

Between Mythology And Anime: Greco-Roman And Japanese Mythological Elements In *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*



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Abstract: *Mythology is a powerful cultural component that was able to shape many societies in both ancient and modern times. One of pop-culture products that may host different mythological elements is Anime, or Japanese animation. Though it is Japanese, anime incorporates from both western and Japanese mythologies. This paper intends to examine a well-known anime entitled Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood to extract the various mythological references that construct its conceptual basis and frames its plot and symbols. This research uses of Myth Criticism while aiming at exposing the conceptual basis of the chosen anime and its link with western and Japanese mythology.*

key words: *Japanese Mythology; Western mythology; Anime; Japan; Myth criticism;*

ملخص: الأساطير وسيلة من الوسائل الحضارية المهمة التي ساهمت في تطوير الشعوب و الحضارات على مر العصور. القصص في هذه الأساطير تشكل مصدرا غنيا لالهام المنتوجات الأدبية و الحضارية. الاستعمال المتكرر لهذه القصص الاسطورية حولها من مجرد أساطير الى أمثلة حية. الأنمي، أو افلام الكرتون اليابانية، هي واحدة من تلك المنتوجات الثقافية التي تحتوي على القصص الأسطورية. الأنمي واحد من أهم عناصر الثقافة المعاصرة اليابانية التي يتم استهلاكها بالملايين على الصعيد المحلي و الدولي. رغم أصله الياباني، يحتوي الأنمي على عناصر أسطورية اغريقية ورومانية ويابانية.

هذا البحث يهدف الى التحقق من وجود هاته العناصر في الأنمي الذي يحتوي على عناصر مختلفة من الأساطير الاغريقية و الرومانية واليابانية التي تثرى محتواه الفكري و تشكل رموزه الأدبية مم يجعله منتوجا ثقافيا مريحا و مشهورا داخليا و خارجيا. هذا البحث يهدف الى كشف مصادر الالهام لصانعي الأنمي عن طريق تطبيق نظرية "الأساطير" و الى التحقق اذا كانت القصص الأسطورية واحدة من هذه المصادر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأساطير الرومانية و الاغريقية؛ الأساطير اليابانية؛ الأنمي؛ نظرية الأساطير؛

Introduction:

Western mythology is considered one of the existing components of different cultures around the world. Its references and the different allusions to western mythology can be perceived within different mediums of human creations even those that seem untouched by it, such as anime. Anime, or otherwise known as Japanese Animation is pop-cultural product that could gain tremendous popularity and success around the globe. As a part of Japanese popular culture, anime was never meant to be destined to an audience outside of Japan. However, it became very popular with a significant international fan-base. Anime is heavily influenced by Japan's history, culture, and mythology. However, traces of other cultures, namely Western mythology, can be recognized within the layers of its creators

Whether it is conscious or subconscious, Japanese anime creators allude to, and sometimes even directly employ, both the mythology that belongs to their own culture, Japanese mythology, and other mythologies that belong to other cultures as well such as Greco-Roman mythology. These references contribute to some extent to the success of their products. Accordingly, *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* is an internationally popular anime that may owe its success to its mythical resonance.

JAPANESE ANIMATION

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Japanese animation or “Anime” (Japanese: アニメ) is a Japanese film/television show that often has a science fiction subject (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary). It is a famous type of animation that is made in specialized studios in Japan where artists and computer-animators create Japanese pop-cultural products that are highly consumed and highly valued nationally and internationally (Craig 4). In “Contemporary Anime in Japanese Pop Culture” Gilles PoItras defines anime as “... (1) Anime is simply the word used by the Japanese for all animation, without regard to its nation of origin; and (2) outside of Japan, the common use of the word anime is to refer specifically to Japanese animation”. Gilles then insists on the second definition in his essay (48).

Anime is the adaptation of “Manga”¹ which is the source for most of the stories used in anime (PoItras 61), light novels, video games, Japanese literature, European or American novels/classics, drama, and in rare cases the animation company i.e. original. The stories of both anime and manga can be based on legends, history, novels, ancient plays and recited tales (PoItras 61) and –what this research is trying to investigate- Mythology.

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST BROTHERHOOD

Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood is an Anime adaptation of the manga entitled *Fullmetal alchemist* or *Hagane no Renkinjutsushi* by Hiromu Arakawa that premiered on April 5, 2009 on MBS-TBS, directed by Yusuhiro Irie and licensed by madman entertainment, Funimation, Odex, and Manga entertainment (Free Collars Kingdom 476). The original manga concluded at 108 serialized chapters with 27 tankōbon (graphic novel) releases, it has two anime adaptations one in 2003 and one in 2009 and both were translated into English (Fullmetal Alchemist wiki). The 2009 anime adaptation, *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*, was translated into English for the North American release and into many other languages such as French, Portuguese and German (featured list 443). The version of the animation that is used in this paper is the licensed English subbed version of the 2009 anime adaptation entitled *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* that the official website of Funimation provides.

The plot of the anime *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* follows the storyline of the original manga *Fullmetal Alchemist* (Marshall 96). There are still some differences between the 2009 anime version, the manga and the anime adaptation of 2003 entitled *Fullmetal Alchemist*. The differences include the omission of some of the content due to its inclusion in the anime of 2003 and time or budget constraints, the introduction of exclusive characters such as the Ice Alchemist, the adjustment in the settings of the first episode and –in general- few minor changes in the plot (Fullmetal Alchemist wiki).

The anime *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* is set in a fantasy world² where alchemy is widely popular and excessively practiced. In this world, alchemy is considered to be both a science in some areas (such as in central Amestris where it has the attention of the government and the “state alchemists”) and a magic or a miracle in other areas (such as the village of Ishbal and Reole, a small village in the desert in Eastern Amestris). It tells the story of two brothers; Edward and Alphonse Elric, two young alchemists who committed the forbidden alchemic practice of human transmutation in a failed attempt to bring back their deceased mother to life.

One of the brothers, Edward Elric, enlists in the army as a State Alchemist and becomes known as the Fullmetal Alchemist and goes on a trip with his brother to seek the Philosopher’s stone. The Philosopher’s stone is a precious stone that is rumored to have magical powers that can be used to reverse the alchemical process that led to the disappearance of Edward’s arm and leg and Alphonse’s entire body during their attempt of human transmutation. The brothers face many obstacles in their journey and they discover the truth of the Philosopher’s stone and the high price

that is required to make it. During their quest to return what is lost, they also realize and then reveal the deep dark secret that surrounds the government of Amestris.

WESTERN AND JAPANESE MYTHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST BROTHERHOOD:

Alchemy:

Alchemy is a prominent theme in *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*. Most of characters including the protagonist Edward Elric, his brother Alphonse Elric, State Alchemists and many characters are practitioners of alchemy. Alchemy; in its simplest definitions, is a primitive form of modern chemistry whereby the common belief was that "...certain elect humans could be God's conduit to his earthly creatures³..." (Janacek 9). The idea of controlling "earthly creatures" itself is directly related to mythology where most of deities and gods from Greco-Roman mythology and Japanese mythology can, in fact, control some of these "earthly creatures" such as the Greek god Poseidon (or Neptune in Roman Mythology) who controls the sea realm and Kagutsuchi, the Japanese "kami"⁴ of fire, who controls the element of fire.

The origin of Alchemy is disputed over ; however, it existed in China during the sixth century (Selin 196) and later "penetrated" into Japan and influenced the beginnings of Shintoism⁵ (Needham 175) and in Greek writings after the fourth and the fifth century (The Japan Daily Mail 990). Therefore, alchemy is closely related to both western and Japanese mythologies. In fact, there was a common belief among Alchemists that ancient myths acted as some sort of roadmap or a "magical trails" that leads to the needed formulas for gold or silver creation. This means that decoding ancient texts and myths unveils "secret recipes" to create precious metals such as gold and silver using the ancient art of alchemy (Hollihan 67). There is also a common tendency to use mythological symbols and metaphors as a way to explain some of alchemy's findings and formulas (Hoke 151). Newman argues that

Newton believed that in the distant past, people knew great truths about nature and the universe. This wisdom was lost over time, but, Newton thought it was hidden in Greek myths, which he interpreted as encoded alchemical recipes. (Hoke 151)

Accordingly, Alchemy is not only related to western and Japanese mythology in terms of historical concurrence but also in terms of content and symbolism

War and corruption:

Another theme in *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* is war and corruption. This appears through the character King Bradley (a human-based homunculi⁶ with the name “Wrath”), his fellow supporters within the government and other homunculus. These characters tend to create and fuel wars, kill innocent people, blackmail soldiers and spread and use terror to expand the nation’s borders under the orders of “Father”⁷ (the homunculi). The relationship between war and corruption is not clarified until the last episodes when Edward realizes that the Fuhrer he admired is actually a homunculi and an enemy of the whole country. He also realizes that all the wars that had happened for “mysterious reasons” are in fact caused, well-planned and monitored by the Fuhrer himself with the help of the homunculi under the direct orders from a mysterious character they call “Father”.

The theme of war and corruption is found in many mythologies but it seems to be almost identical to the stories and qualities of Greek god Ares (better known as the Roman god Mars) who combines both war and corruption⁸. Ares enjoys bloodshed and wars excessively especially those that are caused and fueled by him (Fiore 96). Ares seems to have similar attitudes of Father who is the most corrupted character in the series. Father is depicted as a character who enjoys conflicts especially those between the brothers Edward and Al. unlike Father, Ares does not have ulterior motives behind his desire for war, conflict and corruption. However, both Father and Ares are similar in their actions that are aimed at fueling wars and corruption.

Transmutation circles

According to *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*, The proper application of the craft of alchemy requires a full understanding of alchemy and ancient alchemical theory. It requires natural talent towards recognizing and manipulating the physical objects with energy. It also needs uncommon levels of intelligence and aptitude. Those with the ability to study and master this craft are called “alchemists”. However, this craft requires another kind of skills which is the ability to manipulate what is known as “transmutation circles”. Transmutation circles are one of the most recurring symbols in *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* and the most important because the power of alchemy lies in them. Transmutation circles are consequently recurrent and have a close connection with the theme of alchemy. These circles can even be considered the only motif of this anime. The transmutation circles symbolize the transition between the real world and the spiritual world i.e. the world of alchemy and sometimes the transition between life and death (when a human transmutation circle is activated). Transmutation circles also symbolize the gate of the spirit where from, the spiritual energy is released –or rather activated- to be able to perform alchemy.

There are different kinds of transmutation circles in alchemy according to the anime. Perhaps the most important one is the human transmutation circle that combines a group of other symbols. It is important to note that transmutation circles are purely the creation of Hiromu Arakawa, the mangaka⁹ of *the Fullmetal Alchemist* manga (where from *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* was adapted). However, this creation still heavily relies on many existing alchemical symbols such as the circle, the pentacle, the caduceus, Mercury symbol, and Saturn symbol.

1. The Circle:

The circle in alchemy's transmutation circles is very important for a very obvious reason (because without it the transmutation circles won't be "circles"). In alchemy, the circle symbolizes fluidity and eternal experiment (Zell-Ravenheart 146). The Circle has a deep connection with western and Japanese mythology where it symbolizes cyclic regeneration in Greco-Roman mythology such as the reunion of Demeter and her daughter Persephone in spring then the departure of Persephone during autumn (Zell-Ravenheart 15). In Japanese mythology, it has a higher significance as it symbolizes the sun (Levin 5) and it is found in one of the most known Japan's national symbols which is the red circle in the Japanese national flag.

2. The Pentacle

Perhaps the pentacle¹⁰ has a deeper connection with western and Japanese mythology than the circle. The pentacle in alchemy studies is a sign of health, mystic powers, and harmony. In ancient Greece, The ancient Greeks who followed the philosophy of Pythagoras used it to represent the marriage between earth and the heavens and as a formation for health (Ancient Alchemy Signs and Symbols). In Greek and Roman mythology, the pentacle is, without doubt, the symbol of the goddess of love Aphrodite (Roman Venus) (Criswell 24). In Japanese culture, the pentagram¹¹ is a symbol of magical power, it is a diagram of the "overcoming cycle" of the five elements of life¹² (Pentagram). The pentacle also alludes to the number five which is the number of men The Japanese god Susanoo had made from Amaterasu's ornament chain (Guru 24) and a number of the generations of earthly gods (Brownlee 26).

3. The Caduceus

The Caduceus is a symbol that can be found in a certain type of transmutation circles. It is considered to be a symbol on its own and can be noticed on the coat of Edward Elric and the armor of Alphonse Elric, the protagonists of the story. It is also the ancient Roman symbol of the god

Mercury (the Greek God Hermes). The symbol features two wing-topped serpents wrapped around a center rod (Daly 30). It can be also the staff of Asklepios, the Greek god of medicine, featuring a single, wingless serpent wound around a rod (Metevelis 460). The two serpent caduceus is often mistakenly used as a symbol of medicine and pharmacy and is associated with Apollo the Greek and Roman god of medicine and healing rather than Hermes or Mercury the god of thieves, travelers and commerce. The Japanese parallel is a Caduceus-like emblem found in the ancient Japanese world with wings symbolizing the upper world (heaven). The serpents symbolize the cyclic death and renewal and the creation itself. It is also believed to be the origin of the myth of dragon since dragons has always been associated with serpents (Metevelis 128). The wings in Japanese mythology also refer to the wind and to the animating spirit (Metevelis 459).

4. The mercury

The mercury symbol is one of the symbols that can be identified in the resurrections transmutation circle (the human transmutation circle). In alchemy, this symbol represents fluidity, transformation, and intellect. It is a lunar and female metal linked by alchemists with 'cold' energy. As the only common metal liquid at ordinary temperatures, mercury was of great interest to alchemists (Tresidder). In Japanese mythology (which is a combination of Buddhism and Shintoism), this symbol is the Genie or God Buddha who is situated between the Sun and the Moon. He is the permanent companion of the Sun of Wisdom (Levin 29). In Greek Mythology, Mercury displays wings in order to express how he assisted the Sun on its sidereal course. It is the name of the Roman god (Greek Hermes) who is the messenger of gods and the fastest among them. Hermes the Greek messenger god, known as Mercury in the Roman pantheon, represents wisdom, cunning, magic, spiritual illumination, skill with swords and mischief (Guiley 133).

5. The Saturn symbol:

Human Transmutation circle also contains another symbol, the Saturn symbol. In *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* and in alchemy, this symbol represents lead, a necessary component for alchemical reactions. The symbol in the human transmutation circle is slightly modified though it matches the equivalent symbol in alchemy. Alchemists usually give metals the symbols of planets and, in this case, lead is symbolized by the planet Saturn (Silberer). Saturn symbolizes partition, definition and ego (Sullivan 24). "The Saturn symbol is composed of two design elements. The top cross, which is symbolic of the culmination of matter as well as the function of a [sic] intense focus.

The second component of the Saturn icon is a crescent an element which it signifies receptivity.” (Venefica).

The symbol itself refer to the Roman god of agriculture with the name Saturn (Cronus the father of gods and the titans’ king in Greek mythology). The cross and the crescent shape that form the symbol were used to refer to the scythe of Cronus which he used to cut the organs of his father (Venefica). Thus, the Saturn symbol which was used to refer to the lead element in the human transmutation circle has a direct relation with Greek and Roman mythology and no apparent relation with Japanese mythology.

6. The Ouroburos:

In the anime, all the homunculi have a tattoo that features an Ouroburos on a part of their body. The symbol is located on Lust’s upper sternum, Envy’s left thigh, Gluttony’s tongue, Greed’s back of the left hand, Wrath’s left eye, Sloth’s back of the left shoulder and Pride’s forehead after turning into the true form. Ouroboros is “a circular symbol of a snake or dragon devouring its tail, standing finity or wholeness; also written uroboros or [Ouroboros]“ (The Ouroboros Father Project 2). Plato describes the first living thing as a self-eating, circular being which is an immortal, mythologically constructed entity i.e. the Ouroboros (Metzger 314). This symbol in alchemy symbolizes infinity and wholeness. It represents the endless cycle of life and death, assimilation, integration, and immortality (Carminé 92).

The Ouroboros is a symbol that existed in many cultures and mythologies including the Greek and Roman Culture and mythology and the Japanese mythology. In Greek mythology, it represented Echidna, a half-woman half-serpent monster, whose offspring included several dragons and Cecrops, the culture hero of the Athenians, who had a man's head and chest on a snake's body (Serpents and Snakes). In Japanese mythology, it represents the giant dragon eating its tail that surrounds the area of the world that is threatened by earthquakes and tsunami (which can be found in the 19th century medieval Japanese map¹³) (Forbes).

The philosopher’s stone

The philosopher’s stone is a major symbol in Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood and it has been mentioned in many different episodes as being the item everyone in the story seeks. In the anime, the stone was used to overridden the law of equivalent exchange¹⁴ where the user can perform alchemical practices without having to sacrifice anything in return. The philosopher’s stone is a stone that alchemists wanted since they began

studying alchemy and some say that some alchemists managed to create it. The stone is rumored to have magical powers that allow the alchemist to turn any metal into gold, heal all illnesses and create human clones or homunculi (Lötscher 44).

Perhaps it's not the stone itself that is related to western and Japanese mythology, but its qualities and the fact that it sprung from the chemical and alchemical connections between elements and that it requires a sacrifice to be made¹⁵. Such connections are manifested in the creation of Venus (Greek Aphrodite) who is "...depicted as sprung from the sea" (Regardie 96), the Pegasus (the winged horse) who sprung out of the blood of medusa after being decapitated and the serpent in general in Greek mythology¹⁶ (Gardiner). The equivalent of the philosopher's stone in Japanese mythology is the Cintamani Stone, one of the three treasures of Japan and it is "...a stone believed to have fallen from the skies during the reign of King Lha Tototi Nyentsen in a chest with four other objects." (Rogers 9).

The Gate:

One of the symbols in this anime is the gate that appears whenever a human transmutation circle is activated. In *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*, the gate appears after activating a human transmutation circle in the attempt to resurrect the dead or to create the philosopher's stone. The gate appeared to Edward and Al after their attempt to resurrect their mother, to their teacher after her attempt to resurrect her dead baby, to Roy Mustang after being forced to perform a human sacrifice and to Father after his failed attempt to transcend into a god. The gate in this anime symbolizes the journey from earth to heaven, from reality to the unconsciousness, from earth to heaven and from the real world to the world of alchemy and pure knowledge. The gate may also refer to alchemy itself because when Edward's gate was "sacrificed" to bring back his Brother Alphonse, Edward was no longer able to use alchemy.

The thickness, the shape and the general look of the gate in the anime is similar to that of Rodin's sculpture at Stanford University, California (in which he was inspired by Dante's inferno) which features a popular design the gate of the underworld in Greek and Roman mythology¹⁷ (Rodin). However, in its significance, it is similar to the gates found in the Shinto temples that are said to be the port between the real world and the spiritual one (Schlief 90).

The Chimera:

During their adventure, the Brothers Edward and Alphonse Elric meet Shou Tucker, a bio-chemist who has a daughter named Nina who has a dog

named Alexander. The first meeting is set in episode four and the story ends with a crime where the father turns his four-years-old daughter and her dog Alexander into a Chimera. The Chimera in the anime is a type of hybrid creature that is created using bio-alchemy through the mixture of a human and an animal into one entity. The name Chimera comes from a Greek monster with a body and a head of a lion, a snake as a tail and a second head of a goat coming out from its back. There are Different versions of Chimera in Greek mythology with slightly different descriptions, such as wings on the back or the back legs of a snake, but most follow the description above. The Chimera is the daughter of Greek the daughter of Greek monster gods Typhon and Echidna (Guru 302).

The perfect being:

Episode sixty-two begins with the brothers discussing something that they learned from a book of alchemy about the perfect being. According to that book, the perfect being is the union of the sun and the moon. The moon represents a female and, thus, is a woman and the sun represents a male and it represents a man. This description alludes to the myth of Artemis the Greek goddess of the moon and Apollo the Greek god of the sun (Daly). It is the opposite of the Japanese mythology where Tsukimoyi is a female goddess of the sun and Amaterasu is a male god of the moon (Roberts). The perfect being in this description refers to Menominakanushi ("All-Father of the Originating Hub") from Japanese mythology (Mizue). This means that this description combines the Greek myth of Artemis and Apollo and the Japanese myth of Menominakanushi to fit into the description of a God in this anime. The union between a woman and a man is also the union between the sun and the moon. When this happens, an eclipse occurs and the Planet's Gate is opened to "bring down" God and control his abilities.

Envy:

Among the Homonculi, envy is the closest to humans and their actions. Envy is the embodiment of some of Father's envy and has the ability to shape-shift as a mean of trickery and survival. He can alter his voice to be identical to the person being assumed and he is gifted with superhuman strength. The real form of Envy is a giant lizard-like creature with multiple legs, a long tail and a body that contains a huge number of faces of suppressed souls inside it. Envy's personality is as his name states; he is envious of the human race and wishes to become like them even though he keeps on belittling them and insulting their race.

Examples of shape-shifting in Greek (and Roman) mythology is Circe transforming Odysseus' men into pigs, Apuleius's Lucius becoming a donkey in *The Golden Ass*, the shape-shifting god Proteus and Metis the first wife of Zeus who was eaten by Zeus after transforming into a fly. In Greek mythology, shape-shifting is usual a punishment from gods to mortals and other gods. Almost all gods in Greco-Roman mythology have the ability to transform and appear to humans and to other gods in any shape they want (Daly). In Japanese mythology, there are two well-known creatures who can shape-shift. The first creature is known by the name Tanuki (or raccoon-dog) and the second is the fox, or kitsune. Other creatures include the bakeneko, the mujina and the ōbake (a type of yōkai with the ability to shapeshift) (Pettigrove 142).

Lust:

Lust is the embodiment of Father's lust and the only Homonculi with a human female looks. Using her looks and her intelligence, Lust plays the roles of the manipulator among the homonculi. Her qualities include claw-like fingernails that can stretch to an unknown length and can cut any substance making her the "ultimate spear" of the homonculi (Fullmetal Alchemist wiki). Lust is the combination of Aphrodite (Venus in Roman mythology) who is known as the goddess who can seduce any men with her looks (Daly) and the Kamaitachi, a type of spirits who roam the Kōshin'etsu region and who has long fingernails that can slice through any substance (Roberts 66).

Conclusion:

According to Myth Criticism, what makes a product successful and effective is its ability to draw attention and attract consumers through its incorporation of archetypes (something that is globally recognized). These archetypes can be anything people can relate to. This includes universally shared ideas such as the constant battle between good and evil or a worldly known story from mythology. This means that, according to myth critics, the effectiveness or the success of a work may be due to its incorporation of mythic components.

This paper reveals that anime, particularly *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood*, incorporates many mythological stories that originate from western mythology and Japanese mythology. This indicates that the success of *Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* and its wide-spread throughout the globe is co-related to the ability of its viewers to relate to its themes, characters, plot and symbols due to its connection to themes and symbols they are familiar with. This familiarity is due to the multiple references to mythology, especially western mythology that I widely recognized around the world.

This means that anime can incorporate mythological elements and use it to attract viewers and gain popularity and success while keeping its original plotlines intact. Of course, the findings of this paper do not deny the role of creativity in the success of anime. This research simply highlights the possibility that using mythology may serve as a tool to create familiarity among viewers and consumers when creating a certain product.

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End notes

¹ Manga: (literally humorous comics) a Japanese comic strips (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). originally meaning irresponsible or irreverent pictures of a sardonic nature; used in 18th century Japan to describe risqué prints and hanging scrolls and further applied to Western style comics with frame sequencing and speech balloons. The term now specifically relates to the 20th century art form and industry of Japanese comics. It is sometimes confusingly applied in the West as anime

² Which is slightly similar to our world in some respects.

³ Any living creatures, Substances and innate objects that exists in earth and its sky

⁴ The Japanese word for god.

⁵ A Japanese Religion and the basis for Japanese Mythology.

⁶ A human-made human-like-being using the art of alchemy.

⁷ The evil-master mind with a human shell, an unknown nature and tremendous abilities, his only affiliations are to himself.

⁸ As a result of his human-like unpredictable nature and his history of being on the two sides of a battle at the same time

⁹ Manga artist

¹⁰ The pentacle is a pentagram inside a circle

¹¹ Pentacle without the circle.

¹² Earth, air, water, wood, metal.

¹³ Or what is known as the Jishin noben Dragon Map.

¹⁴ It is a law in *Fullmetal alchemist Brotherhood* that states that nothing is born out of nothing, in order to obtain something one must sacrifice or give something that has equivalent value.

¹⁵ Which is usually a human sacrifice in the anime.

¹⁶ If the serpent bites you, you either survive, heal all your illnesses (just like the philosopher's stone does), or you die and be paralyzed as a "stone".

¹⁷ Because Dante's inferno is inspired by Greek and Roman mythology where the protagonist is on a journey in an underworld that is almost identical to the underworld from Greek mythology