what Japan does through *FMAB*. From the one directional view of the world being clearly divided into good and bad people, it shifts people’s perspective towards the situations and inherent nature of people that may be the cause of their actions, and should be considered before judging someone. Such outlook of life helps people become more considerate and comfortable, as no one in reality is pure righteous or pure evil, no one is a complete hero nor a complete villain. It makes them feel more human, and feel good about being one. Thus, keeping it in line with Nye’s definition, *FMAB* shapes people’s preferences, and Japan exercises soft power.

At first, there is a challenge hinted in the setting of the anime. With the setting being in war-clad Amestris, the Western country and references to the peaceful Eastern country of Xing, the anime is a clear portrayal of the East-West binary. The style of naming, clothing and buildings of the Amestrians suggest that it is representative of the West in the real world. Similarly, the names and clothes of the Xingese resemble those of the Chinese in the real world. The difference between Amestris and Xing, that is the difference between the Western and the Eastern culture, even in alchemy, is acknowledged by the characters as well. In “A Messenger from the East,” Ling mentions to Edward that the alchemy in Xing is “a skill that is used predominantly for medical purposes.” In reply, Edward says, “Different customs, I guess. It’s

mostly used for war in our country (Amestris).” The difference between productive use by the East and the destructive use by the West of the same technology is shown quite cleverly through the anime. The fact that is little known is that China has a long history of alchemy, going as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. According to Shuttleworth,

The Chinese alchemy blended in with their Taoist (Daoist) beliefs and the idea of balance and harmony, one of the many reasons why it took a different course from the western alchemy. Chinese alchemy was also related closely to the holistic Chinese traditional medicine, with many minerals believed to have healing qualities, a strong difference from the Greek influenced idea that only organic substances could be used for medicines.

By making references to Eastern alchemy, especially Chinese alchemy, Arakawa enlightens the world about the existing advanced Eastern technologies that is not known to the West. Thus, she opens the gates of wonder of the East for the West, to take a peek, inviting them to learn more and accept more of the East – a true mark of public diplomacy.

Next, there is the popular legend of the Philosopher’s Stone. It is a glorified stone in the world of Western Alchemy. It is the perfect substance, rumored to have the ability to fulfill any and all wishes of the user, even to grant immortality. In the beginning of the series, Edward reads out from a book about the Philosopher’s Stone:

A heavenly stone that destroyed Xerxes overnight. The great elixir that had been sealed away by a Sage from the West. There are many names for it, but to put it simply, it is something that reinforces alchemy. That is a philosopher’s stone (“The First Day”).

This concept of the Philosopher’s Stone is in line with its Western legend. The most prominent name in the legend of Philosopher’s Stone is Nicolas Flamel, who is rumored to have learned

and to possess the elixir of life and the secrets of transmutation (Appel), is referred in the anime as well (Edward, “Hidden Truths”).

However, the anime provides an alternate explanation of the Stone’s origin as well. The basic rule of alchemy is equivalent exchange. It is “understanding the various rules and flow that exist within matter, breaking it down, then rebuilding it. This world also flows while abiding by those rules and is in a cycle” (Edward, “Rains of Sorrow”). Not even the Philosopher’s Stone can defy this rule, regardless of how it may appear. Therefore, to bestow immortality, or rather a very elongated life, to the user, there needs to be an equivalent exchange made. Thus, the concept of humans as ingredients for the Stone is introduced. It takes several living humans to perfect even one small stone. As long as the Stone holds the souls of those humans, it continues to display extraordinary power. Once the souls are used up, the stone breaks and disappears. Such accounts of the “perfect substance” are horrifying yet logical. It defies the Western concept of alchemic glory and introduces the audience to a world of deeper truth, deeper darkness.

The most dominating theme of the anime, the homunculi, the humanoid personification of the seven deadly sins of Father, reinforces the blurring of the line between good and bad. The seven homunculi – Pride, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth and Wrath – are offshoots of Father, the original Homunculus, the Dwarf in the Flask, who brought alchemy to the world of humans. Since he achieved a human body using Hohenheim’s DNA, the slave who was in charge of his care, and the Philosopher’s Stones that reside in his and Hohenheim’s blood, created with the souls of every human of Xerxes, he has excluded all his “mortal sins” from his body and given them human bodies, calling them his children. “The Seven Deadly Sins are sins that characterize fallen humanity, so classified by traditional orthodox Christianity and especially

held to, and taught by, the Roman Catholic Church since the early Middle Ages” (“Seven Deadly Sins”), and even this other worldly being acknowledges it. However, the anime provides an insight in quite a few of these ‘monsters,’ and in human heart in turn.

Arakawa presents the true desire of these homunculi, the core reason of the sins, and, as they are originally emotions of Father, the core desires of his as well. Greed, who is greedy for everything – “money, women, subordinates” (Greed, “Those Who Lurk the Underground”), is truly greedy for friends, true friends (Greed, “The Other Side of the Gateway”). Envy who acts superior and always squashes the weak humans, is actually jealous of humans and human bonds that keep them moving forward (Edward, “Beyond the Inferno”). Wrath, who holds extreme cold fury, the only human transformed into homunculi, is originally a loving husband and a man of dignity. Moreover, all of these emotions originally belong to Father, which brings sympathy to him as well. In addition to that, in the origin episode of Father, “Homunculus, the Dwarf in the Flask,” the Homunculus expresses its deepest desire: “I don’t want to be too greedy, but I guess being able to leave this flask would make me happy.” In fact, Greed further blurs the idea of good and bad regarding avarice in “Looming Shadows”:

If you ask me, there’s neither ‘right’ nor ‘wrong when it comes to greed. You humans go around ranking certain types of greed in order from good to bad, which makes you so hard to understand.

Greed being a part of Father, it shows that Father, or Homunculus, holds such views as well. Even when he meets Truth, right before he dies, he says whatever he did, he only did it to find the Truth and he is unable to understand what he did wrong (Homunculus, “The Other Side of

the Gateway”). Being a non-human intelligent creature, he simply did what he saw fit to obtain God. It is absurd to expect humanity from him.

Arakawa challenges the idea of God and truth in Western philosophy quite tactfully. In Western or Abrahamic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, God is essentially a separate being from his creation. He created the world and He will destroy it someday. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. He is the perfect being, does not die nor decays. The ‘Father’ imagery for God is common in Western religions, especially in Christianity. However, Arakawa names the other worldly creature, the core homunculus as ‘Father’ - a being that does not belong to this world of humans, brought alchemy to this world, created the other homunculi and the humanoid creatures, attained immortality and does not decay. Father’s features shadow the features of God, similar yet oddly distorted. Arakawa tries to show what God may be like, based on the vague and paradoxical Western idea of God. In Eastern philosophy, “The Divine is immanent in creation” (LaFave). He resides in this very world, within all His creation, which is much more suitable and believable as the idea of God. To make that argument stronger, Arakawa thus paves her way through initially pointing out the flaws in the description of God in Western religions.

Arakawa further mocks the idea of God’s omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence by introducing Truth. In “The First Day,” when Edward faces a featureless creature on the other side of the Gate, it introduces itself as “an existence that you folks like to call the “world”. In other words, the universe, In other words, God. In other words, the “Truth”. In other words, entirety. In other words, “one”. And, I’m you.” This description of Truth represents the attributes of God as described in Western religions. It has the ‘all-seeing eye,’ which symbolizes God’s

omniscience. It possesses the power to pass judgment on anyone and everyone. Thus it is omnipotent. It is the world and the universe, hence is omnipresent. However, this creature, Truth, likes to play cruel jokes on the ignorant and sinful humans. He takes a toll from the sinners, parts of their body, for performing human transmutation, and calls it “equivalent exchange” (“The First Day”). However, the toll it takes far exceeds the limit of equivalence. As Father says,

Truth is cruel. Out of the cocky ones who tried to revive the dead in order to be embraced by their mother’s warmth again, one of them (Edward) was robbed of his leg with which to stand, and his one and only brother was also taken from him. The other (Alphonse) was stripped of his entire body which left him unable to feel warmth at all. The woman who longed for her dead child (Izumi Curtis) was given a body no longer able to reproduce. Now, the one who had his eyes fixed on the country’s future (Roy Mustang) was robbed of his vision; never again will he be able to see what the future holds. He (Truth) gives humans their suitable forms of despair to prevent them from getting too conceited. He is the existence which you humans refer to as ‘God’ (“Lost Light”).

With this, Arakawa poses the forever unresolved philosophical question regarding God – is he all-powerful or all-kind?

She provides the answer in “The Other Side of the Gate.” In this episode, when the Homunculus demands to know what is God unhappy about, Truth answers that it is “because you (homunculus) don’t believe in yourself. You were born from humans after stealing other’s powers, and yet, you were just clinging on to God the entire time.” Later, when Ed returns to take Al back, he decides to sacrifice his Gate of Truth, in other words, his alchemy as the price. In answer to Truth’s queries about him being ready to become an ordinary human, he replies,

“I’m not going to “become” anything. I’ve always been an ordinary human... Even if I lose alchemy, I’ll still have my friends.” To this, Truth, or rather God screams in joy, “Correct answer! You have defeated me!” Arakawa suggests that instead of searching for God in transcendence as a separate being, like Homnuculus did, humans should believe in themselves and learn to be content with their own life. Only then can they find God, or Truth, or enlightenment, as he is the world, the universe, the one, and oneself. Arakawa effortlessly converts Western philosophy to Eastern, as in Eastern religions, “[t]he source of enlightenment and liberation is *within* the individual” (LaFave).

In the anime, Arakawa plays a clever visual trick with images of the important personalities of Eastern and Western religions. Her references to the pioneers of Eastern and Western Alchemy are paradoxically subtle and direct. In “The Arrogant Palm of a Small Human,” Edward and Fu discuss their legends about “The Sage” who came from Xerxes, a country situated in the desert in the middle of their countries, in the East of Amestris and in the West of Xing. According to the Amestrian legends, “the Sage of the East” came from Xerxes and introduced alchemy in Amestris. Fu, in turn, informs him that it was “the Sage of the West” from Xerxes who introduced alchemy in Xing: “Eastern alchemy as we know it today is a combination of the skills he brought to us and Xing’s technology”. However, in Arakawa’s art, we see striking similarities of these “Sages” with real pioneers of religions. In the Figures 1 and 2, we can clearly see that the pioneer of alchemy in Amestris resembles the pioneer of Christianity, Jesus Christ.





(Fig 1: Image of “the Sage of the East”: Arakawa, Hiromu. “The Arrogant Palm of a Small Human.” *FMAB*)



(Fig 2: Image of Jesus Christ: “Christ the Redeemer.” *OhFact!.*)

It is a semblance that anyone who is familiar with the image of Christ can notice, but none can claim it to be so, nor can they question Arakawa. Thus, Arakawa, by resembling Father, the other worldly being with Christ, the ‘son of God,’ creates more confusion about the Western religions, in the audience’s mind.

Similarly, the pioneer of alchemy in Xing shows the features of East Asian scholars, as seen in Figures 3 and 4. One may claim it to be Confucius, who is considered the greatest philosopher of China. However, it is more likely to be similar to the famous Chinese philosopher Ge Hong, who was:

[A]n eclectic philosopher who dedicated his life to searching for physical immortality, which he thought was attainable through alchemy... His most important contribution to Chinese philosophy was his attempt to reconcile an immortality-centered Daoism with Confucianism... His penetrating insight was that the teachings of no one school could solve the problems that his world faced – only a combination of the best methods of each could do so. (Knapp).

As mentioned before, there is a long history of alchemy in Chinese culture. However, Ge Hong is the philosopher who not only worked with medicine but politics as well. Both his connection with immortality and alchemy, and his foresight of the necessity of combining separate philosophies make him more likely to be Arakawa’s inspiration of “the Sage of the West”.



(Fig 3: Image of “the Sage of the West”: Arakawa, Hiromu. “The Arrogant Palm of a Small Human.” *FMAB*)



(Fig. 4: Ge Hong: “ Ge Hong (Ko Hung, 283-343 C.E.)” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*)

With this, Arakawa allures the international audience even further into the mystical world of East to explore, and eventually to accept.

In the anime, Arakawa emphasizes on the fact that the homunculi are not the true monsters. They are simply a different species with more knowledge and more physical prowess than the human beings. Therefore they consider themselves as superior to the humans. Just as any intelligent creature feels, the homunculi are proud of themselves as well. As Bradley, or Wrath who was turned into a homunculi from a human, and has experienced both lives, tells Mustang, “This body has far surpassed human capabilities. It’s far superior. Just as you humans are proud to be human, we are proud to be Homunculi” (Reunion”). Being a much superior creature than the humans, they treat humans the same way humans treat other creatures – inferior to them and disposable. Not only humans consider themselves superior to other beings in general, even Western religions have made sharp distinctions between humans and the rest of the natural world, for example, animal, plants, insects, even objects, and have stated that humans are the best beings of creation. Further confirming this superior notion of the Homunculi, Father calmly replies to Lin’s aggressive attack about him considering humans foolish, “Do you consider insects crawling about the Earth to be foolish? Even if the insects struggle, the difference between you and them is so great that you don’t exactly give a damn. That’s precisely how I feel about you humans” (“Father”). Through such remarks, Arakawa mocks the conceited nature of humans, and makes them aware of how other creatures may feel to the human’s casual and sometimes cruel disposal of them. This perception comes from Arakawa’s the Eastern beliefs where “[a]ll sentient beings have value (since they might be reincarnated souls)” (LaFave). Thus, Arakawa not shatters people’s glass house of ‘human’ pride, but leads them towards the Eastern culture.

However, Arakawa does not hesitate to show that even among general people, who may simply be ignorant and not inherently bad, the humans who beget power and bring these ‘monsters’ like the Homunculi into the world are the real monsters. The royalty of Xerxes, the upper echelon of Amestrian army – those who are in power who greed for more power, even if that leads to destroying the lives of thousands for their selfish desires. Even Homunculus brushed over this fact: “Immortality... I wonder why fools who gained ultimate authority and prosperity begin to wish for that.” (“Homunculus (The Dwarf in the Flask)”). Such people who covet beyond their limit and conduct such atrocities knowingly, are the truly hideous and vicious ones. This idea confronts the Western idea of humans being superior to other creatures, and also reveals the ugly face of power. It simultaneously conforms and challenges hierarchy. Through spreading such ideals, Japan competes with the USA, its Western counterpart after WWII in its exercise of soft power both in the USA and in other parts of the world. It also attracts the viewers towards Japanese understanding of the gray area instead of dispelling everyone in a black and white perspective of good and bad. According to Samantha Chambers, there is a “shift in perceptions and stereotypes of anime” and the American people are turning the subversive Otaku culture into a “more mainstream popular culture,” and that anime wields a strong soft power as it has a strong economic foothold in American culture (“*Anime: From Cult Following to Pop Culture Phenomenon*”). Thus, Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood is a small but solid proof of Japan challenging the dominating West in a battle of culture and wielding soft power.

## Chapter 2

### ***FMAB* and Politics: Soft power in the Real World**

- “ - Everyone loves justice.  
 - That’s right. The first person to say it wins.”

(Mustang’s men, “Flame of Revenge”)

The previous chapter dealt with the dominant philosophical ideas and ideology that have been constantly challenged by *FMAB*, and created questions about life and living in the viewers, which may be answered with the Eastern belief system. However, the purpose of soft power is not to simply challenge a group but to attract them. As Nye says, “Soft power rests on the ability to shape preferences of the others” (95). The importance of positive public opinion in politics and power, even to do the right thing, is undeniable. For that, *FMAB* does not only deal with morality, but it addresses the real world as well. The key to the real world from the alternate universe lies in the setting and the plot. Arakawa mentions that the setting of Amestris is influenced by her impression of Europe from a tour. She says, “I was particularly impressed by how remarkably different the thinking and customs were, even between neighboring countries” (qtd. in “Old copy pasta about Hiromu Arakawa 1”). For the East, Arakawa draws inspiration from China to create Xing: “Arakawa is clearly very taken with China, as Chinese culture is a recurring element in her work” (Donovan). She likes to work on Chinese motifs while still infusing Japanese ideologies, making her work a representation of the broader East. By infusing both Western and Eastern elements in her art, Arakawa succeeds in captivating readers and audience from around the globe. Moreover, what make this anime even more extra-ordinarily successful in this regard are the historical and universal elements infused in it, which are taken

from real life, first-hand accounts. Arakawa draws from her conversations with people from all walks of life: “Those people include paraplegics, refugees, war veterans, former yakuza, foreigners living in Japan and many others” (“Old cypasta about Hiromu Arakawa 1”). Such accounts clearly motivate the controversial Nazi regime and World War II references. As Japan was part of the Axis party, accounts of these people make the references all the more credible, and as Nye says, “... credibility is the crucial resource and an important source of soft power” (100).

Although Arakawa mentions she did not use any particular Western country but several European countries for the setting, the Amestrian regime is most strikingly similar to the Nazi regime. The similarities between the physical histories of these two countries seem almost exclusive. Both Amestris in the *FMAB* universe and Germany in the real world are nations under dictatorship. Both of them are embattled countries. Both Amestris and Nazi Germany became large countries by taking over bordering countries. As Major General Armstrong tells Edward, “Our country started out as a small nation, but we expanded by annexing the small countries around us” (“The Shape of This Country”). In “The Shape of This Country,” the foundation and expansion of Amestris is explained. Amestris attacked neighboring Riviere in 1558 without a declaration of war and conquered it, much like Germany invaded Poland in 1939 and gained victory. Amestris continued to grow, shaped into a large circle, by annexing other neighboring states like Ishval. This part of history is similar for both nations in the real and the fantasy world as Germany also expanded by annexing other countries like Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium etc (“German Wartime Expansion”). In geographical positions, even neighboring political relationships are similar: “[T]he Nazi nation had Russia [as enemy] while Amestris had

Drachma. And they allied with Aerugo similar to how Nazi Germany allied themselves with Fascist Italy by the Berlin-Rome Pact” (“Amestris”).

Amestris is a very militarized nation under King Bradley, the Führer president’s rule. This strikes the second note of resemblance with the Nazi regime, or the Third Reich. Not only was Germany a militarized state under the regime of Adolf Hitler, Hitler himself was called the Führer, which means ‘Leader’ and was used “to define his role of absolute authority in Germany’s Third Reich” (“Führer - NAZI TITLE”). Both Bradley and Hitler considered themselves superior to most. Bradley being the homunculus Wrath, a superior being while Hitler suffered from many psychological disorders and, as Langer argues, “had a strong messiah complex, exhibited significant masochistic tendencies and... displayed schizophrenic symptoms...” (qtd. in Hyland et al 59). However, Hitler was not born with such disorders as Bradley was not born as a homunculus. They were turned into monsters from their early life by society.

King Bradley is the first human transformed into a homunculus using a Philosopher’s Stone by Father and his underlings. Bradley was an orphan, left to die by society when he was taken in, along with many other orphans, by Father’s followers. As Bradley tells Mustang,

We were called “Führer President Candidates.” And we were all gathered into one place and educated in many different fields. How to be a good emperor, anthropology... We were trained in military combat, marksmanship, and swordsmanship until we were highly capable. “I will lead this country someday.” With that thought in mind, I endured the toughest of trainings. (“Reunion”)

After he proved his worth as a human, a Philosopher’s Stone was fused into his body by his teachers or trainers, or rather his ‘creators’ and King Bradley was born. It is clear that Bradley’s



childhood shaped his present, and the responsibility lies on his Father, and the monstrous side of humanity.

Adolf Hitler did not go through such fantastic transformation, yet his childhood traumas are highly responsible for his neurosis. His 'evil' was not a characteristic evil, but a result of various psychological disorders. According to Fromm,

[T]hese psychological tendencies developed in early infancy due to an unresolved stage of psychosexual development, however they were greatly exaggerated due to traumatic life events such as his relationship with his father. Of course, Fromm argued that Hitler would have possessed no conscious awareness of his personality deficiencies and therefore blamed many authority figures such as teachers, his father, and society for his early life failings... Fromm's thinking was that Hitler transferred his incestuous Oedipal desires and feeling for his mother onto the homeland (qtd. in Hyland et al 59).

As it is very clear from Fromm's argument, Hitler becoming a tyrant was simply not a matter of choice either. Both Hitler and Bradley are products of the society. In fact, Arakawa makes it so that the two Führers even look similar:



(Fig 1: Image of King Bradley: Arakawa, Hiromu. "The First Day." *FMAB*.)



(Fig 2: Image of Adolf Hitler: "Adolf Hitler" *Assasin's Creed Wiki*.)

The Ishvalan extermination strongly suggests the influence of Jewish extermination on Arakawa's art and writing. In "The Ishvalan War of Extermination," the entire situation of the Ishvalan war is explained through Riza Hawkeye's conversation with Edward. The systematic annihilation of the Ishvalan race began with an order issued by the government, "Executive Order No. 3066". All Ishvalans were ordered to kill, including women, children, the old and the sick. State alchemists, the 'human weapons' were deployed to effectively wipe out the race. Alchemy was used to round up and murder all of them without fail. In one particular moment, it is shown that Major Armstrong created a huge wall to block the path of fleeing Ishvalans while the infantrymen shot them one by one on the other side of the wall. Not only were the Ishvalans killed on their own land, "... all the soldiers of Ishvalan descent were purged before the extermination" (Edward, "Ice Queen") and some like Major Miles, who had Ishvalan blood only from one of his grandfathers, were saved due to "narrowly missing the requirements of the purge statute" (Miles, "Ice Queen"). Even when, at the brink of the completion of the extermination, the Ishvalan elders wanted to surrender, the Führer president refused to accept it and continued with the massacre. It continued for years until there were no social habitats of Ishvalans left, only handfuls of refugees scattered around the country, living in slums. The racism in the Amestrians, or at the very least in the Amestrian army as a unit, was strong, regardless of individual opinions. Regardless of the fact that Arakawa labels this incident as part of the homunculi's plan of creating a blood mark on that area to create a giant transmutation circle, one cannot deny that the accounts of war are too real to be rejected as part of a fantasy anime.

These events are too similar to the Jewish extermination in Germany and Netherlands. The Nazi army handpicked all the Jews and ruthlessly murdered them. In one document, "The

Jews under the Nazi Regime” by J. F. Krop, accounts of such atrocities committed in Netherlands are described chronologically from 1940 to post 1943. Just as the Ishvalans were purged before the extermination, the Jews were purged before their annihilation. As Krop mentions, “Toward the end of 1940 all Jewish civil servants, state or local, were discharged and an order was issued that all persons of Jewish blood be reported” (28). Throughout the first half of 1942, the Nazis prepared their ground to identify the Jews, as everything from place, time to services and products, even relationships, was specified for them. They were even made to bear the Jewish Star on their cloths to be identified instantaneously. Then began the extermination. The Jews were deported to concentration camps, tortured in the name of medical examination where many died during these ‘examinations’. “Those who survived this first “selection” were sent to gas chambers at Oswiecim, Poland” (Krop 30). This torture and murder continued while the scale of torture rising continually and rapidly, and after 1943, there was no official Jewish community left in the Netherlands. Jews were forced to live underground, as the Ishvalans were left to live in slums. As Arakawa mentions in one of her interviews, she “interviewed veterans who had been at the front during World War II” (qtd. in “Hiromu Arakawa”), it is crystal clear that her accounts of the Ishvalan war are heavily influenced by the Nazi regime and the Holocaust.

Human experimentation is one of the most important key features of the *FMAB* plot as it was of the Holocaust. Both during the homonculi’s reign in *FMAB* and during the Nazi regime in the real world, the experiments have been conducted to strengthen the military’s power position. In *FMAB*, alchemic research is conducted on the prisoners who have been sentenced to death to create Chimeras, to affix souls into objects, and of course, to create Philosopher’s Stones, especially using the souls of the prisoners captured in the Ishvalan War. This war was caused by

the homunculi specifically to collect 'ingredients' for the Philosopher's Stone (Dr. Marcoh, "The Ishvalan War of Extermination"), and to create a blood mark for the nation-wide transmutation circle ("The Shape of This Country"). In fact, not only the Ishvalan war, but all the other wars that took place were to create numerous Philosopher's Stones and blood marks around the nation. The purpose of creating these stones is to activate an immortal army of humanoids, as one of the high ranking military officials tells Major General Armstrong, they will obtain the souls to be inserted in them "from the people of the countries we've crushed, and have yet to crush. The battlefield will become the hunting ground where we can obtain thousands of souls" ("Revving at Full Throttle"). As seen in "The Fifth Laboratory," death row prisoners like Barry the Chopper and Slicer the Homicide have been robbed of their body, and got their souls affixed into suits of armor to become invincible guard dogs for the homunculi and the army. Moreover, even their human bodies have been turned into mindless beasts, as we see Barry's body in "Cold Flame," so that they can serve the homunculi without question. Finally, as Greed tells in "Beasts of Dublith," and as we see in "Conflict at Baschool," the army continuously keeps creating Chimeras out of prisoners for the army's use. All these humans are denied their existence as human beings. For the homunculi, the purpose of such atrocities is to obtain God. For the humans in power, however, all the human experimentations are done for a single purpose for – ensuring grasp on power of those who consider themselves superior to the others, the 'chosen ones'.

The Third Reich had the same aim, making the military stronger and Hitler's reign last longer beyond anyone's expectations. Hitler tried to establish the German ideal as a religion and, as Rudolf Binding wrote, "I think it might be put in one word – a religion of military strength" (qtd. in Battersby 12). Innumerable experiments were conducted upon the "inferior races" –

Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses and people who were chronically and physically ill. During the holocaust, "some 70 medical research projects were carried out in Nazi camps. About 200 doctors were posted at the camps; their job was to conduct Selektionen and participate in these medical experiments, which were initiated by German and Austrian universities and research institutes" ("Medical Experiments" 1). The doctor decided the fate of the patient by producing a diagnosis of "useful life" or "useless life" (Kroda 33), thus denying the human existence of the victims. As Tabitha Gomes mentions in "Nazi Experiments," "Every [Nazi] experiment fell into one of three categories: military research, pharmaceutical, or racially motivated experiments" (13). The first category dealt with researching the human survival under extreme conditions. This category was crucial to aid the military forces in the battlefield. The prisoners were subjected to the common difficulties of extreme situations that the soldiers faced, and then their bodies, mostly dead due to the experiment or killed for autopsy, were examined to find out the solutions. Andrew Korda describes that the criteria covered under this category are haemorrhage, high altitude or low pressure, hypothermia, drinking seawater. The second category, pharmaceutical, dealt with the various illness and diseases that were considered direct threat to the German soldiers and citizens, and this one covered small pox, tuberculosis, typhus, typhoid fever, yellow fever, malaria, hepatitis, mustard and phosgene gas attacks, bone-grafts, sulfanilamide drug administration (Gomes 13). Similar to the military research, pharmaceutical research meant more inhuman torture for the victims as they were deliberately inflicted with the diseases and then every possible 'cure' was tried on them to find out the efficiency of the method.

The first two categories of medical experiments may be judged with mixed emotions as the goals were betterment of humans but the methods lacked even the slightest form of humanity. However, the third category, the racially motivated experiments, was the cruelest and the most

heinous one. This one constituted of experiments with two types of agenda – a) destruction of the ‘parasitic race’ (Jews) and b) creation of the ‘master race’ (Aryans). The first agenda is as straight forward as it seems – annihilating the Jewish people, along with other minority groups – the root cause of the beginning of the Third Reich. Experiments were conducted to make it effective and long lasting: “Those experiments seeking to advance the destruction of the Jews included mass sterilization, meant as an alternative to immediate extermination” (“Medical Experiments” 2). However, the sufferings of such victims were less inhumane, though no less regretted than those of the victims of the second type of research. The path to the second goal was vaguer and thus was open to much more insanity and cruelty. Hitler’s idea of the perfect “Aryan” features were blue eyes, blonde hair, and tall and healthy body, and the Nazis desired to control these traits and expand them at will to populate the world of the ‘master race’ as quickly as possible. Primary focus was given on experiments on twins “to derive the secret of multiple births at one time, in order to expand the German population” (Carson 5). Dr. Mengele, known as the “Angel of Death,” was the most infamous scientist in this area. Under his reign, the twins were experimented on while living, and then had chloroform injected in to the heart. “Mengele was known to have injected chemicals into the twins’ eyes in attempts to change their eye color, to stitch twins together, and remove organs and limbs without the usage of an anesthetic, on top of other horrific deeds” (Carson 5).

Arakawa definitely focused on the genetic experiments of the Nazi regime through the crazy experiments conducted by Father’s stooges. Creation of Bradley nicely portrays the experiments of expanding the superior race, the homunculi, out of the inferior humans. Even the obsession with color of eyes and hair as a defining feature of a race receives much significance in *FAMB*. She makes blue eyes and blonde hair common features of the majority of the

Amestrians. Moreover, she expands this theme in her art by attributing specific eye and hair color to other races as well. In *FMAB*, the Ishvalans possess red eye and white hair while the Xerxesians had golden eyes and golden hair.



(Fig 3: Image of Amestrians with blue eyes and blonde hair: Arakawa, Hiromu. “Ishvalan War of Extermination.” *FMAB*.)



(Fig 4: Image of Ishvalans with red eyes and white hair: Arakawa, Hiromu. “Ishvalan War of Extermination.” *FMAB*.)



(Fig 3: Image of Xerxesians with golden eyes and hair: Arakawa, Hiromu. “Homunculus (The Dwarf in the Flask).” *FMAB*.)



These pictures serve to draw proof of the physical attributes of different races that Arakawa put in her drawing. What is important to notice is that she relates the “Aryan” (Nordic) features specifically to the Amestrians. Even though Amestris is a country consisting of many different populations merged from the annexations, the “Nordic” group seems to be exclusive of Amestris (“Amestris”).

With such depictions what *FMAB* achieves is the favor of both the East and the West. According to Nye,

Effective public diplomacy is a two-way street that involves listening as well as talking. We need to understand better what is going on in the minds of others and what values we share... By definition, soft power means getting others want the same outcomes you want, and that requires an understanding of how they are hearing your messages and adapting them accordingly. It is crucial to understand the target audience. (103)

Therefore, it is important to understand how smoothly *FMAB* accommodates this attribute. The cruelties of the Nazi regime against the Amestrian civilians along with the wartime victims that are shown in the anime gain the audience’s sympathy for the victims universally. It creates a favorable mindset of the Americans and Europeans for Japan, despite being a member of the Axis party. It shows that Japan accepts such actions of the Axis party to be truly wrong, as similar atrocities were committed in Japan in the East. Moreover, by showing that the evil is defeated by the combined force of the East and the West (Xing, Amestris and Ishval), it invites collaboration among the world powers, suggesting that it is the best solution to defeat the evils present in the real world.

Moreover, this anime spreads quite straight forward political views about a country's government. It condemns a militaristic approach which was the core element of both Nazi-ruled Europe and Japan during WWII, and supports democracy and monarchy. In "The Ishvalan War of Extermination," Hawkeye tells Edward, "Someone would need to change [the militaristic element of Amestris] and turn this country into a democracy. For this country to be reborn, all the faults that existed from the militaristic regime will have to be brushed away," which is the ultimate goal of Colonel Roy Mustang by becoming the next Führer. As it is shown in the final episode "Journey's End" that Colonel Mustang succeeds in becoming the Führer, it is open for the audience to assume that his goal will be achieved as well, making it a victory for democracy, which is the most widely accepted government system in the world, especially in the West. In addition to that, as the Japanese Government is a unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy, Arakawa also respects monarchy by showing it the government system of Xing, where Lin Yao changes Xing's monarchy into an all-inclusive one when he becomes the Emperor of Xing: "I'll accept the Chan clan along with all of the other clans" ("Journey's End"). As a part of pop-culture, this anime has more impact on the mass than formal diplomatic events, which reach only a few.

As the above discussion makes it clear to understand, *FMAB* works like a two-edged sword, that pierces through the heart of the audience of all kinds. It not only attracts many by subtly replacing the Western philosophical values with the Eastern ones, it even appeals the West itself through appeasing their political beliefs. Thus, by combining both Western and Eastern elements, *FMAB* serves as a highly effective tool of soft power.

## Conclusion

The present world of information and technology is becoming more opaque by the day as it is becoming borderless. Because of internet, there is an overflow of information from all sides, which produces the “paradox of plenty” (Nye 99). It means, when there is an explosion of information, attention becomes the scarce resource, as people become confused about what to focus on. Amidst this confusion those who can grab the attention of the mass, win the game. This is the way to successful use of soft power. The easiest way for a country to attract the people is, of course, as being discussed throughout the thesis, through its cultural industry, and when the cultural industry is able to convince people not only to continue to enjoy it as a form of entertainment, but to convert them into supporters of that country’s values and goals, that is when the soft power is truly exercised. This thesis has given a glimpse into the true application of soft power in the transnational showground. By analyzing one anime highly popular around the globe, *FMAB*, from various perspectives, it has shown that soft power works on multiple layers in a text, even when it is a non-traditional form of text, and how Japan is convincing the world, East and West alike, to support its social, cultural and political values.

In the two chapters of the thesis, two broad perspectives have been used to analyze *FMAB* – philosophical, and political. Under these two views, various related themes that work in a more micro level have been discussed. “Soft Power of Sins: *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*” debated on the point that *FMAB* raises question about the Western philosophy in the minds of the audience. It shows that the philosophical ideas of Western religions that are most commonly followed in the world, are full of loopholes. The idea of a transcendental God that does not belong to this world, the concept of mortal sins that decide the fate of people in their afterlife, the notion of ultimate truth and knowledge – all these ideas alienate people from religion and faith,

those believing in these ideas are conditioned to follow without question, as there are no answers that can be found. However, the Eastern religions that develop the ideas of God, sins, truth and knowledge from observing the worldly life, and finding them in the surroundings – can make a person feel in touch with them, and thus quench their philosophical thirst. The concept that Eastern philosophy is more relatable and sustaining than Western philosophy immediately and successfully attracts the international audience. Through rebutting the Western arguments one by one in the anime, *FMAB* effectively convinces them into developing an interest in the Eastern, that is, the Asian religions and philosophy. It is like first creating a hole in a solid slab of earth, and then pouring liquid in it, which will gradually seep through the slab, soften it and eventually make vulnerable to the liquid. Thus the first sheet of soft power is spread.

“*FMAB* and Politics: Soft power in the Real World,” as the name suggests, discussed the political and historical events, their relevance to the present world, and conclusions drawn in the anime. It argues that *FMAB* is actually a fantastic document of the WWII. It tries to portray one of the biggest historical events from the Western view, agreeing with the world that it is a dark mark on the history of the world, and such atrocities along with the Nazi regime needs to be condemned, and indirectly tries to redeem the deeds of Japan, as Japan was part of that horrible crime. Moreover, as it has apparent moral authority, it gives direct political opinions and suggestions that are convincing for the world populations, who have ever enjoyed this anime, even as a mere form of entertainment. Thus, *FMAB* covers its audience in a second layer of soft power.

This thesis has used *FMAB* to portray how Japan is cleverly convincing the world by adopting the western cultural elements to attract the initial attention of the international audience, and then leading them towards the exclusive culture of Japan. The invitation of collaboration

sent along with those only makes everything better. It is important to understand the power play that works in this anime, because it is not the only means of such power. *FMAB* is one of the innumerable anime that are aired every year, and anime is certainly not the only form of Japanese popular culture. Before WWII, when the West – America and Britain, forced Japan to open its gates for trade, “[o]ne group of samurai advocated cooperation with the West—open the country to learn how to make Western weapons in order to defend Japan from the West” (Smethrust 3). Thus the Meiji reformation took place and changed the structure of Japan, making it one of the most powerful countries at that time. Today, in a world of public diplomacy, Japan’s core is still the same – learn from the West, and defeat them in their own game. Only the methods of achieving this goal have changed, befitting the need of the time.

The proof of Japan succeeding in convincing an international audience through anime lies in the Anime Conventions, held in various countries around the world. These gatherings are held under many names – Expos, Conventions, Festivals etc. with one surface goal of creating a platform for the anime lovers to gather together. However, the original goal is to actually probe the interest of the audience further to come out of the intangible world of the anime, and step into the tangible world of food, fashion, merchandise and cosplay. This is where solid proof of the popularity and success of anime can be grasped. In 2010, the New York Anime Festival took place from 8 to 10 October, which received 18,000 visitors. In 2011, the Japan Expo was held in Paris from June 30 to July 3, which received a total of 200,000 visitors in total (“CJS”, January 2012). Japan Expo that is organized by French private organizations every year received 230,000 visitors in 2013. In Los Angeles in the same year, where a large event of Japanese anime and manga is hosted by private organizations every year since 1992, the gross number of visitors reached 160, 000, making it a new record (“CJS”, July 2014). This shows the magnificence of

the growing industry of anime and related businesses in the international market. Moreover, as it is seen in *FMAB*, all anime focus on instilling Japanese culture in its audience. Therefore, these data suggest the potential number of people being convinced to sympathize with Japanese values. Thus, the enormity of effects of soft power and the importance of creative industry being a tool to exercise it can be understood.

This paper opens up the field of research to be conducted on various individual anime and manga to excavate the extent of soft power employed through them. There are many genres of anime and manga, ranging from shonen (focused to appeal the boys), shoujo (focused to appeal the girls), romance, comedy, slice of life to action, thriller and science-fictions, the level of content differing in a wide scale to suit the taste of all ages. Such wide range of content and presentation makes the scope of research on their application of soft power and public diplomacy is also limitless. Therefore, this research should be considered as a foundation stone in this field, and should be advanced further by future researchers in the field of cultural studies.

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