

Rick Riordan's Intention in Writing *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* and the Reception of the Readers

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ABSTRACT

This research studies *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. The objectives are to describe the Greek mythology presented in the novel, the intention of Rick Riordan, and the reception of the readers. The methodology is hermeneutic referring to Ricoeur's theory. It was found that, first, the Greek mythology presented in the novel is blended with American real life; second, the main character is a son of a Greek mythology god and a real American woman and, third, the setting is a blend of places in Greek mythology and real American cities. The intention of Riordan is to open up American culture that is lived through by Americans, that a part of American culture is Greek mythology. The readers accept that the novel fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation of aesthetic enjoyment and of the incorporation of Greek mythology into real American life.

Keywords: Riordan; *Percy Jackson*; Greek mythology; hermeneutic; American life

INTRODUCTION

Rick Riordan, best-seller novelist born in San Antonio, Texas, USA in 1964, is a prolific novelist. He has written as many as five novels of *Percy Jackson* series, six novels of *The House of Olympus* series, three novels of *The Kane Chronicles* series, the first book of *The 39 Clues* series, seven novels of *Tres Navarre* series, and two stand-alone books. The novels, in particular *Percy Jackson* series, are very popular, not only in America, but also in Indonesia. The film *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* is often broadcast in Indonesian televisions. It is very popular not only among young readers to whom it addresses, but also among adult readers. Oldon (2007) says, "*The Lightning Thief* is a great book for adults and kids. I've already recommended it to a couple of adult friends who experienced the same kind of can't-put-it-down pull that I did." (p. 1). A comment in Krishna (2013, p. 5) says, "These books seem to appeal to all ages."

USA is a Judeo-Christian country. The pioneers of the establishment of the nation and country were puritan immigrants from England. Puritanism was held firmly by the early immigrants establishing a colony in Massachusetts Bay, the colony which initiated revolution against British colonialism. O'Callaghan (2002) notes, "They passed laws to

force people to attend church and laws to punish drunks and adulterers. Even men who let their hair grow long could be in trouble." (p. 18). Marsden (1996) says that eventually American people in general liked to talk about America as New Israelites chosen by God to play a role in a new age of redemption. (p. 25). Puritan Ethics which were based on strict translation of the Bible have become the social ethic until today.

How can a novel having to do with Greek mythology become best seller in a country of which the foundation has been laid down by Puritanism? The *Harry Potter* series, as reported by Barrs (2003), have been attacked by many people in USA.

There have been many passionate attacks on the *Harry Potters* series by many people and in particular by Christians. This has accord in United States – much more than in Britain or other places. In the USA, Christians on the radio, in magazine articles, on the television, on the websites, and on the growing number of books, have attacked this series very strongly. There are Christian Schools where the books have been banned. (p.1).

Most criticisms on *Harry Potter* say that *Harry Potter* teaches "satanic witchcraft" (Harry Potter Criticism, p. 1). Rick Riordan books, if not about witchcraft like

the Harry Potter series, are about Greek mythology which belongs to paganism. Wulandari (2004, p.1) finds that *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* has the same formula as *Harry Potter*. The Calico Critic (2009, p.1) says, "The similarities to the Harry Potter books were so many I eventually quit counting them all. I almost felt like this author was simply telling his own Potter story and just changing a few of the basic tenants around."

The novel is about the adventure of the main character, Percy Jackson, who is a demigod, the son of Poseidon, Greek god of the sea, and an American Woman, Sally Jackson. His quest is to find Zeus' thunder bolt which is stolen by Luke, the son of Hermes, for Kronos, to return back to Zeus. In the quest he encounters many monsters from Greek mythology. The setting of place is cities in USA; the entrance to the Underworld of Greek mythology, the Hades, is California, and the Olympus where Zeus dwells is located in New York, on top of Empire State Building. So it is a blend between Greek mythology and real American life. However, not all American readers accept it. The following quotation from The Calico Critic shows the readers' rejection of the blend.

However, unlike *Potter*, this story wasn't able to get me to suspend disbelief in the reality of the tale. I can believe there's a Hogwarts School of Wizardry. I can believe there's a magical land of Oz and that Superman can fly. These stories have a way of getting me to believe their realities within the confines of their stories. But for some reason, I frequently was drawn out of the story in *Thief* and just couldn't accept its premises. Monsters in the St. Louis Arch? The entrance to Olympus in New York and the entrance to the underworld in California? Riordan gives reasons for these locations, but I still couldn't buy it as a reader. (The Calico Critic, 2009, p. 1).

So, it is strange to know this novel won best-seller status. What has made American people like to read this novel? This question makes us curious to study this novel more deeply.

In accordance with the background, the objectives of this research are, first, to describe the Greek mythology presented in *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, second, to describe the intention of Rick Riordan, the writer, to present Greek mythology in the novel, and, third, to describe the reception of the readers toward the presentation of Greek mythology in the novel.

The readers' reception will demonstrate why the novel is so popular, not only in America, but also around the world.

METHODOLOGY

This research belongs to cultural studies because the object of this research belongs to popular culture which is, according to Storey (2007), central in cultural studies (p. 3). As for the methodology, Barker (2005) explains, that "On the whole, cultural studies has favoured on qualitative methods with their focus on cultural meaning." (p. 25). McGuigan (1997) says it is "eclectic in the method it uses, drawing liberally from across the humanities and social sciences." (p.1). So far, Barker (2005) notes, "Work in cultural studies has centered on three kinds of approach: *ethnography*, [...]; *textual* approaches, [...]; a series of *reception* studies." (p. 25). So, in accordance with the focus of this research, the proper approaches of this research are textual theory, intentional theory, and reception theory.

Textual analysis is to reconstruct Greek mythology presented in the novel and it is focused on narrative analysis. Thwaites, et al. (1995, p. 118-131) explains "A narrative is a structured sequence of events in time," while "Events are the basic units of a story. They constitute the paradigm choices that are combined into the narrative syntagm." (P. 122). Narrative has two manifestations, 'plot' and 'story'; "**Plot** is the narrative as it is read, seen or heard from the first to the last word or image. That is, like signifier, it is what the readers perceive", (p. 121), while "**Story** is the narrative in chronological order, the abstract order of events as they follow each other. That is, like signified, story is what the reader conceives or understands." (p. 121). The theories really derive from the theory of tragedy in Plato's *Poetics* and the theory of *Syuzet* and *Fabula* in Russian Formalism.

An element in narrative which is important to note is point of view, that is, the strategy taken by the writers to tell their stories, either from first person, third person, or objective point of view. Thwaites, et al. (1995, p. 127) says that "Narrative point of view is a specific kind of textual address." In the first person point of view, the narrator is one of the characters, very often the main character. The narrator narrates his/her story and makes account of what happens from his/her point of view. When making account of other characters, the first person narrator becomes third person narrator. Third person point of view, or eagle-eyes point of view, is a strategy of telling the story from third person, presumably the writer

himself/herself. Objective point of view is a strategy of telling stories in which the characters tell their own stories. This point of view is also called dramatic point of view because it is like drama in which the characters speak themselves.

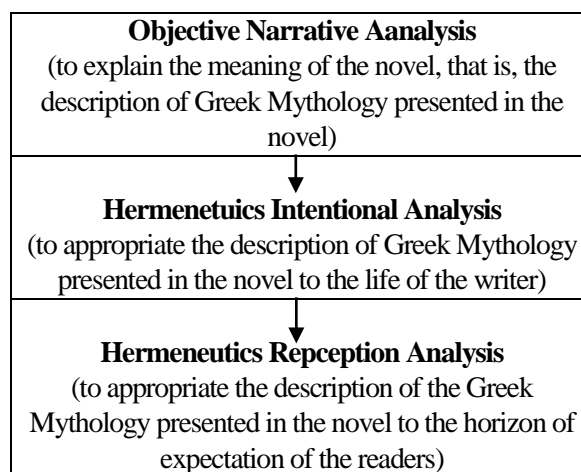
Intentional theory belongs to hermeneutics, even, the term 'hermeneutics', as explained by Milner (1996), is used to refer to theories of 'interpretation' to 'understand' the intended meaning of others. (p. 44). As for the meaning of a text, Ricoeur (1975) says that according to the common trait, "which constitutes text as text is the fact that the meaning of the text has become autonomous in relation to the intention of the author" (p. 90.). This means, Ricoeur says further, "The question is no longer to define hermeneutics as an inquiry into the psychological intentions which are hidden in the text, but as the explication of the being-in-the-world shown by the text. What is to be interpreted in a text is the projection of a world which I could inhabit." (p. 93) Ricoeur proposes the concepts of 'distantiation' and 'appropriation'.

Distantiation is placing the text at a distance, as explained by Ricoeur (1975) in the following quotation, "This concept of distantiation is the dialectical counterpart of belonging-to in the sense that our manner of belonging to a historical tradition is to be related according to a distance which oscillates between remoteness and proximity." (p. 92). As for appropriation Ricoeur says that it responds "to the thing of the text. It is therefore the counterpart of distantiation which established the text in its own autonomy in relation to the author, to its situation, and to its original destination." (p. 94). Moore (1990) explains that distantiation constitutes the 'objectivity' of the text and makes possible to approach the text in two ways, first, the readers suspend the judgment regarding the referential dimension of the text, that is, the approach adapted by structuralist, and, second, "to disclose the non-ostensive references of the text [...] to understand the world projected by the text; that is, what it refers to, what it speaks about." (p. 95). As regards appropriation Moore (1990) explains that "Appropriation is movement from sense to reference." (p. 97). In an interview, Ricoeur (1996) explains that a completely objective study kills the text; inversely, reading which does not pass through all the mediations of an objective and structural approach is only a projection of the subjectivity of the reader on the text. "Consequently, it is necessary that subjectivity be held in some way at a distance and that the appropriation be in some way mediated by all the objectifying activities." (p. 92).

As regards reception theory which also falls under hermeneutic, Iser (1999, p. 79-80) says that

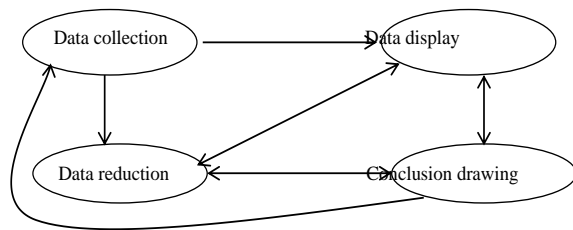
"comprehension is an individual act of seeing-things-together [...]. With a literary text such comprehension is inseparable from the reader's expectation, [...]. The process is virtually hermeneutic." Jauss (1996) says that the author's anticipation of the specific reception can be achieved "first, by the familiar standards or the inherent poetry of the genre; second, by the implicit relationship to familiar works of the literary-historical context; and third, by the contrast between fiction and reality, between the poetic and the practical function of language, which the reflective reader can always realize while he is reading." (p. 84). So, reception is a kind of appropriation of objective analysis to the reader's expectation.

Accordingly, the frame of the methodology of this research is formulated as follows.



The data of this research consists of primary data and secondary data. The primary data, that is, the words, phrases, and sentences constituting plot, setting, and dialogues, is taken from the novel *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan, published in 2005 by Hyperion Books (in the following text it is abbreviated *Percy Jackson*). The secondary data, that is, interviews with Rick Riordan and reviews and criticism toward the novel, is taken from internet. The samples are purposively selected based on the theme of this research.

The analysis is conducted through the following steps. First, the data is classified in accordance with the objectives, second, the classified data is analysed inductively using the theories presented in the methodology as the tools of analysis, third, drawing conclusion. The whole process from data collection, data reduction, data display, through conclusion is conducted interactively. (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 23).



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Greek Mythology Presented in Percy Jackson

Percy Jackson, the hero of the novel, was a demigod, the son of Poseidon and a mortal woman, and suffering from ADHD and dyslexia. He was suspected by Zeus of having stolen the master bolt, Zeus' weapon. Firstly Zeus suspected Poseidon, his brother, the god of the sea. However, a god could not usurp directly another god's symbol of power, it was forbidden by the most ancient divine laws. Zeus' suspicion on Percy became stronger when Poseidon claimed that Percy was his son. Zeus believed that Poseidon, who broke the oath of not having children from mortal women anymore, had Percy steal the master bolt. To prove that he was not the thief and to prevent the war between Zeus and Poseidon, Percy conducted a quest to find the master bolt to give it back to Zeus.

In the quest, Percy was accompanied by Annabeth, the daughter of Athena, and Grover the Satyr. Percy's weapon was a famous sword called Anaklusmos or Riptide which was handed down to him by Chiron the Centaur. Luke, the son of Hermes, gave him a pair of winged sneakers which then were worn by Grover because the sky area was too dangerous for Percy. Annabeth had an invisible Yankee's cap which was able to make the wearer invisible. They decided to travel to the west in order to reach the entrance to the Underworld in Los Angeles. He encountered several Greek monster and Ares, the god of war, who told Percy that his mother was still alive. His entering the Underworld made Hades, the god of the Underworld, angry. Hades believed that Percy had not only stolen the master bolt, but also his helm of darkness that allowed him to become a shadow.

Later on, Percy and his friends learnt that it was not Hades who had stolen the master bolt, instead Kronos who plotted fight among the Big Three: Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. They also realized that Ares was in Kronos' side because he tricked him by putting the Master Bolt in Percy's backpack. Percy then fought against Ares and defeated him by hurting his heel. Ares gave the helm of darkness to Percy and Percy returned it back to Hades. Percy reached New

York City to give the master bolt to Zeus in Olympus located on top of Empire State Building and thereafter, knowing that his mother was still alive, Percy returned to his apartment to see that his mother was there already. Percy then returned to the camp where he had been trained and met Luke who confessed of having stolen the master bolt for Kronos to destroy Zeus.

The demigods presented in the story are all originally created by Riordan himself and thus it leads into his creation of such a new mythological story. Although owning the same name, Percy and the original Perseus are two different characters. Riordan once confessed that he decided to create Percy as the son of Poseidon instead of Zeus' to make things more difficult for him to face (Rick Riordan - 2009 National Book Festival). Percy and the other new demigods, all made up by Riordan, still own the basic characteristics of their parents who are Greek gods and goddesses. There are so many examples of this if we look at all the demigods in the novel. Clarisse is depicted as a strong girl of her father, Ares, the god of war. Annabeth is depicted as a smart wise girl of her mother, Athena, the goddess of wisdom and battle. Luke does indeed own mischievous and cunning personalities as a son of Hermes, the Messenger, who is identical with thievery. This demigod stole toiletries for Percy when he arrived at Camp Half-Blood's cabin eleven and he admitted in the end of the story that he even stole Zeus' master bolt.

Riordan does also a kind of modernizing the Greek mythological characters as he needs to drag them into the modern world and make them fit into the setting of the novel. He attaches wheelchair to Chiron the Centaur, Hawaiian shirt into Dionysus the god of wine, sandals and short for Poseidon the god of sea, glasses and biker's looks for Ares the god of war, and so on and so forth. Related to the antagonists of the story, Riordan also has his reasons of why they become the villains. If we look at what happens in Greek mythology, Kronos can be classified into the 'dark area' and thus fits the characteristics of a villain. Luke has something happened in the past related to his father, Hermes, and many other things. It becomes his reason why he was on Kronos' side. Ares joined this side simply because he desired a great world war to happen.

This story uses the first person point of view, with Percy Jackson as its narrator. The whole plot is built upon what came into Percy's life, what he described, thought, and felt, and also his conversations with the other characters. This first person point of view shortens the distance between the story and the

readers as they can feel like they are talking to Percy or reading his diary. It also raises the acceptability of the story, helping the readers to understand the situations and accept the blend of modern reality and ancient mythology as Percy himself also could hardly believe in what had happened to him at first.

The first person point of view creates a gap between Riordan and Percy. What Riordan thinks may not be the same as what Percy thinks. It may happen due to the difference on their age. When Percy is apt to think about himself negatively, Riordan tries to say that actually Percy is not like what he thinks he is. Riordan wants to objectify Percy's opinion about himself. Riordan also has said that he is different from Percy: he said he would not be able to stand bravely and fight (Rick Riordan - 2009 National Book Festival).

Rick Riordan's Intention

Answering a question in an interview with Erin (2007, p. 1), "How did he get the idea for this series?" Riordan said that his son, Haley, who was studying Greek myths asked him to tell some bedtime stories about gods and heroes. When Riordan ran out of myths his son was disappointed and asked him to make up something new with the same characters. He made up Percy Jackson and his quest to recover Zeus' lightning bolt. When it was done his son asked him to write it out as a book. That is how *Percy Jackson* came into existence.

In an interview with Jennifer Robinson, Riordan said that as a parent he has two sons who are reluctant readers and now they have made amazing strides in the last few years. His older son, Haley who has dyslexia/ADHD, "will now sit for hours when he involved with a book." Patrick, his second son, has a great time with him reading together and discovering new fantasies. (Robinson, 2009, p. 3).

It is what is called by Reocour psychological intention of the writer. Psychologically Riordan was motivated to invent something to encourage his son to read. Being himself a reluctant reader and finding out *Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien interesting to him, Riordan invented new mythologies for his son. But why Greek mythology?

In an on-line interview (An Interview with Rick), when being asked whether Riordan is worried about censorship, because *Percy Jackson* deals with magic and the Greek gods, Riordan (2009) said,

In Western Civilization, we've always had an uneasy mix between Classical mythology and Judeo-Christian values. As a culture, we tend to

believe in one God, but we also grow up steeped in these wonderful old stories about the Olympians. As long as we recognize them as stories that are part of our heritage and long-since stopped being any kind of serious religion, I don't see the harm in learning mythology. In fact, I think you have to know Greek myths to understand where our modern culture came from. It's part of being an educated member of society. [...]. If censors want to challenge Percy Jackson on the grounds that it portrays the Greek gods as real, they'll have to censor a good portion of the English curriculum in every state. Greek mythology is studied extensively from grades 1-8, not to mention the Iliad and the Odyssey in the upper grades. English literature draws heavily on Greek mythology. (p. 4-5)

The quotatio reveals that Americans believe in one God, they have been grown up in a society embodied by values deriving from Judeo-Christianity, yet they have also been nurtured by Greek myths. This opens up a fact about American culture lived through by Americans: a blend of old European culture, Greek-Roman culture, and Christianity. Their formal religion is Christianity, but their ideal heroes are not figures like Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ which is mild like lamb does not fit the ideal heroes. When in a time of low spirit and need of ideal heroes, like the aftermath of Vietnam War, they go not to Jesus Christ, instead to figures like Beowulf or Hercules who is able to defeat enemies single-handedly. *Rambo* is the best example.

The blend is also represented well by the American Great Seal which has two sides, the obverse side and the reverse side. The obverse side bears the image of an eagle bearing a shield having thirteen stripes representing the thirteen colonies on its breast, a scroll in its beak with a sentence '*E Pluribus Unum*' meaning 'out of many one', olive branch representing peace hold by its right talon, and a bundle of thirteen arrows hold by its left talon, representing war and the thirteen colonies. The reverse side bears the image of an unfinished pyramid representing strength with an ever seeing eye on top of it. Under and above the pyramid there are sentences "*novus ordo seclorum*" meaning "new order of the ages" and '*annuit coeptis*' meaning "he (God) has favored our undertakings" which, at the same time, explains the meaning of the ever seeing eye. (Patton, 2000; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington, DC, 13 July 2003, p. 6.).

The image of the 'All Seeing Eye' on the top of the pyramid has several versions associated with several

beliefs and originates in mythology. It can be traced back to Egyptian mythology and the Eye of Horus. Buddhist texts like the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* also refer to Buddha as the 'Eye of the World'. (Eye of Providence, 2013). The account explains the origin of the single eye in mythology, even though not Greek Mythology. That is why when President Roosevelt suggested the Great Seal be put on the one-dollar bill, as explained by Henry A. Wallace quoted by MacArthur (2013), he needed to ask James Farley (Postmaster General and a Roman Catholic) "if he thought the Catholics would have any objection to the 'All Seeing Eye' which he as a Mason looked on as a Masonic symbol of Deity. Farley said 'no, there would be no objection'." This is how the Great Seal of the United States has been put on the one-dollar bill.

So, Riordan's sentences in his answer to the question in the on-line interview, that "Greek mythology is studied extensively from grades 1-8, not to mention the Iliad and the Odyssey in the upper grades", that "English literature draws heavily on Greek mythology", and that "Percy Jackson is part of that tradition", open up the 'world' Americans have been living through.

That America's tradition stems in Greek tradition gives way to comparing USA with Rome, the continuation of Greece, in political and military might. Tsonchev says that "There are astonishing similarities between the rise of the American state and power and the upsurge of Roman Republic." (Tsonchev, 2013, p. 1).

The Reception of the Readers

The readers' reception can be classified into two: the readers' aesthetic enjoyment when reading the novel and the way the novel opens up Greek mythology to them.

The aesthetic enjoyment comes from the language, the tone, and the plot. O'Sullivan (2013), in her review says that "the series is so popular" because "The writing is a crisp and easy to read." (p. 1). This review is what most readers think about the novels, that is, "easy to read". Krishna (2013, p. 1), for example, says, "They're great easy reads and are definitely good for when you want something light and enjoyable." This "easy to read" of the novel can be proved by the following quotation from the novel (Riordan, 2005).

My name is Percy Jackson.

I'm twelve years old. Until a *few* months ago, I was a boarding student at Yancy Academy, a

private school for troubled kids in upstate New York.

Am I a troubled kid?

Yeah. You could say that.

I could start at any point in my short miserable life to prove it, but things really started going bad last May, when our sixth-grade class took a field trip to Manhattan— twenty-eight mental case kids and two teachers on a yellow school bus, heading to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at ancient Greek and Roman stuff. (p. 3).

Most sentences in the quotation are simple sentences with ordinary vocabularies that make them light and "easy to read" by young readers, nonetheless adult readers.

Besides easy to read, light, and enjoyable, the tone of the novel also makes the readers like the novel, "The sardonic tone of the narrator's voice lends a refreshing air of realism to this riotously paced quest tale of heroism that questions the realities of our world, family, friendship and loyalty." (Kirkus Reviews in Powell's Books, 1994-2013, p. 2). The sardonic tone appreciated by the review is the effect of the narrator's first person point of view which is relaxed, causal, and trendy as described by Robichaud (2013), "There are so many things that I love this book that I don't know where to start. Firstly, I love how the author uses a relaxed, causal, trendy first-person narrative. It comes off as a terrific-personal journal that is almost believable. I also thoroughly enjoy the comedy embedded within the story...". The 'comedy embedded within the story' is the effect of the sardonic (i.e. ironic/sarcastic) tone of the novel. In a more general term we can say it is 'humorous' as said by Smith "Overall, the writing is excellent with a good degree of humor." (Smith, 2013, p. 3). One of the examples of the humor is when Percy gave the magical sneakers to Grover in Chapter 10.

"Pretty soon we'd laced the sneakers over his fake feet, and the world's first flying goat boy was ready for launch.

"Maia!" he shouted.

He got off the ground okay, but then fell over sideways so his backpack dragged through the grass. The winged shoes kept bucking up and down like tiny broncos.

"Practice," Chiron called after him. "You just need practice!"

"Aaaaa!" Grover went flying sideways down the hill like a possessed lawn mower, heading toward the van." (Riordan, 2005, p. 158).

Another example can be found in the same Chapter 10 when Grover teased Percy with the idea that

Gabe's 'aura' is contagious and Percy was contaminated by the 'aura'.

"Your mom married Gabe for you," Grover told me. "You call him 'Smelly,' but you've got no idea. The guy has this aura.... Yuck. I can smell him from here. I can smell traces of him on you, and you haven't been near him for a week."

"Thanks," I said. "Where's the nearest shower?" (Riordan, 2005, p. 165).

Such kind of humorous event or dialogue is spread over the pages of the novel that makes it more enjoyable to read.

Other aesthetic enjoyment, along with the humorous allusion to Greek mythology, is the sequence of action which is 'rip-snorting', as said by a review in *Horn Book Magazine*, "Packed with humorous allusions to Greek mythology... along with rip-snorting action sequences, this book really shines." (Powell's Book, 1994-2013, p. 2). Taylor (2009, p. 1) describes it as follows: "Good pacing, decent characterization, interesting ideas, and a good overall balance to the novel." The pace of the actions which is described by Patricia in *School Library Journal* as "the breakneck pace keeps the action from being too predictable" seems to be the source of aesthetic enjoyment from the plot.

This aesthetic enjoyment fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation, that is, that to read a novel is to get enjoyment. Horace said that literature is *dulce et utile*, beautiful and useful. This becomes the reader's expectation when reading literary works.

Besides getting aesthetic enjoyment, the readers also feel like being transported into the story of the novel. Dragonfly's review (2009) says "I think this book was really interesting and is a great way to get you into Greek Mythology! When you read it, it makes you feel like you are transported into the book!" This is also the effect of first narrator point of view of the novel which is described by Robichaud in the quotation above as coming off "as a terrific-personal journal that is almost believable."

The next effect of the first narrator point of view is making Greek mythology presented in the novel 'current'.

As a child, I was fascinated by Greek mythology, so I loved that this book incorporated many of those themes. It's a wonderful way for children to learn about these myths in a fun way. As an adult, it really took me back. Riordan did a great job making the themes that run through the mythology current, and his way of

incorporating the gods into the stories is both intriguing and amusing. (Krishna, 2013, p. 1).

Percy Jackson, the narrator, is an American boy living today. This makes his narration which seems like 'personal-journal' current. At the same time it opens up a fact that American readers have quietly and secretly accepted myths, in particular Greek mythology, as a part of their culture. This fact is implicitly explained by Barner-Barry (2005 p. 206) "They shared certain basic principles that seemed fundamentally true, such as belief in a monotheistic deity that they called "God" and a reverence for Jesus. *What is being ignored is that religiously and culturally the United States is no longer that way.*" (Italic by us). This means that *Percy Jackson* (and the other books in the same series) fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation, that Greek mythology is a part of their history of expectation.

This Greek mythology's seemingly current (real) makes it interesting to the readers, in particular young adult. Teens, as found out by Bright and Bright (2013) in their research, "look for books that provide a real-world link for them, that allow them to imagine circumstances that might be a bit beyond their own live, [...]. Even the very popular *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* series are rooted in the real world, but then take the readers into a series of imagined circumstances and places." (p. 11).

Percy Jackson is rooted in real world as *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* are; the made-believe Percy Jackson as the son of a real American woman and the placing of the adventure in American cities make the novel seem like to be rooted in real world. This also fulfils the expectation of American young adults.

CONCLUSION

The Greek mythology presented in the novel is blended with American real life; the main character, Percy Jackson, is a son of Poseidon, the god of sea in Greek mythology, and Sally Jackson, an American woman. The setting, the Underworld and the Olympus in Greek mythology, is located, respectively, under American cities and on top of Empire State Building. Second, the intention of Riordan is that by means of the presentation of Greek mythology in the novel Riordan opens up American culture lived through by Americans, that American culture is a blend between Yudeo-Christianity and Greek mythology. Third, the reception of the readers is that the novel fulfils the readers' horizon of expectation of aesthetic enjoyment and of the fact that Americans accept Greek mythology as part of their culture.

The critics and reviews selected as the data for the reception of the readers are not classified according to cultural background. When classified based on cultural background, there may be differences among the critics and reviews due to different cultural background. In the Introduction, a paragraph from Calico Critic is quoted of saying that the critic is not able to accept the premises: monsters in the St. Louis Arch, the entrance to Olympus in New York and the entrance to the underworld in California. Whereas the analysis shows that many readers enjoy the humorous blend of the Greek mythology with American real life. To obtain a prudent finding on the reception of the readers, further research on the reception of the readers classified based on cultural background needs to be conducted.

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