Joanna Bieńkowska, "Entry on: God of War III by SIE Santa Monica Studio ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/790. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

SIE Santa Monica Studio

God of War III

United States of America (2010)

TAGS: Aeacus Ancient Warfare Aphrodite Apollo Athena Boreas Centaur(s) Cerberus Chimera / Chimaera Cronus / Kronos Cyclops / Cyclopes Daedalus Epimetheus Fate Fates Gaia / Gaea Golden Fleece Gorgon(s) Hades Harpies Helios Hephaestus Hera Heracles Hercules Hermes Hippocampi Hyperion Icarus Minos Minotaur Moirai Nemean Lion Oceanus / Okeanos Olympians Olympus Pandora Pandora's Box Persephone Perseus Pirithous / Perithous Poseidon Rhadamanthus / Rhadamanthys Satyr(s) Scorpion Sirens Titanomachy Underworld Zeus





Logo of the God of War franchise owned by Santa Monica Studio. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (accessed: December 29, 2021).

General information	
Title of the work	God of War III
Studio/Production Company	Sony Interactive Entertainment
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	SIE Santa Monica Studio, *God of War III*. PlayStation 3. Directed by Stig Asmussen, San Mateo, California: Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2010.
Platform	PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4 (remastered version)
Official Website	sms.playstation.com (accessed: June 17, 2019)
Available Onllne	Trailer available online (accessed: June 17, 2019)
Genre	Action and adventure video games*, Hack-and-slash*, Platform*

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Creators



The Santa Monica Studio team at the 2019 Game Developers Choice Awards. Retrieved from Wikipedia, licensed under CC BY 2.0 (accessed: December 30, 2021).

SIE Santa Monica Studio (Company)

SIE Santa Monica Studio (or Santa Monica Studio) is an American video game studio owned by Sony Interactive Entertainment, as part of SIE Worldwide Studios. It was established in 1999 in Santa Monica, California. Currently based in Playa Vista, Los Angeles.

Santa Monica Studio is widely known for the *God of War* series, its most popular title so far.

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Additional information

Adaptations	*God of War: Blood & Metal EP* – a heavy metal music homage by various bands that features music inspired by the game. Part of the collector's edition, available for download with *God of War III Ultimate Edition* and *Ultimate Trilogy Edition* collections; can be bought separately at the iTunes Store and ShockHound.
Translation	While dubbing and subtitles are available, the title remains the same in all languages.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	Sequel to 2007's *God of War II*; the seventh installment in the series, prequels: • *God of War*, • *God of War II*, • *God of War: Betrayal*, • *God of War: Chains of Olympus*, • *God of War: Ghost of Sparta*, • *God of War: Ascension*; sequel: *God of War* (2018).
Summary	The story revolves around **Kratos**, a Spartan warrior, who sets on his quest to defeat the Olympian gods – in revenge for their actions against him in the previous installments. (see the God of War and God of War II entries for more info) The game opens with Kratos's famous words that ended *God of War II*: "Zeus! Your son has returned. I bring the destruction of Olympus!" The warrior marches to Olympus atop Gaia, along with her fellow Titans saved with the power of the Fates, ready to continue the Great War with the Olympians. Zeus is seen giving commands to his fellow Olympians – Poseidon, Hades, Helios and Hermes; the gods rush to fight the Titans, while Zeus stays back to watch the battle from afar and prepares to defeat Gaia and Kratos. Poseidon is the first threat –

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having fallen into the sea, he raises up a shielded water-made avatar of himself, ready to face Gaia in his new gigantic form. Alongside him the Hippocampi, monstrosities showing horse and crab-like features, fight. Kratos has to protect Gaia from the beasts and soon after – from Poseidon – but he quickly overcomes both threats. He brutally murders the God of the Sea, which leads to uncontrolled floods of water destroying cities and villages situated below mountains. This is one of his first steps towards the intentional end of the world.

With both Poseidon and the Hippocampi gone, Olympus remains unprotected and Kratos and Gaia proceed further to meet Zeus. The encounter ends with a miserable failure; Gaia falls down the mountain and can barely hold onto the rocks, thus is unable to help her companion. Kratos is abandoned once again by those whom he helped; he falls down to the Underworld, where the Styx river drains all his powers, leaving him weak and incapable to face Zeus and the rest of Olympus. To his surprise, he encounters Athena, veiled in a ghost form – the goddess of wisdom transcended after her sacrifice for Zeus, which let her see things that were unreachable for her before. She's determined to help her half-brother and grants him new weapons to survive Hades' harsh environment and enemies that lie ahead. Kratos is faced with a new objective – finding and extinguishing the Flame of Olympus is his main priority now. After this, he'll gain access to the Pandora's Box and Athena's ultimate power stored within (that remained there even after Kratos opened it for the first time).

Kratos sets on his quest and a new challenge appears before him – Hades, consumed with anger and sorrow after Kratos killed Persephone (see the *God of War: Chains of Olympus* entry for more info), eagerly agrees to stop the Spartan warrior. In the depths of the Underworld Hades meets Hephaestus; the smith god is reluctant to help, speaks in riddles and reveals only that he was imprisoned by Zeus because of Kratos.

Rushing towards the inevitable, Kratos encounters Hades. Engaged in a bloody fight, he finally gets the advantage and ripping off the god's helm, he finally manages to kill him and absorb his soul. With Hades' head crushed and lying opened, Kratos watches thousands upon thousands of lost souls escaping his brain, setting on a dangerous road to freedom. From now on, they roam the skies in search of a purpose – which is another step forward to doomsday.

On his way back, he meets Hephaestus once again; both of them

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watch as the Hyperion Gate next to the prisoner reopens to his sincere surprise. The smith god then shares his tale of hard work and success which got him the most beautiful wife among goddesses as a reward, and of his fall immediately after Kratos' fight against Ares. Hephaestus claims that the king of the gods became distrustful and afraid, due to all the evil that was set free with the opening of Pandora's Box. Hephaestus encourages Kratos to look for Pandora, taken away by Zeus after these events, but the Spartan refuses.

With a new plan to kill Zeus and the soul of a god, Kratos leaves Hades through the Hyperion Gate and reaches the city of Olympia. Fighting through Greek soldiers, Gaia joins the battle, wounded and almost about to fall, asking Kratos to once again stand with the Titans. Kratos cuts off her hand and lets her fall off the mountain. He then engages in a fight with Helios and shoots his chariot from the sky with a ballista bolt. Injured, but protected by the warriors of Olympia, Helios manages to shield himself from Kratos for the first few moments, but soon after the last soldier dies, the Spartan decapitates him with his bare hands. The sun dies behind rain clouds and since then, the world is cloaked in darkness.

Pushing on, Kratos watches the world falling apart, but it doesn't stop him from going further in his rage. All gods that stand up against him end up killed and maimed. Hermes has his legs torn away, Hercules has his skull crushed with his Nemean Cestus, and Hera suffers a broken neck. Kratos also stumbles upon Aphrodite's chambers, only to discover the goddess safe and sound, untroubled by the end of the world, ready to make love to him. Then, he uses the Hyperion Gate in her room to return to Hephaestus prison; the smith god, humiliated, asks whether Aphrodite managed to lure another god of war, but Kratos says coldly that this is a question he should ask his wife; as for him, he seeks the Labyrinth. Hephaestus realises that Kratos is looking for Pandora, the key to the Flame's destruction, kept deep within Daedalus' Labyrinth. Enraged, he tries to intimidate Kratos, afraid that his creation and daughter at the same time will perish by the hero's hand. He tells him of his parental love to Pandora, neither a mechanism, nor a child; of his fear for her when Zeus took her and placed in the Labyrinth; of his never-ending attempts to recreate her. Realizing that Kratos won't let go of his goal, he convinces Kratos to look for the Omphalos Stone, which will allow to make a great weapon of unlimited power. Kratos agrees, only to find himself in Tartarus, face to face with Kronos, angry because of the death of Gaia.

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Killing another Titan, the hero returns to Hephaestus and accuses him of betrayal. The smith god hides behind courteous words, creates the new weapon as promised, but in the end – uses it to electrocute Kratos. Kratos manages to escape the deadly grip and kills the smith god. Progressing in his quest, the Spartan warrior reaches the depths of the Labyrinth and after endless tests, he finally meets Pandora – a naive young girl who bursts with enthusiasm and readiness to meet her destiny. Even though she knows that reaching the Flame of Olympus will bring her death, she herself has also experienced Zeus' ruthless lunacy. Hope slowly pouring into the warrior's heart makes him grow fond of the girl who reminds him of his lost daughter, Calliope.

Breaching the security mechanisms, Kratos and Pandora finally leave the Labyrinth and reach the Flames of Olympus. Zeus appears unexpectedly, ready to end Kratos' farce; a fight quickly escalates, but Pandora stops it with her sacrifice, extinguishing the Flame. Though Kratos decides not to let her die, she convinces him that this is the only way to stop Zeus. Soon after she's gone, Kratos opens the box and realises that it's empty. Filled again with anger at Zeus, he's ready to end the world's existence and his father's with it.

With everything falling apart, Kratos finds Zeus and both of them engage in a fight for life and death, the greatest duel the world has ever known. Gaia, thought dead, also joins the battle, but not for long. Both of them, the father and the son, are angry and fear defeat. Kratos is the first to fall; he loses conscience and has visions of his family and Pandora. She guides him through the dreams and helps him make peace with his deeds and most importantly, himself. When all is done, Kratos opens his eyes, fueled by something that Zeus doesn't have and will never have – hope. With this new power, he kills Zeus and the world can finally be reborn.

At last, he stands before everything he's done; Athena appears before him, demanding to give her the weapon she asked him to obtain. Kratos answers shortly – there was no weapon, for Pandora's Box was empty. But seeing a dangerous spark in his eyes, Athena is convinced that he has her power and tries to intimidate him.

Kratos does the only thing he can do – grabs the Blade of Olympus and for a moment it seems that he is about to kill Athena. But, then, he commits suicide, using the blade to end his own miserable life. The power that he obtained from Pandora's Box and that slept in his

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unconscious for such a long time, is finally set free – the gift of hope to all the lost souls roaming the skies. With hope and no god ruling over them, they will be able to resurrect.

Athena leaves Kratos dying with only one word on her lips – "pathetic."

After the ending credits, the player can see a trail of blood leading to the nearest cliff – here, as is suggested, Kratos cast himself into the sea. It is a reference to the first and the last scene in the original *God of War* – fist, when Kratos falls into the see with an obvious intent to kill himself and when time rewinds to three weeks earlier; last, in which Kratos, after falling into the sea, is lifted by Athena back to Olympus to claim his throne as Ares' successor (see the *God of War* entry for more info). In *God of War III*, Kratos makes the same decision, knowing that Athena will not be there to lift him back up – which can be interpreted as having the ultimate freedom to decide about his own life and death.

Analysis

With the introduction of Playstation 3, the *God of War* franchise became one of Playstation's top exclusives (i.e. games available only on that platform). Highly anticipated, it ended being the first best-selling game in the *God of War* series. With new technical possibilities that came with a new console, the last part of the trilogy explored the vast world of ancient Greece with even more depth and presented a complicated plot featuring new Olympian gods and mythical beasts, while also focusing on the gameplay and new ways or interaction between the game and the player.

Taking all of the above into account, Santa Monica Studio delivered one of the best products for PS3 in its history. The game became the studio's trademark, widely known among young people and console enthusiasts.

God of War III introduces, or extends, a fundamental motif present in the original ancient Greek Mythology. The parricide (father-killing) theme tells the tale of Kronos killing Uranus, Zeus killing Kronos and then, in the *God of War* series – Kratos killing Zeus. The myth starts with Uranus, Gaia's mate, abusing his power and placing their children in the depths of Tartarus. Cronos, the youngest and the most talented one, aims to end this reign. The same happens later when the

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saviour becomes the enemy of his own sprouts, eating and keeping them alive in his stomach. Rhea, his mate, saves the youngest of her children by hiding it on Crete to be raised by Gaia (according to the *God of War* version of ancient Greek mythology). When Zeus reaches adulthood he turns against his father and kills him, ending another bloody reign.

This myth can be analyzed through its various aspects. The first is the aspect of fate. It is said that Kronos overthrowing Uranus' rule was previsedand well known before it happened. The same applies to Zeus and the same was used in *God of War III* as *spiritus movens* of the story. The second aspect is exploring the change of world order – Uranus and Kronos represent the misuse of royal powers to reign despite the natural hereditary line, turning to evil to keep their rule intact. At some point, a saviour emerges to stop the evil which later results in crowning of a new king – the saviour becomes the ruler and the story repeats itself all over again.

The other aspects are – receiving help from the female gods connected to the foul rulers, i.e. Gaia and Rhea, to protect their children, which is passed over in *God of War III* (with Hera siding with her husband against the new usurper). In case of Zeus and Kratos paradigm, the same terms occur, yet in a different way and with different results. Kratos is half-god, half-human, which strips him of the right to fight Zeus the way his predecessors did; he can't be the king of gods. Yet the game follows this path to the end. Kratos kills Zeus and then himself. His reign emerges as something else in nature – as the ultimate freedom to decide for himself, even if it means ending his own life. He offers the same to the souls roaming in the skies; no rule means no higher power that imposes its laws.

Kratos' actions lead to a conclusion that by having little regard for the Olympian gods, he chose to side with fellow mortals and set them free from the godly reign. It has to be underlined though that this is not explicitly shown in the game – *God of War III* portrays Kratos as a ruthless anti-hero seeking revenge, caring little for both gods and mortals. Following the path of destruction, Kratos smashes down the fundaments of the Olympian rule – he releases souls from Hades and erases everything, the world and its inhabitants alike. The clues would suggest that he does all this to give everyone equal chances of living their lives after rebirth, in a new world, with no gods, godly curses and godly rules, with no fate and no Olympus. Then, Kratos can finally rest, as the clue with which the player is left after the end of the game

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	speaks for his death. Sony, on the other hand, confirmed a new title in the series, going by the title God of War, just as the original game. It was released in April of 2018 (see the entry for more info).
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aeacus Ancient Warfare Aphrodite Apollo Athena Boreas Centaur(s) Cerberus Chimera / Chimaera Cronus / Kronos Cyclops / Cyclopes Daedalus Epimetheus Fate Fates Gaia / Gaea Golden Fleece Gorgon(s) Hades Harpies Helios Hephaestus Hera Heracles Hercules Hermes Hippocampi Hyperion Icarus Minos Minotaur Moirai Nemean Lion Oceanus / Okeanos Olympians Olympus Pandora Pandora's Box Persephone Perseus Pirithous / Perithous Poseidon Rhadamanthus / Rhadamanthys Satyr(s) Scorpion Sirens Titanomachy Underworld Zeus
Further Reading	Christesen, Paul and Dominic Machado, "Video Games and Classical Antiquity," *The Classical World* 104.1 (2010): 107–110. Lowe, Dunstan, ""Playing with antiquity: Videogame receptions of the classical world" in D. Lowe and K. Shahabudin, eds., *Classics for all: Re-working antiquity in mass cultural media*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009, 62–88.
Addenda	**Release Date:** March 16, 2010 in North America, March 18 in Australia, March 19 in Europe and March 25 in Japan. **Commercial Success:** The *God of War* series has sold over 21 million copies worldwide (2012, see here, accessed: June 17, 2019), i.e. without *God of War: Ascension* – *God of War II:* 4,2 million games sold worldwide. **Genre:** An action, adventure, hack and slash, story-driven video game.

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