Yauheni Pipko, "Entry on: Persona (Series): Persona 2: Eternal Punishment; Persona 3 by Atlus ", peer-reviewed by Hanna Paulouskaya and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/727. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Atlus

Persona (Series): Persona 2: Eternal Punishment; Persona 3

Japan, United States of America (2000)

TAGS: Cerberus Eurydice Hades Hypnos Nyx Orpheus Prometheus Thanatos Titans Zeus

Logo of the PlayStation Portable version of the first game in the Persona series. Retrieved from Wikipedia, public domain (accessed: December 30, 2021).

General information	
Title of the work	Persona (Series): Persona 2: Eternal Punishment; Persona 3
Studio/Production Company	Atlus
Country of the First Edition	Japan, United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Japan, United States of America
Original Language	Japanese
First Edition Date	2000
First Edition Details	Atlus, *Persona 2: Eternal Punishment*, June 29, 2000; Atlus, *Persona 3*, July 3, 2006.
Platform	PlayStation
Genre	RPG (Role Playing Game)*
Target Audience	Young adults (ESRB – Mature, PEGL – 12+)
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Creators

Atlus (Company)

Retrieved from Wikipedia, public domain (accessed: December 30, 2021).

Atlus is a Japanese company, developer and publisher of computer games, which was established in April, 1986. Since 1991 the company has its North American subsidiary, which is called “Atlus USA”. In 2010 Atlus became a part of Index Holdings. The company has released more than 100 games for different consoles (Game Boy, Nintendo, PlayStation, Xbox, PC etc.). The most popular series of games is Shin Megami Tensei, created by Kouji Okada. In addition to the games the company produces amusement equipment, toys, manga, anime. The mascot of Atlus is Jack Frost – a character who looks like a snowman, but he is dressed in a jester’s costume.

Source:

Official website (accessed: March 27, 2019)

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Additional information

Summary

Persona is a role-playing game, which was developed by Atlus. In this game characters use Personas, who are the embodiment of the soul, taking the form of demons, gods or ancient heroes from mythologies and lore of many cultures, to protect a town from a catastrophe, friends from dangerous situations and their own lives from death. Without Personas, characters can do nothing because their enemies use Personas, or demons, and they cannot be easily killed by conventional weapons. At the beginning of the game the main character does not have any Personas inside the soul and cannot use any powers to protect his/her own life from demons. Awakening of a Persona happens when a person is in a dangerous situation, but not everyone has this power.

Analysis

The core elements of the analysis have been presented as a poster and as a blog entry (accessed: March 27, 2019) and were prepared in cooperation with Aliaksandra Starbedava and Khrystsina Hunko.

The game utilises Personas from various mythologies. I will analyse only Personas from Greek mythology.

Prometheus was one of the Titans in ancient Greek mythology, who helped Zeus in the great war against the Titans. In *Persona 2* Prometheus is the ultimate Persona with large rocks attached to his body, which symbolise the rock, where Prometheus was chained because he had helped mankind. Red lines on his body represent fire, which he brought to humanity. In the game he is invincible to light and dark, but vulnerable to lightning because Zeus bound him to the rock for disobedience. Despite his weakness, he possesses one of the strongest thunder attacks in the game because in the mythology he also helps Zeus to fight the Titans. When characters summon Prometheus, he says: “Even if I am to be chained to a rock, my duty is to love you and give you wisdom. The fire I have given you is your indomitable spirit”.

Hades is the god of the underworld in ancient Greek mythology. In *Persona 2* Hades is depicted in very dark clothes because the god of the underworld cannot wear light clothes, especially in the place where the dead are. Hades has a staff with a tri-skull ornament, which

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symbolises Cerberus, who has three heads, and reflects his dominion over the dead. His skills in battle are related to water (because there are two rivers in the underworld: Styx and Lethe) and darkness, element that befits the king of the underworld. In the game Hades symbolizes justice. When characters summon Hades, he says: “I am Hades. King of the underworld who judges the evil and the righteous alike. I am thou. Thou art I. Let us walk this path together”. He says these words because the character, who summons him, is completely narcissistic. Hades perfoms as a teacher to change the character’s attitude to life.

Thanatos is the personification of death in Greek mythology. In *Persona 3* Thanatos is the ultimate Persona, and he is depicted as he was represented in the earliest mythological accounts. Hesiod describes Thanatos in *Theogony* (VIII–VII BC):

> “And there the children of dark Night have their dwellings, Sleep and Death, awful gods. The glowing Sun never looks upon them with his beams, neither as he goes up into heaven, nor as he comes down from heaven. And the former of them roams peacefully over the earth and sea’s broad back and is kindly to men; but the other has a heart of iron, and his spirit within him is pitiless as bronze: whomsoever of men he has once seized he holds fast: and he is hateful even to the deathless gods” (Hes. *Th*. 758–766, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White).

He looks like a shadow with white cloth on his arms and legs and wields a long sword. His helmet resembles a skull, and he wears generally dark clothes with a belt, on which a scull with crossed bones can be seen, because Thanatos is the harbinger of death. He is surrounded by metal coffins, which can be also his wings. In a battle Thanatos uses a sword and attacks with light, dark and fire. He is the ultimate Persona of the death arcana (the arcana are the different classes of Tarot Cards, which are a major thematic element of the *Persona* series), and 6 Personas with the same arcana are needed for his summoning. There is some information about him in the Compendium of *Persona 3*: “The Greek god of death, he is the son of Nyx and the brother of Hypnos. He is depicted as a young man with an inverted torch and wreath or butterfly in his hand”.

Orpheus is a legendary singer, musician, lyricist in Greek mythology, whose name epitomised the power of art. In the game Orpheus has two forms: Orpheus and Orpheus Telos. He has a mechanical body with a device, with the help of which he can speak, since in the myth

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Maenads tore apart his body. In *Persona 3* he uses a lyre as a weapon. Orpheus is the first awakened Persona of the main character, with whom he has the same face. At the end of the game a character has a choice: to look back and return to the carefree life of school, or to go on to the end and, sacrificing himself, save the world (the second option was chosen). This choice illustrates the plot of the myth, where Orpheus descended into the underworld to save Eurydice. That is why Orpheus is the first Persona of the main character. When he appears, he says: “Thou art I. And I am thou. From the sea of my soul I cometh. I am Orpheus, master of strings”.

Orpheus Telos is the second form of the main character’s Persona. Telos means “end” in Ancient Greek. Having this Persona, a character dies, but he saves the world. In the game appearance of Orpheus Telos is almost identical to Orpheus.

The developers of the game used mythological characters based on Karl Jung’s archetypes. Jung developed the doctrine of the collective unconscious. He saw the source of universal symbolism in images (archetypes), including myths and dreams (“Metamorphoses and Symbols of Libido”). The goal of psychotherapy according to Jung is the realization of individual identification. In Persona game series there are shown not only Greek mythological characters but also Japanese, Scandinavian, Egyptian, Slavic, Chinese etc. Personas show to a player that most people have hidden depths. All of them have their individual lives and stories as Personas do. Thanatos shows that your thoughts matter, that life and deeds are not divided into only black and white, that resolve and friends can help to overcome many difficulties in life situations, that despair and apathy can burn you from the inside. Orpheus and Hades show that there is always a way to reach your dream, that our “social links” can help us to stay on feet. Prometheus shows that there is always more than one point of view, that you cannot predict consequences until things happen, and you will never know what will follow them. If a player does not know anything about some Personas, there is the compendium in the game that gives a short description about mythological characters.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Cerberus Eurydice Hades Hypnos Nyx Orpheus Prometheus Thanatos Titans Zeus

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Child, children Death Heroism Knowledge Learning Magic powers Teenagers
Further Reading	Berens, E. M., *The Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome*, Boston: Longwood Press, 1979 (ed. pr. 1880). Hesiod, *Theogony,* trans. by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, London: W. Heinemann, New York: The Macmillan Co, 1914. Stabredava, Aliaksandra, Khrystsina Hunko, and Yauheni Pipko, *Persona: Figures of the Underworld Fight the Shadows*, available online at antipodeanodyssey.wordpress.com and poster version available online at antipodeanodyssey.files.wordpress.com (accessed: March 26, 2019).
Addenda	Genre: Role-playing, social simulation

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