

The 7th of October Occurrence, Palestine in Fullmetal Alchemist Anime Portrayal

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze how the event of 7 October 2023 is depicted in the anime Fullmetal Alchemist 2003 and Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood. The theory used in this research was mainly by Julia Kristeva about intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The data used in this paper were taken from an anime called Fullmetal Alchemist 2003 and Brotherhood. This anime was chosen because of its similarity with the event happening in Palestine on 7 October 2023. Its fame has only been rewritten a few months before 2024 after the coming of a new anime entitled Sousou no Frieren. This high ranking from thousands of different anime implies that this anime is very well known among anime watchers. It can be inferred that Ishvalan is more attached and related to Palestine, as tragedy and agony happened in Ishval. It is an empathy that encourages people to support Palestinians.

Keywords: *Palestine; international conflict; world war; middle eastern crises; America*

INTRODUCTION

Fullmetal Alchemist tells a story about the world of alchemy. It is said that in that world, people can do alchemy to do many things. In order to do it, a sacrifice must be paid. The story started when the two Elric Brothers namely Edward and Alphonse Elric tried to bring their mother back to life. They loved their mother dearly and they had studied so many books to bring her back to life. Instead of bringing their mother back to life, the alchemy apparently needs more sacrifice, and they succeeded to bring the mother back to life but with a very scary appearance because she does not have some limbs as the result of the insufficiency of the sacrifices. In addition, the alchemy also took the whole of Alphonse's body. Fortunately, Edward could save Alphonse's soul and put it into an armour that makes the armour have Alphonse's soul. Furthermore, Edward needed to sacrifice his one hand and one leg in order to put Alphonse's soul into that armour.

The story continues because Edward wants to bring his brother back into his body. In their adventure, they learned about the Philosopher's Stone which can become a catalyst in the alchemy which will make the body of Alphonse's back without needing another sacrifice. In their journey, they met many kinds of people. One of them is a red-eyed man called Ishvalan. They are famous for their strength and their faith in God. They also do not want to do alchemy because they believe only God can create things. However, the people of Ishval had a tragedy where their kinds were all massacred in a war.

It was later found out that the Philosopher's stone was only able to be made with human sacrifices. That is the reason why that peculiar stone can be used as a catalyst because it has

human sacrifices that can be used in the alchemy. The best human that can be used to make the best Philosopher's stone was the Ishvalan because they had huge energy power within.

In the 'Brotherhood' series, Alphonse Elric can at last become a human again after the two brothers defeated The Father who was an Alchemist that had lived for hundreds of years.

Because of this, they can already be reunited as normal human beings though Edward must sacrifice his ability in using alchemy ever again. The case started on the 7th of October 2023. It was said that Hamas was attacking the Israeli commoners by using missiles that had killed many civilians. Because of this, the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) used their rights to fight Hamas back by killing thousands of civilians in pursuit of Hamas headquarters.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this paper, the writer would like to write an analysis of how the event of 7th October 2023 is depicted in an anime entitled Fullmetal Alchemist 2003 (Mizushima, 2003) and Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood (Irie, 2009). There are two kinds of series of this anime. The first one was released in 2003 and the second one was released in 2009. The theory used is mainly by Julia Kristeva (Kristeva, 1980). Her famous theory talks about intertextuality and interdiscursivity. They can be found in literary works such as writings, poems, movies, etc., and in many other man-made products. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity talk about how a work can have many different things in it that are combined into one known discourse for example a movie series.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data used in this paper are taken from an anime called Fullmetal Alchemist 2003 and Brotherhood. This anime was chosen because of its similarity with the event happening in Palestine on the 7th of October 2023. This anime is one of the most famous anime (now ranked the 2nd best anime) according to (MyAnimeList, n.d.). Its fame has only been rewritten a few months before 2024 after the coming of a new anime entitled Sousou no Frieren. With this high ranking from thousands of different anime, it implies that this anime is very well known among anime watchers.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will explain the analysis of how the 7th of October can be depicted in the story. Much textual evidence shows how Ishvalan cannot depict Israel and instead, depicting the genocide in Palestine done by Israel.

Israel of Palestine?

At a glance when watching the anime, the people of Ishval can be seen made to resemble Israeli people. This can be seen from the evidence from the word they used as in 'Our Holy Land' and 'The Chosen People'. This can be seen from Ep. 31 and 32 of Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood. This is also supported by the idea that anime is a work made by the Japanese and Japan has been known to support Israel. It can be concluded that Ishvalan was created by the animator to represent the tragedy of the Holocaust. Moreover, the anime Fullmetal Alchemist has one military force that is led by a corrupt leader who wants the end of Ishvalan and to have the power

of the Philosopher's Stone. This man is called the Fuhrer that can be implied to represent the 'Hitler' that people had known.

Israel in the Holy Quran is depicted as the people who will bring about vileness in the world because they have always become the people who disobey God's commands.

Israel was actually a calling for prophet Yakoub a.s. and the people of Israel were called 'The son of Israel (Yakoub a.s.)'. It should be understood that the sons of Yakoub are including Yusoof a.s.; the most handsome person on earth. They lived in times of the Pharaoh until Yusoof became one of Pharaoh's reliable subordinates where they live peacefully in the times of Yusoof's leadership. After that, there were evil Pharaohs in the following years when Moses was appointed to become one of the next prophets from the sons of Israel's side. Sadly, the people of Moses (the sons of Israel) were always very ungrateful and opportunistic. The verse below is the evidence that they are the people who do vileness and wickedness.

17:4

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لُتُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ۚ

And We warned the Children of Israel in the Scripture, "You will certainly cause corruption in the land twice, and you will become extremely arrogant."

— Dr. Mustafa Khattab, *the Clear Quran* (Surah Al-Isra - 1-111, n.d.)

They became the cursed people because of their ungratefulness. There were already so many blessings given to them, yet they were ever ungrateful. Some of the blessings and their ungratefulness can be seen from the list below (Editor2, 2022).

Blessings:

1. Kings and prophets were appointed from the sons of Israel
2. They were honored above the others
3. They were saved by the Pharaohs
4. They saw themselves how the Pharaoh was drowned in the sea
5. There was a revelation for Moses (their prophet at that time) and he must leave for days, yet they worshiped a calf
6. There were sons of Israel brought back to life
7. They were fed manna and quail from the heaven when there was a very long drought yet they said that eating those food everyday makes them bored
8. There were 12 spring waters for them to drink, yet they were ever ungrateful

Their ungratefulness can be seen from the list below:

1. They claim themselves as the son of Allah
2. The worship scholars, rabbis, monks, and calf
3. They only believe in Allah if they can see Him (they were struck by lightning immediately)
4. They claimed only jews and christian can enter the Paradise
5. They were bored of food from heaven and wanted many different tastes
6. Allah commands them to help Moses a.s. Fighting the infidels in the Sacred Land, yet they would not enter the sacred land.

7. They killed many prophets sent to them including (they claim they killed) Jesus (Isa a.s.)
8. They distorted the words of Allah in Torah and Bible

All these are their sins that can be found in the Qur'an. Only after the holocaust did they suddenly claim Palestine as their sacred land. It is now becoming their occupied land where they can do anything to Palestinians every day since 1948. Even though they had been driven away by Arab countries in their surroundings (Israel - Facts, History & Conflicts, 2023), they could resist because of the help of the US and its allies. Japan as the factory of anime had always been staying but had always supported Israel for instance in their being as a country.

Tragedy

Anime is a series that tells many things. An anime is mostly memorable and good when they are made in a long sequel. It is because there will be many things to tell. The main character will not be the only focus. The other characters also have their time to shine because their stories are also told. Some long anime that are still very loved by many are Naruto, One Piece and even Doraemon or Pokemon. Similar to those anime, Fullmetal Alchemist (2003) and Brotherhood both have quite long stories. Both series have more than 50 episodes. This enables them to have screen times for many things.

A long story will be very boring if they only show one dominant genre. In order to make a long story enjoyable, the animator needs to create many phenomena and plot twists. Fullmetal Alchemist is an anime that mainly has genres like 'action and fantasy'. However, this anime also provides genres like 'tragedy and friendship'. The tragedy is needed and can be more sensed because they can make people feel sad even without actually experiencing it. The feeling of experiencing sadness is called 'catharsis' (Catharsis - Examples and Definition of Catharsis, n.d.). This is one literary device that can be used to trigger empathy so viewers will pity and support the oppressed people.

Catharsis is one good way to insert the idea that Israel must be supported because they were the oppressed in the Holocaust. It should be understood that a literary work such as movies or animes are delicate work that requires a lot of support from many kinds of people. The animation, story, music, sales manager, and many other works behind the success of the literary work is evidence enough to say that the story is intentionally made up. In this term, this anime is intentionally made to give clear representation that Israel needs to be supported.



Figure 1. The Evil Woman Starting the Conflict

Nevertheless, there are many evidence showing that it backfires and instead of showing the story of Israel, the anime itself succeed in telling the continuous tragedy happening in Palestine as a result of Israelis' genocide. The picture below shows the sad story of how peace can never come for Ishvalans from Fullmetal Alchemist 2003 eps. 32.

The picture shows a woman in a scarf being in the Ishvalan line when there was a refugee checking by the military forces. This woman is seen to shoot the military forces that in the end creates a commotion of firings that kills many unarmed civilians. Moreover, she was helped by her friend to shout hate words to trigger people's anger and hate. The picture below shows the scene where the military were attacking back at the civilians, not knowing that the culprit is the woman in the scarf who did not belong to the Ishvalan group.



Figure 2. Lines of Ishvalan and The Military



Figure 3. The Result of the Conflict

Figure 1.2 shows how there are two lines facing each other. These two groups of people are the one having conflicts with each other triggered by the evil woman seen in figure 1.1. The figure 1.1 was the beginning of the conflict. It is visible from the following discourse:

Soldier A : He's shot!

Soldier B : I don't hear any gunshot!

(All soldiers in Panic)

Colonel Mustang : Stop! Don't shoot!

Soldier C : Don't shoot! Idiots! (Stopping the firings)

Ishvalan Chief : Everyone calm down! Who did this to him?

The evil woman : Will this be another massacre?

The evil fat man : There's been enough of that!

Ishvalans : Yes! We can't stay silent any longer! I'm sick of the military's oppression! I won't let my people get killed! (Proceeding to throw rocks at the soldiers.

From the discourse, it is seen that the woman killed someone and creates commotion. In the end the two sides who actually do not intend to do any harm is stuck in a one-sided conflict. Ishvalans could only fight back by throwing rocks like how Palestinians can fight back against Israel. The thing done by the evil woman has become a tradition since a long time ago which is called the strategy of *divide et impera*. This strategy is very effective in making genocide or ethnic cleansing or imperialism easier because they only need to tell lies or create conflict by blaming each other sides for what they have done and the targets can destroy each other. The imperial can just take the loot, the rewards and the remaining easily after both sides are killing each other. The best reward that can be obtained from this is the land.

This strategy has been done many times like how the United Nations would support the massacre done by Israel by targeting Hamas, saying that Hamas must be eradicated no matter if it costs millions of Gazan babies and women. This can be seen in how even israeli soldiers killed their own troops and still blaming Hamas. It can be seen that viewers are debating whether Ishvalan is representing Israel or Palestine from the below picture.

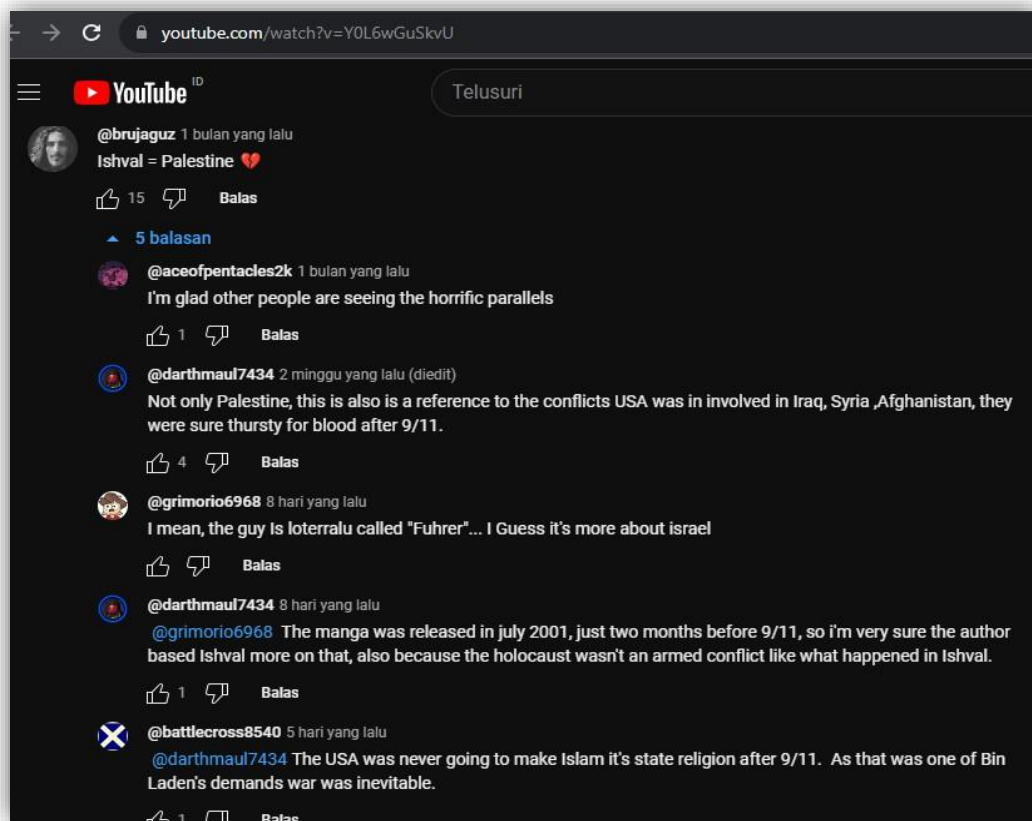


Figure 4. Debates of Ishval as Israel or Palestine

From the picture, people were confused about the representation of Ishvalan people being the representation of Israel or Palestine. The developer clearly intended to make Ishvalan represent the Israeli. However, the way they create the story only makes it obvious that their sufferings are more closely related to Palestinians. It can be seen from how people of Ishval are powerless against the oppressors, which are the alchemists wanting their life for the creation of the Philosopher's Stone. It is very contradictory with the acts of Israelis that leave their country where they live and now occupy another country by doing ethnic cleansing and genocide to that particular people in the country they are occupying.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it can be implied that the Ishvalan is more closely related to Palestine than to Israel. It can be seen from how the tragedy and agony were happening in Ishval. This tragedy is the trigger of empathy that makes people have the courage to support Palestinians as the oppressed and the dominated.

There can be broader and more complete research from even more different texts and perspectives. However, for this brief paper, hopefully, there are sufficient evidence of how Ishvalan can depict the oppression faced by Palestinians since 75 years ago. This paper is also expected to show that just because Ishvalan is depicted as Israel, it does not necessarily mean that it can be true.

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