



**BRINGING GREEK MYTHOLOGY INTO AMERICAN STORY:
A FORMULAIC ANALYSIS OF RICK RIORDAN'S *THE TRIALS OF
APOLLO: THE HIDDEN ORACLE***

THESIS

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Submitted to English Department,
Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember, in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree Sarjana Sastra in English Studies.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Kanta and Sugi Hariyati for the love, faith and prayer they have given in my life.



MOTTO

Realism is just another name for yesterday's thinking.

(Robert Kriegel)



DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “**Bringing Greek Mythology Into American Story: A Formulaic Analysis of Rick Riordan’s *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle***” is an original writing. The analysis and research contained in this thesis have never been done for any degree or publication. I also validate that sources utilized and supports received in the process of writing this thesis have all been acknowledged.

Jember,
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My praises and gratitude belong to Allah SWT for His merciful that lead me to finish this study. I also would like to thank all the people who have accompanied, supported, and given their contribution to me during my study.

1. Prof. Dr. Akhmad Sofyan, M.Hum, the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember
2. Dra. Supiastutik, M.Pd, the head of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember
3. Dr. Ikwan Setiawan, M.A, my first advisor, and Dr. Eko Suwargono, M. Hum, my second advisor, who have guided me to finish my thesis
4. All of my lecturers in English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember, who have educated me to get better understanding of meaningful and valuable knowledge during my study
5. All the staff of Faculty of Humanities
6. The Library Officers of Faculty of Humanities and the Central Library of Universitas Jember
7. My parents, Kanta and Sugi Hariyati as the most amazing people in my life who always support me, give me their greatest motivation, love and prayer in every situation in my life
8. Ilma Makhfirah, Yovita Andriani, Nurul Firdaussyah, Serly Yusita, Ina Yuliana who always accompany, support and give great friendship during my lecture period
9. Nurul Aeny, Chusnul Andriani, Khemal Wichaksy as 'Formulir Squad' who help me by sharing their knowledge to finish this thesis
10. Dwi Oktalina Lestari, Widad Abdul Hamid, Adinda Nur Khalifah, Dio Catur Prasetyohadi and all of my friends in English Literature 2014 who give all of their love and always make my day getting brighter through their smile and advices

11. Ilma Makhfirah, Basofi Hardiyanto, Erwin Chandra Purnama as ‘Bipolar Squad’ friends who bring happiness through their jokes, support and motivation during my study in University
12. My late best friend Giga Iman Dharmawan who gave great experiences and unforgettable moments in my life through his motivation, advice and always cheered me up
13. All of my friends in English Department 2014 who grow up and develop together since we become an English Department students
14. All my friends who have contributed for my thesis which cannot be mentioned one by one
15. My Almamater.

Jember, September 2018

Pingkan Ayu Prameswary

SUMMARY

Formula in *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* by Rick Riordan; Pingkan Ayu Prameswary, 140110101011; 58 pages; English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember.

This study discusses about Greek mythology which is brought into American story in the novel entitled *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* by Rick Riordan. The adventure events are represented through Greek mythology and it is combined to American culture. Greek mythology is the media to present American culture as the new formula of adventure story of hero story. American culture and Greek mythology are related to each other. Thus, I analyze it using formula theory by John G. Cawelti who presents the elements of adventure story and formula and culture. Formula cannot be separated from culture because the story is about two different culture. The standardization of the story is needed to find the standard of the story based on the culture and the general rules of adventure story. Escapism as one of formula element is needed to know the contextual background and the purpose of the novel creation. American culture and Greek mythology will be analyzed using these elements of formula to reach the goals of this analysis.

Qualitative research is used in this analysis because the object of analysis is a novel. There are two kinds of data in this research, primary data and secondary data. The primary data are taken from the narrative structure, statements and dialogues in the novel which are related to the research questions. The secondary data are taken from library and internet such as books, thesis, journals, e-books and websites which are related to the topic discussion.

As the result, it can be concluded that the construction of adventure story and formula and culture are presented in the novel. Greek mythology is used to represent the hero as American superiority, because America does not have a mythological hero. It makes America creates a hero using Greek mythology because Greek mythology is the foundation of western culture. Riordan created a

different superhero based on Greek mythology to show American superiority. Riordan also brings the issue in America. He creates some of the characters in the novel to represent LGBTQ community in America. It is done to make the reader respect to the existence of LGBTQ community, especially for the young readers. It can motivate the young readers as LGBTQ that they should be confident. The readers also can learn about Greek mythology through the story in the novel. It can be concluded that the idea of writing formula by Riordan presents the new construction of formula which can reach the popularity of the novel and the issue in American culture and society.

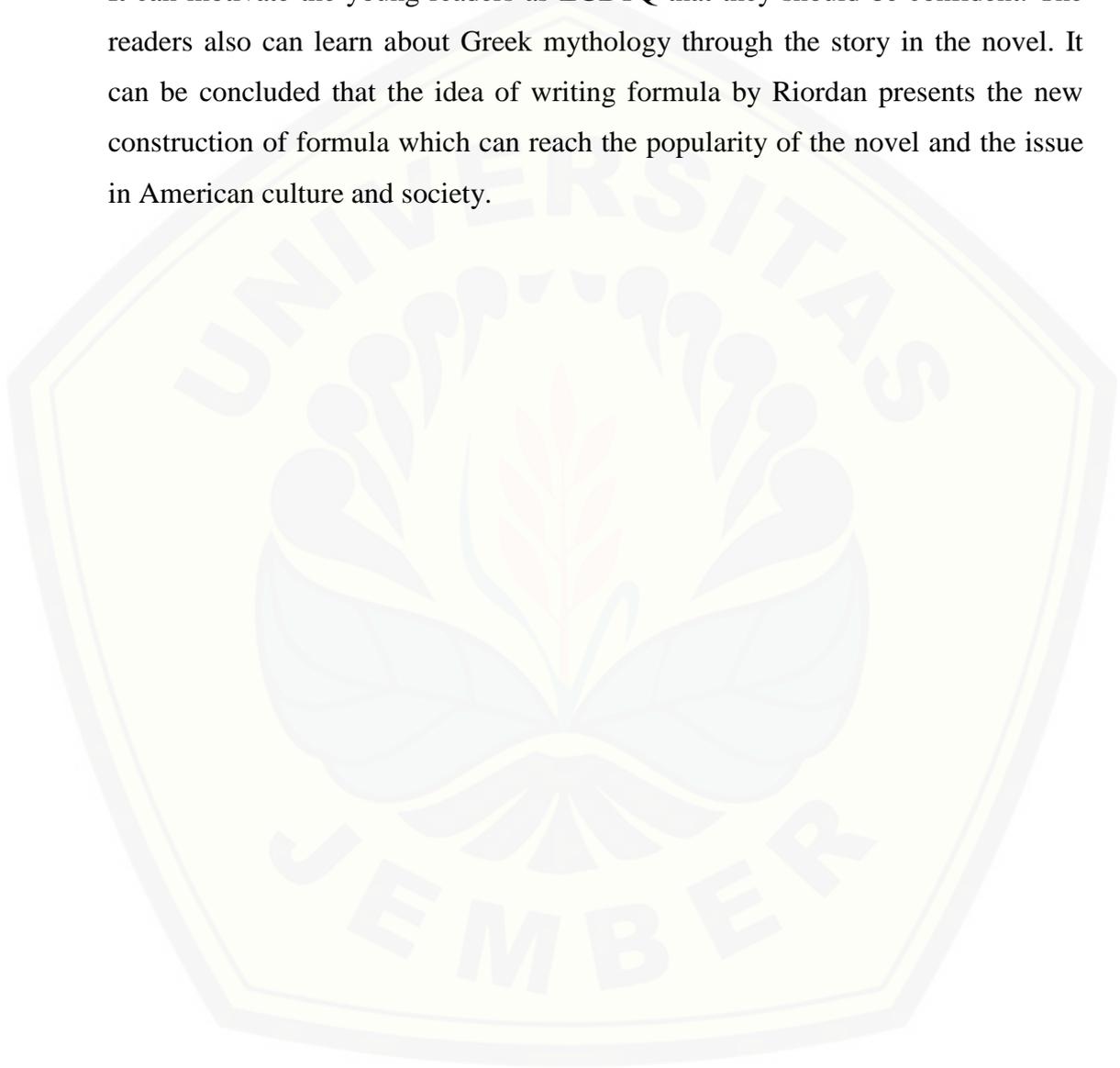


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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the basic concepts while doing the research. One concept relates to the other concepts. Background of study relates to the topic of discussion, the research question and the aim of the study. Those basic concepts are explained as follows:

1.1 The Background of Study

The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle by Rick Riordan is one of popular novels, which has a good rate in the USA. This novel was published on May 3rd, 2016. It appropriates for readers aged 10+ or young readers. There are five books of *The Trials of Apollo* and this novel is the first series. He released the second book of this trilogy on May 2nd, 2017. It is titled *The Trials of Apollo: The Dark Prophecy*. The third book of this trilogy is *The Trials of Apollo: The Burning Maze*, it was released on May 1st, 2018 (<http://rickriordan.com/series/the-trials-of-apollo/>).

Rick Riordan is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of over twenty novels for young readers, including *Percy Jackson* series, *The Heroes of Olympus*, *Kane Chronicles* focusing on Egyptian mythology, *Magnus Chase and The God of Asgard* series based on Norse mythology. Riordan has begun writing mystery novels for grownups. He has two sons whom one of his oldest son has got ADHD and dyslexia. His eldest son, Haley, asks him to tell about some bedtime stories of Greek gods and heroes story to his son. It makes his son happy and feels enthusiast. He attempts to make a novel using Greek mythology and makes his son feel better. He, eventually, writes a children's fiction book when he starts writing *The Lightning Thief* of Percy Jackson series about Greek mythology as a bedtime story for his oldest son. Then, he becomes an author who writes novel using mythology (<http://rickriordan.com/>). *The Hidden Oracle* also won *Goodreads*

Choice Awards Best Middle Grade and Children's Fiction of 2016 (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/26252859-the-hidden-oracle>).

The story in this novel is a mixture of two cultures, American culture in the 21st century and Greek mythology. The story tells about hero. The heroes of American and Greek have different appearances. American and Greek heroes have different appearances respectively such as Captain America and Superman from America and Zeus, Poseidon and Hercules from Greece. Even though the appearances of those heroes are different, they also have similarity. The similarity is the superiority which attracts American to read the book even though it talks about a myth. American people bring Greek ideology from Greek philosophers into America. The ideology from those philosophers is used by American people. It can be proved by books and statements of famous Greek philosophers such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle which are used as the foundation of American ideology to develop the country in all aspects. The books from Greek philosophers are used as a hand book at university in America. Indirectly, Greek ideology is followed by American people but American people develop it well. Therefore, America can be a superior country because they can develop high end technology and have a control over the progress of various aspects of life compared to other countries. It delivers the researcher to analyze it using formula's theory to identify about superiority in America which makes the reader want to read the novel even though it tells about a myth.

A formula is a combination or synthesis of a number specific cultural conventions with a more universal story form or archetype (Cawelti, 1976: 6). Formula cannot be separated from cultural factors or certain period associated with social problems at that time. The several culture combinations of the story are an archetypal of the real culture. The story of this novel has universal story form or archetype, but it is combined with several different cultures.

Rick Riordan introduces this novel using the correlation of the story from the last series of *The Heroes of Olympus* novel by him. It tells about Seven Greek Heroes and Roman Demigods who win the war against Gaea (The Greek Earth

Goddess; Mother of Titans, Giants, Cyclopes and other monster). The author starts writing this novel using the end of the war as the beginning of the story. He tells about the sixth months later after the war ended. Apollo, one of the God is cursed by his father, Zeus (The Greek God of The Sky and the King of The Goddess) to be a mortal human named Lester Papadopoulos. Apollo is the Greek God of the Sun, Prophecy, Music and Healing; the son of Zeus and Leto, and the twin of Artemis. When he has been cursed to be a mortal human, he becomes sixteen years old teenager who lives in New York City, USA and he has an appearance of Caucasian male. He is good at poetry and music, but he has lost his power and some memories. He also meets with a young girl with incredible strength named Meg McCaffrey, who will be his partner in the story.

As The God of Prophecy, he has responsibility for the Oracles. There are five Oracles which are Oracle Delphi, The Sybil of Cumae, Oracle at Erythaea, The Oracle of Trophonium and The Grove of Dodona. Some of those Oracles have been destroyed. Oracle Delphi is the most famous Oracle and the only Oracle which gives prophecy until now but it has kidnapped by Python. Oracles are needed because without Oracles no one can do their quests. To send a quest, it needs prophecy and prophecy comes from the Oracle. Apollo faces many difficult problems, but he must take his responsibility.

The setting of the story happens in contemporary era in New York City but the author brings Greek mythology into its narrative. He makes most of the characters using modern appearances because it happens in 21st century. This novel story takes place at Camp Half-Blood, Long Island, America. It is where the demigods are living with Greek nuance. The author exposes the use of modern social medias such as Snapchat and Youtube that are used by God. The choice indicates that the author has creative sensibility in mixing Greek mythological reality and modern reality.

In short, the author also brings contemporary American culture into its narrative. Therefore, understanding contemporary American culture is important in conducting the research of this novel.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Greek mythology and American culture in *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* are related to each other. Greek mythology is the reason of modern culture comes. The unique Greek mythology characters represent American people, culture and society. It makes Greek mythology can be accepted in American society which has great superiority. Riordan gives new formula by the superhero based on the origin of western civilization. *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* portrays the construction of formula in adventure story based on superhero story about Greek mythology in American culture in different way. Greek mythology is used as the main story and American culture is used as the contextual background of the story. The new formula which is given in the novel can attract the popularity of the novel because the story fits the interest of American culture.

Based on Riordan's experience, the problem in America such as LGBTQ which occurs to children is important problem and must be addressed. Young reader is the main purpose Riordan creates the story. This is Riordan's main escapism to influence readers to accept existence of LGBTQ and respect each other. Riordan presents Greek mythology as the way to add insight by learning it. The story of the novel by putting LGBTQ characters can give motivation to young reader with LGBTQ problem to be confident. Riordan fights for gender equality in children because children are difficult to accept different mindset than adults. LGBTQ is still an issue in American society. There is a sense of care which must be given to them because they are the same like common people. They are not harmful the people in society. This can be shown through the representation of some characters in this story. Respect each other is a must. It can be concluded that the idea of writing new formula by Riordan represents the cultural condition in America about children equality problem in society and Greek mythology as an intermediary story.

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