

# About Fidelity

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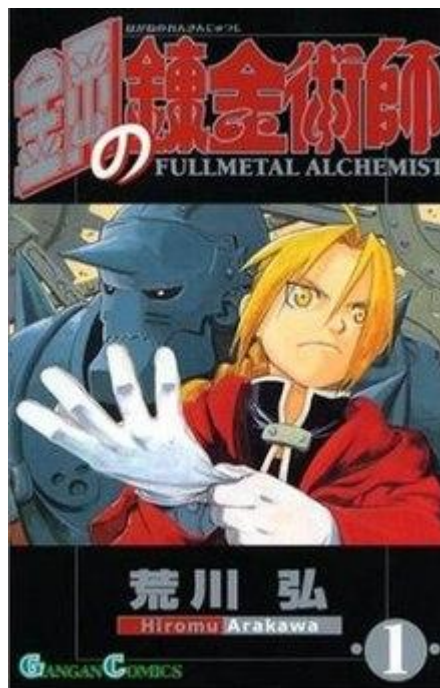
Exploring fidelity discourse through the case of *Full Metal Alchemist*

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## Summary

This paper explores the role of *fidelity* as a part of the *adaptation* theory through a case in the manga and anime industry. The case in question is the manga *Full Metal Alchemist* and its two anime adaptations. After looking at where *adaptation* and *fidelity* currently stand as phenomena in their own right and in relation to one another, this paper delves into the specific case of *Full Metal Alchemist*. Through an analysis of the available information about the creation and stories of the two adaptations, this paper discusses the role of *fidelity* in *adaptation* research. What becomes clear after studying the case of *Full Metal Alchemist* is that fans and critics consider the second and more faithful adaptation to be the better one. After the analysis, this paper seeks to present a possible new perspective on the topic of *fidelity* in *adaptation* but at the same time acknowledges that future research will be needed.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Adaptations and the theory behind them are a topic that has produced a large body of research covering nearly all forms of *adaptation*.<sup>1</sup> An example of a form of *adaptation* that is being researched is “narrative adaptation,” which Jackl describes as an author’s choice regarding which version of a story they are going to tell a particular audience (“Rules of Telling: Exploring narrative adaptation”, 263). However, there are some areas that have remained relatively undiscussed. For instance the adaptation of “the primal wildness of the Viking era and Northern European Bronze Age” by the experimental folk-metal group Heilung (Reed). They have given a new form to the history contained in the ancient swords and bones of their North European forefathers. In doing so they have invented a new form of adaptation that is different from the usual book to movie adaptations that are commonly covered by adaptation theorists.

This paper looks into at a more traditional form of adaptation: the manga and anime industry. Especially the way these manga and anime adaptations deal with *fidelity* is of interest. Through the study of fidelity in anime and manga this thesis intends to provide new insight into the question of whether or not *fidelity* and *adaptation* can co-exist and what the possible effect of fidelity-based adaptation versus adaptations without fidelity could be.

In exploring the possibilities, this paper hopes to bring into focus a new perspective from which the question of *fidelity* and *adaptation* combined might be approached in future research. Chapter 2 will cover the theoretical underpinnings of (i) *adaptation*, (ii) *fidelity*, (iii)

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<sup>1</sup> Whenever the concepts of *adaptation*, *fidelity* or *fidelity in adaptation* are used they will be italicised but whenever one of these words is used in a different context they will not be. This way this paper hopes to provide a visual aid in order to ease the reading of the text. Example: someone who studies book to movie adaptations is an *adaptation* theorist.

and *fidelity in adaptation*. This chapter will provide an overview of where fidelity discourse in adaptation theory currently is and point out places where the current views can be challenged. Chapter 3 will give a brief overview of what anime and manga are and what makes them so distinct. In doing so the foundations will be laid from which a more specific case in the manga and anime industry can be explored. Chapter 4 will discuss the specific case via which this paper expects to find some new insight. The case in question is the manga *Full Metal Alchemist* (2001-2010) and its anime adaptations. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and discusses the conclusions that may be drawn from these findings. An appendix will also be included in this paper. This shall contain examples of the characteristics discussed in chapter 3.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Background

In this chapter three of the theoretical concepts behind this paper will be explained. The first concept is that of *adaptation* and the second one is *fidelity*. The third concept is a combination of the first two: *fidelity in adaptation*.

### The Concept of *Adaptation*

“To adapt,” as the *Oxford Dictionary* formulates it, “is to make something suitable for a new use or purpose, it is to modify” (“Adapt”). This dictionary entry provides a starting point from which my own concept of *adaptation* can be explained.

The history of *adaptation* in the sense of creating a new form for existing media is explored by Hutcheon and O’Flynn (*A Theory of Adaptation*, 2). They state that all art comes from other art and that all stories give birth to new stories (2). According to them, adaptation theorists are in the habit of dismissing adaptations that are “perceived as ‘lowering’” the story (3). They note how adaptation theorists tend to accept adaptations of Shakespeare into other high art forms, whereas adaptations of Shakespeare which do not do so are dismissed (3). An example of an adaptation that Hutcheon and O’Flynn perceive as being dismissed for this reason is Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* (3). However, the notion of higher and lower art forms should not play a role in the appreciation of adaptations. Because, according to Hutcheon and O’Flynn the Victorians had a habit of adapting anything and everything into any form imaginable (xiii). Like the Victorians, I am of the opinion that *adaptation* is not a concept that should be limited to only a certain number of arts.

One of the many forms of adaptation relevant to the argument of this paper is “narrative adaptation”. “Narrative adaptation” is defined by Jackl as the author’s choice regarding which version of a story they are going to tell to a particular audience (“Rules of

Telling: Exploring narrative adaptation”, 263). This means that narrative adaptation studies which version of a story is being told. Every story can be told through a variety of different genres or even mediums and narrative adaptation studies which version of the story the author decided to tell. According to Jackl, this choice involves six rules of narration, which she explains in the following manner:

If an emotionally close relationship exists with the listener(s), then a more detailed story is told; [...] If it is believed that the listener(s) will not wrongfully judge the storyteller, then a more detailed story is told; [...] If the listener(s) display interest in the story, then a more detailed story is told; [...] If the physical setting is not appropriate, then the story is condensed; [...] If the conversational context is not appropriate, then the story is condensed; and [...] If a meaningful purpose will be fulfilled by telling the story, then a more detailed story is told. (263)

However, Jackl notes that authors do not always have these rules at the forefront of their mind (268). This is an example of *adaptation* showing that it is not a concept that can be clearly defined and perhaps it should remain that way, lest it limits all future adaptations.

### **The Concept of *Fidelity***

To show *fidelity* to something else means to show faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, through continued loyalty and support (“Fidelity”). “Fidelity” also has a second meaning: it can mean the degree of exactness with which something is reproduced or copied (“Fidelity”). Both of these meanings are applicable to my concept of *fidelity*.



Hermansson defines *fidelity* as: “the particular book-to-film comparative approach, usually in that order and often in case study format, whose main tendency is to evaluate the adaptation’s faithfulness to the original” (147). Hermansson does not propose *fidelity* as the only way of looking at adaptations (157). However, she does propose that the exclusion of *fidelity* in analysing adaptations might actually lead to an impoverishment of *adaptation* (157). An example of this being adaptations aimed at children, which cannot exist without *fidelity* according to Hermansson (157). She argues that *fidelity* is necessary in this area because the target audience relies on the context of the adapted work in order to explain the adaptation (157). The fact that Hermansson is of the opinion that a certain field of *adaptation* requires *fidelity* might suggest that other fields could also benefit from *fidelity*.

### **The Concept of *Fidelity in Adaptation***

When an *adaptation* is made, fans, critics and adaptation theorists will compare it to its source and judge it accordingly. However, this judgment is criticised by Stam and Raengo, who label this kind of adaptation criticism as “profoundly moralistic, rich in terms that imply that the cinema has somehow done a disservice to literature” (qtd. in Connor, par. 1). They are of the opinion that these criticisms only focus on what has been “lost” in the adaptation process (qtd. in Connor, par. 1). This is but one of many examples that Connor gives of adaptation theorists attacking *fidelity* in some way, shape or form (pars. 1-5). However, Connor also notes that despite these constant attacks, fidelity discourse continues to persist (par. 5). Connor uses the term “fidelity reflex” in his paper, which he does not use to refer to the persistence of the discourse (par. 5). Instead he uses this term to refer to the ever-present call for it to end (par. 5). This leads Connor to name the acts that adaptation theory must perform: it must account for the continued existence of fidelity discourse, and it must account for its blind spot “what

has the campaign against fidelity failed to get at? And given this consistent failure to achieve its goals, why do critics persist in calling for an end to fidelity?" (par. 5).

Hermansson argues against the exclusion of *fidelity* because she is of the opinion that this would lead to an impoverishment of *adaptation* (157). She strengthens the credibility of her argument by arguing that certain fields of *adaptation* need *fidelity* (157). Meanwhile, Connor points out that despite constant attempts to do just that which Hermansson argues against, *fidelity* continues to persist (par. 5). This suggests that *fidelity* might be inseparable from *adaptation*.

## Chapter 3: The History and Characteristics of Manga and Anime

### What is Manga?

Manga is the name given to the type of comic books that has its origins in Japan. Kordic, Pereira and Martinique provide a brief history of manga, which they say was first created in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The way that these drawings made their characters appear to be running was later adapted by many manga-ka. During the Edo Period<sup>2</sup> (1603-1867) a book of drawings called *Toba Ehon* first embedded the concept of manga, but the term manga was not yet used. In 1978 Santō Kyōden's *Shiji no Yukikai* was the first book to gain the name: manga.

<b>12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries</b>	<b>Edo Period (1603-1867)</b>	<b>1978</b>
The very first examples of what later would be called manga are found	<i>Toba Ehon</i> was the first book to embed the concept of manga (manga are comic books)	The name manga is used for the first time.

The name given to authors of manga is manga-ka or mangaka; it is a combination of the words 'manga' and 'artist'. The reason that 'artist' is used instead of 'author' is that manga are comics and the author is therefore also the illustrator, an artist.

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<sup>2</sup> Also known as the Tokugawa period, it is a historical period much like the dark ages or the renaissance.

## What is Anime?

Anime is the name given to the type of cartoon that has its origins in Japan; it is usually based on a manga. Anime first came into being with the rise of the film industry at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Yegulalp). However, it did not become popular until the Sixties when it switched to the television (Yegulalp). In 1963 the very first anime was exported to the United States: *Tetsuwan Atomu* or *Astro Boy* (Yegulalp). Western audiences did not yet realise that this anime had been redubbed in English and censored according to the network's standards (Yegulalp). However, nowadays such edits are less common and access to the uncensored versions of anime has become more readily available (Yegulalp).

## The Problem with Names

The division between anime and manga is one that is used in order to create a visual difference between the two media. Anime is the term used for the cartoons and manga is the term used for the comics. However, the Japanese word 'manga' can refer to both comics and animation. This is because the word is made up of two kanji (kanji are one of the three different script markings used in Japanese writing): 'man' which means whimsical or impromptu, and 'ga' which means pictures. However, the two separate terms will be used because this is in line with what the western audience tends to use.



Figure 1:  
Manga  
(written in  
kanji)

## The Characteristics of Manga and Anime

Manga and anime have certain distinguishing characteristics. Some of these they have in common with the western comics and cartoons, though this might be due to both industries taking inspiration from each other. This paper intends to provide an overview of a number of characteristics that are commonly found in manga and anime. With this overview this paper hopes to provide the reader with a general idea of what these characteristics could mean. For the exploration of these characteristics the *Full Metal Alchemist* manga will be used. All of the characteristics are shown in Appendix A.

The first of these characteristics,<sup>3</sup> showcased in *Full Metal Alchemist*, is one that is found in manga and comics alike. This characteristic is the altering of the shape of the speech bubble in order to indicate emotions like anger and surprise. In the given example, the main character Edward Elric is crying out because his little brother has just disappeared.

The second characteristic<sup>4</sup> is the reduction of detail used in order to indicate emotion or a special circumstance. In the given example both of these uses are shown. First there is Edward Elric in the second frame:<sup>5</sup> his face has lost most of its features except for two stripes for his eyes. This way of portraying a character is usually used for moments where the character in question is either unimpressed or very tired. Secondly there is Alphonse Elric in the third frame: in this frame Alphonse is using some alchemical power (the manga's version of magic) in order to repair a radio. While using this power Alphonse's face has lost all of its features and gone completely black with the exception of two dots where his eyes are

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix A: Figure 1.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix A: Figure 2.

<sup>5</sup> In manga the reading direction (for the frames) is right to left instead of the western left to right.

supposed to be. The first use of this characteristic is usually reserved for the given situation but this second use is used in both the special circumstances and the indication of emotions. If this second use is used in order to indicate emotion, it is usually reserved for emotions like anger and rage. Abbot and Forceville found another example of this characteristic in the manga *Azumanga Daioh* (92). In their paper they discuss the use of hand loss in relation to loss of emotional control (92). This is another example of manga using this decrease in detail in order to illustrate certain (change in) emotions.

The Third characteristic<sup>6</sup> is the use of a large number of lines in order to indicate the direction and/or speed of a (character's) movement. In the given example, all except the fourth and fifth frames show this characteristic in use:

- In the first frame an outline is used to imitate an explosion.
- In the second frame an outline is used to imitate the explosion from the first frame and a large number of lines are used to show that the explosion has caused a large gust of wind to go towards the character in the frame.
- In the third frame there are a number of smaller lines around the object that is emerging from the ground in order to try and portray the movement of the object, and there are a large number of lines around Edward Elric's hand in order to indicate that some sort of power is being used.
- In the sixth frame a large number of lines are used to portray the chimera's charge towards its opponent.

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix A: Figure 3.

### **The Publishing of Manga and the Broadcasting of Anime**

When discussing manga and anime<sup>7</sup> it is important to note that due to their episodic nature manga gets published in chapters and anime get broadcast in episodes. It is therefore important to note the date that a chapter was first published and an episode was first broadcast. Consequently, this paper will be giving the date of publishing/broadcasting whenever it refers to a specific moment in a manga or anime. An example would be that instead of referring to a specific moment in the *One Punch Man* manga with the final publishing date,<sup>8</sup> the date of the respective chapter being published will be used.

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<sup>7</sup> Manga and anime are two words that do not change when used to indicate the plural. For example: Out of all the manga in existence this one is my favourite; *Fairy Tail* is a manga that has been adapted into an anime; I am currently watching three different anime.

<sup>8</sup> Which in the case of *One Punch Man* is impossible at the time of writing because the manga is still being written.

#### Chapter 4: A Case of Three Tales: *Full Metal Alchemist*

Hirumo Arakawa published the first chapter of *Full Metal Alchemist* on 12 July 2001 and published the final chapter on the eleventh of June 2010. As is often the case with long running manga series, the (first) anime adaptation was released long before the final chapter of the manga was published. Examples of this would be: *Fairy Tail*, *Naruto* and *One Piece*. The first anime adaptation of *Full Metal Alchemist* (called *Full Metal Alchemist*) had its first episode broadcast on the fourth of October 2003 and its last episode appeared on 2 October 2004.

The case of *Full Metal Alchemist* is an exceptional one. As noted, the first adaptation ended in 2004, but this was not the final episode of a *Full Metal Alchemist* adaptation to be released. In 2009 it was announced that a new *Full Metal Alchemist* anime would be released that year (Donovan, “Get to know a Manga Artist: The Unstoppable Hiromu Arakawa” 2014). This new anime (called *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood*) released its first episode on the fifth of April 2009 and ran until the fourth of July 2010 when its final episode aired.

<b>“Full Metal Alchemist” (manga)</b>	<b><i>Full Metal Alchemist</i> (anime)</b>	<b><i>Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood</i> (anime)</b>	<b>Published in/Studio:</b>
12 Jul. 2001 – 11 Sep. 2010			<i>Shounen Gangan</i>
	4 Oct. 2003 – 2 Oct. 2004		Bones
		5 Apr. 2009 – 4 Jul. 2010	Bones



<b>Timeline of publication/broadcasting</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> release</b>	<b>A few days/weeks later</b>	<b>Weeks/months later</b>
The manga is published in Japan (Japanese language)	The manga is published in the western world (English language)	
The anime is broadcast in Japan (Japanese spoken)	Japanese version of the anime with English subtitles is broadcast	The anime is broadcast in the western world (English spoken) <sup>9</sup>

### **On the Topic of Names**

Three different versions of the same story will be discussed in this paper. For the sake of clarity, each version will be given its own name. The first version: *Full Metal Alchemist* in its manga form will be called “Full Metal Alchemist”. This is because the manga was first published in the Japanese magazine *Shounen Gangan* and could therefore be seen as a chapter in the magazine, which would be cited in quotation marks. The second version: *Full Metal Alchemist* in its first anime form will be called *Full Metal Alchemist*, because it is not a part of a whole but stands on its own and is thus cited in italics. The third version of *Full Metal Alchemist* (the second anime adaptation) was called *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood* or in short *Brotherhood*, and will be cited as such.

It should also be noted that the abbreviation FMA will be used when discussing the *Full Metal Alchemist* universe in general. This abbreviation is one of the alternative titles of

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<sup>9</sup> The English spoken version is only created if the anime (or the manga) is popular enough for a western studio to go about creating it.

the manga. In keeping with the alternative titles of the various versions, it should also be noted that manga and anime tend to have a variety of different names. Some of these names are the Japanese versions of the English name, or Japanese and English names combined. These will not be used in this paper.

### **What is Full Metal Alchemist?**

FMA is a story set in a fictional universe with severely outdated technology (medieval age). In this universe there are those who have certain special powers through which they can manipulate and modify matter. These powers are known under the label of ‘alchemy’ and its users are called ‘alchemists’. However, these powers do not come without their own rules and limitations. The most important limitation is that human transmutation is forbidden. To transmute is the verb that FMA uses when alchemy is being used on something, for example: to transmute water into sand, this means that an alchemist uses alchemy to change water into sand. Despite the prohibition on human transmutation, the main characters Edward and Alphonse Elric decide to use it in order to resurrect their dead mother. This fails and ends up costing them: Alphonse loses his entire body and Edward loses his left leg. Edward sacrifices his right arm in order to seal his brother’s soul in a suit of armour. The rest of the manga details the Elric brothers’ quest to find the Philosopher’s Stone (because they hope its power will restore their bodies) during which they uncover several dark secrets.

### **“Full Metal Alchemist” to *Full Metal Alchemist***

In 2003 it was announced that “Full Metal Alchemist” would be made into an anime adaptation (Donovan). However, because “Full Metal Alchemist” had not ended yet, Arakawa decided to leave the anime to have its own story, which is why the ending of *Full Metal Alchemist* is different from the ending of “Full Metal Alchemist” and *Full Metal Alchemist*:

*Brotherhood*. Unfortunately, no additional information was found with regard to why Arakawa left the first anime adaptation. However, a reason might be found in a comparison of the release dates of the first adaptation's episodes and Arakawa's chapters. When the first episode of *Full Metal Alchemist* was broadcast, chapter 21 of the manga's eventual 108 (not counting the various bonus chapters) had just been published by Arakawa. And when the final episode first aired, chapter 33 was the manga's latest development.

The plot of *Full Metal Alchemist* significantly differs from the manga. In *Full Metal Alchemist* the plot largely relies on the existence of gates which allow one to travel between the world of FMA and a version of our world (earth). This version of our world is situated in the First World War and a pro-Nazi group becomes a significant player in the events of the story. In the manga there is no indication that these gates exist except for a brief mention of a gate which was to allow a villain to create a philosopher's stone.

### **“Full Metal Alchemist” and Full Metal Alchemist to Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood**

In the anime industry it is an unwritten rule that a manga gets an anime adaptation only once and this adaptation does not deviate from the manga. A sequel (if the anime has not covered the entirety of the manga) and some spin-offs (extra stories not directly relevant to the plot) are the only known exceptions to this rule. However, there are a few rare examples of manga and their anime adaptations that do not follow this rule. For example: the *Fairy Tail* anime has at times (almost) caught up to its manga counterpart which can be seen in those storylines in the anime that do not exist in the manga, though in the case of *Fairy Tail* they do not directly impact the overarching plot of the series. *Full Metal Alchemist* goes even further, it caught up with the manga and abandoned its source material's plot in order to create its own.

FMA's departure from the unwritten rule went even further with the announcement of a second anime adaptation in 2009 called *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood*. This meant that FMA would be a rare example of a series consisting of one manga and two anime. Furthermore, it was announced that this series would be following Arakawa's plot instead of the new plot that *Full Metal Alchemist* created. However, when comparing the dates of release of the final chapter of the manga and the final episode of the second anime adaptation respectively, this seems unlikely since there was less than a month between them (11 June 2010 – 4 July 2011). However, there is a simple explanation for this: Arakawa shared the details of how she intended the story to end with the creators of *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood*. This allowed them to release the final episode so soon after the final chapter was published.

Though *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood* follows the plot of "Full Metal Alchemist" there are several differences between them. The first is that the part of the manga that had also been covered in *Full Metal Alchemist* is shown at a greater pace, with a few details omitted. There are also changes to some parts of the story.<sup>10</sup> However, these changes were insignificant enough that they did not influence the amount of appreciation that the public gave *Full Metal Alchemist Brotherhood*. This is demonstrated by the respective ratings of "Full Metal Alchemist", *Full Metal Alchemist* and *Full Metal Alchemist* on the fan-made ranking of *MyAnimeList*<sup>11</sup>: the manga rates 3rd with a score of 9.13; the 2003 anime rates

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<sup>10</sup> For a full list of the changes, go to the fan-made wiki page of FMA:

[https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Fullmetal\\_Alchemist:\\_Brotherhood](https://fma.fandom.com/wiki/Fullmetal_Alchemist:_Brotherhood)

<sup>11</sup> *MyAnimeList* is the world's largest anime and manga database, and it is entirely fan made.

It also contains reviews (by people who have watched the respective anime or read the

275th with a score of 8.27; and the 2009 anime rates 1st with a score of 9.24. Perhaps the most negative criticism of the first anime adaptation is found in the reviews on *MyAnimeList*. In these reviews there are two very harsh comments: firstly, that most of the faults in *Full Metal Alchemist*'s story come from the fact that it originally followed Arakawa's story but chose to deviate from its source material; secondly, that *Full Metal Alchemist* looks like a badly written fanfiction of "Full Metal Alchemist".

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respective manga), rankings (based on the mark that readers/viewers have given a manga/anime) and countless amounts of other useful bits of information.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion & Discussion

To adapt something is to modify something, which this is the meaning the Victorians embraced (Hutcheon and O’Flynn, xiii). They were in the habit of adapting anything into any form imaginable (xiii). My concept of *adaptation* agrees with the Victorians on this subject: *adaptation* should not be limited to only a certain number of arts. This concept can be applied to FMA on multiple levels. Firstly, there is the first anime adaptation which is based on the manga but ultimately creates a significantly different story. Secondly, there is the second anime adaptation which breaks with the unwritten rule of a manga being adapted into an anime only once. Thirdly, there is the fact that the second anime adaptation also adapts the first anime adaptation into its own version of the story.

When an adaptation is made, it will be compared to its source and often will be judged accordingly. Thus the first anime adaptation of “Full Metal Alchemist” was judged for its flawed fidelity. This kind of judgment is criticised by Stam and Raengo who call this type of adaptation criticism “profoundly moralistic, rich in terms that imply that the cinema has somehow done a disservice to literature” (qtd. in Connor, par. 1). This particular adaptation criticism that Stam and Raengo talk about is based on the concept of *fidelity*. Hermansson defines *fidelity* as “the particular book-to-film comparative approach, usually in that order and often in case study format, whose main tendency is to evaluate the adaptation’s faithfulness to the original” (147). Despite the constant attacks, Connor notes that fidelity discourse in adaptation continues to persist (par. 5). An example of this persistence is that despite the relative success of the first anime adaptation, “Full Metal Alchemist” got a second adaptation which was very explicitly faithful to its source material.

Hermansson has pointed out, that the *fidelity* lens is not the only lens through which adaptations can be observed (157). The reason for this is because fidelity criticism tends to

lament those parts that are omitted in adaptations (qtd. in Connor, par. 1). However, there is more to an adaptation than just that which may be lost. This does not mean that *fidelity* should be excluded as a criterion in adaptation criticism. Because I agree with Hermansson that such an exclusion could actually lead to an impoverishment of adaptation (157).

This paper has looked at *adaptation* and *fidelity* in the manga and anime industries and concludes that from a fidelity discourse point of view the manga “Full Metal Alchemist” is unique. In the manga and anime industry the unwritten rule is that each manga produces one anime (with the exception of spin-offs and sequels). However, “Full Metal Alchemist” was adapted into an anime not once but twice. The first adaptation called *Full Metal Alchemist* was created during the writing of “Full Metal Alchemist” and ended when the manga had yet to reach its halfway point. The second adaptation called *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood* was created during the writing of “Full Metal Alchemist” and ended about a month after the final chapter of the manga had been published.

The difference between the two anime is found in two places: The writer of the manga (Hiromu Arakawa) let the first anime create its own scripts; *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood* was created with the express purpose of following the story as Arakawa wrote it (Donovan). Arakawa even helped the second anime adaptation hold true to its purpose by sharing the way she intended the story to end with the creators of the anime. This explains why the final episode could be released so soon after the final chapter had been (Donovan). This led to *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood* being rated 1<sup>st</sup> on *MyAnimeList* whilst its predecessor takes the 275<sup>th</sup> place in the ranking.

This gap in rating between the two anime may be an indication of *fidelity* as a key to success in the *adaptation* field. However, it is not feasible to raise *fidelity* to being the most important part of *adaptation*. There is not enough information to confirm nor deny that the

success of the second adaptation was due to the first adaptation's flawed *fidelity*. Thus FMA does not provide enough of a basis to propose *fidelity* as the most important factor.

The original aim of this thesis was twofold: provide new insight into the possible co-existence of *fidelity* and *adaptation* in *adaptation* theory and practice; and what could be the possible effect of *fidelity* based adaptations versus adaptations that do not (explicitly) show *fidelity*. In the case of FMA, this co-existence appears to be possible and the effect of the *fidelity* based adaptation versus the adaptation with flawed fidelity is that the *fidelity* based adaptation gets much more appreciation from the shared target audience. However, this paper is only one case study and therefore cannot come to a conclusion that is generally valid. Therefore, further research is recommended.



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## Appendix A



Figure 1: *Full Metal Alchemist* "Vol. 1: Chapter 1: The Two Alchemists" page 6



Figure 2: *Full Metal Alchemist* "Vol. 1: Chapter 1: The Two Alchemists" page 14



Figure 3: *Full Metal Alchemist* "Vol. 1: Chapter 1: The Two Alchemists" page 51