ISSN: 1994-4217 (Print) 2518-5586(online)

Journal of College of Education

Available online at: https://eduj.uowasit.edu.iq

Rese. Ansam Yaroub Khyoon

Dr. Ansam Riyadh Abdulla

University of Tikrit / College of Education for women

Email:
Ansam.hanon549@st.tu.edu.iq
Sbc.s5@tu.edu.iq

Keywords:

Cerberus, eco-hero, Fates, Furies, Greek trinity, Gorgons, and the trident

CC BY

A r t i c l e i n f o

Article history:

Received 18. Jan.2026

Accepted 22. Feb.2026

Published 10. Nov.2026

Archetypal Numbers in Rick Riordan Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (2005)

A B S T R A C T

The problem lies in the lack of research that tackles archetypal numbers in literature in general and in English novels in particular. Therefore, the aim of this research is to shed light on archetypal numbers, concentrating on number three, decoding its symbolism, and analyzing how it is used as both a literary element and a literary device. The researchers select Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief (2005) as it draws upon a wide range of Greek myths, and number three encapsulated Greek belief systems, culture, and philosophical ideologies. Decoding its symbolism will enable readers as well as critics to fully understand the importance of number three. After identifying the main occurrences of number three in the novel, the researchers concentrate on its function as a representative of archetypal number. The study concludes that understanding an archetypal number in the novel gives extra layers of meaning to the novel as well as enriched the reading experience with a wide range of philosophical, social, and cultural beliefs unique to Greek mythology. Thus, number symbolism functions as a narrative framework linking mythic order with modern identity.

© 2026 EDUJ, College of Education for Human Science, Wasit University

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol65.Iss1.4981

الأرقام البدائية في رواية رك رايوردان برسي جاكسون والاولمبيون: سارق البرق ٢٠٠٥

الباحثة: أنسام يعرب خيون أ.د. أنسام رياض عبد الله المعروف

جامعة تكريت / كلية التربية للبنات

المستخلص

تكمن مشكلة البحث في ندرة الدراسات التي تتناول الأرقام البدائية في الأدب بصورة عامة وفي الرواية الانكليزية بصورة خاصة. يهدف البحث الى تسليط الضوء على الأرقام البدائية وتحديدا الرقم ثلاثة وحل رموزه وتحليل دوره كأحد عناصر الرواية. تم اختيار رواية ***برسي جاكسون والاولمبيون: سارق البرق*** لان الرواية مبنية بشكل أساسي على الاساطير الاغريقية التي شفرها في روايته من خلال الرقم ثلاثة. اذ من خلال الرقم ثلاثة شفر رك رايوردان المفاهيم

الاغريقية والثقافة والعديد من المفاهيم الفلسفية التي ينماز بها الأدب الاغريقي. إنَّ فك شفرة الرقم ثلاثة سوف يمكِّن كل من القارئ والناقد الأدبي من فهم أهمية الأرقام كعنصر ادبي يشير الى المكان والزمان ويعطي عمق للشخصيات. ان فهم الارقام البدائية في النص الادبي يعطي عمق أكبر بالرواية ويغني القراءة بمدى واسع من المفاهيم الفلسفية والمجتمعية والثقافية المميزة في الاساطير الاغريقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كلب الجحيم(سيربروس)، بطل البيئة، ربات القدر، الهة الانتقام، الثالوث الاغريقي، الغرغونات، الرمح الثلاثي.

1. Introduction

Numbers play an integral part in a person's life; they make up the cells and chromosomes he is made of, the time and date of his birth, his number in his family, his identification card, and his education process, which is marked and leveled by numbers. His salary and his whole life are founded and judged by numbers. All living creatures as well as non-living creatures are classified according to numbers. This strong number foundation shaped the psychology of human beings, a matter that is well reflected in literature.

Number symbolism in literature mirrors diverse world cultures, yet for the Greek civilization, this symbolism became a science called arithmancy, known today as numerology. Arithmancy is a term made up of two Greek words, arithmos, meaning "number," and manteia, divination. During the nineteenth century it was changed to numerology (Stewart, 2024). Numerology is the study of cosmic codes that use numbers as symbols. It studies the meaning of numbers and their influence on life (Drayer, 2003). The first to introduce this science was Pythagoras, a Greek mathematician who lived in the 6th century BCE and is famous for his Pythagorean Theorem in geometry. Pythagoras is considered the father of numerical analysis because he believed that "the key to the universe was concealed in the science of numbers." (Drayer, 2003) Thus, he roamed the world studying numbers of all civilizations to refine his theory. He studied the numbers of Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Hebrews and formed a cult called Pythagoreanism, whose members believed that numbers are the base of the entire universe.

Pythagoras believed that there are specific numbers that carry mystical properties, like number (1), which symbolizes unity and the origin of all things since all other numbers are made up of adding it to them. Number (2), on the other hand, represents female, while number 3 represents male, and when they come together, 2+3=5, it represents marriage. All even numbers represent the female, while odd numbers represent the male. Number four represents justice, and number ten is the most perfect because it is made up of the most important numbers: 1+2+3+4 = 10 (Stewart, 2024).

Numerology was and still is studied and practiced all over the world. Some scholars define it as "a belief in an occult divine or mystical relationship between a number and one or more coinciding events" (Haung, 2016), while others regard it as "the study of numerical value." (Drayer, 2003) Despite its cultural depth, number symbolism remains underexplored in modern literary criticism, particularly in Anglophone fiction.

1.1. The Problem of the Research:

The problem lies in the lack of research that tackles archetypal numbers as key elements for literary criticism in modern novels based on Greek mythology.

1.2. The Aim of the research :

The research aims at shedding light on archetypal numbers, concentrating on number three, decoding its symbolism, and analyzing how it is used for literary criticism.

1.3. Methodology:

The research builds its theoretical analysis on the interdisciplinary approach of Carl G. Jung's theory of Archetypal numbers introduced in his book ***Man and His symbols*** and fully explained by Charles R. Card in two articles; The Emergence of Archetypes in Present-Day Science And Its Significance for a Contemporary Philosophy of Nature (1996) and Mind, Matter and Archetype: A Review of the Jung-Pauli Hypothesis (2020). This theory will be applied in discuss and analyze of modern American novel representation of Greek mythology namely Rick Riordan's ***Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief***.

2. Theoretical studies

2.1. Archetypal Numbers:

The term "archetype" consists of two elements: the first, "arche,"means primal source or origin, while "type" means pattern (Card, 2020). It is defined as the "original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations or copies."(Merriam-Webster, 2025) This pattern or model attracted the attention of Carl Gustav Jung, a well-known psychologist, who applied it to his psychoanalysis of dreams and then expanded its application to include literary criticism. According to Jung, archetypes are "symbolic forms of stories, persons, places, or images that have been accumulated from human experience throughout history."(Jung, 1964 as cited in Leigh, 2015) He expanded the concept to include archetypes of personality, numbers, and narrative patterns.

2.2. Carl G. Jung's Theory of Number Archetypes :

Carl Gustav Jung was a psychiatrist, psychologist, and, above all, psychotherapist. He is mostly famous for his theory of archetypes, which is largely applied in literature. During his later years, however, he made a theory concerning numbers through psychotherapy. He was working on a patient, treating him through dreams, when he discovered that in the patient's dream, there was a certain number that acted as a core point (Card, 2020). Drawing upon Pythagorean numerology, Jung interpreted numbers as expressions of universal psychic order. In some cases he used English cabalism for number interpretations; one is a symbol of the living God, two symbolizes spirit from spirit, three represents water from spirit, four represents fire from water, five is height, six is depth, seven is east, eight is west, nine is south, and ten is north (Morariu & Card, 1998). Soon after these studies on dream numbers, Jung generalized his theory and became fascinated with numbers and declared that "number itself is the most primitive archetype of order, which became conscious."(Jung, 1964, as cited in Card, 1996) Therefore, he believed that numbers coexisted with humans and that humans discovered these numbers rather than invented them. Since numbers coexisted with humans,

Jung considered them to be archetypes, symbolizing religious, philosophical, and aesthetic associations of a certain culture. Furthermore, Jung suggested that numbers are produced spontaneously by the unconscious and drive man to behave specially (Papadopoulos, 2006).

2.2.The Power of Number Three in Greek Numerology

As mentioned earlier, Pythagoras was a Greek mathematician, and he is considered the founder of numerology. He based his interpretation of number symbolism on his own beliefs that included not only Greek religion but Egyptian mythology as well. Number three in Greek mythology represents divine triads, harmony, and wisdom. It also represents the completion of life cycles (birth, life, and death) and beginning, middle, and end; the three aspects of humanity (mind, body, and soul); and the triad of past, present, and future. The symbolism of number three plays an important role in teamwork represented in trios on quests. Hence, number three is strongly associated with collaboration and teamwork (Onwuatuegwu, 2023).

3. *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (2005)

Percy Jackson and the Olympians is the first book of a five-book series entitled ***Camp Half-Blood Chronicles*** *(2009)*. The novel was adapted into a graphic novel, a film, and a Disney series. The novel opens with Percy telling his readers that he is a twelve-year-old boy who is diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). He has only one friend, Grover, who is physically disabled. They both go on a field trip to the museum as part of Greek Mythology class, where his teacher, Mr. Brunner, gives him a pen and tells him that he might need it. Immediately Percy is attacked by his math teacher, Mrs.Doddes, who changes into a Fury and attempts to kill him. Strangely, Percy's pen changes into a sword with which he is able to slay the Fury. Shocked by all this, Percy asks Grover and Mr. Brunner what is going on; they both deny knowing anything. Percy is sent home to his mother, Sally Jackson, who is married to a bad-smelling man called Gabe. Life without knowing his real father is made worse by Gabe's consistent abuse.

Percy's mother takes him on a vacation that is interrupted by Grover, who warns them that Percy is in danger and he must be taken to the safety of the Half-Blood Camp. Sally decides to take her son and Grover to the camp, shockingly; Grover's lower body is revealed as that of a goat, and a Minotaur tries to kill them. After crashing their car, the Minotaur managed to take Percy's mother, and in his attempt to squash her, she turned into golden dust. Infuriated, Percy chases down the Minotaur, kills it, and takes one of its horns as a trophy before collapsing. In the camp, Percy is treated and regains his full health. He also learns that all gods, goddesses, creatures, and places of Greek mythology are very much real. His teacher, Mr. Brunner, is a Chiron; his best friend, Grover, is a satyr; and above all, he is the son of Poseidon, the god of the sea. He makes friends with Annabeth, the daughter of Athena, the goddess of wisdom. The entire camp is dedicated to all half-bloods, that is, children resulting from human and gods' encounters. The camp consisted of twelve cabins corresponding to the twelve Olympian gods and goddesses' children. At the beginning, Percy's father was not determined; therefore, he stayed in cabin eleven under the supervision of Luke, the son of Hermes, the god of travels and thieves, until claimed by Poseidon.

Once determined to be Poseidon's son, he is presented with a quest. Zeus, the god of gods, is angry with Poseidon, believing that he stole his master bolt using his son Percy. Poseidon claims that neither he nor his son stole it and blames Hades, the god of the underworld, for the theft. Percy, with the aid of two chosen friends, should go on a quest first to take the master bolt from Hades in the underworld, then return it to Zeus before the summer solstice. The trio Percy, Annabeth, and Grover set out on their ten-day odyssey, where they face the three Fates, the three Furies, Medusa, Echidna, and many more. They are aided by Ares, the god of war, before reaching Hades. Upon reaching Hades, Percy discovers that Ares tricked them, and after a fatal fight, Percy manages to retrieve Hades' helmet of Darkness, thus regaining his mother in return. He was also able to return the master bolt to Zeus, gaining his father's respect and stopping war temporarily. He learns that Ares collaborated with an accomplice from inside the camp to steal Zeus' master bolt and Hades' helm of Darkness. Both of them were tricked by Kronos, Zeus' father, who is imprisoned in Tartarus. At the end, Percy discovers that the accomplice is none other than Luke, the one whom he called a friend. Unfortunately, Luke manages to escape before being brought to justice.

4. Analysis & Discussion Of Number Three As An Archetype in the Novel :

In the novel there are so many references to number three as an archetype. Most of the literary elements and devices of the novel are based on number three. Number three, being an archetypal number, will be the base of literary analysis of setting, characterization, themes, and a wide range of literary devices. As for literary elements the setting of the novel is based on three so as the characters in this novel. The Greek triad and trinity is incarnated in the characters divided into many sets of threes starting with the three main characters setting out for the quest, Percy, Annabeth, and Grover; the Greek trinity represented by the Big Three gods Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades; the evil triad Kronos, Ares, and Luke; the three Fates; the three Furies; and the three Gorgons. In addition to that, all the themes in the novel are based on the concept of number three. Number three acts as attribute to both Poseidon and Hades.

The researchers will analyze and discuss the literary elements and devices in the novel that are based on number three and explain how this number is archetypal in the sense it represent the entire Greek frame of mind.

4.1. Setting:

In the novel there are two main settings: the three realms (Sky, Sea, and the Underworld) and the three mythical world places (Half-Blood Camp, the Underworld, and Mount Olympus). The three realms are closely related to the characterization of the main three gods of these realms: Zeus, the god of the sky; Poseidon, the god of the sea; and Hades, the god of the Underworld.

The mythical world is represented by three main settings; the first one is Mount Olympus. It is considered an axis mundi in Greek mythology, where the gods reside at the top of the mountain, the upper world; humans live at its base, the mid-world; and the spirits of the dead reside in the underworld (Sears, 2014). Therefore, it is considered as a cosmic map and the major mythical setting of the novel. According to Greek mythology, Olympus is a

utopia where the Olympian gods lived on the highest peak of Mount Olympus. It is covered with clouds and snow all year round, and it is rich with biodiversity. It contains a complete divine city made of Zeus's throne and gold and marble palaces of all gods and goddesses. The gods spend their time in self-involvement, listening to the muses, and enjoying music and poetry. It is also the main council from which Zeus rules the human world. (Roman & Roman, 2010) However, there are no clear references that describe how this is done; on the contrary, all references agree on Mount Olympus being a place of complete pleasure, and their rule over humankind is based on self-subjectivity. In the novel, Percy goes to Mount Olympus, which is located in the real world in the Empire State Building. The elevator takes him to the six hundredth floor, and when the door opens, Percy feels almost as if he is having a heart attack. He sees a stone walkway in the middle of the air connected to white marble steps covered with clouds that reaches up to the sky.

The sky is Zeus' realm or domain, and his character is manifested through the weather. He is present all the time, hovering over Percy's head in the shape of dark clouds, threatening him and tormenting him every second of the novel. His impatience, wrath, and anger are incarnated by rain, storm, lightning, and thunder. Percy first states how bad the weather has been ever since Christmas: "Massive snowstorms, flooding, and wildfires from lightning strikes." (Riordan, 9) Then Percy starts feeling that the weather is a character just like him, so he starts calling it names and paying attention to. He calls it freak weather, and it starts to rain after he killed Mrs. Dodds. When things escalate, a thunderstorm blows out his dorm room windows. Then when he goes on a vacation to Montauk with his mother, Zeus storms into Percy's dreams first, then hit them with a hurricane accompanied by pouring rain. Trying to run from Zeus's wrath, Percy, his mother, and Grover got into the car and drove away, yet "the roof had cracked open like an eggshell, and rain was pouring in." (Riordan, 47) Eventually the car crashed, and Percy blamed the lightning. In Half-Blood Camp, Percy realizes that the weather is Zeus angry at Percy, believing he stole his thunderbolt. Ever since he realized Zeus was over his head, he started paying attention to the ceiling and discovered that the Half-Blood Camp, Mount Olympus, and the underworld had no ceilings as well. "I guess they never had to worry about rain down here." (Riordan, 295) When he started his quest, he suggested flying to Lost Angels to save time, but he was warned against it because Percy should not fly in Zeus' domain.

The second realm, the sea, is depicted through Percy and his relation with water. At the beginning, Percy did not realize his connection with water until Half-Blood Camp. He was fatally injured, so he was taken to the water to cure him. It was at that moment that his father, Poseidon, claimed him as his son. Then again, when Echidna and the Chimera attacked Percy, he jumped into the Mississippi River. He was not only healed by the water, but he also realized that he can breathe normally underwater, and he is dry. By the end of the novel, he assumes his role as the prince of the sea, and thus, fights Ares, the god of war, with the waves of the sea.

The Greek underworld is the third realm of the Greek cosmos. It is the final place where the spirit after death and separation from the body resides. The spirits are led in groups on boats passing the river to the underworld, which is believed to be underneath the earth. (Berg, 2024) Upon reaching the entrance, the underworld is divided into three parts:

Asphodel Meadows, where normal good spirits reside; Elysium, which is paradise for heroes and distinguished individuals; and finally Tartarus, the deepest, darkest part of the underworld reserved for wicked souls. (Roman & Roman, 2010) In the novel, the reader is first introduced to Tartarus as the darkest part of the underworld where the sliced pieces of Kronos are scattered. Percy's first reaction when he learned that Greek mythology is a reality was that the underworld is real; therefore, his mother did not vanish. He started hoping to get a quest to go to the underworld so as to save his mother. Three heroes got quests to the underworld: Orpheus, Hercules, and Houdini, yet none of them was successful in returning someone from the dead. Finally, when he was acclaimed as Poseidon's son, he was offered a quest to go to the underworld and bring back the lightning bolt presumably stolen by Hades so as to clear his father's name and stop the war among the three brothers. "Gods cannot cross each other's territories except by invitation" (Riordan, 142); that is why gods operate through humans. The entrance to the underworld is always in the west; however, it changes from age to age. In Percy's world it is in Los Angeles. The entrance looked like a cross, showing three separate entrances under one huge black archway. The dead were distributed in three queues, two marked 'attendant and duty,' and their lines were very slow, while the third one marked 'easy death' moved very fast. The fastest line went straight to the Asphodel Fields.

4.2.Characterization :

A. The Trio on a quest (Percy, Annabeth, and Grover):

Percy is the main protagonist in the novel; although he is only twelve, he is faced with a tremendous task: saving both the real world and the mythical world from a colossal war among gods. After seeing his mother disappear in front of his eyes, he learns that he is a demigod, the son of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea. Zeus accused Poseidon of stealing his master bolt using his son, Percy; therefore, Zeus wants to kill Percy to retrieve his master bolt. Poseidon and Percy do not have the master bolt, so they blame Hades, the god of the underworld, for stealing it. At the same time, Hades's helmet of darkness is stolen from him, and he also blames Percy for stealing it. So Percy's quest is to go to Hades and ask him to return the master bolt, believing he has it, and return it to Zeus so that the three brothers would stop fighting within ten days. He immediately accepts the task and asks Grover to accompany him. Annabeth tags along, although she starts off on the wrong foot with Percy.

Annabeth is Athena's daughter. Athena (Roman: Minerva) is the Olympian goddess of wisdom and war. She is Zeus' daughter and is the personification of intelligence. She is often depicted wearing a helmet, carrying the aegis, a spear, and a shield decorated with Medusa's head (Roman & Roman, 2010). Percy meets Annabeth at Half-Blood Camp. She is as old as Percy yet inches taller and "a whole lot more athletic looking." (Riordan, 67) Percy describes her with admiration as having a deep tan and curly blond hair, but "her eyes ruined the image. They are startling gray, like storm clouds: pretty, but intimidating, too, as if she were analyzing the best way to take me down in a fight." (Riordan, 67) Although they share a quest, Annabeth and Percy started off as rivals more than friends; he calls her 'wise girl,' and she calls him 'seaweed.' We first see her looking after Percy, wanting to know some information from him. When he woke up she kept her distance, and when he tried to talk to her she simply dismissed him, saying, "You drool when you sleep." (Riordan, 67) She has an

invisibility cap that she uses many times to save herself and her friends. Annabeth always compares her mother to Percy's father, looking down on him, calling him a destroyer compared to her mother, the architect: "Athena expects her children to create things, not just to tear them down, like a certain god of earthquakes I could mention." (Riordan, 198) Furthermore, when all other gods and goddesses backed Poseidon, only Athena backed Zeus. Percy wants Annabeth to trust him so they can work together as a team, so he asks her if her mother has ever collaborated with his father to do anything of importance. Annabeth remembers the chariot that Athena invents, and Poseidon creates horses from wave crests to complete it. So after many ordeals, Percy asks her if war between gods did happen and if Athena will stand against Poseidon, just like she did during the Trojan Wars. Annabeth answers, hiding her face, that if Athena does stand against Poseidon, she won't because Percy is her friend. Since then their friendship grows; knowing Annabeth is terrified of spiders, he understands her fear and protects her from them. The spiders are Arachne's children who vowed revenge upon Athena's children for turning her into a spider after losing against her in a weaving contest. Finally, when Percy fights Ares, Annabeth gives her necklace of beads to Percy, saying "Reconciliations, Athena and Poseidon together." (Riordan, 316)

Grover is Percy's best friend, and he is a satyr. Satyrs are hybrids with a human male torso and a goat's legs and have horns on their heads. They are known for their playful nature, being nature spirits that personify fertility and sexual desire, and hence are considered creatures of chaos. They enjoy playing musical instruments and are loyal followers of Dionysius, the god of wine (Sears, 2014). In the novel, Grover is a satyr, yet he is not portrayed as being lustful or playful; on the contrary, he is an enthusiastic environmentalist. He does play musical instruments but is not lustful; instead, his hunger for food is concentrated upon. From the beginning of the novel, Grover was disguised as a crippled boy whose every step hurt him, yet Percy directly warns the reader not to be deceived by appearances: "Don't let that fool you. You should've seen him run when it was enchilada day in the cafeteria." (Riordan, 2) He loves nature and music and is great with animals. Throughout the novel he is depicted eating as a goat, chewing coke cans, gulping playing cards, swallowing wax paper, and eating anything that comes near his mouth. Compared to other satyrs, he is a late bloomer and is not very good at woodland magic. However, he can smell monsters, has sharp ears, and even takes vitamins for his ears.

B. The Evil triad (Kronos, Ares, and Luke):

Kronos, or Cronus, in the novel spelled Kronos, was the leader of the Titans and the youngest of Gaia's (earth) and Uranus's (sky) offspring. Gaia gave birth to many children, yet not all her children were godlike; she gave birth to Tartarus, the one-eyed Cyclopes, and the hundred-handed Hecatoncheries. Uranus was appalled by some of his offspring; therefore, he imprisoned them in Tartarus, the darkest and deepest pit in the underworld. Gaia was infuriated by her husband's doings, so she conspired with Kronos to castrate Uranus and cut him into many pieces with a sickle. For some time he freed his siblings from Tartarus, then he did exactly what his father did: he reimprisoned them in Tartarus again and assumed the throne with his wife, Rhea. Kronos' mother, Gaia, told him that he is destined to be overthrown by his children just as he overthrew his father. As a result, Kronos devoured all

his children: Demeter, Hestia, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. Before the birth of her youngest son, Zeus, Rhea sought Gaia's advice on how to save her son from his father. Zeus was born and was hidden from Kronos, who was given a wrapped stone to swallow, believing it was his son. Upon growing up, Zeus, with his grandmother Gaia, forced Cronus to drink a potion that made him disgorge all his siblings. This act started a ten-year war called the Titanomachy that Zeus won after freeing all his siblings as well as the Hecatoncheires and the Cyclopes. After Kronos' defeat, Zeus cut him into many pieces and threw him in Tartarus along with many Titans (Roman & Roman, 2014).

In one of Percy's dreams he meets Kronos. Percy sees himself standing in a dark cavern next to a gaping pit symbolizing the confrontation between the protagonist and antagonist. In this dream, Percy knows he is in the underworld surrounded with gray mist and the spirits of the dead. However, the spirits were urging him to wake up and move away from the pit. The pit opened wide, talking to Percy directly: "*The little hero. Too weak, too young, but perhaps you will do.*" (Riordan, 191) The voice urged Percy to help him rise from the pit, and it would give him his mother in return. Then the voice coiled its unseen grip around Percy, trying to pull itself up; the dead woke him up from the nightmare. Percy did not know who the creature in the pit was, and when he told Annabeth his dream, she was shocked too. By now the trio suspected that Hades is not the real villain. "That doesn't sound like Hades. He always appears on a black throne and never laughs." (Riordan, 196)

The second time we feel his presence in Percy's final dream. The same unseen voice from the pit conspiring with another character. One is referred to as "lord" and is called the crooked one, and the other is the thief. In this dream, the voice declares that Percy is different; he came unsummoned to another person's dream: "He is too changeable, too unpredictable." (Riordan, 245) The voice wanted to scare him, so he changed the scene of the dream; he placed Percy in the underworld, where his mother is frozen in golden light. Again Percy is powerless; he couldn't move, and what made things even worse, his body was withering into bones. The skeletons surrounded him, dressing him in a silk robe and crowning him with Chimera-poisoned laurels that burned his scalp. The voice was enjoying the dream to the extent it laughed and said, "Hail, the conquering hero!" (Riordan, 247)

Ares (Roman: Mars) was the Olympian god of war and courage, son of Zeus and Hera. Often portrayed riding a chariot with four horses accompanied by Deimaos (fear) and Phobos (panic), his animals are the dog and vulture. His weapons are the shield, sword, spear, and helmet. In Greek mythology, he is depicted as a violent god who wages war to enjoy its brutality and destruction (Roman & Roman, 2010). In the novel the trio met Ares in a diner on the fourth day of their quest after their encounter with the three Furies, Medusa, and Echidna. He bought them cheeseburgers and offered them a proposition. Riordan portrays him as a biker whose very sight would make professional wrestlers run to their mothers: "He had the cruelest, most brutal face I'd ever seen—handsome, I guess, but wicked—with an oily black crew cut and cheeks that were scarred from many, many fights." (Riordan, 219) The air around him was hot and dry; people rose from their seats in respect as if hypnotized. He ignited negative feelings in Percy: "I couldn't see his eyes behind the red shades, but bad feelings started boiling in my stomach. Anger, bitterness, resentment. I wanted to hit a wall." (Riordan, 220) After removing his shades, Percy was able to see his eyes: "Where his eyes

should've been was only fire, empty sockets glowing with miniature nuclear explosions." (Riordan, 220) He plays a vital role as the villain who conspired to start a war against the gods, and he was proud of it. "Sure. Framing somebody to start a war. Oldest trick in the book." (Riordan, 223) He first deceived the trio to bring him his shield that he left in the water park in exchange for providing a ride to the underworld. Ares caught the thief Luke and took away the bolt and the helmet from him. Instead of returning them to his brothers, he was plagued with nightmares telling him to start a three-way war among the big three gods. Therefore, when Percy goes to Hades to ask for the master bolt, Ares hides the stolen master bolt in Percy's bag, hoping Hades will catch him and blame Poseidon for the theft. Finally, Percy fights Ares in exchange for the helm of darkness. Percy's fight with the god of war is symbolic of Percy's character development from a bullied boy to a hero that slayed the god of war and stopped a war among gods.

Finally, we have Luke Castellan, the Lightning Thief. As mentioned earlier, the camp consisted of twelve cabins corresponding to the twelve Olympian gods and goddesses' children. At the beginning, Percy's father was not determined; therefore, he stayed in cabin eleven under the supervision of Luke, the son of Hermes, the god of travels and thieves, until claimed by Poseidon. He is considered Percy's friend and mentor; he even gave his winged sandals as a gift to Percy to help him on his quest. Unfortunately, Percy at the very end of the novel discovers that Luke is the lightning thief and he is the friend that the prophecy warned him against. The winged sandals he gave to Percy were a trap, for they were directed to fly Percy directly to the pit of Tartarus.

C. The Greek Trinity (The Big Three: Zeus, Hades and Poseidon):

The Big Three referred to in the novel are the Greek male trinity, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, who, after winning the Titanomachy, became the ruling Olympian gods. When Percy first heard the term 'the Big Three,' he thought it referred to Zeus, Hera, and Hades, as is the custom of all other mythological trinities having a female included. Grover corrected Percy, saying, "When we say the Big Three, we mean the three powerful brothers, the sons of Kronos." (Riordan, 112) After drawing lots, Zeus became the god of the sky, Poseidon the god of the sea, and Hades the god of the underworld.

Zeus is the main god in the Greek pantheon. We are introduced to Zeus through Percy, the protagonist, while he is explaining the painting of Kronos eating his children in the museum. According to Greek mythology, Zeus assumed succession after a violent, abusive father-son relationship. In the novel, he is the Supreme Being, and Percy meets him only once on Mount Olympus:

> Zeus, the lord of the gods, wore a dark blue pinstriped suit. He sat on a simple throne of solid platinum. He had a well-trimmed beard, marbled gray and black like a storm cloud. His face was proud and handsome and grim, his eyes rainy gray. As I got nearer to him, the air crackled and smelled of ozone. (Riordan, 327)

Poseidon (Roman: Neptune) is one of the Big Three Olympian gods and the son of Cronos and Rhea. He is the god of the sea, and his main role is to calm waters or to cause storms. He is often portrayed as an independent god that not only challenged Zeus many times but also once conspired with Hera and Athena to put Zeus in chains. Unlike Zeus and Hades, Poseidon is not involved in human society; instead, he is associated with violent natural phenomena, namely earthquakes, floods, and drought (Roman & Roman, 2010). He sired many children from different women; some of them were gods, like Triton, a merman god of the sea and Poseidon's messenger. Poseidon also sired a number of daimones, nymphs, and giants. Poseidon is also associated with dolphins and horses, and some of his offspring are horses. He is often depicted riding his chariot pulled by a hippocampus, a fish-tailed horse (Albert, 2021).

Percy meets his father for the first time in Mount Olympus on his quest to retrieve Zeus's lightning bolt:

> "His skin was deeply tanned, his hands scarred like an old-time fisherman's. His hair was dark, like mine. His face had the same brooding look that had always gotten me branded as a rebel. But his eyes, sea-green like mine, were surrounded by sun-crinkles that told me he smiled a lot, too." (Riordan, 329)

The trident is Poseidon's three-pronged spear, which represents his power and control over water. Forged by the Cyclopes to be used during the Titanomachy. The trident is a symbol of his divinity, celestial nature, and the trinity (Panchenko, 2019). When Poseidon claimed Percy as his son, the trident appeared over Percy's head: "a hologram of green light, spinning and gleaming, a three-tipped spear; a trident." (Riordan, 125) As a reaction to the trident, all demigods in the camp knelt for him while Chiron declared, "Earthshaker, Stormbringer, Father of Horses. Hail, Perseus Jackson, Son of the Sea God." (Riordan, 127) Percy saw the real trident when he met his father on Mount Olympus; it was made of bronze, and it flickered with green light around its three tips. Percy noticed that whenever his father talked about Kronos, he grabbed his trident tight, and he did not leave it once out of his hands. Percy was so happy that he blushed when he was given his first bead as a half-blood camper because it carried "the sea-green trident shimmering in the center." (Riordan, 350)

Hades, one of the Big Three powerful brothers, is the god of the underworld that is also called Hades. Hades, the god of the underworld, is portrayed as being ten feet tall, a matter that struck Percy's attention. Riordan gives Hades a strong presence and a respectable personality compared to the other gods' faults and shortcomings. He has a "mesmerizing evil charisma" (Riordan, 229), and even his clothes are unique. Hades' robes are made of shadowy, tormented faces, as if the robe were stitched of trapped souls trying hard to get out:

> Dressed in black silk robes and a crown of braided gold. His skin was albino white, and his hair was shoulder-length jet black. He wasn't bulked up like Ares, but he radiated power. He lounged on his throne of fused human bones, looking as lithe, graceful, and dangerous as a panther." (Riordan, 299)

Percy's reaction to Hades was complete surrender: "Numbness crept into my joints, tempting me to lie down and just take a little nap at Hades' feet. Curl up here and sleep forever." (Riordan, 299) Percy managed to talk to Hades, and they discovered that they are being played. Hades has the best villain characterization and appearance, and his portrayal strengthens the reader's belief in his evil doings; hence, the plot twist comes as a shock, enhancing the theme of deception by appearance.

4.3.Themes :

A. Disability and Super-ability (Percy, Chiron, Grover):

One of the most notable standpoints of Greek mythology is its fixation on physical perfection. Their mythology provided the "blueprint for human behavior, worldview, and cosmology." (Saniotis et al., 2024) This physical perfection is believed to reflect cognitive perfection as well. All Greek deities, except Hephaestus, were physically perfect and had strong attributes and superpowers (Saniotis et al., 2024). Riordan heavily invests in the theme of disabled individuals as chosen heroes making distinguished achievements. In the novel we have three disabled characters: Percy with a mental disability and Chiron and Grover with physical disabilities. Percy is a twelve-year-old troubled boy with cognitive disabilities, namely dyslexia and ADHD. The novel opens with Percy directly addressing the reader: "Look, I didn't want to be a half-blood. If you're reading this because you think you might be one, my advice is: close this book right now." (Riordan, 2005) Then he continues explaining to the reader how dangerous and messed up his life is. He is only twelve years old, and he is struggling with self-acceptance; therefore, he asks a rhetorical question, "Am I a troubled kid?" to which he immediately answers, "Yea. You could say that." (Riordan, 2) He does not stop at that; in detail he gives all incidences in his short life that led to disasters and warns the reader that he is not only dyslexic but also his brain does not function well: I have moments like that a lot, when my brain falls asleep or something, and the next thing I know I've missed something, as if a puzzle piece fell out of the universe and left me staring at the blank place behind it. The school counselor told me this was part of the ADHD, my brain misinterpreting things." (Riordan, 12) In moments like this, Riordan describes in detail how Percy acts heroically regardless of how he sees himself or how low he feels. It is this type of narrative that makes readers feel empathy with their hero. Riordan consistently reminds the reader that his chosen hero is mentally troubled yet never mentions anything about his physical skills. From his actions we learn he always makes a stand even if he is beaten down. The chosen one is a character archetype of ancient myths that "represents an individual selected or destined for a specific, often world-altering, purpose." (Parker, 2025) Furthermore, 'the chosen one' is a trope as well. Upon learning he is a demigod, Percy realized that his personality is programmed on battle mode; therefore, his senses were "working overtime." (Riordan, 318) In other words, the ADHA is keeping him alive during battle. "I was wide awake, noticing every little detail." (Riordan, 318)The chosen one as a trope is frequently used as a literary device or even a theme to portray a character that is pressured with fear and self-doubt and troubled with internal conflict (Raines, 2025). The same is true for Chiron and Grover, who are introduced along with Percy as both being physically disabled. Mr. Brunner is a centaur, and centaurs have horse-shaped lower parts representing their brutality,

savagery, and uncivilized nature. Their animal part always wins over their human part; therefore, they are considered creatures of chaos (Sears, 2014). There is one exception, however: Chiron, the civilized centaur. He was skilled in medicine and was trusted as a trainer of heroes like Achilles. He was immortal but suffering from a painful wound that forced him to trade his immortality so as to stop his endless pain and die. Zeus honored him by making him the constellation of Centaurus (Roman & Roman, 2010). In the novel Chiron was disguised as Mr. Brunner, Percy's disabled Latin teacher whom he highly respects. He is a middle-aged guy in a motorized wheelchair." (Riordan, 2) He only discovers his real identity at Camp Half-Blood when he keeps asking his teacher who he really is, and then suddenly the apparently paralyzed teacher rises from the wheelchair to show Percy that his lower part of the body is that of a white stallion. Chiron is Percy's most trusted person and mentor. Grover, Percy's only friend, was crippled. "He had a note excusing him from PE for the rest of his life because he had some kind of muscular disease in his leg." (Riordan, 2)Being the chosen one requires them to suffer internal as well as external struggles. Therefore, both Chiron and Grover are portrayed as the physically disabled chosen ones so as to "make them relatable." (Raines, 2025) Chiron is chosen to be the trainer of heroes, and Grover is the one who will find Pan, the god of wild places. Hence, their seemingly troubled physical disability turned out to be a super-ability.

B. Gender Stereotype in Major Characterization:

In the novel, all major characters except Annabeth are men reflecting the gender in Greek mythology that is based on Greek society at that period. Men are viewed as systemizers, while women are empathizers, creating stereotypes that are not only bound by race, culture, ethnicity, and social class but also contribute a great deal to constructing society. In an article entitled "Gender Stereotypes in Rick Riordan's The Lightning Thief," the authors analyze the novel as having three main themes, each revolving around gender theory. The Greek trinity consists of three male gods, and the entire plot revolves around the competition of these three male characters along with minor male gods, namely Ares. Each of the powerful three has his own famous untouchable symbol of power: Zeus's Master Bolt, Poseidon's Trident, and Hades' Helmet of Darkness. The main hero of the novel is a male adolescent character who is stereotyped as being brave since he is a male. In the scene when he fights Ares for the master bolt and the helmet of Darkness, he tells Ares to fight him himself, and if Percy loses, Ares could change him to anything he wants. This negotiation incarnates how male characters perceive themselves; if they do not win a fight as men, they should not be men anymore (Andriaka, et al., 2023).

Female characters, however, are given complementary roles; all goddesses mentioned are typical female empathizers: Hera is the goddess of marriage, Aphrodite of love, sex, and beauty, and Athena of wisdom and feminine handcraft. Annabeth, Percy's companion in his quest, helped a lot with her intelligence, although she is stereotyped as a mere companion who is saved by Percy many times (Andriaka et al., 2023). She is portrayed as powerless, highly sensitive, and affected by her family's condition, whereas Percy is also abused by his stepfather, yet he is portrayed as sarcastic, strong, and unsentimental.

C. Order Vs Chaos

Creatures of Order (The Three Judges, the Erinyes, the Moirai, Cerberus):

Souls live in the underworld a shadow life with no comprehension until being judged (Retief & Cilliers, 2010). There is a clear system. According to references, the three judges are deceased mortals who are Zeus' sons and are known for their justice. The three mythical heroes allotted the role of infernal judges are Aeacus (Aikos), Minos, and Rhadamanthys. Aeacus was responsible for judging the European spirits, while Rhadamanthys was responsible for judging the Asian. Minos is responsible for the final judgment: the good go to Elysium, the bad to Tartarus, and those with no significant deeds are sentenced to live in Asphodel Fields doing nothing for eternity. In the novel, Annabeth explains to Percy that the three lines of the underworld entrance are judged by the three judges. However, in the novel, Annabeth changes the names of two judges:

> They switch around who sits in the bench. King Minos, Thomas Jefferson, and Shakespeare-people like that. Sometimes they look at a life and decide that a person needs a special reward-the Fields of Elysium. Sometimes they decide on punishment. But most people, well, they just lived. Nothing special, good or bad. So they go to Asphodel Fields."(Riordan, 280)

Riordan blended mythology with history and fiction in representing the three judges of the underworld, where King Minos represents the mythical, Thomas Jefferson represents the historical, being the founding father of the United States of America, and William Shakespeare represents the great creator of fictional worlds. He also introduced the idea of rotation, where the judges 'switch around.'

The Erinyes, or the Kindly Ones, Tisiphone, Megaera, and Alecto, are the daughters of Gaia and Uranus and the sisters of the Titans and the Giants. They are the Greek personification of curses and revenge. They are portrayed as fearful bat-like winged creatures carrying a whip in hand. In other depictions they have bloodshot eyes and snakes in their hair like the Gorgons. They work with Hades in the underworld as punishers of wrongdoers, especially homicide within families, as well as other violations of law, so as to achieve justice. Megaera is responsible for punishing crimes caused by jealousy, Alecto is responsible for crimes committed out of envy, while Tisiphone is responsible for punishing murders (Roman & Roman, 2010). In the novel, Percy encounters a fury disguised as Mrs. Dodds, the math teacher, who, once she caught Percy's aura, changed into a fury:

> Her eyes began to glow like barbecue coals. Her fingers stretched, turning into talons. Her jacket melted into large, leathery wings. She wasn't human. She was a shriveled hag with bat wings and claws and a mouth of yellow fangs, and she was about to slice me to ribbons."(Riordan, 13)

Since she is immortal, after Percy's successes in killing her at the museum, she comes back again along with her two sisters, attacking him on his first day of the quest. Annabeth explains to Percy that the Furies function as Hades' torturers, who set up eternal tortures for bad people. Percy describes them as "triplet demon grandmothers," and Annabeth calls them "the three worst monsters from the underworld" (Riordan, 158). Therefore, when they caught the trio on the bus, the Furies declared, "You have offended the gods. You shall die." (Riordan, 161) Then they changed into their real form:

> The old ladies were not old ladies anymore. Their faces were still the same- I guess those couldn't get any uglier – but their bodies had shriveled into leathery brown hag bodies with bat's wings and hands and feet like gargoyle claws. Their handbags tuned into fiery whips. (Riordan, 159)

Annabeth and Grover warned Percy not to call them by name and to call them the Kindly Ones instead. They were looking for something; they did not try to kill him. At the museum and on the bus, they screeched at him, "Where is it? Where?" (Riordan, 190) They exploded with the bus, and being immortal, they did not die; they continued to track Percy and his friends till Percy managed to give them Hades' helmet. They immediately stop attacking him, knowing that he is not a thief. "Live well, Percy Jackson. Become a true hero. Because if you do not, if you ever come into my clutches again …," she crackled, savoring the idea (Riordan, 320).

The Fates The three fates, also called Moirai, are a personification of fate portrayed as three spinners of the thread of fate. According to Hesiod's ***Theogony,*** they are the daughters of Nyx, the primordial goddess of night; however, in other sources, they are Zeus' daughters from his second Titan wife, Themis, the goddess of justice (Sears, 2014). Regardless of their patronage, the three fates have absolute power over all creation, gods included. The three sisters are Clotho, the youngest of the three, who is the spinner responsible for spinning the thread of each individual to determine his/her time of birth, depicted carrying a spindle and distaff. The second sister, Lachesis, is the allotter that measures the thread and allots a specific time for life. Finally, Atropos, the oldest of the three, depicted as being old and cruel, is responsible for cutting the thread of life with her shears, thus determining death. (See Figure 1 below.) No one has the right to intervene with their decisions (Roman & Roman, 2010).

In the novel, the three fates are introduced as three old ladies knitting a very big pair of blue socks. However, Riordan made the ladies on the left and right knitting while the one in the middle is holding a large basket of electric blue yarn. "All three women looked ancient, with pale faces wrinkled like fruit leather, silver hair tied back in white bandannas, bonny arms sticking out of bleached cotton dresses." (Riordan, 27) Percy at that moment did not know what the three old ladies represent and it was Grover's fear that made Percy pay attention to the symbolism of their actions. He ironically asks Grover

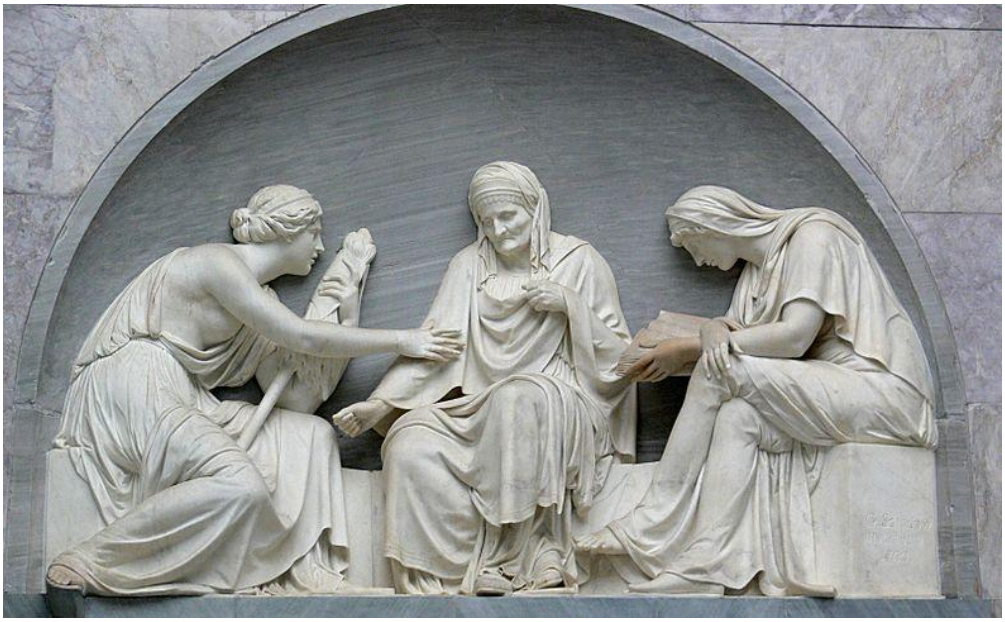
- "You think those socks would fit me?"

"Not funny, Percy. Not funny at all." (Riordan, 27)

The three fates were looking directly at Percy when the lady in the middle took out a pair of long bladed shears made of gold and silver. Percy describes the sense with vivid imagery, "the middle on cut the yarn and I swear I could hear that snip across four lanes of traffic." (Riordan, 27), Grover's fear made Percy understand how fatal that cutting of the yarn was and it meant that he is going to die. The use of the three fates is controversial since they did cut the yarn looking at Percy, but Percy did not die. Maybe because at that moment he did not realize the Greek mythological realm as a reality to be affected by it.

Figure 1

The Three Fates



***Note*: from Fates, by Liana Miate, World History Encyclopedia, 2022,**

https://www.worldhistory.org/image/16813/the-three-moirai/

Finally, Cerberus is a three-headed dog that guards the entrance to the underworld. He is the offspring of Echidna and Typhoeus (Roman & Roman, 2010). He is responsible for keeping the dead from leaving the underworld and the living from entering it. In many sources he is described as having three heads, while in others, the number of heads varies, ranging from two to one hundred. His three heads are believed to represent past, present, and future. He is also described as having serpents as a tail or having a hundred serpents aligned to his back. According to Greek culture, snakes are guardians of the underworld; therefore, the serpentine qualities that Cerberus has reinforce his role as the guardian, along with the fact that he is a dog, associating him with loyalty and protection (Strozier, 2022). The reader is introduced to his howl, and Percy shows his excitement to see this mythical dog that is a purebred Rottweiler and is "twice the size of a woolly mammoth, mostly invisible, and has

three heads." (Riordan, 281) Annabeth managed to distract Cerberus by playing fetch with him with a red rubber ball. He was standing right where the path split into three lanes, and Percy repeatedly concentrated on Cerberus's triple aspects and their applications like he was growling from his 'three throats' (Riordan, 283), and when Annabeth tried to make him obey her, giving him the order to sit and showing him the red ball, "all of his three heads cocked sideways. Six nostrils dilated" (Riordan, 284), to which Cerberus responded by "licking his three sets of lips" (Riordan, 286) and sat crushing dozens of dead spirits. Finally, when they left him and entered, "Cerberus moaned pitifully from all three mouths." (Riordan, 287)

Creatures of Chaos (The Three Gorgons):

The three Gorgons are one of the most famous sets of threes in Greek mythology. They are the daughters of the sea gods Phorcys and Ceto, who, according to many sources, were beautiful girls yet punished by Athena with a monstrous appearance. The three monstrous sisters are Sthenno, Euryale, and the most famous one of them all, Medusa. They are depicted with serpentine hair and a horrific gaze and have the ability to turn anyone who looks at them into stone. (See Figure 2 below) There are two stories as to why Athena turned the three sisters into gorgons; according to the first story, Athena caught Poseidon having intercourse in her sanctuary, and in the second story, Poseidon raped Medusa in Athena's sanctuary; however, the result is the same (Sears, 2014). Athena was enraged that her sanctuary was so, so she poured her wrath on Medusa, turning her and her sisters into monsters. The Gorgons appear in the myth of Perseus, the demigod son of Zeus, who, in order to save his mother from a tyrannical king, was asked to kill Medusa and bring her head to his mother (Roman & Roman, 2010).

Figure 2

The Three Gorgons



Note: **The Horrifying Story Of The Gorgons, The Snake-Haired Monsters From Ancient Greek Legend**, by Andrew Milne, 2025

https://allthatsinteresting.com/gorgons

In the novel, the trio reach a garden gnome emporium owned by Aunty Em, who was very tall, wearing a long black gown that covered her entire body from head to toe except her hands and eyes. Percy noticed that her hands looked old yet well-manicured and elegant. When they came near her, Grover could hear a hissing sound. Then Aunt Em started talking about how a bad woman who was jealous of her affair with her boyfriend caused a terrible accident. She continued stating how her sisters died and she remained alone. Then Annabeth realized that Aunty Em is Medusa herself; she wore her invisibility cap so as to push both Grover and Percy out of Medusa's gaze. Percy avoided looking at Medusa's eyes and looked at her hands instead; the hands turned warty and had 'sharp bronze talons for fingernails." (Riordan, 178)

Percy managed to decapitate her with his sword, the trio wrapped her head and placed it in a box, and then they mailed it to the gods at Mount Olympus. It is the same head that Percy's mom used on her husband, Gabe, turning him into a statue entitled The Poker Player. Sally sold the statue, and with the money she bought a new apartment and paid for her tuition at the university. After this incident Percy blames Annabeth's mother, Athena, for creating such a monster, to which Annabeth angrily responds that it was his father, Poseidon's fault. Riordan adapts, through Annabeth, the first story of Medusa, where she is punished for being Poseidon's girlfriend:

> Medusa was Poseidon's girlfriend. They decided to meet in my mother's temple. That is why Athena turned her into a monster. Medusa and her two sisters who helped her get into the temple, they became the three gorgons. That's why Medusa wanted to slice me up, but she wanted to preserve you as a nice statue. She's still sweet on your dad. You probably reminded her of him." (Riordan, 183-184)

D. Animal Rights and Eco-awareness (The Three Zoo Animals):

According to the novel, the Greek gods chose America as their dwelling place because it is the heart of Western Civilization. They enjoyed the development and mingled with humans naturally yet not too often. For the gods this civilization has one major flaw: pollution. All characters that are directly related to the mythical world care for the ecosystem and have environmental awareness. Grover is an environmentalist, as Percy calls him. He is pained by the pollution and violation of wildlife and takes actions against it. Riordan gives Grover the voice and the right to criticize humans many times and gives him the role of an advocate and a protector.

Ares provids the trio with a ride to the west in a truck that has three animals inside to transport to the zoo. The smell of the truck is horrible, and the place is dark; however, there are three animals inside: a zebra, a male albino lion, and a weird antelope. The animals are abused physically by being trapped in a filthy, dark, smelly truck inside cages. They are given food that does not match them; the carnivore lion is given turnips, and both of the zebra and the antelope are given hamburgers. Furthermore, the zebra's mane has chewing gum on it, and a balloon is tied on the antelope's horn. The lion is caged in a place too small for him,

and he is in pain; “he had flies buzzing around his pink eye, and his ribs showed through his white fur.” (Riordan, 239) Grover is the first to revolt, and he is so angry that he wants to beat up the truckers. Unfortunately he cannot, so he talks to the animals instead. Percy switchs their food and gives them water, but the truckers came and started to abuse the animals, starting with the lion. One of the truckers splashed water on the lion’s face. Grover was very angry; “for a peace-loving herbivore, he looked downright murderous.” (Riordan, 247) It iss at this moment that Percy realizes he understood the zebra’s language but cannot understand the lion nor the antelope. Poseidon, his father, is the creator of horses, and since a zebra is close enough to a horse, he can understand his language. The zebra pleads with Percy, saying, “*Open my cage, lord. Please. I’ll be fine after that*.” (Riordan, 248) Percy changes from a passive environmentalist into an active eco-hero.

Percy immediately responds by smashing the cage locks with his sword and freeing all the animals. Grover blesses them with Satyr’s sanctuary, which entails reaching safely to the wild and being able to find food, water, shade, and everything they need until they reach safety. Percy is shocked and asked Grover to bestow on the trio the same sanctuary; unfortunately, the blessing works only on wild animals. At the Lotus hotel, Grover is fixated on Virtual Deer Hunter game, so he spent his entire time shooting hunters, “Die, human! Die, silly polluting nasty person!” (Riordan, 256)

By the end of the novel, Percy’s characterization develops into a full eco-hero; he not only protects nature, he is one with it (Wardana, 2025). In his fight with Ares, he controlled the sea and smashed Ares with its waves. Accepting his role enabled him to survive all natural crises, storms, bad weather, and earthquakes, and he was even able to take a plane to Olympus. He became one with nature and the prince of all water.

5. **Conclusions:**

After thorough analysis of number three as an archetypal number, the researchers concluded that number three is used to encapsulate a wide range of literary elements and devices. (See table 1 below). The setting of the novel concentrate on three; the three realms, sky, sea, and the underworld as well as the three mythical places in the novel Half-Blood Camp, the Underworld, and Mount Olympus. Riordan invested number three in portraying all characters in the novel; the evil triad of Kronos, Ares, and Luke conspired to start a three-way war among the Greek trinity of Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. It is the trio’s task to stop this war and fight all sets of three creatures of order and chaos. All types of literary devices are decoded within these sets of three as well as themes. Cosmic order and inevitability of fate is represented through the three fates, gender stereotypes is represented through the trio on quest and the big three brother, disability and super-ability represented by the three disabled characters, and finally animal rights, and environmental awareness represented by the three zoo animals. Ultimately, the archetypal use of number three transforms Riordan’s children’s fantasy into mythopoeic reflection of human order, chaos, and transcendence.

Table (1)

The Power of Three in Percy Jackson and the Olympians: the Lightening Thief (2005)

	Major Literary elements	**Sets of three in the novel**	
Number three	**Setting**	***The three realms***	Sky
			Sea
			Underworld
		Three mythical places	Half-Blood Camp
			The Underworld
			Mount Olympus
	Characterization	***The Big Three***	Zeus
			Hades
			Poseidon
		The Trio on a Quest	Percy
			Annabeth
			Grover
		The Evil Triad	Kronos
			Luke
			Ares
		Creatures of Chaos	The Gorgons
		Creatures of order	The Fates (Moirai)
		Hades' agents of order	The Furies (Erinyes or the Kindly ones)
			Cerberus
			The three judges
	Themes	***-Cosmic order -the inevitability of fate***	represented by the Fates
		Moral order	represented by the Furies
		Fatal boundaries	represented by the guardians Cerberus
		Paralyzing chaos	chaos represented by the gorgons
		Gender stereotypes	The trio on a quest (Annabeth as gender stereotype)
		-Disability and super-ability - Appearances are deceptive	Three disabled characters : Mentally disabled : Percy (dyslexia and ADHD) Physically disabled Chiron (wheelchair), Grover (crippled)
		-Animal rights -Pollution of natural sources	Three Zoo animals

References

Adler, G. (Ed.). (1992). ***C.G.Jung Letters 1906 - 1950*** (Vol. 1). New York : Routledge .

Albert, L. (2021). ***Greek Mythology: The Gods, Goddesses, and Heroes Handbook***. New York: Adams Media. Retrieved 10 8, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Greek_Mythology_The_Gods_Goddesses_and_H/ShnuDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=poseidon%2Bgreek+mythology&pg=PA29&printsec=frontcover

Andriaka, R., Sukarno, S., & Setiarini, R. (2023). Gender Stereotypes in Rick Riordan's the Lightning Thief. ***International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis****, 6*(5), 2265-2278. doi:10.47191/ijmra/v6-i5-55

Berg, S. (2024). ***Greek Mythology: Gods and Folklore of Ancient Greece***. New York: Creek Ridge Publishing. Retrieved 10 5, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Greek_Mythology/raYhEQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=greek+underworld&pg=PA47&printsec=frontcover

Card, C. R. (1996). The Emergence of Archetypes in Present-Day Science And Its Significance for a Contemporary Philosophy of Nature. Retrieved 1 27, 2025, from https://www.seconddrawerdown.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Emergence-of-Archetypes-in-Present.pdf

Card, C. R. (2020, 11 14). Mind, Matter and Archetype:A Review of the Jung-Pauli Hypothesis. Canada : University of Victoria. Retrieved 2 23, 2025, from https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=-TidTqoAAAAJ&citation_for_view=-TidTqoAAAAJ:9yKSN-GCB0IC

Drayer, R. A. (2003). ***Numerology: The Power In Numbers***. USA: Square One Publishers. Retrieved 8 25, 2024, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Numerology/oNfEWDTCidgC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=numerology&printsec=frontcover

Jung, C. (1964). ***Man and His Symbols*** . New York: Anchor Press .

Leigh, D. J. (2015). ***Carl Jung's Archetypal Psychology, Literature, and Ultimate Meaning***. URAM, 34(1-2), 95-112. Retrieved 1 24, 2025, from https://utppublishing.com/doi/pdf/10.3138/uram.34.1-2.95

Merriam-webster. (2025, 1 23). Archetype . Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/archetype

Onwuatuegwu, I. (2023, July). The Duality of Perfection: Exploring the Symbolic Significance of 3 and 7 in Human Experience. ***ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*** (ISRGJAHSS), 1(IV), 93. Retrieved 10 6, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378041656_The_Duality_of_Perfection_Exploring_the_Symbolic_Significance_of_3_and_7_in_Human_Experience

Morariu, V. V. (1998). THE ARCHETYPAL HYPOTHESIS OF C.G. JUNG AND W. PAULI AND THE NUMBER ARCHETYPES: AN EXTENSION OF THE CONCEPT TO THE GOLDEN NUMBER. ***Paideusis - Journal for Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Studies***, 1, 73-83. Retrieved 8 28, 2024, from https://www.seconddrawerdown.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Paideusis-MorariuCard-1.pdf

Pabadopoulos, R. K. (Ed.). (2006). ***The Handbook of Jungian Psychology: Theory, Practice, and Application***. New York: Routledge. Retrieved 7 5, 2024, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/The_Handbook_of_Jungian_Psychology/Ygh1B62BtboC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=psychology+of+numbers%2Barchetypes&pg=PA90&printsec=frontcover

Panchenko, D. (2019). thena Tritogeneia, Poseidon's trident and early sacred trinity. ΣΧΟΛΗ. Философское антиковедение и классическая традиция(2), 451-462. Retrieved 0 8, 2025, from https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=806717

Parker, E. (2025). ***Hero Archetypes***. Oslo: Publifye AS. Retrieved 9 19, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Hero_Archetypes/72tPEQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=the+chosen+one+theme%2Barchetypal&pg=PT37&printsec=frontcover

Previews, B. (2024***). The Language of Dreams: Unlocking the Secrets of the Unconscious Mind***. Stiago. Retrieved 9 28, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/The_Language_of_Dreams/ELr3EAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=dreams+in+greek+mythology&pg=PT43&printsec=frontcover

Raines, H. (2025). ***Genre Constraints***. Oslo, Norway: Publifye AS. Retrieved 9 19, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Genre_Constraints/OXpbEQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=archetypal+themes%2Bthe+chosen+one&pg=PT36&printsec=frontcover

Riordan, R. (2005). ***Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Theif***. New York.

Roman, L., & Roman, M. (2010). ***Encyclopedia of Greek And Roman Mythology***. New York: Facts On File, Inc.

Saniotis, A. (2024, January). Ancient Greeks and Body/Cognitive Enhancement Technologies: An Anthropological Perspective. ***Anthropologie***, 26(1). doi:10.26720/anthro.24.01.17.1

Sears, K. (2014). ***Mythology 101: From Gods and Goddesses to Monsters and Mortals, Your Guide to Anceint Mythology***. Avon: Adams Media.

Stewart, I. (2024, 8 25). Number symbolism. Retrieved from Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/topic/number-symbolism