



Analysis of Myth-Making in the Initial Stage of Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief*

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Abstract

Joseph Campbell stated that myths are collective aspirations, while dreams are individual aspirations. The novel "Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief" by Rick Riordan explores the heroic adventure of Percy Jackson through the lens of Joseph Campbell's concept of the Monomyth. The Monomyth consists of three main sections: Departure, Initiation, and Return. Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief" are ancient myths woven into modern graphic novels. The art of myth-making is skillfully employed by the writer and introduces the readers to a world where ancient Greek mythology and mythical characters intersect with contemporary life. Percy Jackson is seen as an innocent teenager who learns the truth that he is the son of Poseidon, which sets the stage for a blend of mythological elements in modern settings. The introduction of Camp Half-Blood in the novel is a training ground for demigods and the protagonist encounters figures like the Minotaur and Chiron. The story is very close to the classical myths and maintains a fresh and engaging approach to delivering archetypal instincts. The seamless integration of ancient tales into a present-day adventure captivates every reader and lays a clear foundation for the series. It may also be helpful to the modern dilemma where many youngsters struggle and there will be a way to find here from this archetypal character. The researcher employs a descriptive qualitative approach to evaluate the hero's quest in the novel. Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief. The conclusion posits that this particular voyage is a symbolic representation of individuals' life journeys in everyday existence.

Keywords: Rick Riordan, *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief*, Myths, Monomyth, Hero's Journey.

Introduction

Mythology refers to the oral narrative of a community. According to Joseph Campbell, mythology serves as the fundamental basis for the development of all civilizations. "The myth is the public dream and the dream is the private myth" (Campbell 48) *The Hero with Thousand Faces* asserts that mythology elucidates, empowers, stabilizes, and elevates an individual's existence from mere existence to a life imbued with everlasting significance. Homer, Sophocles, Herodotus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, and Archimedes are widely recognized as mythology's most renowned pioneer writers. Mythology has greatly influenced literature.

Problem Statement

The researcher formulated the research question based on the study's background and research topic. According to Joseph Campbell's idea of Monomyth, the Adventure of Percy Jackson in Rick Riordan's novel can be analyzed. The researcher intends to analyze the following questions:



- Does this text pertain to the creation of myths?
- Does the novel align with the theory of Monomyth or the hero's journey?
- Does the main character ultimately realize his true identity?

Objectives

To use Joseph Campbell's Monomyth theory to examine the adventures of Percy Jackson by Rick Riordan.

Significance

According to Joseph Campbell's theory of Monomyth, the researchers thought that this research would be helpful and help readers who want to learn more about Percy Jackson's big adventure and Departure of the Hero's Journey in Rick Riordan's novel.

Review of Literature

Numerous prior findings have been documented in this investigation. The preceding findings are derived from the study that shares similar issues with the present study, namely the Monomyth. The outcomes above are as follows:

The article titled "A Modern Musical Exploration of Monomyth" by Brace (2009) introduces and examines the author's initial jazz composition, A Hero's Journey, which draws inspiration from Joseph Campbell's renowned and often employed narrative structure referred to as the Monomyth. The suite for a ten-piece jazz orchestra was composed by the author, drawing upon significant elements from the Monomyth. The suite comprises six scenes, which are further separated into two acts. Although originating from jazz, the composition incorporates elements from classical music, African music, Indian music, and contemporary rock and hip-hop, resulting in a dynamic and daring musical encounter. The present study commences by providing a comprehensive overview of the entire suite, followed by an analysis of its prominent melodic themes. Subsequently, an examination is conducted on the harmonic development approaches utilized within this composition.

The study "Mad Hero in a Box: Christianity, Secular Humanism, and the Monomyth in Doctor Who (2015)" looks at how Christian precepts in helping the Doctor on his heroic journey, Secular Humanist ideologies draw him away from that path, and the resulting contradictions create an anti-hero who no longer represents the heroic ideal he is supposed to uphold.

Kealy (2011) examines the application and analysis of Joseph Hobbs as Superman's ancestor in the works of *Beowulf*, *Odysseus*, and *Roy Hobbs*. Kealy and Campbell proposed the Monomyth Theory. This thesis aims to assess the application of Campbell's Monomyth theory to renowned literary works, including *Beowulf*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, and Malamud's *The Natural*. These diverse pieces will serve as a means to evaluate Campbell's thesis and determine the durability of the Hero's Journey across both temporal and spatial dimensions.

The author identifies distinctions and parallels among them, drawing upon prior research. In previous investigations, the researchers have employed Campbell's Monomyth or the Hero's Journey but with distinct objects. For instance, Brace utilizes a song or musical as an artefact, Hardy employs a film, and Kealy uses poetry. Consequently, this study will analyze Rick Riordan's literary work, specifically the novel *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* from a monomyth perspective. The researcher will employ the Monomyth hypothesis proposed by Joseph Campbell to evaluate the work.

Research Methodology

The research employed for the study is a descriptive qualitative method. This approach aims to analyze the protagonist's journey in the novel *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief*, authored by Rick Riordan. According to Endraswara (2011: 5), descriptive



qualitative research is a strategy employed to provide a verbal or visual description without using numerical data. The writer employs note-taking as the primary tool for conducting the research. According to Endraswara (2011: 163), note-taking can be understood as a method of gathering data. During the note-taking process, extraneous aspects of the topic are excluded. At the same time, pertinent concepts, such as underlining or bolding, are emphasized to facilitate the writer's examination of the issues at hand. The researcher carefully observes and records any crucial details in the novel. The methodology employed for the literary study consistently revolves around examining the theory, concept, and methodology. The author utilizes Joseph Campbell's Monomyth theory to explore the extraordinary journey of the protagonist in the novel *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief*.

Discussion and Findings

The Monomyth or Hero's Journey stages proposed by Joseph Campbell encompass three fundamental divisions: Departure, Initiation, and Return. There are six stages in Departure, five stages in Initiation, and seven stages in Return. The researcher has chosen the First stage 'Departure' for analysis. Myth refers to the oral narratives of individuals. Joseph Campbell posits that mythology is the fundamental basis upon which all civilizations are built. In his work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* asserts that myth empowers, stabilizes, and elevates an individual's existence. Great writers like Homer, Sophocles, Herodotus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, and Archimedes used mythology as the core of their works. Hence, the influence of mythology on writing has been multifaceted.

1. Departure

a. The Call to Adventure

The initial phase of the legendary journey, known as the "Call to Adventure," signifies the hero's summons from destiny, causing a shift in their spiritual focal point from the confines of their civilization to an unfamiliar realm.

I have moments like that a lot when my brain falls asleep, and the next thing I know, I've missed something as if a puzzle piece fell out of the universe and left me staring at the blank space behind it. The school counselor told me this was a part of the ADHD, my brain misinterpreting things. (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 11)

Percy Jackson is suddenly forced into an adventure that he may not like and is against initially. He is loaded with responsibilities that he cannot be refused. Something must have anchored the Gods, and the hero must take it upon himself to solve it. In the novel *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* (2005), Percy is the typical teenage boy forced to find the stolen Zeus' Lightning Bolt. If it is not returned, it will result in a war between the Gods, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. Percy tries to handle the fact that he is the son of the Greek God Poseidon, his disabled friend Grover is a satyr who is protecting him all along, and that his pre-algebra teacher Mrs. Dodds one of the furries.

b. Refusal of the Call

The next step is "Refusal of the Call." Sometimes, the hero is given the option of going on a mission. He may or may not search; the choice is entirely up to him.

That's the property line, my mom said. Get over that, hi, and you'll see a big farmhouse down in the valley. Run and don't look back. Yell for help. Don't stop until you reach the door. "Run Percy, she told me. I can't go any further; run! But I stood there frozen in fear as the monster charged her. She tried to sidestep, as she'd told me to do, but the monster had learned his lesson. His hand shot out and grabbed her by the neck as she tried to get away. He lifted her as she



struggled, kicking and pummelling the air. (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 49)

In certain situations, the hero is given no options and is compelled to quest, such as Percy, whose mother is kidnapped and promises to return her when he returns The Lightning bolt to Zeus. Percy resists attending Camp Half-Blood and almost refuses to undertake the task.

c. Meeting the Mentor

Meeting the Mentor is the next step in the Monomyth. During this stage, the hero becomes engaged in the mission or quest, either inadvertently or consciously, and is directed by a mentor.

Then things got even stranger. Mr. Brunner, who'd been out in front of the museum a minute before, wheeled his chair into the gallery doorway, holding a pen in his hand. "What ho, Percy!" he shouted and tossed the pen. Mrs. Dodds lunged at me. With a yelp, I dodged and felt talons slash the air beside my ear. I snatched the ballpoint pen out of the air, but when it hit my hand, it wasn't a pen. It was a sword—Mr—Brunner's bronze sword, which he always used on tournament day. Mrs. Dodds spun toward me with a murderous look in her eyes. My knees were jelly. My hands were shaking so bad I almost dropped the sword. (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 12)

It does not have to be a guide; the hero is often given magical weapons to assist him defend himself. In this book, Percy Jackson is often advised by his Latin instructor, Mr. Brunner in the mortal world, eventually revealed as Chiron, a centaur in command of Camp HalfBlood.

d. Supernatural aid

Supernatural aid is one of the important incidents that happens in the formation of a hero and the success of the hero's task.

I was too tired to argue. I stepped back into the creek, the whole camp gathering around me. Instantly, I feel better. I could feel the cuts on my chest closing up. Some of the campers gasped. 'Look. I -I don't know why,' I said, trying to apologize, 'I'm sorry.' But they weren't watching my wounds heal. They were staring at something above my head. (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 12)

Throughout the story, Percy is emotionally and physically supported by Chiron and spiritually by his father, Poseidon, the God of the Sea. Before embarking on a quest, Chiron bestows upon him a celestial bronze sword to aid him in his voyage and his natural ability to control water as Poseidon's son.

e. Crossing the Threshold

Nestis represents the 'Crossing the Threshold,' a stage in which the hero must choose between leaving his previous world and embarking on the adventures that await him. The initial step in crossing the narrowing barrier between the mortal and eternal worlds is 'crossing the threshold'. The hero is oblivious to the unknown world and looming peril as he embarks on the trip to strengthen his abilities.

Most of the campers were older than me. Their satyr friends were bigger than Grover, all of them trotting around in orange CAMP HALF-BLOOD T-shirts, with nothing else to cover their bare shaggy hindquarters. I wasn't normally shy, but the way they stared at me made me uncomfortable. I felt like they were expecting me to do a flip or something. (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 75)

Percy embarks on a journey from the familiar to the unknown in this tale. He attends the Half-Blood Camp, abandoning his mortal life and developing himself there to reinforce his



foundation. He prepares himself physically and mentally to deal with the difficult and perpetual environment in which no one knows what will happen because the norms and limitations are undefined and unpredictable.

f. Belly of the Whale

The fifth stage of the Hero's Journey is the 'Belly of the Whale.' The term usually refers to the hero's rebirth, particularly in Greek mythology. The hero is absorbed into an entirely new universe, where he may suffer, giving the reader the impression that he is doomed forever. The 'Whale' depicts the hero's initial 'first evil.' The author Joseph Campbell takes the phrase 'Belly of the Whale' from the biblical account of Jonah entering the whale. The hero understands he is too deep into the dilemma to turn back.

Grover was leaning against the porch railing, looking like he hadn't slept in a week. Under one arm, he cradled a shoe box. He was wearing blue jeans, Converse hi-tops and a bright orange T-shirt that said CAMP HALF-BLOOD. Just plain old Grover. Not the goat boy. Grover was a satyr. I was ready to bet that if I shaved his curly brown hair, I'd find tiny horns on his head. But I was too miserable to care that satyrs existed, or even minotaurs. (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 58)

The man facing me was small but porky. He had a red nose, big watery eyes, and curly hair so black it was almost purple. He looked like those paintings of baby angels—what do you call them, hubbubs? No, cherubs. That's it. He looked like a cherub who'd turned middle-aged in a trailer park. He wore a tiger-pattern Hawaiian shirt, and he would've fit right in at one of Gabe's poker parties, except I got the feeling this guy could've out-gambled even my stepfather. "That's Mr. D," Grover murmured to me. "He's the camp director. Be polite. The girl, that's Annabeth Chase. She's just a camper, but she's been here longer than just about anybody. And you already know Chiron... (*Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* 62)

Greek mythology contains numerous devouring motifs. Zeus, the King of the Gods, is destroyed by his father, the Titan Kronos. To defeat the monster sent by Poseidon, Hercules, the heroic hero, must descend into its belly. When Percy Jackson's mother is transported to the Underworld, he fights the Minotaur first. This is the point at which Percy understands he can't turn back.

Conclusion

The hero is not someone who wakes up one day and chooses to confront evil. He is someone who improves himself with the support of others. He is not a hero because he commits heroic acts. He is a hero because he is moral and does not easily succumb to evil, which constantly influences him. A hero is frequently portrayed as having abilities. A person is a hero because he stands out from the crowd, even when the entire world is against him. Every hero goes through a remarkable or innovative change, known as Percy's journey. Percy Jackson, as described on the first page, is not the same person as on the last page. Like any other teenager, he is bullied in mortal and immortal worlds, making the reader feel connected to the characters. Percy Jackson experiences practically every feeling and emotion that a typical teenager goes through, from bullying to problematic parenthood, prompting every reader to reflect on their own lives. Like other heroes, Percy Jackson undergoes significant transformations that make him appealing to readers. A hero has dedicated their life to something greater than themselves. A hero must complete his physical and psychological



journey despite insurmountable hurdles. The hero does not always have to be larger than life. Analyzing the hero's journey effectively examines story structure, myths, tales, films, novels, and comic books. The hero's journey also provides insight into the hero's personality. The most famous literary works constantly draw on the ageless story framework known as the hero's journey, which has been around for a thousand years. The researcher responds to the problem statement based on the findings from the analysis and discussion. According to Joseph Campbell's idea, Percy Jackson's quest in Rick Riordan comprises three stages: departure, initiation, and return. In this novel, the Monomyth theory applies to the six phases of the first stage. In mythological accounts, the intervention could come from God. In *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief*, the hero returns safely out of jeopardy without God's aid. He identifies himself and returns to the Camp of Half-Blood without assistance. Percy's quest will continue in the following stages of initiation and return.

Suggestions

Following an analysis, the recommendations are:

- For previous research, Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson and the Olympians sequel series can also be analyzed using the Monomyth hypothesis.
- The researcher recommends more works incorporating the Monomyth idea, particularly for Literature students, such as *Harry Potter*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Trial of Apollo*, *The Heroes of Olympus*, *Kane Chronicles*, etc.
- The researcher recommends that readers read this novel since it is one of the best novels and tells the tale of someone's life that is comparable to the lives of others.

Future Recommendation

- Another prospective field of inquiry in this story is a psychoanalytical study of the characters' minds, titled "Survival of the Fittest and a Good Leader".
- A social investigation into good and evil as choices.
- Examining the Mythological Figures accepted into the Modern World.
- The researcher can conduct the research in the following two stages: Initiation and Return of *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief*.

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