

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
University of Amar Thelidji Laghouat  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of English



**Greek Mythologies in the Modern Urban Fantasy**  
**World of the Hero's journey through Rick Riordan's**  
***The Lightning Thief (2005)***

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master Degree**

**in English:**

**English Language, Literature & Civilisation**

**Submitted by:**

**Amal Mekhanet**

**Supervised by:**

**Mrs. Moufida Boumous**

**Academic Year**

**2018-2019**

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my dearest family, my adorable brothers and my unique friends. Father and mother, you have given me a life that cannot be possibly given to anyone. I have lived with your inspiration and tenderness and love since the beginning of my life, and eventually, I will always do. Nothing could ever be possible without those yells and advice you gave me. I may sometimes be stubborn, but I know how you always care for me.

My beloved brother Ridha, the days when I was supposed to be writing my dissertation, you gave me the greatest reasons that helped me not to write. But in one way or another, I was able to do it with your help. You are a blessing.

## **Acknowledgment**

My greatest debt of gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mrs. Boumous for her wisdom, support and most importantly her patience since day one, because without her, this would not be possible to achieve. She instructed me with her ideas and comments until I finished my work. The most important things that inspired me about my supervisor is her considerate nature and simplicity.

I would like to thank my teachers. I must say that I am really grateful for the years of study that I spent with you; therefore, I am greatly thankful. In the end, the journey that I started would have been in vain if you were not there. For this reason, I have survived.

## **Abstract**

Fantasy literature has benefited from the ancient mythologies and folklore as a primary material. Yet, many contemporary authors remained utilizing these myths by incorporating them into their modern stories. From the original mythologies, different and divergent views emerged because many of them when placed within an urban environment; therefore, it resulted in these different visions. In three chapters, this analytical study aims to address and explain how Rick Riordan, in his book, *The Lightning Thief* (2005), reshaped these old myths and modernized them to keep the updated to his age. This study also highlights the synthetic method used among the pioneers of fantasy stories derived from, *the hero's journey*, Campbell's work which is also used by Rick Riordan.

**Keywords: urban fantasy, monomyth, quest objects, mythic fiction, YA fiction, Greek mythologies.**

## ملخص

استفاد أدب الخيال من الميثولوجيا و الفولكلور كمادة اولية. الى حد الآن دأب العديد من المؤلفين المعاصرين باختلاق الأساطير و دمجها في قصصهم الحديثة. ظهرت وجهات نظر مختلفة و متفاوتة عن الأساطير القديمة ,لان العديد منها عند وُضعه داخل بيئة حضرية انتج رؤى اخرى متباينة. هذه الدراسة التحليلية تهدف الى معالجة و توضيح كيف ان الكاتب ريك ريوردان في كتابه " لص البرق " سنة 2005, قام بإعادة محورت تلك الأساطير القديمة وتحديثها لتصبح مواكبة لعصره. كما ابرزنا الطريقة التركيبية المستعملة و المتداولة بين رواد قصص الخيال المستنبطة من " رحلة البطل " لكامل و المستعملة من طرف ريك ريوردان .

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الخيال الحضري، رحلة البطل، مغامرة بحث، عناصر البحث، الخيال الأسطوري، أدب الشباب، الأساطير اليونانية.

## Résumé :

La littérature imaginaire a bénéficié des mythes et folklore comme matière première. À ce jour, de nombreux auteurs contemporains sont penchés à inventés des mythes pour les intégrer à leurs récits modernes. Des points de vue différents et variés ont évoqués des mythes antiques, vu que, les légendes et les mythes ont été placées dans un environnement urbain. Cette étude analytique vise à traiter et éclaircir comment l'auteur Rick Riordan, dans son livre "*Le Voleur de foudre*" de 2005, a remanié les mythes et il les a modernisés pour suivre son époque. D'autre part, nous avons également souligné la méthode de synthèse utilisée par les pionniers de fiction dérivées du titre "voyage du héros" cité dans livre de Campbell et utilisées par Rick Riordan.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## General Introduction

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From the road of the ancient Greek myths, other paths emerged. Walking by the Greek ancestors uncovered many values, morals and ideas that are worth spreading. The spirits of the ancient myths and legends of Gods and heroes are the most essential elements in any fantasy writing. This is why many fantasy authors manipulate those folklore myths into their wild worlds. Mythologies in relation to modern fantasy are still creating contemporary legends that exist in modern times. Therefore, the inspiration of the ancient world has remained instilled in some recent contemporary fantasy works.

Fantasy literature and the real relate to each other in a way that possibilities are the answer to it. In fact, myths are related to the ancient civilizations that were once part of people's cultures, values and their way of living. So, it is significant to examine after all of these as an explanation for the truths behind each idea applied in their societies. The pillars of life or, in other words, the origins of the universe were represented by the Greeks as nothing more than philosophies and explanations to intentionally give a meaning to it.

Greek myths and legends have deeply influenced the contemporary world. The gained affection remained on after more than 2000 years; hence, some works still extract from the tree of civilizations, and the novels of all the time watering it. It is important to note, however, that history of the ancients did not only belong to that time, but it was shared and injected through different spaces and times. Eventually, every age has its own perspective over the past and thanks to literature and human's imagination, the production adds more motion to the original shape. Therefore, some of the American contemporary fantasy novels are still influenced by the classical myths which are filled with journeys that are unexpectedly established in the present world.

According to Berens in his study of *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome (2009)*, fantasy literature and the real relationship to each other in a way that possibilities are the answer to it. In fact, myths are related to the ancient civilizations that were once a part of people's cultures, values and

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their way of living. So, it is significant to look after all of these as an explanation for the truths behind each idea applied in their societies. The pillars of life or the origins of the universe were represented by the Greeks as nothing more than philosophies and explanations to intentionally give a meaning to it. In recent days, people consider Greeks' religion as all based on visualizations; yet, the real basis comes from reality or mainly the logical source. This shows that their imagination and beliefs did not spring from anything, but it was already there spinning over the existing world.

Charles Sullivan's *Welsh Celtic Myth in Modern Fantasy*, 1989 claims that both the writers of fantasy and science fiction genres employ classical materials and at the same time implements the impossible into reality. In other words, it reflects another secondary world that is not possibly going to ever happen or exist in our world. Mythologies bring the culture closer and that is why fiction writers implement them. In some ways, for the ancient Greeks it explains what is far to reach, but for now it does the opposite. Sullivan noted that fantasy novels are at first read as fantasy, but as soon as you enter these worlds, there is more than that. It deals more with life complexities hence to know and differentiate between what is right and wrong. Therefore, fantasy literature and the real relate to each other in a way that possibilities are the answer to it.

Stefan Ekman's article of "Here Be Dragons: Exploring Fantasy Maps and Settings" discusses mainly urban fantasy and studies its nature. Besides, shows the link between the unseen and the urban living conditions. Stefan Ekman states that urban fantasy cannot be linked only to fantasy on its own, but it also can be related to other genres providing that rural places and towns are set in the present world. Classical literature is linked particularly to fantasy literature. At the same time, it draws the past to contemporary works in which all that it belongs to it is repeatedly history that we cannot break from. To relate our contemporary world to another means to have two settings in one. This is known as the urban fantasy which gained popularity among the readers even more in the 2000s and even for the term itself.

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Richard Buxton's *The Complete World of Greek Mythology*, (2004) focuses on the retold stories of the ancient myths and their today's representations and interpretation. Furthermore, It examines the activities of the Greek Gods, their origins and the tradition of retelling until the twenty- first century in which the themes of Greek myths developed.

After examining and checking several sources, most of the studies made upon *the Lightning Thief* are articles; yet, no study has discussed the subject of urban fantasy or the reshaped Greek mythologies and materials concerning this novel. Therefore, an investigation is needed to discuss the rehash and twist in the Greek mythologies and the way it is incorporated by the author.

The value of this study lies in the contributions it hopes to achieve. The study will shed light on the Greek influences and its twist in the contemporary position it holds. Therefore, it unfolds the covered pieces of fantasy and attempts to see what connects the real to the fantastic. Besides, it aims to contribute to the field of fantastic literature and the critical literary studies, and also opens a gate for further researches especially for those who are interested in it.

The focus will be put on the work of Rick Riordan which through it the set off becomes clearer and brings the image into life. In the American novelist's work titled *the Lightning Thief 2005*, the concentration basically falls on the fantastical genres and the changes imparted from the original Greek myths. *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief* amalgamate between the twenty-first century and Greek myths which demonstrate a life of a demigod young boy who experiences a quest, an accidental journey to the underworld and the half-blood camp which is a fantastical portal only for those who have Godfathers or mothers. The heroic and adventurous journey relates the protagonist to a path of challenges and personal problems in opposition to the battle between Gods in which he, the protagonist Percy, prevents it from happening.

Riordan's intentions to write this novel are most probably to represent the ancient Greek mythologies in modern ways which is mainly intended for young adult children. By creating this bond between the ancient mythologies and the contemporary literature, the Greek myths will keep having an

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influence on the modern and future years. He started his writing career for some reasons, but mainly, it is because of his love for writing and to write the first novel of Percy Jackson to his son. Through the journey, the readers will get to know many Greek legends and myths about the Gods, heroes, and monsters. This can be seen as the main reason behind Riordan's writing *The Lightning Thief*.

This study explores the transmission of a long-life journey towards our contemporary existence by focusing on the difference between the ancient Greek myths and the contemporary reshaped versions regards to the urban fantasy. It comes across the fiction which is inspired by the roots that rose from the seed of what is contemporary. In addition to that, the study analyses the *Lightning Thief* based on Campbell's monomyth structure.

Thus the central question of this study is, do the conditions of living affect the writers to change ancient literature to keep their works updated? The classical myths have different ways to be represented in the western world. From this point, a question is raised on the basis of the Greek mythologies. Firstly, how did the contemporary authors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century twist Greek mythologies? In what way is it incorporated by the author in the urban fictional novel, and to what extent do themes change? There is, however, a model which many heroic fantasy writers use. The old materials such as myths are re-enacted, although these re-enactments are in the same structure which Campbell called the monomyth.

What is hypothesized, therefore, is that society plays an important role in sculpturing men's perspectives. So, it may change the original shape of the real subject and that is applied mainly to Greek myths which are exposed to different interpretations and twists in the postmodern works. There is, although, a structure that mainly concerns hero fantasy writers. The patterns used are the same as the other old and contemporary writers of fantasy use.

This research is analytical qualitative. This type of this study is driven by analysis through the examination of Rick Riordan's work which is the primary data. By putting all together, the urban fantasy and the historical mythologies, it will lead to an explanation for the study. The work also blends data from a number of sources such as books, articles, and purposes for observations as well as analysis. At

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the same time, it will provide a representation of the work and reflect the evolution of the chain between both the past and present. It also includes overall bibliographies of both primary and secondary sources such as internet sources.

This study is made up of three chapters. The first chapter contains the theoretical background which deals with the fantasy genres such as urban fantasy and the hero's journey, and also the original sources of the Greek mythologies discussed by the old Greek poets. The second chapter will highlight the factors that bring both the Greek myths and American life together within the novel from a contemporary perspective and focuses on the role of the society in shaping this vision. The Third chapter analyses the novel from different angles. First, it shows the reshaped versions of the Greek mythologies. It, then, discusses the similar patterns of the hero's journey within the novel. Additionally, it will examine the quest which the hero goes through.

Chapter one:  
Greek Mythologies and Fantasy Literature

### **Introduction**

In each decade, fantasy fiction's works expand their roots in literature. Blending elements of reality and imagination form a new substance which is reflected in the fictional and fantastical writings. The amalgamation of human thinking and understanding of the surrounding nature results in the creation of the most important thing in literary writings. Fantasy in many ways presents the feelings and values of humans but in a different way that engages the readers through a portal of quizzes and unfamiliarity. Therefore, the reality is not denied or buried in fantasy. Instead, it is replaced with such materials that are unknown and impossible to be found in reality. Most of the time, the traditional materials of ancient ethnic cultures and nations are to be found in this kind of literature.

### **I. Fantasy and Fiction Literature**

Fiction is in every sense built out of imagination; hence, this imagination creates literature. Some of the 21st century authors have needed to proceed with old fictional works by using more and different supernatural and fantastical elements that could make it modern.

#### **1. Early and Contemporary Fantasy Fiction Literature**

It is not easy to determine the start of a specific literary subject, but initially, the beginning of fictional writing's growth is witnessed between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a matter of fact, the genre of fantasy covered some works since the early beginnings of the nineteenth century, but in that period these works were not recognized as fantastical writings but rather fictional. Subsequently, fiction and fantasy have become two distinct genres. Both of them come in different shapes and embrace variant subgenres. It is important to note that both of them are genres of speculative fiction. Certainly, Speculative fiction is the head of the skeleton and its genres are likely to be the other parts like fantasy, fiction, science fiction, utopian and dystopian fiction.

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These kinds of narratives include different works that may be literary genres, tales or prose. The word fiction originates from the Latin word  *fingere*  or  *fiction*  which refers to dissimulation, fabrication and invention of the mind<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, a distinction between fictional and nonfictional work is needed to extract the accurate definition. To be more accurate, a nonfictional work always includes the truth base as long as people believe that it is true. In this context, the events, people and places tend to be more precise. While in fiction, imagination relates to truth since it places unreal characters into a real setting and sometimes even places and events are all imagined. There seems to be a blurred image between the two, but there is definitely a fine line that distinct them. Bringing this up to show how both of them relate and vary from each other (Friend 2).

In fantasy, the reality is unknown. It is much like a surreal atmosphere that blurs and alters the image of the world which cannot and will not exist now or later. Therefore, it is an escape from the real world since it uses unusual characters and created worlds. Even sometimes it represents the feelings of people in an extraordinary way. As for fiction, it may occur in the future and have this unknown feature which is recognized in terms of setting or events and mostly take place in the future or present. When first encountering them they may look alike, but of which have their own core and qualities. As it is known that fiction is created from the human mind, and when shaping any form of literature using imagination, then it is a work of fiction. Sometimes, it may be based on a situation or a true story that the writer encountered and not only based on the inventions of the mind.

Fiction, most likely, has this characteristic of happening probability in the future, while fantasy does not. Charles stated that the writers of fantasy genre employ classical materials and at the same time implement the impossible into reality. In other words, it reflects another secondary world that is not possibly going to ever happen or exist in our world. For this reason, fantasy authors implement traditional materials like myths, magic or talking creatures and other elements because these are far from happening (Sullivan 248).

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<sup>1</sup> (Online Etymology Dictionary)

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It is important to mention that the use of magic is not always essential to create fantasy. However, the secondary world must be consistent so that the reader gets this familiar feel and understanding of the setting through folklore genres. He also points out an important element which is the relationship of consistency and logic which make fantasy more likely to be phenomenal. For this reason, authors of this genre drop out the inconsistency and make ground or a logical base for the presented stories. It is mentioned that the old or traditional materials used by the authors are intentionally applied to give a familiar feel as Sullivan called in their novels (Sullivan281).

The essential reason behind creating fantasy is to differentiate between matters like good and evil or most likely, human values by embracing the supernatural. This is obvious from the beginning of all the fantasy stories when representing the villain and the protagonist. Indeed, it actually helps its readers to discover about reality and life complexities, rather than just reading about a world or a story that does not exist. Whereas fiction tends precisely to tell facts, at the same time informs and pleases its readers which may be through the use of futuristic elements (Fabrizi 2).

Therefore, fantasy employs the impossible into its works by creating worlds or beings that do not exist on the human planet. Most authors of fantasy make use of folklore into the storyline to structure a theme which is not implicit (Sullivan). Therefore, myths, folktales, and legends all provide fantastic themes for fantasy writers. That what makes writers depend on using them into their stories. J.R.R. (Tolkien)'s lecture 'On Fairy-Stories' discusses the principals of the folklore genre, recognized as Märchen<sup>2</sup> which brings closer the meaning of fantasy. Accordingly, he is one of the modern fantasy genre pioneers since the early 20th century whose works are prominent in this field. He stated that escape is a way to reach the principals of fantasy as follows:

I have claimed that Escape is one of the main functions of fairy-stories, and since I do not disapprove of them, it is plain that I do not accept the tone of

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<sup>2</sup> Märchen is a folklore genre that takes the form of a short story. Such stories typically feature entities such as dwarfs, dragons, elves, fairies, giants, gnomes, goblins, griffins, mermaids ... and usually magic or enchantments. The term is also used to describe something blessed with unusual happiness, as in "fairy-tale ending. The term is mainly used for stories with origins in European tradition and, at least in recent centuries, mostly relates to children's literature.

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scorn or pity with which “Escape”...Why should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? The world outside has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it. (10)

In this sense, Tolkien brought close the meaning of fantasy by giving an alternative view for fairy-stories of breaking free from the controlling mind and letting the mind reveal what is inside the human soul. It is a matter of fact that, if a being is restrained by anything that cannot grant human's freedom then it turns their thinking to escape in various ways. Thus, fantasy is a way to express and allow imagination to take the lead. At the same time, in spirit this genre of folktales into people by encouraging them to free their minds and souls.

In fact, each of fantasy and fiction genres possesses subgenres that include particular qualities. Low and high fantasy requires specifying their setting in terms of the events which take place; thus, to be aware of the subgenre dealt with. High fantasy also known as epic fantasy is always set in another secondary world that has nothing to do with the human world and also employ such creatures that are imaginary. Most of the time, the hero of high fantasy is a male protagonist and processes with the development of lifetime (Fabrizi 13).

In most cases, the story begins with a protagonist whose origins are not known. Instead, it proceeds surprising the readers by showing how special the character is. In contrast, low fantasy establishes the setting within the primary human world while adopting magical or fantastical elements into the story. In this context, low fantasy is more related and attached to the planet rather than the secondary world. Certainly, when recognizing whether a work is a low or high fantasy, then it becomes easy to categorize and know about the genre is being studied (Fabrizi14).

### 2. Urban Fantasy

The fantastical world and reality differ from one to the other in terms of the qualities of elements placed in both of them. Although, when Reality is accordingly joined with fantasy, it first builds a sense of familiarity and in the meantime unfamiliarity and therefore creates what is called urban fantasy. Creatures such as vampires, fairies, elves, and monsters from traditional tales and legends bring this sense of unfamiliarity which increases understanding of the familiar. In this meaning, folklore creates fantasy and fantasy is formed through traditional materials. Thus, both elements interlock with each other and this mixture allows having a special effect between magic and on the counterpart the urban city (Ekman 453).

Contemporary fantasy particularly puts emphasis on the present and implements the fantastical elements within that contemporary setting. In this case, these elements are not usually noticed by ordinary men within the setting, but only the characters that have superpowers are able to see the fantastical or magical elements of the story. One of the main subgenres that modern fantasy is famous with is urban fantasy. Urban fantasy can be seen as low fantasy since it uses the world as a primary setting while uses fantastical elements. Therefore, urban fantasy is featured by the amalgamation between an urban setting and the magical or fantastical aspects. Though, this genre is not necessarily set in a contemporary setting, but uses the city or rural places as where the story takes place. In other words, it uses the historical, modern or future world as a primary setting and at the same time fits the magical materials into them through creating a distinct setting or simply by adding the supernatural elements (Horstkotte 172).

Urban fantasy requires elements that make it what it is. In fact, from both worlds, it is possible for a new reader of this genre to decode what is meant by. Urban as mentioned earlier, is the city or the town which a story takes place while making fantasy exist in most of its parts. So, the main component to create UF is to have the urban city as a setting and to breathe the places and culture projected through the story. Thus, the ability to understand the rules within the reality amalgamated with fantasy result the

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possibility of believing it. Another element to be mentioned is to construct fantastical elements within the urban town. Besides, face the reader with some mysterious sections that create the difficulty to grasp or get its meaning. Most importantly, UF most of the time uses the first person narrative, because it is affected by the views and interpretations of the protagonist. The protagonist has a great force in this genre. This gives the main character a special and centred position which allows the readers to see through the protagonist's point of view (Column).

The city is emphasized pretty much in this genre. There is, however, a little evidence that urban fantasy is most of the time set in the primary world rather than the secondary one. But what is certain is that it is found in both worlds. It is the same as important as the contemporary time which is used repeatedly within the context of urbanism. A lot of postmodern fantasy fiction literature writers use the contemporary setting within a primary setting joined with fantasy (Ekman 457).

### **2.1. Mythic Fiction**

Nevertheless, the literary myths, tales, and legends further proceeded with urban fantasy. As mentioned before, folklore and fantasy fiction have a special link, since most of the folklore elements are found and placed in the fantasy genre. According to Sullivan, that modern fantasy writers, like Tolkien for example, use traditional materials since the fantastic literature is attached to them. Rooted under the tree of speculative fiction, mythic fiction came to be inspired by different myths, folk and fairy tales (Sullivan 292).

Mythic fiction tends to relate folklore myths and legends with fiction inside a contemporary urban setting. In this sense, blending different genres in the same picture creates what it is known as mythic fiction. Although the urban setting is not a necessity in mythic fiction, it can be placed in a non-

rural contemporary setting. Mythic fiction is likely to use mythologies of the ancient materials rather than modern fabricated ones, therefore inspired by myths and traditional materials<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. Quest Objects

A quest is something that exceeds the normal and ultimately leaves the character to decide about the reality lived. The enigma a character lives in will lead to an experience which greatly affects the moral qualities of a character. Subsequently, quests in fantasy literature engage the character in a journey that takes part in developing the personality characteristics of the figure. There are some old works that represent someone looking for an object to acquire an important element of life, therefore developing and changing from a passive to a powerful or more mature character. The quest objects represent a journey in which a hero is suddenly faced by a quest or a task of getting an important object that may be stolen or lost. On the positive side, the characters get to know himself through the obstacles of the journey (Howard).

Indeed, most of quest objects have this characteristic of returning something that is lost or stolen. In this way, a character is put in a situation of searching and exploring about a target or object aimed. The object is the reason behind looking for something hence quests are the basics of the search. Speaking of which uncovers the importance of quests in fantasy literature. It puts a lot of emphasis on the protagonist who will be able to foresee and fulfil the aim of the quest after seeking the unknown. Most importantly, mythologies help creating quest objects in terms of enhancing the story events. Usually, a lot of quests are found in folklore. In myths, the hero is the one who is supposed to take actions of power to get what is required or wanted. It is where the problems and obstacles construct the quest and therefore become a plot of the story. It is found that the idea of quests is already planted in the old poems and stories of heroes.

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<sup>3</sup> (WIKIPEDIA)

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Most of quest objects are unexpected journeys. Looking at the details sculptured by early fantasy authors like J.R.R. Tolkien primarily picture the beginning of the journey as obscure. This obscurity at the start leaves the protagonist without a clue about the upcoming adventure. In this course, the life of the character turns upside down and without a given chance to decide. This opens a gate of obstacles and eventually provides knowledge about the origins and powers of the protagonist which before were hidden. Dwarfs, demigods or people with special blood are almost always used in the quest objects. This process greatly changes and develops their minds. The quests, therefore, are represented in subjects such as saving the world from an approaching danger or a group of people from war. These subjects are the essence of quest object stories and mainly used as a plot.

### **3.1. Young Adult Fiction**

Definitely, when coming across the word fantasy, young adult fiction category is often instilled into this genre. The protagonist of this category is greatly placed in a period of physical and personality change to adulthood. This is also known as the coming of age in which the character is able to bear responsibility and face the threatening that is circling around (Sullivan 282).

Young adult fiction is always related to young and adult life matters such as family and friendship. Traveling from one place to another is just the same as developing the self from one level to another. It is reasonable to look at the way the character's identity would shape itself from the situations confronted. It questions matters of bad and good, hence it is the best way to convey covered messages inside this kind of fiction. Probably, this category is influential because it discusses a critical age that each human being lived (Wells).

## **4. The Monomyth**

To a large extent, all Humans desire to challenge and discover the unknown. Heroic fantasy represents the most exciting adventures in which both the protagonist of the story and its reader experience what is lived and learned from the adventures. As long as it is filled with action, challenges

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and imagination, then it is about an explorer, a wanderer or an adventurer in a fantastical world. The main character, in fact, is the essence of the story who will eventually become a champion. Definitely, what makes of this literary trope appealing is the protagonist or the hero who saves a bad thing from happening. Joseph (Campbell), an American professor in literature, came up with the term monomyth in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* which studies and discusses the common element that brings the myths and religions together. The monomyth, also known as the hero's journey, is explained as a single myth that is recounted in variant ways.

Most certainly, the hero of the journey goes through many stages that develop and transform the Character's inner and outer worth both physically and emotionally. In the beginning, the hero's own value and origins will not be known. Therefore, the start is like an unfinished portrait of a person, but when it is published and completed the details will often be so attractive and demonstrative. Following up through the folds of the heroic tale, it will be discovered that the protagonist's origins actually will be exposed after an important event that takes place in the storyline. This event occurs when the hero meets the herald who can be evil or sometimes a good character.

The protagonist most of the time represented as a normal or a poor character that descends from a royal origin. Thus, the heroes are represented as demi-gods; royal blooded or have special super-powers that would be later revealed. From the departure until finishing the journey, the main character steps onto the unknown up to the last event where everything becomes clear. It has been discussed in several contemporary and old works, although the most notable one is as found in Campbell's work. There are some variant stages that the hero goes through.

The character is placed in a passive state to a remarkable one. Breaking through the familiarity to unfamiliarity is a stage that leaves the hero in a state of refusal to accept the coming escapade, but eventually ends uprising into a hero. Because of this unfamiliarity, the character refuses any surrounding obscurity and tries to escape the coming quest or adventure. Although, beginning from the departure to a place which is illustrated as a secret area or mysterious region such as forests, aid comes from a mentor

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who is able to lead the protagonist through this road. This mentor provides any piece of product that grants protection for the character. In this way, the hero will be able to cross the first threshold. The boundaries between the normal and supernatural dark world will be obvious.

When the hero enters the portal of the unfamiliar and the unknown for the first time, the character's own qualities and performances are tested under such puzzling circumstances. In the meantime, meeting new creatures with special deformed shapes will unfold new understandings of the unknown. After that, the hero will have to confront the ordeal in the story. This is a harsh phase where he will be able to face his biggest fears. The coming step is about encountering with a powerful supreme being. This power, therefore, aids the protagonist throughout the quest and at the same time instills power into the main character to face any fear and understands life problems. Later, the character is able to overcome even more complicated situations. When the aim of the quest is achieved, the hero will choose between the new world and the normal world (Bronzite).

### **II. Historical Greek mythologies**

What inspire humans are the traditional and historical stories passed by different generations. They provided the most essential thing about life in detailed descriptions and manners to gain experience and knowledge about the ancients and of course in relation to modern times. Greeks in many cases attracted the world, not only with philosophies and sciences, but additionally to the myths and legends which are found in the ancient works such as the creation of the universe and Gods.

#### **1. Myths and Legends of Greece**

To understand Greek myths, it must be mentioned that mythology is the principal map which is the guide to know the deep secrets and the pillars of it. Certainly, society and religion are important to solidify any culture that is meant to be studied. Hence, to discover a culture with any specific qualities, then people's deeds must be explored to eventually serve as a leading road.

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A myth can be seen as a folk tale which was passed through generations. It mainly concerns religion and mainly involves people's state of emotions and behaviours in different ways. All the traditions that Greeks used to breath and perform unexpectedly constructed the deities, legends and supernatural creatures.

From the tales of the ancient Greek people, it is always found that religion and rituals meant a lot to them in many ways. The so-called epic period primarily has seen many poets, but Homer and Hesiod are thought to be initially the first poem writers. Myths of the old Greek initially began from oral to written discourses. Several ancient poetic written works discuss about the deities which were worshiped at those classical times. One of the important and earliest prose literary works is Hesiod's Theogony. Actually, Theogony comes from the Greek word theogonía which refers to the birth of Gods. Therefore, it discusses about the very beginnings of how the universe and gods were created. This Theogony was not recognised as a written poem at first, but it was oral (Buxton 60).

Exceedingly, the Gods of the ancient Greeks have the same features as human beings and also Romans because they shared some of the same worshiped deities. Despite the fact that they resemble humans, the powers that they have are the only different case. Having considered that, it is also reasonable to look at the imagination which is one of the main significant values shared by humans. The Greeks praised imagination and that what makes their works more appealing. Roger Woodard called Hesiod's poem of Theogony, as mentioned earlier, cosmogony since it is more related to the origins of the universe. Now people consider it as all based on visualizations; yet, the real basis comes from reality or mainly the logical source. According to Berens, Gods have the qualities and characteristics of men. The main difference is that of powers, besides the origin of the universe happens to be the result of the marriage between Uranus and Gaea. Thus, the union of sky and earth in which after that they gave birth to the other Gods (85).

Revenge, anger and war, such words cover a huge feeling of rage. Reading about Greek Gods fights definitely leads to questions that are linked to humans' lives. In many places, it is found that the

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Greek Gods starting from Cronus and his own sons fight to dominate the whole universe. So the question that must be answered is that each God is linked to some senses and emotions that people get. For example, Aphrodite is the God of love and beauty, while Phobos the God of fear. These demonstrations eventually serve the meaning that human feelings are quite related to Greek Gods. Therefore, it is the reason why imagination is an aesthetic element that cannot be separated from the minds.

Clearly, the Greeks were polytheists which mean that they worshiped many Gods and praised the ancient heroes. In Plato's old written myths, it is discovered that people make sacrifices as gifts for their deities and to have their protection. These sacrifices can be represented in both animals and humans, just like the Viking's voluntary sacrifices. They worshiped them everywhere, because, in their beliefs, God is everywhere. Obviously, the Greek people did not limit it only to specific places, but after time they grew prosperous and temples were spread all over their towns. Most importantly, they believed in heaven and hell that were acknowledged as Elysium as orally stated by Homer and Hesiod, the underworld of the God Hades. Nonetheless, their way of life was not only based on religion, because it is not possible to neglect other matters such as families, arts, philosophies and even the practiced old Olympic Games. All of these are a part of the societies that Greek people lived in (Berens 18).

For the Greeks, family concerns are as crucial as succeeding something in life. It is really important to them to unite and support their families in good and bad, therefore it was and still is a part of their traditions. Furthermore, most of the ancient Greeks were educated, especially those who were from high classes. Even women who did not have a special position like men, they were able to learn and get education<sup>4</sup>. Education in relation to art impacted a lot of great works in Drama, music, philosophies, poems, and sculptures. Thus, these activities are cherished in the Greek' society and famous in the modern world. Philosophically speaking, the order of the universe needs balance, just like balancing between good and evil. If it is broken, then any kingdom will fall into ruins. Without a doubt,

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<sup>4</sup> (Evanson)

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the exercises of the Greeks' minds were also balanced with the physical exercises. The physical exercises can be represented in the Olympic Games which included a variety of training exercises<sup>5</sup>.

### 2. Greek Gods and Goddesses

The life of the ancient Greeks was based on religion or myths that are related to their Gods, heroes and legends. These myths were often told by their ancestors, and later were written by many poet authors and further expanded. From the top of the family tree descends the Gods, the children of Uranus and Gaia, then comes mortals who, some of them, mated with the Gods and after that they gave birth to demigods. From these seeds, the epic tales of heroes sprouted and it was destined to reach and to be heard by the contemporary world. E. M. (Berens) in his book of *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome* simplified the very first scenes of the formation of universe elements stating that,

... there was in its place a confused mass of shapeless elements called Chaos. These elements becoming at length consolidated resolved themselves into two widely different substances, the lighter portion of which, soaring on high, formed the sky or firmament and constituted itself into a vast, overarching vault, which protected the firm and solid mass beneath. (23)

Chaos, a very important element that brought Tartarus, Erebus, Eros, Nyx, and Gaea, as the Greeks called, into existence. The ancient Greeks achieved great advancements in science and, therefore, there must be a belief that nothing comes from nothing. Just like chemical substances that interact with each other which eventually result in complex compositions. All of the sky, earth, love, and the underworld Gods became the product of the universe that the Greek people regarded as their almighty supernatural beings. Although, there are some contradictions in which Hesiod mentioned that Eros the God of love is the son of Aphrodite and Ares which means it is not originally from chaos.

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<sup>5</sup> (The Ancient Olympic Games)

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As mentioned earlier, the chaos from which the initial Gods were born, Gaea after that gave birth to Uranus. Uranus, the earth, united with Gaea, the source of light, and produced Oceanus, Aether, AÉR, and Pontus. Aether is the ambiance that is only breathed by the Gods or specifically those who are immortal. While AÉR, on the other way around, is the air that is breathed by mortals. Nyx, the sister of Uranus further gave birth to the Daylight, the Dawn, Eos, and Hemera. After all, their seeds did not stop at this point, but it kept on continuing producing even more descendants. This resulted in rising three Giants who are known as Hecatoncheres and the twelve Titans. Uranus flung the giants into the deep abyss because he feared that their presence would be harmful (26).

Consequently, two of the Titans named Cronus and Rhea became the rulers after Uranus and Gaea. The reason behind Cronus succession is the conspiracy that he planned to dethrone his father and take over it in a cold- blooded manner. According to the Greek mythologies, Cronus injured Uranus and his blood poured out from which some living beings came out. After all, Cronus also needed to throw away of his brothers. So they managed a war with the Giants against him, but they eventually were defeated and sent to Tartarus.

Cronus, the God of time, subsequently married Rhea, the mother of the Olympians, and gave birth to three female and male Gods. They are recognized as the last generation of Gods. Demeter, Hestia and Hera are the female daughters, while their male sons are Zeus, Poseidon and Aïdes. Cronus was afraid that the same circumstances he put his father into would happen to him. So as a result, after each baby is born, he swallows them thinking that they would dethrone him. After all, when the last son was born, Zeus, his mother Rhea saved him and hid him from his own father. In the course of time, Zeus put his father in the same situation, became the supreme power and, therefore, took over him. He finally brought back his brothers and sisters with a kind of potion that was given to Cronus with the aid of Metis (28).

There was a massive war recognized as Titanomachia between Cronus and Zeus in which they stood in two separated locations. The mount where Zeus and his Titan supporters were placed in was

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called the mount of Olympus. It is important to note that his mount is also that Zeus resided in. Whereas for the mountain which Cronus and his supporters settled in was named Othrys. After a long battle fought between the Greek Gods, Zeus felt that his troops' powers weakened hence needed the assistance of the Giants and the Cyclopes against Cronus. So, he brought them back from the underworld, in which they were imprisoned, to the surface of the earth. Zeus's new allies fulfilled his needs and ultimately were victorious. All those who opposed him in the battle were sent to the depths Tartarus and Cronus became forsaken from his authority. Nevertheless, Zeus married several Goddesses and became the father of Ares, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes, Heracles, Helen and Hephaestus (Berens 31).

Zeus, the king of the Gods, is marked with the thunderbolt, lightning and sometimes with his giant eagle. He is the God of the sky and one of the important Gods that Greeks worshiped at that time. Most importantly, he survived from his unfair father, Cronus, while he was a baby and grew to be a wise and a powerful God. Without neglecting his brothers Hades and Poseidon who were also powerful and very important figures in Greeks mythologies. Zeus, as mentioned before, married many Goddesses and mingled with Alcmene, a mortal, who gave birth to the well-known demigod Hercules. Another essential demigod to be mentioned is the hero Perseus, the son of Danaë and Zeus.

Hades, the God of the Underworld called Tartarus in Greek mythologies, is the son of Cronus who swallowed him unlike his brother Zeus who was saved by Rhea. He fought against him with his brothers at the war of Titanomachia, ended his reign and eventually was put into his dark dungeon. Hades then was married to the daughter of Zeus, Persephone, by abduction since he had intense feelings for her. He made her his queen of the underworld. Indeed, their myth love story is famous among Greeks. Poseidon, his younger brother, is the God of the seas with his own divinity like his brothers. Each holds a divinity and all of them ruled the universe. Like Zeus and Hades, he was worshipped by people since he was a god of the sea. Therefore, Poseidon was worshiped and people made sacrifices for him to protect the travellers from the stormy sea journeys. In addition to that, he had several sons and

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some of them, like Zeus, were demi-gods. Since Zeus inhabited the Mount of Olympus and Hades resided in the underworld, Poseidon lived under the deep sea (35).

Another important Greek God to be mentioned is the Goddess Athena who is represented as a wise woman with exceptional war skills. She is Zeus's beloved child. It is said that Athena was born from his head. Before that, Zeus gulped her mother while she was pregnant with her. So, this is what makes Athena's birth special and different from the births of Gods and Goddesses. After she grew up, Athena never got married or had any children. That is why she also symbolised virginity. It must be mentioned that the well-known city of Athens of Greece was named after her. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, also supplied the good Greek people with information and educated them for the sake of civilization (72).

### **2.1.Demi-gods**

From the Greek antiquity, mythologies inspired people's intellects. Therefore, the myth of demigods was thought to be real and was believed to exist, because, for them, those demigods had a special role in their lives. Being a half human being and half a God is an amazing ability that is given to those who were born from the union of gods with human fathers or mothers. Most of the time, they grow as heroes and have mortal and immortal parts which means that they have a combination of a deity and human talents.

When a demi-god is young, or before reaching an age that develops both intellectual and physical capabilities, the skills possessed do not seem to be obvious. Although their looks are not different from human beings, the only thing that distinguishes them is the power that each possesses. However, when the demigods reach that specific age, they will eventually be able to see and control these special powers gained from their godparents. An important element to be mentioned is the power which is in the sense that if God is Zeus, then this demi-god child will hold a skill that is related to his powers.

### 3. Mythological Creatures

While telling legendary stories about heroes, variant creatures will be encountered through the journeys. Some of which are evil in nature, while the other creatures can be wise and good assistants. It should be pointed out that these creatures are always linked to animals and their nature. Some of these creatures are born out as a punishment for people as a result or of Gods' seeds. In a manner, Greek myths and legends are intimately joined with the old designed creatures such as furies, centaurs, Cerberus and satyrs which, hopefully, will be discussed afterward.

One of the important creatures which are documented in Greek's writings is known as Medusa. Different stories have been told about the Gorgon Medusa, the sister of both Sthenno and Euryale, but what is shared among the ancient writers that she is a Greek monster who would turn anyone that looked at her into a stone. According to the mythology, it is said that they were all born this way. While to E.M. Berens, it is stated that the reason behind their terrible looks was because of the goddess Athena. She turned them into monsters as a punishment. These Gorgon sisters are demonstrated as having serpents in their heads instead of hair. While Medusa's other siblings were born immortal, she was mortal. That is what caused her death by Peruses. She died beheaded. Though, even after her death, her petrification ability remained working (207).

In Greek mythology, the Minotaur is also prominent. This beast is a half human and half a bull. His source of existence was a punishment to the king of Crete from Poseidon. His wife mated with the bull given by Poseidon to be sacrificed. Since this king did not sacrifice the bull, he had to face a bad fate and thus gave birth to this monstrous being that grew to be violent. The king thought about killing the Minotaur since he killed his only son. He asked for a prophecy which can solve the problem. The answer of the oracle says to build a labyrinth to contain him. After some time, a demigod hero named Theseus came to be the killer of this monster inside this labyrinth (363).

Stepping into Tartarus means to confront suffering, death and where you will be deprived of getting back to the world of livings. No one could ever escape from Hades underworld's gate since he

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has a huge guard that blocks its entrance. This guard is a monster called Cerberus. He listens and does what Hades say only. In addition to that, he is represented as a three-headed dog and sometimes more than that. Thus, he is thought to symbolize evil. However, before meeting Cerberus, you will have to first encounter Charon by the river Styx. Charon will accept only those who are no longer alive and will have to be provided with a coin that one will be allowed to be taken to the underworld. Thus, it is complicated to Tartarus which refers to hell (346).

From the blood of Uranus, creatures of ancient Greek such Erinyes and satyrs which birth is from the blood spilling of Uranus can be detected in many fantasy works. As observed in the nineteenth, twentieth centuries and even contemporary ones. Erinyes are female Gods who came to be known as Furies. Therefore, they serve as tormentors for those who kill and make such crimes against Gods or nature. In addition to that, the other beast, Satyr, is at the first portion of Greek's times was represented as half human being and half horse. But in many later works, the satyr became to be known more with both half goat and human. Above all, this kind of creature is depicted as wild and entertaining in nature (199).

The mythology of Chiron who is known to be a different Centaur is portrayed as a horse with the usual human front part. The reason behind differentiating between this centaur to other ones is not because of the physical appearance. But rather, it is because Chiron lived as an educated and disciplined creature, unlike the other wild centaurs<sup>6</sup>. Chiron grew as a wise centaur, therefore, he trained, instructed and educated heroes, who some of them were demigods such as Heracles and Perseus. He was an immortal creature since he originates from the blood of both Phylira and Cronus. Although in the legend of Heracles, it is said that he was hit by a poisonous arrow that he wished to be rather dead. From all that pain Chiron felt, he chose to be mortal and eventually he died (335).

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<sup>6</sup> (Greek Myths & Greek Mythology)

### Conclusion

This chapter holds the link between every fiction genre which show how each of them relates to each other. Greek mythologies are one family tree that is kept all over these centuries alive inside the roots and the fruits which most of the fantasy writers still pick from. Indeed, classical literature in a lot of ways gives a sense of familiarity and awareness to people. The traditions of ancient Greeks brought the culture closer and facilitated the passage of variant facts and information even about Greeks religion. The roots of mythologies have influence over the ideologies that seem to bring a sense to link between the ancient western literature and the modern worldwide literature. Subsequently, the stories of the ancient Gods and legends of heroes share one core element which is not necessarily knowledge, but the power of morality. Furthermore, the only explanation to give for creating the Gods is because Greek people needed a sense of belonging and that what led them to imagine and thus construct them into reality. Literature, in every sense, is the language of the world. All the worlds inside each human being are literally a big space of thoughts, feelings, bad and good acts which speak different languages. The gates of literature are various, but what is definite is that each of which expresses the same matter. It is definitely the human universe. Fantasy fiction, therefore, is a way that itself has many branches as any genre in literature. The tales of challenges, quests, and heroes are in common related to individuals' lives. The moralities acquired greatly affect the decisions, because thoughts and feelings may be not remembered. But, it inculcates a memory that will be shared.

Chapter Two:  
Reflecting Greek Mythologies in an American Contemporary life

### Introduction

There is a considerable difference between the American ways of living and the Greek counterpart. Beginning from the location to the traditions, religion and most importantly the period in which each one lived. Definitely, this leads to contrast among the two and eventually will show the factors that bring them together. Rick Riordan, the contemporary American author, gathered all of this into one land and reflected the Greek mythologies with a slightly different approach. Therefore, this chapter intends to create this bond and show the main contributors and circumstances which caused the composition of the novel. In each decade the factors that affect literature are different, but definitely, the ancient materials overlap with the contemporary. This is why fantasy is bound up with the old folklore created genres. In addition to that, it purposes to demonstrate them with famous fantasy works to solidify this.

### I. Internal and External Interventions in *the Lightning Thief*

The complex life is almost always faced when the view of the world is changed, and especially after entering the period of adulthood. The case is even more difficult when one thinks the world is truly what it is, but everything that is thought to be true changes in a blink of an eye.

#### 1. First Glance of the Groundwork

*The Lightning Thief* is a contemporary fantasy novel that does not mirror the life of the Greeks, but rather the author, Rick Riordan, used their mythologies in an American style of life. Actually, many Greek mythologies used took an important role in shaping the flowing events of the story. Although, what makes it important is definitely the combination of the contemporary American setting with the ancient Greek myths and legends of the hero Perseus, whose American counterpart is the protagonist Percy.

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The ancient Western literature and contemporary American literature make a really perfect contrasting combination. However, it clearly builds up a kind of unique quality that subsequently attracts and empowers the historical background of people. The idea of combining two different cultures of two different periods enhances the social conscience. In a way, it serves in comprehending the moral values of society. Consciously or unconsciously, Rick used the social conscience to picture family and personal issues. Accordingly, the author directly broke through countless periods of time into the modern time, hence, by introducing and producing reshaped forms of Greek mythologies.

The contemporary life of Americans has changed since the middle of the twentieth century. It should be noted that family relations deteriorated and became shattered. The high rates of divorce, women's independence, and homosexuals resulted in bad effects on young children from both psychological and emotional sides<sup>7</sup>. However, the Greeks family relationships as mentioned in the previous chapter are strong and matter for them. It is demonstrated initially in the very first chapters of the novel in how his stepfather treats him and how the protagonist was affected by only knowing that his real father, Poseidon which was revealed later, is dead. Therefore, Rick customized this novel ostensibly for young adults and chose his protagonist to be in a period of development. In addition to that, this shows the difference between American and Greek family relations. The relations hold an important characteristic in the life of young adults, although it is not really stressed in the novel. But, it is reflected somehow in the age of the protagonist and his relationship with his mother.

Indeed, life complexities impact on the psychology of young children and adolescents. Rick Riordan chose to open a gate of challenges, difficulties and responsibilities for the protagonist, Percy, to empower the reader's abilities to be the best that they can be. After all, this will instil the idea of the endurance of life problems for young adults. Since the writer reflected Greeks mythologies in the American life, it is also reasonable to emphasize on the family which composes societies.

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<sup>7</sup> (Fuchsman)

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Family is important, especially at some specific period of development. Percy had no idea about who his father is, but all he knew is that he is dead. In this vein, his mother was married to another man who did not treat them well. Hence, this shows how family connections are harmful when behaved in a terrible way. Consequently, the writer smashed all of the problems of the protagonist by building up a challenge that could turn him into a mature character. Through the quests, which are mainly connected with mythologies, he acquires experience that leads him to the path of manhood.

In contemporary literature, reality is one of the main components that construct a story. Even when fantasy elements show up, there will be this base that can build up a relation to it<sup>8</sup>. For this reason, Riordan created an urban setting to consolidate the American reality with the ancient myths. Contemporary America is the setting of the novel. In addition to that, the fantastical elements actually are implemented in the real which create an alternative reality. Furthermore, Rick decided to design a cruel atmosphere to represent the other half core of the idea for the life that young children are suffering from. He also stressed on the protagonist to emphasize on the way Percy confronted it with power. But, initially, it was hard for him to bear it.

In one way or another, the construction of this complex reality is always bound up with something greater than this. It is not only about introducing the Greek mythologies, but it is about producing social and personal issues which are the other part which must be focused on. Therefore, the author implemented both of the Greek mythologies and the personal issues in an ironic way that could interact with human's thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, the contradiction of arguments is often found in many contemporary writings, hence, it is found in the novel which is being discussed. Thus, it provides a really complex understanding, but eventually, it brings a sense which is most likely like a blended picture of colours that can be viewed and understood from different angles.

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<sup>8</sup> (Girard)

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Culture is the air that any society breathes. On that account, previous and contemporary authors make use of the Greek mythologies and took advantage in relating it to fantasy. Furthermore, some adopted them in creative ways which may appear recent, but are not necessarily very different from the original materials. Imagination enables humans to step on the reality to give a wider image of what is going to be expressed. It is evident to find hidden messages that transport issues or conditions occurring inside the world. The contrast between the two cultures actually clarifies that two kingdoms are able to be mixed, and eventually it will end up being consisting of more than one culture. As it is known, America is a melting pot of different cultures. Therefore, Rick exploited Greek myths, which were believed to be real and for the most part as a religion, in a modern way. This confusion of cultures intended to introduce the Greek mythologies to understand life differences. Therefore, religion is even more in a complex state because of the coexistence of different Gods in one universe.

Similarly, Greeks beliefs are so wide that they cannot be separated from each other. They are related in the tradition and most essentially the meaning behind their myths. What is repeatedly encountered in their myths are the superior feelings and values applied in their societies. They are meant to provide the inner and outer power to people, and therefore they will be able to endure and overcome challenges from which they fear. The stories passed by Greeks of the ancient heroes are never in vain. Since the modern world is attracted to the heroic tales, then there is for sure this core human belief that is attached to such a great extent into people's spirits. Their realizations of their imagination into reality make it different, but simple to grasp. This is found in the way they expressed their Gods and represented them just like human beings in shape.

### **2. About Rick Russell Riordan**

Rick Riordan, an American novelist, is a fantasy fiction writer who is much interested in historical mythologies or history as a whole. Since Rick taught history and the ancient mythologies in schools, he became familiar with this kind of subject. So he chose to share this interest and, therefore,

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introduce Greek, Egyptian and Roman mythologies in ways that young adults could grasp in undemanding and sometimes sarcastic approaches. Rick tied mythologies into his novel by constructing an urban contemporary setting which creates a feeling of familiarity and unfamiliarity at the same time. Furthermore, he deals with a critical age that those who are close to reach adolescence period subsequently understand the life complexities specifically in American families.

From his early life, he was attracted to Norse mythology and to J.R.R. Tolkien who is one of the earliest fantasy writers<sup>9</sup>. Fantasy in every way is linked to the old materials. Although, Tolkien is known for his mythopoeia<sup>10</sup>, which is myth-making, unlike some authors who use the ancient myths as they are. Tolkien did not neglect them all, because he also implemented German mythologies into his fantasy worlds. This is demonstrated in *The Hobbit* which contains creatures from Germanic mythologies known as Dwarfs. All of his writings have the most important element in fantasy which is adventure. Adventures supplied with heroic tales sustain the real meaning of fantasy. In addition to that, the system of good against evil is the main tree which these kinds of stories are fed from. Actually, it is through these writings that readers learn variant forms of morals and most importantly expand their imagination.

Rick Riordan created a series of books of the same hero, named Percy Jackson & The Olympians, and won The New York Times Best Seller list. *The Lightning Thief* is the first novel of the series and the winner of the School Library Journal Best Book of 2005, and awarded with the Young Reader's Choice Award in 2008. In this series, he felicitated to go on a modern heroic Greek journey by introducing the most essential myths of Gods and a famous legendary hero named Perseus through contemporary fantasy literature. What makes it different in quality is the twist in Greek mythologies which are set in contemporary America. This twist cannot be seen as mythopoeia, since it already originates from the Greek myth. But he changed some elements into more modern ones.

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<sup>9</sup> (Rick Riordan)

<sup>10</sup> Mythopoeia is a poem by J.R.R. Tolkien. The word mythopoeia means mythos-making, and has been used in English since at least 1846. It is a narrative genre in modern literature and film where a fictional or artificial mythology is created by the writer of prose or other fiction. (Wikipedia)

Besides, Riordan included that Percy, the protagonist, is identified by two disorders, Dyslexia and ADHD, which his son was diagnosed with<sup>11</sup>. These similarities contributed to design the mental characteristics of the character in some ways. Although, Percy is a demigod with some special powers and this is what differentiates him from the others. Furthermore, the idea of writing for young children was for the reason that Rick recounted stories for his oldest son. From his life career, he inspired the idea of the camp half-blood from the summer camp he worked in. As a result, he began writing stories about heroes, challenges and myths which all share the same purpose in fantasy writing.

### 2.1. Similar Works

From the outset, it is clear that there are several similar natures between *the Lightning Thief* with previous and modern famous works such as *the Lord of the Rings* of J. R. R. Tolkien, *Harry Potter* series written by J. K. Rowling and *City of Bones, 2007* written by Cassandra Clare. Tolkien's writings are the body of fantasy writings, therefore, fantasy writers, in many cases, often produce elements that resemble the original or primary materials while making some changes or creating other elements to bring new transformations that serve fantasy. Furthermore, the folklore genres are still pretty much injected in contemporary works. *The Lightning Thief* blended all of most of the modern and early genres into one pot which mainly is concerned with the novels mentioned previously.

Concerning this matter, there is an axis where these novels face each other. It must be mentioned that the fantastic features that each of which embrace are the essential part that should be discussed. Tolkien employs Norse mythologies and his own created myths. Since he believes that the ancient people created their own myths, then it is possible to make myths by anyone who has a special and creative imagination. The author Cassandra actually used New York into the *City of Bones* as a setting in her novel and at the same time employed the fantastical elements into the contemporary world which is

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<sup>11</sup> (Wikipedia)

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known as contemporary or urban fantasy. Actually, it resembles it to a high extent since the author appears that she used Campbell's 'hero journey' just like Riordan.

Although the only differences found are the myths and folklore genres used within the novels. Besides, Rowling used the Greek mythologies into her created fictional universe which is not separated from the real world, since England is the primary setting in addition to the secondary at Hogwarts, nor can seem related it. Thus, her novels match the urban fantasy genre just like the *Lightning Thief* which falls within this genre. Riordan set the fantastical world in contemporary America and employed the Greek mythologies in such an approach that seems to be different from the original one. To illustrate, there is a prominent Greek creature called Cerberus who is found both in the second novel Of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and the *Lightning Thief* who guards the entrance of the underworld.

Obviously, the reason behind starting an adventure or a quest is to obtain or return an important element, which is most likely hidden, or to fight evil. In this way, experiences and capabilities develop and certainly accomplish the main objective of the story. The *Hobbit's* object is to return what was stolen from a folk, and to fight the evil that is spread all over the world. While in the *City of Bones*, the novel is mainly concerned with finding a hidden mortal cup. This cup is also hidden from everyone, and it was not easy to find. But the protagonist with her own special powers managed to find it. From the start of the *Lightning Thief*, the protagonist is accused of stealing Zeus' Lightning Bolt. Therefore, his object was to find it and stop a fight between the Gods, Poseidon, Zeus and Hades, which was eventually going to happen if Percy did not get it back to its owner. Although, there are some things that are out of reach just like Percy's mother who is not rescued from Hades' Tartarus.

The classification of literature that all of them share is intended to young adult readers. It should be mentioned, however, that UF for most of the time is found attached to this genre. The themes seem to have the same structure which stresses on the development of the protagonist and follows his life. Especially the life complexities that each protagonist live in which it begins from a normal to an

extraordinary one. In addition to that, are the protagonist's first experiences which are often unexpected difficulties. These unexpected journeys are always stressed in this kind of literature; thus, it brings all of the novels together. Last but not least, are the quests which are full of adventures based on the combinations of different folklore types. Therefore, the object of the quest must be found to bring it into an end.

### 3. Faith and Contemporary America

The diversity of races and religion in modern America is increasing, since more and more people from around the world immigrate to it until this day. This produced a mixture of beliefs, and therefore people took on other religions as their true one. Indeed, it is found that the American individuals in each family embrace different beliefs, and not only at the social level. Hence the diversity which they live became a life style. Crossing one ocean to another means to encounter a new life which is different, but the only way to fit in is to communicate the two cultures and create a bond that can hold them together.

Christianity is thought to be the religion that Americans believed in, and it remains to be the first religion that covers more than 70 % of it. So, it is reasonable to look at the differences between what men now think about religion and how it was thought to be at first. It seems that now U.S. nation does not give much of interest to religion in view of the fact that liberations and rights given to people are the cause of this religious deterioration. The decline of the membership in churches shows how people are losing faith since religion is not making an effect on the American societies. A recent study stated that 21% of adults do not worship any god<sup>12</sup>.

Since America is a spot that holds a mixture of ideologies and religions, Greeks religion can sneak into postmodern America and live once again. Imagination has no limit, which is why Rick Riordan intentionally or unintentionally implemented the Greek myths to the others. Greeks already influenced the Americans linguistically and ideologically. So, it is reasonable to fit the contemporary

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<sup>12</sup> (NEWPORT)

world because the link did not break until the twenty-first century. Though, the most important element that made it possible to fit the remote elements of Greek myths into America is fiction and fantasy. What makes religion essential is because it gives a feeling of belonging to men. Whether locating someone in the past or present, time will not be a problem because it cannot change its progression. Nevertheless, the influence of society and individuals can produce a believer or a non-believer to the existence of a god or generally religion.

### ***II. Historical Greek Influence over the Lightning Thief***

Each story has its own background; thus, some contemporary authors like Rick Riordan adapted the ancient stories into another form. The only way to do that is to draw on the old Greek materials and put them in imaginative reinterpretations. Therefore, the modern world is definitely remained attracted to ancient Greek myths.

#### **1. Legends and Prophecies of Perseus**

Since many insights were put on myths, there must be another essential equivalent which carries the same importance and meaning, but it must be somehow different in qualities. From different spaces and times, humans are still concerned with that kind of subject that interacts with all people such as old cultures. So many people's lives faded, but their timeless stories inhabited and travelled over many dimensions. This is reflected in the Greek legends and prophecies which carry valuable and significant story told actions of the old heroes. Heroes played an essential part in constructing the meaning of what power and defending really means. It is found in many places that Greeks trusted the predictions and prophecies that were told by a spiritual mediator called an oracle.

There is a legend about a demigod. In this legend, there are also some mythical aspects which serve this legend in different ways. This demigod is the son of Zeus and the mortal being called Danaë. His alternative is Percy Jackson in the novel. The story of Perseus must be emphasized for further

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analysis. He is a legendary Greek demigod hero whose birth story is itself a legend. It begins with a Greek king named Acrisius who was told about an oracle. This prophecy says that the reason for his death will be related to the son of Danaë, his daughter. Therefore, he kept her imprisoned. But the God Zeus came down to the earth and in some form united with Perseus's mother. She eventually gave birth to him and once the king Acrisius knew about it, he threw them into the sea. The god Poseidon had a role in saving both Perseus and his mother. He calmed down the oceans so that they will settle safely on a land (Berens 290).

Perseus grew as an educated nobleman and a king became his step farther. Though, Perseus needed to achieve something that could grant him the name of a hero. His object was to kill one of the Gorgons. One of these three sisters named Medusa, whose story will be further written in detail, was Perseus's quest. In brief, they are Greek monsters who would turn anyone into stone if looked at, but he had to be supplied with some magical materials such as talaria, a shield, a wallet and the cap of invisibility. In this journey of his, he was helped by two Gods, Athena and Hermes. Perseus did not know where the Gorgons were located. The God Hermes asked him to see the Gaerae sisters to show him the way. The Gaerae sisters<sup>13</sup> are three ugly nymphs that shared one eye and teeth between themselves. In some areas such as Hesiod's Theogony, it is found that the Gorgons and Gaerae were sisters (209).

When Perseus obtained the objects needed, he flew with those winged sandals, talaria, to the Gorgons. Thus, he was warned about the Gorgon monsters like it was mentioned before. After entering their shelter, he was determined not to look at them in any way. So as a result, he did not fail the quest object and the head of Medusa was caught and put into the magical wallet which was given to him by Hermes. However, even after Medusa's death her head was somehow still alive and still had the stone effect. This is demonstrated in Perseus's act when he faced Medusa's head to a king that stoned him. In

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<sup>13</sup> (Encyclopedia.com)

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addition to that, some of her blood drops leaked from the wallet while Perseus was coming back from the Gorgons adobe which resulted in snakes on several locations (291).

Wondering around the world, he came by a ruined and destroyed the place in Ethiopia where people lived in ceaseless fear because of a monster. But a prophecy given by a deity they worshiped, Ammon, changed their lives. It says that they have to sacrifice the beloved child of the king Cepheus to that monster who spread corruption over their kingdom. It was hard for him to give up his child, but for the sake of protection, they chained her to a rock that faced the sea. However, none of this happened (293)

When Perseus first saw her chained over that rock, he fell in love with her. So Perseus wanted this maiden as his bride and in exchange, he would save them from this beast. Luckily he was able to turn that immense size to a huge rock that took his shape with Medusa's head. After this long journey, Perseus went back to the place where he was first born and met his mother. Therefore, the oracle of the king Acrisius who was afraid and running from its fulfilment happened in a blink of an eye. In an unfortunate incident, there was a game event played by ancient Greeks in which a discus thrown by Perseus hit the king, his grandfather, and lead to the death of Acrisius' death (295).

### **2. Greek Myths in American Literature**

The basis of the novel examined is influenced by Greek mythologies beginning from its protagonist to the mythical materials used inside the American setting. The author Rick established many Greek creatures, legends and an important demigod tale about the Greek hero, Perseus, whose father Zeus mated with a mortal human being. Of course, Rick changed many parts that seem to be essential, therefore these adaptations will be discussed in the third chapter. But, in a way, it built a more poetic reformed version of the older poets. According to Roger (Woodard), myth is seen now as fiction. This is why most of the fantasy and fiction writers tend to use myths, folktales, and legends into their writings.

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An important scene found in the novel is where Percy Jackson meets with Medusa, fights and beheads her. According to the Greek myth of this hero, he had to come back with a monster's head called Medusa to his step king father to show how much he had grown, and for the sake of a hero's name. As mentioned in the second half of the first chapter, that Medusa is one of the three monsters, and who ever looked them in the eye would turn into stone. Hence, she is represented as an evil mortal creature unlike her sisters. Medusa eventually was killed by Perseus like Percy killed her in the novel.

The demigod daughter of Athena mentioned about the Trojan War in indirect way while talking to Percy, therefore it is reasonable to know how important this war to Greeks. What may cause this war is a beautiful woman known as Helen of Troy. This historical or specifically mythological war between the Greeks and Troy which lasted for ten years became known as the Trojan War. Helen is an icon of beauty that everyone wanted to ask to marry her. Her Spartan king stepfather could not grant her to anyone, because he feared it would make enmity between all those who asked her hand. This fact led the prince of troy to abduct her, and here was the beginning of the war (Berens 393).

The reason why it was mentioned in the tale is because Annabeth is reminding Percy of the war which was about to happen between the Gods. Percy's father Poseidon, Zeus and Hades of the underworld, are about to have a fierce battle among them. Thus, this war can put the world into darkness. This is what led them to unite their forces to look for Zeus' lightning bolt.

Most of the Greek Gods and Goddesses are mentioned inside *the Lightning Thief*, but Riordan focused on the big three Hermes, and Athena. Most importantly, it must be mentioned that the oath between Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades to never sire children from mortal beings. This is known as the pact of the big three, but since Zeus and Poseidon had demigod children in the novel, the pact has been broken. The God Zeus in *the Lightning thief* is searching for his magic item called the master bolt, and somehow Percy gets in the middle of this story without knowing about his own origins. Until then, his journey starts from that point where he will get to know Greek creatures, just like his satyr friend

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Grover, who serves him and protects him from any engraving danger, and other demigods at the half-blood's camp such Annabeth Chase, the daughter of the Goddess Athena, and as well as the son of Hermes, Luke Castellan.

Just before the quest's ending, Percy, Annabeth Chase and Grover the satyr on their way to the underworld, they stepped into a casino which smelled like Lotus. Whoever smelled this kind of flower will be addictive to it and eventually will lose their memories. All of them felt like that time was not passing from the lotus smell, and they were tempted by the credit cards that they were given. As introduced, in the ninth book poem of *Odyssey*, about the Lotus eaters that, the wanderer Odysseus landed in a place where the lotus eaters lived. Odysseus was attracted to this land who only plant lotuses. Those who ate this fruit became addicted to it and eventually will make them forget who they are. As stated in the book that,

...Any crewmen who ate the lotus, the honey-sweet fruit, lost all desire to send a message back, much less return, their only wish to linger there with the Lotus-eaters, grazing on a lotus, all memory of the journey home dissolved forever. But I brought them back, back to the hollow ships, and streaming tears-I forced them, hauled them under the rowing benches, lashed them fast and shouted out commands to my other, steady comrades. (Homer 214)

Therefore, Odysseus did not fell into the lotus trap as the others did, because he was awake. It was not easy to wake someone who ate this flower, so he had to take his team from it by force. Percy Jackson as the hero of this story did the same since his friends were hypnotized by the lotus flower smell, they had to run away from the casino so they will not stay there forever trapped. In addition to that smell, they were all amazed by the VIP cards they were given which made them stay even much longer. Although, Percy got awake by his father, Poseidon, while his friends could not resist the lotus flower of the casino as an equivalent for the land of lotus eaters.

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The author demonstrated creatures such as Furies, Satyrs, Centaurs and Echidnas which are all a reworking of old Greek materials. The first creature, the hero of the story, will get to know is a fury that tries to kill him. Mrs Dodds works for Hades in the underworld disguised as a teacher for Percy. As mentioned in the first chapter that furies punish by torture or kill all those who make misdeeds against the Gods. What made her turn into a fury while trying to kill Percy, is the result of offending Zeus by stealing his Lightning. But actually, it was not his fault, because he was neither aware initially of his own origins nor his powers. This is what made the Centaur Chiron and the satyr be on his side by defending him from the fury.

Another event in the novel to mention is the Pine tree which is located on the tip of the camp. According to the story Thalia's Pine tree, it provides protection for the camp of half-bloods. Thalia is in fact the daughter demigod of Zeus. She helped Grover, Annabeth and Luke to run away to keep them safe from the furies who attacked them at the top of the hill. Eventually, she could not handle them all. So she got greatly wounded from battling them. Thalia became a tree is as a result of Zeus transforming her into a pine tree since he could not see her dying. This tree actually symbolizes peace and sacrifice. Thus, it reminds us of the olive tree which was given to the people of Athens made by Athena. The tree Thalia protected the shrine from the outside monsters.

### **2.1. From a Reality to Another**

Most of fantasy writings are built around obscurity and about odd sudden encounters that will end up changing the pace of the hero or protagonist's life. It is obvious that fantasy is mysterious, and it is conventional that it is somehow an escape from the actual world. When reading the first pages of any fantasy work, it always seems that what is about to encounter is going to be different from the reality lived. Because there are always things people cannot see or understand. This is known as metaphysics. Apparently, even when fantasy elements are present in reality, the meaning of life cannot appear from

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the beginning. The protagonist will always face the fog and darkness which must be wiped to see its beauty and light.

Basically through change, the reality is found. But again, the metaphysical interventions are always present to create the impossible. Instead of making a secondary fantasy world, Rick like most of the twenty first century young adult writers use urban fantasy, by amalgamating fantasy elements inside New York City. The setting of the supernatural elements is put inside the primary world, this is represented in the location of the underworld which is in a studio, and the camp which all the demigods resided in just like Olympus and the Greek Gods.

A point of change at the life of the protagonist Percy is when he begins to discover his origins. Everything he knew became meaningless and mixed, and so does his emotions. As his journey starts, Percy could not be able to grasp what was happening around him, thinking that he is a normal person with no powers like those who were in the camp. Of course, this would be hard without knowing about his origins. Some of Poseidon's powers were inside his veins which are linked to the sea. However, Percy had to adapt to survive in the journey. The next chapter will discuss step by step the hero's journey according to Campbell and how the author contained them into the novel.

In this reality, the shift that Percy lives is difficult since nothing seemed to be right. First, he was unaware of neither his own origins nor his powers. Second, there is always a mentor who will lead and help him to begin the journey, and mostly when the hero is in a difficult situation. In addition to the friends who assist him by keeping the protagonist's emotions high. Eventually, to fulfil the quest, the hero of this tale did not choose to fight because he had to. Thus, the reality which everyone recognises as reality is actually just the beginning until it switches into fantasy. For the reason, that fantasy has an important role in shaping the flowing of events, and not only introducing the impossible into the work. After all, it is all about the protagonist's power of will to face and fit in both worlds.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the impacts of Grecian mythologies on this novel are plentiful; thus, it is a key aspect of creating *The Lightning Thief* tale. By combining modernity and fantasy, it made it expand even more. It is typical to find many fantasy authors who use mythologies in their works. Although, it must be stressed that there are always more internal and external interventions that are placed inside the storyline which are out ranged from the Greek mythologies matters. It can be viewed in the way the author led his protagonist, Percy Jackson, in a path of obstacles and problems. In addition to that, the family is seen as important, but not when you lose the one and only person left to depend on. This is demonstrated when Percy loses his mother at the very beginning of his quest. Thus, the benefit of this works is not only about learning Greek myths, but it is concerned with challenging life and enduring problems. It implements and encourages its readers to be powerful not from the outside but from the inside.

## Chapter Three:

### The Rebirth of Greek Mythologies

### Introduction

To determine whether a picture is identical or different from the original, then it must be differentiated with the primary one and observed from each angle to identify the variations between the two. The Greeks vanished long ago, but their myths were believed to be true and not only as fiction. The combination of the historical Greek myths and the twenty-first century contemporary America constructs a postmodern understanding of them. Eventually, this chapter analyses the reshaped Greek mythologies and how Rick Riordan incorporated them into the urban fantasy novel, *the Lightning Thief*. In addition to that, it will examine briefly the qualities shared between Campbell's monomyth and the novel.

#### ***I. Reshaping Greek Materials in the Lightning Thief***

Imagining alternatives for the Greek mythical sources produce a reshaped form of the original versions. It is like the author is trying to exemplify the Greek myths in a more contemporary understanding for the readers.

#### **1. Blending Contemporary Views with the Ancient Civilisation**

When asking about any story which two or more persons heard, each one will give the story according to how they viewed it. This is represented in the folktales which the old generations passed to their grandchildren. But it can be also applied to how our contemporary look of the world has changes and brought to the old original materials. That is what contemporary fantasy is about. In the novel discussed, the *Lightning Thief 2005*, the myth of the demigod Perseus is permanent. It reflects the journey of this hero in a variant form, although the base remains unchanged.

The most important thing to mention is the life of demigods and how it is risky and full of danger from the beginning of their lives. So, according to Greek mythology Perseus is a demigod hero, the son

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of Zeus and Danaë, who grew older and became stronger after the quests and adventures he went through. Certainly, Perseus is just as important as Hercules the demigod, his brother from the same father but from another mother, since the journeys they walked through are imperishable. This is observed through the American people ways of praising Hercules for the stamina and power he possesses. Heroes are always remembered for their deeds, for the reason that they prevent evil or future danger from occurrence.

The twist which is obvious from the beginning of the tale is the origins of the Hero Percy. As claimed in the novel that Percy is the twenty first demigods Perseus. Then, comes a point where his mother and the satyr, his sidekick, will claim that his father is Poseidon. According to the mythology, however, Poseidon, the god of the seas cannot ever be possibly his father since Zeus is actually supposed to be the real father. If that was it, the war could have happened, and all the blame will be put on Poseidon and the other demigods. Furthermore, it is found that Athena had a child named Annabeth. She is never blamed for that because she was not a part of the pledge which the other Gods made. Although, as mentioned in the myth, is that she never gave birth to any children. This is why Athena is marked as a virgin Goddess besides to her wisdom.

What led people to ask for their written destinies is the desire of knowing about the future which God holds for them. For this reason, prophecies are ghost anthems for those who believed in them. The ancient Greeks, as previously mentioned in the first chapter, waited for their priests, who are known as Pythia, to tell them about what will ever happen. A prophecy shows up in the first half of the novel which emphasises on the importance of prophecies in Greeks lives. In addition to that, Percy was asked by Chiron to go and see the oracle to be able to know about his destiny. To demonstrate from the journey of Percy, an oracle comes to be his fate states:

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You shall go west, and face the god who has turned. You shall find what was stolen, and see it safely returned. You shall be betrayed by the one who calls you friend. And you shall fail to save what matters most, in the end. (5)

Rick Riordan used this prophecy which interprets all about what the protagonist is going to face in his quest. Furthermore, these estimations are what are really going to happen to him. What must be mentioned is that the ancient Greeks made use of them to keep the threatening or dangers from happening. Therefore, Percy engages in this quest, stops the real object of the story from the occurrence of a fight between Gods, but could not save his own mother from the underworld. Indeed, the prophecy emphasised precisely about the journey which all of Grover, Annabeth, and Percy are going to experiment together. They headed west to Hades to fulfil Percy quest, however, they were betrayed by Ares and Luke whom he thought they are friends. Luke and Ares helped him to steal the Zeus' lightning bolt and the realm of Darkness which goes back to hades. In the novel, the protagonist had to learn how to fight, in addition to his innate powers. However in the Legend of Perseus, he started his journey only by the aids of Gods.

Actually, the ones who aided Perseus in his journey were Athena and Hermes. Chiron and the satyr have no marked trace in the life. They gave him a magic wallet, a sickle, a metal shield and the invisible helmet which helped him get rid of Medusa of the Gorgon sisters. Furthermore, they told him where to find the Graiai sisters so that they could show him the way to the gorgons. Percy, on the other way around, is assisted by the daughter of Athena Annabeth, Chiron and Grover. On this quest, Percy did not intend to kill her since Grover is the only one who observed the statue of stone that looked like his uncle. As a result they had to cover and close their eyes so they would not turn all into statues and get petrified. Percy was able to see medusa's reflection with a glass, while Perseus was able to see the three gorgons with his metal shield. The legend says that Medusa was sleeping with her three sisters.

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This made it easy for Perseus to behead her with the sickle and run away with his winged sandals and invisible helmet from the other two gorgons.

Percy was never liked by the Olympian Gods, since most of them thought that he stole Zeus's lightning bolt. However, the myth says the opposite since they are the ones who are supposed to be aiding his through his journey. Equally important, are the cursed winged sandals given to Percy by Luke. Of course, Luke's intentions were sinister from the beginning. Even so, he never wore them because he gave them to Grover. In spite of that, the winged sandals were Perseus best aid through all the journeys he lived. In the myth of Perseus, he never entered the gates of the underworld. But still, is it possible to have the underworld inside a Recording Studio? Rick Riordan made it possible to exist into the primary world which construct a very contradicting, and yet different sense. Even so, it is only seen by those who have special powers.

Perseus has never been into the lotus land has already been is discussed in the second chapter. The story, of course, goes to Odysseus and not to Perseus. This shows that Rick also mixed up another hero's journey into Percy's journey. But since Percy entered the Lotus Casino, we can make the link between the Lotus land eaters and the lotus casino. Through the story it can be seen that he and his friends had been hypnotised there for five days until Percy got awake from that dream he was living. This land is, as in the novel the lotus casino and hotel, actually located in Las Vegas in which all the customers who have been there got trapped with the VIP cards they got instead of the lotus.

### 2. The Journey of the Alternative Greek Hero

The monomyth is actually a repeated pattern found in many fantasy works. Matching the rules of Campbell's work of a *Hero with a Thousand Faces* with *the Lightning Thief* shows the same structure. It is indeed a journey that recounts the myth of Perseus in a different form. In addition to that, the structure in which the events seem to follow are so familiar with it. Since the tale is much linked to a hero, the legend of Perseus, then the work has the essential idea of Campbell. The story brings the focus mainly to

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the hero, and not to the other characters. Even his own thoughts about the others lead the story since the protagonist is the essence of it.

Percy Jackson is as he called himself a troubled kid, diagnosed with dyslexia and that makes it hard for him to keep his focus on his education. The only friend he had is the Grover who was not really aware that he is a satyr. He got expelled from many schools and then he attended the Yancy Academy. His life was already hard enough financially, educationally and even at home because of his stepfather. The only one he could lean on is his mother and not anyone else. Nevertheless, the call of adventure is on the way to Percy to bring the world he knows upside down. It is where Mrs. Dodds asked Percy to see her alone and started asking him about what she thought he stole. However, he had no idea about what she was talking about. Then she turned into a monstrous creature, and this is where Mr. Brunner hurls to save Percy with a special pen that turns into a sword. Therefore, Mrs. Dodds is an evil herald. After that, his father Poseidon sends him a messenger, which can be seen as another herald, in a form of water. She tells him that it is essential to go to the beach of Santa Monica to get what his father asked from him.

In Campbell's monomyth, the protagonist meets his mentor who instructs and aids him through the journey. In fact Percy had already met his mentor, who is Mr. Brunner, without knowing. It was first at the museum, and then they meet again in the camp as the centaur Chiron. The story of Chiron is already mentioned in the first chapter which tells us that he was an educated centaur and not wild as the others. In the camp, he instructed the heroes, and now it is time for Percy Jackson to be instructed by him. He learns how to use the sword and protect himself.

The next step is where the protagonist either accepts or refuses the journey. Although, the protagonist does not have the choice to run away from what is destined for him. It was hard for Percy to believe what happened to Mrs. Dodds at the museum. After what happened, no one seemed to remember her because the others could not be able to see her as he did. Even Grover hesitated but, denied her

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existence. Thus, when Percy came back home, he felt that he needs to bury what ever happened by blaming his disorders for what he saw. However, Grover tells Percy's mother Sally about the event and they all hurry to the half-blood camp. On their way to their destination, a Minotaur is after them to get Percy killed. The fight started, but unfortunately Sally is taken away. By trying to fight the Minotaur with his broken horn, he is showing that his is no ordinary boy. Hence, Percy has no choice but to accept the quest of retrieving Zeus's master bolt and to get his mother back. The reason why Zeus blamed Percy is Poseidon. He thought it was planned to dethrone him just like Cronus did to his father, and also Zeus.

By entering the half-blood's camp, Percy is now in the unknown world. Or in more focused words, he crossed the threshold which is a place for training the demigods to defend themselves from the monsters. There is definitely a change which the protagonist is going to face inside him and outside. Problems will come his way. Percy is tested for his performances under hard circumstances to see whether he deserves the name of a hero or not. When the journey of the underworld starts, both of Grover Annabeth will be helping the hero Percy to fulfil the quest. Only, Percy cared to save his mother from the underworld more than anything else.

Shortly, the ordeal puts the hero in a much bigger test which cannot seem easy to be solved. The dilemma often makes the hero realise a lot about his life. In addition to that, he will develop and transform Percy's both inner and outer powers which are physical and emotional. In his journey, he will encounter different Greek monsters. The main ordeal he faces is when he gets into Tartarus and Hades. Both of Percy Jackson and Hades thought that one of them is the thief; however, they will know that both of them are innocent of all these charges. Again, with the quest he is trying to achieve, he still thinks about saving his mother. The three pearls sent by Poseidon are the only way to get out from the underworld. Therefore, the protagonist is put in a dilemma where he had to choose between his mother and his friends.

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At last, the hero won over Luke who is the real stealer of the master bolt. Furthermore, he knew who his real friends are. By preventing the war which was going to happen, he becomes the champion at the half bloods camp. The change that Percy went through gave him the right to choose between the world he already lived in or at the protected camp which all the demigods resided in. Thus, the hero fulfilled the quest by finding the object. Although, his mother was a part of it, but she was not saved until Hades released her from the prison of the underworld.

### II. Alternative Path from Greece to the Twenty-First Century America

*The Lightning Thief* is a low fantasy since it is set in the primary world. Therefore, it is also an urban fantasy work about the 21<sup>st</sup> Perseus journey in America. Therefore, contemporary fantasy genre emphasises on the contemporary setting, and that is why it uses the city or the town as an essential component with the implementation of fantastical elements.

#### 1. The Role of Urban Fantasy in *the Lightning Thief*

Matching between what all humans know as real with all that is imagined supplies many with different ideas and understandings. This can be seen in the way the ancient people's creation of their Gods within their societies, and now it is represented in *the Lightning Thief*.

Rick Riordan revived a Greek hero, Perseus as Percy in the novel, in an American family, and made it possible through the urban fantasy world which he created. Modern writers headed directly toward the ancient mythologies and produced different form from the original, although the roots are still protected from changes. The life of the Americans interchangeable with the Greek life constructs a special variant body structure. Mythologies are one of the roads to reflect the ancient beliefs into the modern day life. The novel created this bond and inspired these Greek myths into America and laid down the path for the beliefs, which were once a part of people's lives, to live once again.

## Chapter Three: The Rebirth of Greek Mythologies

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Certainly, the American contemporary authors have much interest in the urban fantasies. Therefore, it is always noticed that the use of the modern urban setting happens to be revolved around folklore and mythologies. The fantasy world within the American setting is only visible to the halfblooded people just like Percy and his demigod companions. First thing to remember is when Percy Jackson was not aware of his origins, but he was able to see the fury of Hades when he got attacked at the museum. Then when he asked his friends about where Mrs Dodds is, no one could remember that she ever existed in reality. It is obvious that the supernatural world is integrated with the urban New York City. Therefore, reality and fantasy interlock with each other. It can also be demonstrated in the Harry Potter series in which the muggle<sup>14</sup> world and the magical world are joined together.

Rick Riordan emphasised on the contemporary setting since he created this modern sense into the whole novel by implementing the elements that are not seen, such as the Greek monsters, the half-blood camp and the underworld. I.e. the fantasy system can either be magical or supernatural. These are all located within the American ordinary setting, and not in a distinct world which can be a secondary world. Likewise, this combination enables its readers to understand and be familiar with the ordinary rules placed in our reality. So, it may result the prospect of accepting it as true. Moreover, urban fantasy focuses on its protagonist. Percy is the first person narrative. He narrates the story according to his everyday experiences and from his own point of view. It can be demonstrated from the first page the story begins with “I”.

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<sup>14</sup> In J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, a Muggle (/ˈmʌɡəl/) is a person who lacks any sort of magical ability and was not born in a magical family. Muggles can also be described as people who do not have any magical blood inside them. It differs from the term Squib, which refers to a person with one or more magical parents yet without any magical power/ability, and from the term Muggle-born (or the derogatory and offensive term mudblood, which is used to imply the supposed impurity of Muggle blood), which refers to a person with magical abilities but with non-magical parents. (Wikipedia)

### 2. Examination of the Hero Quest of the Demigod Percy Jackson

The Quest is an essential fantasy element, especially if writing about a hero and his journey of searching or looking for an important or a particular object. What enhances quest stories are the mythologies, especially about the ancient heroes.

Percy, as the protagonist of the novel, started his life like any normal boy who lives in a middle class. However, he ends up knowing about a fantasy world within the American society. In fact, when he entered the half-blood camp, he experienced different personality effects. To emphasize, the reason behind engaging the hero into any journey is the quest. In the novel, it is apparent that Percy shifted from a passive character in a powerful demigod. It is when he learned how to challenge himself inside and outside, and therefore problems produce the quests which the protagonist must fulfil to be granted the name of a hero.

Actually, the protagonist had no idea about being a demigod, or even more surprisingly that his father is Poseidon. His origins are kept as a secret until the time when he was told by his mother Sally and his friend Grover. Percy could not have been starting the quest if he had no special blood. Notably, He never expected that he will be starting a journey with no choice but to accept. The life of Percy is so obscure that he had no idea about what will ever happen. Obstacles start coming at his way, therefore he had to be protected and the taught all the fighting basics. He gets to know about his water inherited power, and that he is no ordinary boy he once used to know. Indeed, he develops his moral qualities and physical potentials. *The Lightning Thief's* quest is represented in Percy saving the world from having a war between the Gods.

Indeed, most young adult fiction writings tell stories about the change which every protagonist live. In this phase, Percy's identity is already shaping itself from the problems he had to bear. To put it differently, it is when he lost his mother and by fighting all those monsters he confronted throughout his journey. In this case, the shift greatly affected his personality. When he had to choose between his mom

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and friends, he chose his friends to come back to the primary world. This can be the best example to give to show how he changed and that he entered the life of responsibility. From this quest, Percy learns about himself and about the world around him. He gained the trust of everyone by retaining the master bolt and the helm of darkness. What is important to mention is that Percy's aim to start the quest at first was only to get his mother back. But as soon as the journey started, he developed moral and fighting capabilities. By all those wounds he got, he changed and then stepped into another level of accomplishment and experience.

### 3. Greek Mythologies Exist in the Twenty- First America

According to the novel, it is plain to see the Greek mythologies placed inside New York City. Greek Gods ruling the world, Demigods with special powers, Furies, Cerberus of Hades, Medusa and the Minotaur are reflected in the novel. Imagination is the key which opens up the door of Greek mythologies to be in the contemporary world. Thus, fantasy is the only way to let this happen. Correspondingly, this opens up another key to question faith.

Now, the Olympians hold the power in America and have demigod sons in the American city. Since the religion and the religion which Greek believed that it exists, the idea that held my attention is probably how imagination can create the impossible inside our world. The only difference shown is that Greeks believed, and now it is merely a substance that creates fantasy. Religion, therefore, plays an important role in their lives, but again contemporary America is losing its faith in religion. This contrast reveals much about America, and even more its writers' interest over the ancient materials.

Following up the folds of Percy's story, it is obvious that fantasy elements are revealed before the journey began. Mainly, Rick Riordan reflected the Greek mythologies in a very special pace that could carry you on into a modern, at the same time, and at the same time old original stories found in the poems of the Greek ancient writers. The fury who intended to kill Percy is one of the creatures who defend the Gods. Thus, she was of Hades' protectors. After that, the satyr Grover, surprisingly Percy's

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only best friend, revealed himself to be an ancient creature. More importantly, the half-blood camp which the normal people cannot see is only seen by those who are special. Here Percy found everything that he could not possibly imagine just like the centaurs whose role to protect the others demigods inside. In addition to that, Rick was able to reflect hell inside a studio which seems to contradict what really Tartarus means. *The Lightning Thief* is a low fantasy which places the supernatural elements inside the same world which normal people live in. It must be mentioned that through the story, Percy did not only learn to protect himself, but he was able to prove himself more than to prove the others about his abilities. Furthermore, the protagonist advanced from the level of an ordinary boy to an adult who can bear heavy responsibilities.

### Conclusion

*The Lightning Thief* surely tells us about the hero's journey. Since Rick Riordan took one of the early Greek heroes' stories, namely Perseus, we can see that his tale is not very much different from the original sources. Yet, it tells it in a variant way. This journey is eventually in modern America rather than the past, and this can be the reason behind the modern view inside it. This chapter reviewed all the reshaped versions with the initial Greek materials and reflected that Rick also used the same patterns of the hero's journey. Because of the fantasy elements placed inside the novel, it is clear that the novel is low contemporary fantasy. Generally, many of the 21<sup>st</sup> century fantasy authors use the urban setting and implement the supernatural such as monstrous beings or magical elements in their stories.

## General Conclusion

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It is clear that the author Rick Riordan reshaped the Greek mythological sources in *The Lightning Thief*. The story is in fact bound with the Greek traditions, but the main reason why they are different is mainly from the different modern vision. This mainly means that, all of the modern perceptions and understandings of the society are representing the ancient Greek mythologies. Most fantasy writers adapt from old materials such as legends, myths, and folktales. Now, we hold the idea that myths are a sort of fiction. In addition to that, fantasy can only extract from what is imagined and not real. Therefore, both fantasy and mythologies have a special unbreakable link that cannot be separated from each other.

It must be mentioned that the modern cultural perspective is the main reason behind the invented tales by adapting myths into the story of *the Lightning thief*. These reenactments give the reader retold stories of false versions of the original classical materials. Although, it still give an account for the ancient Greek myths for the contemporary readers which reinforces the link between the past and present. Furthermore, myths are represented as fiction, and that mainly means that imagination is regarded as the entire power which builds those myths. Equally important, is how these twenty- first adaptations are recounted. But what made Rick Riordan adapt those stories is because it has a contemporary purpose which I see suitable. Definitely, the properties that the Greeks once owned required renewals to meet with contemporary author's needs and to become more appealing to readers.

Yet with all these contradictions and differences made upon the *Lightning Thief*, it made look more attractive to contemporary readers. Even more, the possibility of taking these reshaped versions of Greek mythologies as true is either unbelievable or believable. In short, the rules inside the American setting would result in that acceptance. This acceptance does not omit the fact that it is not true, but it builds a possibility to serve both the readers and the writer to represent another reality within our reality.

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Fantasy is, therefore, therefore an escape from reality, although, here the fantasy elements are within the real world which does not seem to contrast it nor is similar to it. Imagination is the key to every fantasy fiction writing. Meanwhile, this imagination is not only an escape since it purposes to present hidden meanings and values inside the storyline.

After all, Rick Riordan used the same steps of the monomyth structure which many fantasy hero writers use. Beginning from the hero's separation from the real world and then the initiation of his journey until his return, the protagonist Percy Jackson fulfilled his quest object by returning Zeus's master bolt and Hades' Cap of invisibility. In addition to his quest's accomplishments, however, he acquired the knowledge which helped him become an adult. Most great men and heroes learn from the road of difficulties and problems. This will eventually expand their view of themselves and about the world. Since this novel is intended for young adult readers, it will create a special link between them and the life of the protagonist. Furthermore, they would learn about the ancient Greek beliefs like knowing that Greeks were polytheists, and that they believed the existence of evil and good creatures.

The themes of friendship, family and responsibility are some of the themes included in *the Lightning thief*. Additionally, the novel questions matters of good and evil just like the villain Luke and Percy the hero. Percy's main aim in the story was to save his mother and himself from what he is involved in. That is mainly the core of any fantasy writing especially if it is meant to young adult fiction. I have stressed on these themes to emphasize on what Percy gained through his journey. Therefore, many values are picked through the story. It must also be noted that the Greeks recounted these stories of heroes not only for fun, but instead, they were told for the sake of having a very wide vision for the worlds inside each human being. Thus, it develops and impacts on peoples' morals and values consciously or unconsciously.

By analysing the novel, the result of the study shows that the writer, Rick Riordan, broke through reality to introduce the supernatural and let the light of imagination live in his work. At the same time,

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he mirrored reality through fiction in many ways without leaving the natural base. It is clear that even if myths function here as fiction, it kind of still holds the meaning of alternative history through the story. Urban fantasy helped to create this bond between the natural setting and fantasy elements such as the ancient myths. Besides, we can see that all the modern writers are attracted to both the remotely past and the present, and this is mainly why they are all incorporated in one setting. On top of that, the monomyth or the journey of the hero patterns in *the Lightning thief* is just as similar to the all the other hero stories. That is why I gave an account for this important component that helped build this novel.

The heroes go through stages in his life like anyone of us, but their stories also provide big questions concerning life. It must be emphasized that the reality which we know as reality can also make exist of the unreal and the imagined inside the world. This is reflected in the way the Greeks believed what they thought as real and how we now think about it as a mere imagined belief. The word 'believe' is very strong in meaning and in enforcement. This shows that all humans share a lot in common even if you place someone who lives in the present in the past and vice versa. The result will be so convergent because it is in fact innate. As a whole, *The Lightning Thief* is a mythic fiction genre since it uses the Greek mythologies rather than modern fabricated ones, mythopoeia. Although, it exemplifies Rick's understanding of the Greek myths in a very current perspective.

### Appendices:

#### 1- The novelist:

Richard Russell Riordan Jr. is an American fantasy novelist. He is born in San Antonio, Texas, on June 5, 1964. He attended the Alamo Heights High School, and graduated in 1982. Rick began to enjoy writing from an early age. He made many unsuccessful attempts of publishing his short stories in teenage years. At school, Rick was appointed the editor of the high school newspaper. It was not until graduation from college and teaching in San Francisco that Riordan took writing seriously.



After graduating from the university, Rick Riordan started teaching history, mythology and English. The reason behind Rick's writing his first series of books, is when his son requested to tell him a story based on Greek mythologies. Since he has a passion for writing, he came up with the character Percy Jackson and started writing the first series of books, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*. Now he is one of the New York Times bestselling American authors. In addition to that, Riordan is the author of, *The Heroes of Olympus*, *Cold Springs*, *The 39 Clues Series*, *Tres Navarre Series* and *The Kane Chronicles*.

### 1- Summary

*The Lightning Thief* is the first fantasy novel series of *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* which is about a demigod who resides in the twenty- first America. Therefore, the author Rick Riordan links and represents the ancient Greek materials into contemporary America in a different way. Since the story is based on Greek mythologies, the story of the protagonist Percy Jackson is based on the hero Perseus. The protagonist Percy gets into a quest to return the master bolt and to stop a war between the Olympians. In this journey, we will learn about how heroes are ordinary until they get the chance to know about their real origins, and how it changes them from a passive state into real heroes.

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