

## Percy Jackson's Eco-Hero's Journey Through Greek Mythology in Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief*

Bezaliel Oliver Wardana

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya  
bezaliel.21017@mhs.unesa.ac.id

### Abstrak

*The Lightning Thief* (2005) karya Rick Riordan adalah novel anak-anak/remaja terkenal yang mengikuti seorang anak laki-laki setengah dewa bernama Percy Jackson di modern Amerika, yang baru-baru ini mendapat adaptasi acara TV oleh Disney. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana Percy Jackson menjadi pahlawan lingkungan. Penelitian ini menggunakan kritik arketipe untuk menemukan narasi, monolog, dialog, kata-kata, dan frasa untuk menganalisis konteks dan aspek mitologis yang digunakan untuk membantu menceritakan perjalanan Percy Jackson menjadi pahlawan lingkungan. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori dari Christopher Vogler mengenai arketipe karakter untuk mengatur peran setiap karakter dalam cerita yang berperan dalam perjalanan Percy Jackson menjadi pahlawan lingkungan, dan tahapan perjalanan untuk memetakan perjalanan Percy Jackson menjadi pahlawan lingkungan. Melalui pembacaan cermat dan analisis tekstual, penelitian menemukan bahwa karena buku ini ditujukan untuk pembaca anak-anak/remaja, penerapan aspek lingkungan dan alam dalam cerita dilakukan dengan terlebih dahulu membangun hubungan dan interaksi Percy Jackson dengan air dan alam melalui penggunaan aspek arketipe mitologi Yunani yang kekal dan luas serta aspek terkait alam untuk menciptakan cara tidak langsung menunjukkan perjalanan pahlawan Percy Jackson untuk menjadi pahlawan lingkungan sehingga tidak membebani cerita atau mengalihkan perhatian pembaca sehingga mereka dapat berinvestasi pada cerita.

**Kata Kunci:** Mitologi Yunani, Hero's Journey, Arketipe Karakter, Eco-Hero.

### Abstract

*The Lightning Thief* (2005) by Rick Riordan is a famous children/juvenile's novel following a demigod boy named Percy Jackson in modern day America, which recently got a TV show adaptation by Disney. The purpose of the research is to find out how Percy Jackson becomes an eco-hero. The research archetypal criticism to find narrations, monologues, dialogues, words, and phrases to analyze the context and mythological aspect used to aid in telling Percy Jackson's journey to become an eco-hero. The research uses Christopher Vogler's character archetypes to organize each character's role in the story that have a role in Percy Jackson's eco-hero's journey, and stages of the journey to map out Percy Jackson's journey to become an eco-hero. Through close reading and textual analysis, the research found due to the intended children/juvenile audience of the book, the implementation of environmental and nature aspects in the story is done by first establishing Percy Jackson's connection and interactions with water and nature through the use of the persistent and vast Greek mythology's archetypal nature and many nature-related aspects to create indirect ways to showcase Percy Jackson's hero's journey to become an eco-hero so as to not bog down the narrative nor distract the audience so they can be invested in the story.

**Keywords:** Greek Mythology, Hero's Journey, Character Archetypes, Eco-Hero.

### INTRODUCTION

*The Lightning Thief* (2005) by Rick Riordan is the first book in the *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* series of novels about a boy discovering his true heritage as the son of a Greek demigod and overcoming difficulties and journeys in the Greek mythological side of the modern world. The story of *The Lightning Thief* contains many messages about important topics, one of which is about the environment or nature, which through the usage of Greek mythology that has a close relationship with nature and with the settings of the modern world, it creates messages

that criticizes the environmental and nature problems in the real world. This kind of message topic is difficult to convey without boring the readers, which the novel series targeted at children aged 9 to 12 years old. Therefore, *The Lightning Thief* does not explicitly focus on environmentalism but through conveying the narrative of Percy Jackson's hero's journey to become an eco-hero. *The Lightning Thief*'s popularity and the young audience mean it can be a very influential literature when it comes to raising awareness of the importance of the ecosystem, sustainability, environments, and pollutions to the youth, and may inspire the world of literature to look closely on

how to raise awareness while still able to tell a satisfying narrative.

*The Lightning Thief* or the series has been studied many times from the angle of the hero's journey or from the angle of ecocriticism, however, none has done it to study how Percy Jackson becomes an eco-hero. For example, a study by Alhimni (2014) has analyzed the environmental issues portrayed in the *Percy Jackson* series, while a study by M & Jhansi (2024) analyzed archetypal patterns in the characters and narrative of *The Lightning Thief*, and Difa (2022) studied how the hero's journey theory was used in *The Lightning Thief* story. These studies understood the importance of environmental and archetypal aspects in *Percy Jackson*, but did not understand that the environmental aspect is as important as Percy Jackson's hero's journey in the story.

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell (2008) introduced the world to a universal concept where protagonists in stories go through series of trials to achieve the centering in their "integrity" or the "hero's Self," which is called the monomyth or the hero's journey, however, Poland (1991) proposed the concept of an eco-hero, where instead of reaching the "hero's Self," the hero rejects their self-interest to reach the "ecocentric Self" (Zainal, 2024). That is why this research will analyze Percy Jackson's hero's journey to become an eco-hero. By researching the original material and understanding how it is able to convey a hero and the journey so effectively, it could produce findings that can be used in the process of adapting from book to screen so that the integrity of the story and message is maintained especially with the recent TV show adaptation, and this research may become a reference to analyze eco-hero's journey in other literature. This research uses Vogler's *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* which refined Campbell's monomyth into the hero's journey as a model for mapping a story's progression and archetypes, but swapping out the hero's goal to reach the "Hero's Self" with the "ecocentric Self," appropriately changing the name "hero's journey" with "eco-hero's journey" to map out Percy Jackson's eco-hero's journey and archetypes of other characters that play a role in his journey, because Vogler saw the hero's journey and character archetypes not as a rigid formula but as a way for people to understand the model so they can break away and create interesting stories with it, and *The Lightning Thief* has broken away from the model by making Percy Jackson's hero's journey be an eco-hero's journey instead (Vogler, 2007; Zainal, 2024).

## METHOD

The source of data is Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* (2005) part of *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* series and part of the *Camp Half-Blood Chronicles*, and the Greek

mythology as a supplementary material to help in the research. Close reading Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief*, marking Percy Jackson's growth on the perspective of ecological or environmental awareness and sympathy, and research the meanings and the Greek mythology relations. By close reading Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* to pick out quotations from Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* in the form of dialogues, monologues, narrations, words, or phrases that has relations with the ecological or environmental aspect, mythological aspect, and its context in the story to support Percy Jackson's eco-hero's journey. Before presenting the analysis, summarize the context of the data, then present the results of the research and analysis of prove of Percy Jackson's continuing his eco-hero's journey.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vogler (2007) saw the concept of the hero's journey as an observation of universal patterns in storytelling and apply it to contemporary storytelling, not as a rigid formula on how to create or identify stories, but as a way to learn the form in order to reject the tradition by bending the form to suit the need and create new stories from it. Act one is Ordinary World, Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Meeting with the Mentor, and Crossing the First Threshold. Act two is Tests, Allies, Enemies, Approach to the Inmost Cave, and Ordeal. Act three is Reward, the Road Back, Resurrection, and Return with the Elixir. Vogler (2007) also saw the character archetypes not as rigid roles but rather as flexible character functions to achieve a certain desired effect in the story, and therefore one character may have more than one archetype which can be worn and removed by the character. These character archetypes include, Hero, Mentor, Threshold Guardian, Herald, Shapeshifter, Shadow, Ally.

### 1. The Ordinary World

The beginning of a hero's journey starts from the status quo of the Hero's day and towards the changed status quo to differentiate how going forward will be different that the usual for the Hero (Vogler, 2007).

*And before that, at my fourth-grade school, when we took a behind-the-scenes tour of the Marine World shark pool, I sort of hit the wrong lever on the catwalk and our class took an unplanned swim. (p. 10)*

With the story set in modern time America, Percy Jackson's Ordinary World is still filled with abnormality regardless of his knowledge and wish. The story does not need to specifically pick an aquarium, "Marine World shark pool" as an example for Percy Jackson's expulsion from the school to be inside of an aquarium and exhibit, but it does, which means it was most likely intentional by

the author. The recounting in the story can be a way to criticize terrible treatments of animals in captivity and how nature's persistence cannot allow humans to control them. And, it shows how Percy Jackson's Ordinary World is related to nature, water, and animals.

## **2. The Call to Adventure (Heralds of Change)**

A change to the status quo can be manifested through a character, where they function to challenge the Hero who may be in denial or do not see the need to change from the Ordinary World (Vogler, 2007).

*I was so mad my mind went blank. A wave roared in my ears. (p. 19)*

In moments of emotional distress, in this case is anger, shown through his narration "so mad my mind went blank," Percy Jackson accidentally uses his power over water that he does not realize himself he has. Not only does it show Percy Jackson's sense of justice, but also as a metaphor to show how nature cannot be restrained the way humans always want. This inciting incident brings out a character, Alecto, who tries to kill him. Chiron, who is disguised as one of his teachers, saves Percy Jackson by throwing a pen that turns into a sword. The undeniable revelation of the supernatural from Percy Jackson's unintended control over water is the Call to Adventure.

## **3. Refusal of the Call (Persistent Refusal Leads to Tragedy)**

Denying reality, looking back, and dwelling in the normalcy are forms of the Refusal of the Call (Vogler, 2007).

*I knew I should tell my mom about the old ladies at the fruit stand, and Mrs. Dodds at the art museum, about my weird hallucination that I had sliced my math teacher into dust with a sword. But I couldn't make myself tell her. I had a strange feeling the news would end our trip to Montauk, and I didn't want that. (p. 48)*

In Percy Jackson's narration, he acknowledges the Call to Adventure; "I knew I should tell my mom," but Percy Jackson refuses the call so he can continue to dwell in normalcy, to be with his mother as long as possible. Percy Jackson's mother brings Percy Jackson to a cabin near the sea, where his mom and Poseidon first meet, and where Percy Jackson is conceived, occasionally to vacation and away from the terrible and abusive stepfather, away from civilization, and away from the monsters that attack him. Refusing to tell his mother the incident in his Call to Adventure, so he can spend more time with his mother in a place holding a huge sentimental value with sentiment, is Percy Jackson's Refusal of the Call.

## **4. The Call to Adventure (No More Options)**

The Call to Adventure can be disorienting or leave no room to run away, placing the Hero in a dire situation, where there is nowhere left other than adventure (Vogler, 2007).

*The bull-man bore down on Grover, who lay helpless in the grass. The monster hunched over, snuffling my best friend as if he were about to lift Grover up and make him dissolve too.*

*I couldn't allow that. (p. 61)*

This second Call to Adventure is where the tragedy from the Refusal of the Call comes in, where Percy Jackson is placed in a dire situation, leaving no choice but to adventure. After establishing Percy Jackson's close relationship with his mother, his refusal to adventure leads to him losing his mother, making it a tragedy. Percy Jackson's mother's death by the hand of a monster serves to shatter his Ordinary World and to establish the very real threat of death for both the audience and Percy Jackson, thus forces Percy Jackson to not wallow in grief and to become a hero to save his friend, Grover Underwood the nature spirit satyr, who is unconscious nearby, indicated by his narration "I couldn't allow that." This leads to Percy Jackson in the woods during a rainstorm fighting the Minotaur, a creature with body of man and head of bull, to protect his satyr nature spirit friend, implementing nature in the setting and characters in this stage of the journey (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025).

## **5. Refusal of the Call (Willing Hero)**

Willing Heroes have accepted or even want to go on an adventure because they have a cause to seek adventure, the refusal comes when other characters warn them of danger of the adventure instead of coming from the Hero (Vogler, 2007).

*But I wasn't quite ready to let the subject drop. Something had occurred to me when Chiron talked about my mother's fate, as if he were intentionally avoiding the word death. The beginnings of an idea—a tiny, hopeful fire—started forming in my mind. (p. 88)*

The Camp Half-Blood is considered safe for demigods because of magical borders surrounding the camp, making monsters and humans unable to enter. Percy Jackson is introduced to a new Ordinary World where what Percy Jackson used to consider abnormal is now normal, a place where nature is prevalent, a place where other kids are similar to him, a place where he may belong for the first time, but unlike the first Refusal of the Call, Percy Jackson has a motivation to go on an adventure to save his mother yet other people refuse to let him, "as if he were intentionally avoiding the word death." Percy Jackson's newfound knowledge of the Greek mythology's afterlife, the Underworld, causes him to hope that he may

bring back his mother to life, yet other people, including his Mentor tries to refuse the call to adventure.

## 6. Meeting with the Mentor

The Hero meets with the Mentor, who supplies the Hero with something needed on the journey (Vogler, 2007).

*I took off the cap, and the pen grew longer and heavier in my hand. In half a second, I held a shimmering bronze sword with a double-edged blade, a leather-wrapped grip, and a flat hilt riveted with gold studs. It was the first weapon that actually felt balanced in my hand. (p. 160)*

As the person with the most experience of interacting with the supernatural world, Chiron offers knowledge, advice, consultations to Percy Jackson who has just arrived. The Mentor archetype teaches and protects the Hero, and Chiron is the Latin teacher and the one who throws a sword at Percy so he can protect himself against Alecto. Chiron himself feels very grounded with how much he expresses regrets and griefs for all the heroes he has failed previously. Chiron regrets he has not trained Percy Jackson better, and he gifts Percy Jackson with a pen that can turn into a sword that cannot harm mortals; it can only harm monsters, and it cannot be lost; it will always return to Percy Jackson's pocket. Chiron's Mentor archetype also function as gift-giver to Percy Jackson, which the gift will become useful during the journey.

## 7. Crossing the First Threshold

Approaching the Threshold, the Hero's final commitment to the journey can begin from an external, and the crossing the Threshold signifies changing of the situation where it can be literal transition of place or crossing a border (Vogler, 2007).

*"Imagine the world in chaos. Nature at war with itself. Olympians forced to choose sides between Zeus and Poseidon. Destruction. Carnage. Millions dead. Western civilization turned into a battleground so big it will make the Trojan War look like a water-balloon fight." (p. 144)*

In Greek mythology, rivalry of Poseidon and Zeus occurs multiple times, usually Poseidon attempting to take a higher seat of power than Zeus (Giuntoli, 2024; Yasumura, 2013). *The Lightning Thief* made use of this rivalry to create the source of conflict of the plot. Knowing Poseidon nor Percy Jackson has stolen Zeus's symbol of power, they turn their suspicions to Hades who is presumably the one trying to kill the son of Poseidon and the "god who has turned" mentioned in the prophecy. This was yet again a diversion, because another major character is in the Underworld and that is the true antagonist of the story, Kronos, who has been regaining strength since the Titan War and his imprisonment in Tartarus. In Greek mythology and in *The Lightning Thief*, Tartarus as a place

is located in the Underworld (Apollodorus, 1921; Homer, 1924). The revelation of Kronos's involvement turns the concept conflict of the series into the Second Titan War. *The Lightning Thief* functions as the proof of the direness of the conflict in the series and how the antagonist Kronos is hiding and turning allies against each other, or as Chiron says, "nature at war with itself" thus Percy Jackson's role in this story is not only personal to save his mother, meets his father, and finds his place in the world, but also reconcile the gods with each other to prevent loss of lives and the destructions of nature. The Herald archetype function as an announcer to the Hero that the world of the Hero is unstable and needed to be stable, this archetype can overlap with the Mentor archetype, which Chiron does do by informing Percy Jackson that he needs to stop the war from breaking out (Vogler, 2007). The Threshold Percy Jackson and his Allies have to cross over is the literal magical barrier created by a pine tree of Camp Half-Blood that prevents monsters and humans to enter without permission. Supplied with tools and information by the Mentor, Percy Jackson leaves the safety of a new home to answer the Call to Adventure and begins the journey to prevent the war between nature from breaking out by crossing the Threshold.

## 8. Tests, Allies, Enemies

The Hero enter the Special World, a world where it has a sharp contrast to the Hero's Ordinary World and where the Hero faces many trials and challenges, provided with introductions of Allies, Enemies, and Rules (Vogler, 2007). The Tests put the Hero through a series of challenges or trials to prepare them for the Ordeal, the Tests can be built into the Special World, dominated by traps, enemies, barricades, and checkpoints. The Ally is a character archetype that travels with the Hero during the journey to serve as friendly face that sides with the Hero, advise and warn the Hero, humanizing the Hero, and challenging the Hero to be the better version of themselves. Enemies refer to antagonists and villains, opposing to the Hero's goal, often playing a role in the Tests.

*Grover gazed down from his tree branch. "Look, Percy, I'm not as smart as Annabeth. I'm not as brave as you. But I'm pretty good at reading emotions. You're glad your dad is alive. You feel good that he's claimed you, and part of you wants to make him proud. That's why you mailed Medusa's head to Olympus. You wanted him to notice what you'd done." (p. 183)*

Percy Jackson and his Allies encounter Tests and Enemies in the form of the Furies and Medusa. They shape Percy Jackson's characterization through his decisions and helps build closer relationship between all three of them. Enemies help in shaping Percy Jackson and his Allies

build relationship. The first encounter is with the Furies, where Percy Jackson has a chance to leave them behind, but he refuses. The second encounter with Medusa, they enter a trap by Medusa which make them have to work together and set aside their differences for once. And after the fight with Medusa, they enter a checkpoint, a resting moment to talk about what has happened between them where Percy Jackson's Ally talks about his own personal goal to find his missing nature god and then points out Percy Jackson's issue with his biological father who has neglected him for all his life, "you wanted him to notice what you'd done." This aligns with how Vogler (2007) saw the Tests at the beginning of Act Two, which are often obstacles without the threat of death, functioning as a way to prepare the Hero for more difficult paths. This sets up into a further internal conflict that will be externalized in the central crisis.

*Why had Poseidon saved me? The more I thought about it, the more ashamed I felt. So I'd gotten lucky a few times before. Against a thing like the Chimera, I had never stood a chance. Those poor people in the Arch were probably toast. I couldn't protect them. I was no hero. Maybe I should just stay down here with the catfish, join the bottom feeders. (p. 216)*

Throughout the journey Percy Jackson and his Allies encounter Enemies and Tests, falling into traps, scrambling around to find the solutions, and being challenged so Percy Jackson can grow as a person, such as Medusa, the former lover of his father, questioning his loyalty to the gods. But the Tests Percy Jackson goes through, eventually culminates in a fight against Echidna and the Chimera without his Allies and on the verge of death. This aligns until the middle of Act Two or the crisis. Vogler (2007) called the climax in Act Two as the central crisis, a peak in the middle, sometimes with metaphorical death and rebirth which makes life more real and the narrative less monotonous. Vogler viewed each act as having their own beginning, middle, end, and their own climax. The climax in Act One is the fight against the Minotaur, and the climax in Act Two or the central crisis is the life-or-death crisis against Echidna and Chimera that ends with Percy Jackson falling into a polluted river, and in a way, there are Tests, Approach to the Inmost Cave, Ordeal, and Resurrection within this part of the journey. Echidna questions his belief about his identity as the son of Poseidon and about his trust in the gods. The water of the Mississippi River that Percy Jackson falls into is described as "clouds of silt and disgusting garbage," but while this can be seen as very obvious environmental issue about how humans dirtied nature, Percy Jackson considers staying down in the river. Prior to falling, he sees himself as undeserving to be saved and a failure as a hero, "those people in the Arch." Vogler (2007) likened the Mentor

archetype to God or divine wisdom through observations in myths. In *The Lightning Thief*, the presence of divine being is quite literal. Poseidon as the Greek god of the sea cannot directly help or interfere a hero's journey, however, Poseidon still provides many helps and gifts. Poseidon's spiritual presence through water and Percy Jackson's abilities is a gift from Poseidon in a way. And after Percy Jackson falls into negativity in the dirty water, a sea spirit sent by Poseidon gives Percy an encouragement. The narrative chooses the location of dirty water as a way of setting the mood and representation of Percy Jackson's negative thoughts, using the association of dirtiness with negative or terrible things and even make his sword unwilling to return to him unless Percy Jackson chooses to.

*I'd heard the zebra talk, but not the lion. Why? Maybe it was another learning disability...I could only understand zebras? Then I thought: horses. What had Annabeth said about Poseidon creating horses? Was a zebra close enough to a horse? Was that why I could understand it? (p. 256)*

In the illegal animal transport truck given by Ares, they fix the mistreatments the animals received and planned to release them as soon as the truck makes a stop, and Percy Jackson learns another part of his heritage from his father is having the ability to talk with horses. In the mythology, the relation between horses and Poseidon comes from an aspect of land or earthquakes and horses rather than the sea, known as Poseidon *Hippios* (Murphy, 2017). The relation of horses with Poseidon may come from of how horses may have been seen as having *chthonic* significance due the relationship between horses and Underworld (Mackay, 1946). In the Greek mythology, the contest between Athena and Poseidon is famously about becoming the patron god of the city of Athens where Poseidon creates a salty spring while Athena offers them an olive tree (Patay-Horváth, 2015; Rambach, 2009). Annabeth Chase mentions about Poseidon and Athena working together when Poseidon creates a horse and Athena creates a chariot similar to their Greek mythology counterpart (Cook, 1995; Komita, 1985; Murphy, 2017). This may be seen as a reflection of the taming of the wild (Detienne & Verth, 1971; Murphy, 2017). This might be why the author decides to make the character Annabeth Chase the daughter of Athena as one of Percy Jackson's Ally and companion. However, this is also another experience where Percy Jackson learns of his close relations is not solely in water, but also in animals.

*Water exploded out of the pipes. It roared into the pool, sweeping away the spiders. I pulled Annabeth into the seat next to me and fastened her seat belt just as the tidal wave slammed into our boat, over the top, whisking the spiders away and dousing us completely, but not*

*capsizing us. The boat turned, lifted in the flood, and spun in circles around the whirlpool. (p. 239)*

Spiders swarm Percy Jackson and his Ally, but his Ally, Annabeth Chase, becomes unreliable due to her fear of spiders, leaving him on his own. With the setting of abandoned waterpark, Percy Jackson makes use of his mastery over water and boats to whisk them away from the spiders, showcasing and establishing his will and mastery over water after his acceptance of identity as the son of Poseidon and his connection to water and how water can help him after the central crisis while building a closer relationship with his Ally.

## 9. Approach to the Inmost Cave

After fully adjusting to the Special World, the Hero makes the final preparations before the Ordeal, and the journey towards the Ordeal itself can even enter into another Special World or another Threshold where the Hero must appeal to the Threshold Guardian to get past them (Vogler, 2007).

*"Polluted," Charon said. "For thousands of years, you humans have been throwing in everything as you come across—hopes, dreams, wishes that never came true. Irresponsible waste management, if you ask me." (p. 286-287)*

After they find the entrance to the Underworld, they bargain with the ferryman Charon to bring them inside the Underworld. Despite the Underworld's characteristics of being located under the earth or on the outside of ocean limit, rivers are prominently mentioned in many depictions of the Underworld, and the most famous one is the River Styx (Garland, 2001; Sourvinou-Inwood, 1996). The author did not need to mention how polluted the River Styx is since there was never mention of polluted River Styx in Greek mythology except for metonymy of the name that can refer to dark or gloomy (Cousin, 2012; Long, 1989; "Stygian," t.t.-a; "Stygian," t.t.-b). The author made use of the association of the River Styx, the association of the word, the start of the Underworld, and the polluted water to convey sense of dread and impactful introduction to the realm of the dead, all with an environmental message on polluted water without necessarily bogging down the content and amplifying the message.

*The slope got steeper. Grover picked up speed. Annabeth and I had to sprint to keep up. The cavern walls narrowed on either side, and I realized we'd entered some kind of side tunnel. No black grass or trees now, just rock underfoot, and the dim light of the stalactites above. (p. 300)*

Grover Underwood's flying sneakers given by Percy Jackson from Luke Castellan suddenly drag him into the entrance of Tartarus and Percy Jackson and Annabeth

Chase have to chase him so he does not fall into the pit. In the mythology, Tartarus is often depicted as a place to punish wicked souls, located beneath the Underworld (Buxton, 2004; Garland, 2001). In the *Percy Jackson* series, Tartarus and the Fields of Punishment is separated. The Fields of Punishment functions to punish the wicked souls, whereas Tartarus is where the Titans and Giants are imprisoned by the gods after the wars, and the slain monsters wait to reform again. The author described the pit or the entrance of Tartarus by transitioning a place with nature to entirely devoid nature with "no black grass or trees now" and it is where the antagonist of the story is located and attempts to get the heroes to him. The author made use of the terrible associations with the devoid of nature could be as a message.

## 10. The Ordeal

The Ordeal is where the most dramatic moment where the Hero changes or transforms through being faced against their greatest fears or failures or a form of manifestation through a villain, heightening emotions of both the characters and the audience, and can signal the death of the ego, which is where the Hero sees the broad view of the connectedness from even before the beginning of the journey (Vogler, 2007).

*I turned and faced my mother. I desperately wanted to sacrifice myself and use the last pearl on her, but I knew what she would say. She would never allow it. I had to get the bolt back to Olympus and tell Zeus the truth. I had to stop the war. She would never forgive me if I saved her instead. I thought about the prophecy made at Half-Blood Hill, what seemed like a million years ago. You will fail to save what matters most in the end. (p. 313)*

After they find out the truth that Hades does not have the master bolt and they are set up by Ares and Hades's symbol of power is also stolen by Ares, Percy Jackson chooses to save the world first, "I had to stop the war," instead of saving his mother. Vogler (2007) describes this moment as death of the ego, where the Hero becomes part of the world, broadening their worldview; Percy Jackson sees the importance of his mother's life as less than the world and nature, his hero's Self is not a hero of his mother, but a hero of nature.

*"Reconciliation," she said. "Athena and Poseidon together." (p. 324)*

*"And take this," Grover said. He handed me a flattened tin can that he'd probably been saving in his pocket for a thousand miles. "The satyrs stand behind you." (p. 324)*

*Ares came forward, grinning confidently. I lowered my blade, as if I were too exhausted to go on. Wait for it, I told the sea. The pressure now was almost lifting me off*

*my feet. Ares raised his sword. I released the tide and jumped, rocketing straight over Ares on a wave. (p. 327)*

In this Ordeal part of Percy Jackson's journey, the culmination of experience and character development is showcased through his decision to save the world first and defeating Ares with wisdom and his connection to nature. His Allies represent wisdom and nature, a reconciliation between the goddess of wisdom and god of the sea "Athena and Poseidon together," and the personification of nature supporting him, "the satyrs stand behind you." Grover Underwood functions as both Mentor and Ally to Percy Jackson. Grover Underwood's identity as a nature spirit offers perspectives to Percy Jackson's human outlook about nature. Grover Underwood's function as a Mentor is classified as the Hero's conscience, offering reminder to Percy Jackson and as an Ally, he grounds Percy Jackson to nature (Vogler, 2007). Throughout the journey, Percy Jackson grows as a hero, learns his identity, becoming closer to his Allies and learning from them, and his fight against Ares the god of war to prevent a war between nature and winning in the life-or-death fight through wisdom and nature is the Ordeal of his eco-hero's journey, "I lowered my blade, as if I were too exhausted to go on. Wait for it, I told the sea." Percy Jackson sets the truth of the matter straight, preventing the war and destruction of nature, and successfully becoming the protector of nature.

### **11. Reward and the Road Back**

In Reward, the Hero has survived the crisis of the Ordeal, the Hero is recognized as special and different, gaining new perceptions, achieving self-realization and epiphany, and gaining even a tangible reward or celebrated the occasion (Vogler, 2007). The Road Back can be a retaliation, finding out the crisis is not yet truly over, a revelation that redirects the story, a setback after acknowledging (Vogler, 2007).

*Poseidon shook his head. "From time to time, over the eons, Kronos has stirred. He enters men's nightmares and breathes evil thoughts. He wakens restless monsters from the depths. But to suggest he could rise from the pit is another thing." (p. 341)*

Percy Jackson returns Zeus's symbol of power and explains what has happened throughout his journey to Poseidon and Zeus, and thus, the war is called off and peace is returned. Although Vogler (2007) views the Road Back as the climax of Act Two, in *The Lightning Thief*, the Road Back is much more subtle to lull the audience into letting down their guard that the threat is not truly there. A revelation that Kronos has been manipulating everything behind the scene shows that it is the Road Back because Zeus and Poseidon refuse to acknowledge that the true threat has not truly disappear, as Poseidon says "but to

suggest he could rise from the pit is another thing," a setback as it handwaves away his hard work and filling him with a sense of dread of future unsolved problems but also being reassured by his father and a god that the problem is not a problem.

*There was a different light in his eyes, a fiery kind of pride. "You did well, Perseus. Do not misunderstand me. Whatever else you do, know that you are mine. You are a true son of the Sea God." (p. 343)*

Percy Jackson's Reward comes when Poseidon informs Percy Jackson that his mother has been returned, he expresses apology for all the misfortunes of Percy Jackson's life from being a demigod, and that he is proud of Percy Jackson. The acknowledgement of Percy Jackson's accomplishments in preventing a war is not gone unnoticed by everyone.

Percy Jackson's Reward comes when Poseidon informs Percy Jackson that his mother has been returned, he expresses apology for all the misfortunes of Percy Jackson's life from being a demigod, and that he is proud of Percy Jackson. The acknowledgement of Percy Jackson's accomplishments in preventing a war is not gone unnoticed by everyone. In the Greek mythology, Poseidon is seen as horrifying and vengeful god due to the destructive nature of the sea and earthquakes (Hard, 2004). Poseidon in the *Percy Jackson* series is portrayed as kind, loving, but distant father to Percy Jackson, while his stepfather, a normal human, is a terrible and abusive person. Percy Jackson has a terrible and abusive stepfather, and he is told by his mother that his biological father is rich, important, their relationship is a secret, and lost at sea, not dead. Poseidon's personality may have been skewed from Percy Jackson's perspective or because Poseidon is only kind to his family. Regardless of the truth, Poseidon approves Percy Jackson as his son, cares for him, and acknowledges his journey, "you did well, Perseus." Poseidon informs Percy Jackson of his mother's survival, praise his mother, indicating Poseidon's love for Percy Jackson's mother, and even gives Percy Jackson and his mother a chance to punish the abusive stepfather. Other characters in Olympus and in Camp Half-Blood celebrates him as a hero. This is the Reward for Percy Jackson because the narrative has clearly described Percy Jackson's plagues such as having trouble fitting in, losing his mother, abusive stepfather, and the absent biological father. Solving all these problems seem like he has everything he wants. Despite rejecting his self-interest to save his mother, Percy Jackson is rewarded everything he lacks at the beginning of the story because he chooses to be the hero of nature, stopping the war between nature.

## 12. The Resurrection

The Resurrection can appear in the form of a second Ordeal or climax, a reminder of death and the Hero's trial, a confrontation with the villain or the Shadow in a showdown, a potential misstep, and surviving brush of death (Vogler, 2007).

*He crumpled his Coke can and threw into the creek, which really shocked me. One of the first things you learn at Camp Half-Blood is: Don't litter. You'll hear from the nymphs and the naiads. They'll get even. You'll crawl into bed one night and find your sheets filled with centipedes and mud. (p. 361)*

The author introduces Luke Castellan's betrayal by showing Luke Castellan littering, throwing a can into the creek, "he crumpled his Coke can and threw into the creek." The author specifically used the creek, a body of water, instead of on the ground or somewhere else to introduce Luke Castellan's betrayal to Percy Jackson and to the audience, and in the world where personifications of nature exist, the story portrays Luke Castellan as direct oppositions to Percy Jackson the eco-hero, where the rejected or unrealized aspect of the Hero is projected onto a character archetype called the Shadow (Vogler, 2007). Not only in terms of nature, but also in every aspect of Percy Jackson, such as how Luke Castellan works with Kronos and is the true of the lightning thief, hates his father Hermes, and feels ignored by the gods. But perhaps because Luke Castellan expects his healing power that the poison is more potent, or because the creek is symbolically corrupted by Luke Castellan's littering, the creek water fails to cure the poison in Percy Jackson that would have cured him normally. The two wood nymphs that save Percy Jackson shows again how close Percy Jackson is with nature and how they help him. There are many examples of anthropomorphism or personification of animals and nature in Greek mythology used in the series, such as gods of nature, animal hybrids, and plant hybrids. By anthropomorphizing nature, the world of nature no longer feels cold, distant, and not relatable. The revelation of the traitor, brush of death by the Shadow archetype and saved by nature, makes this Percy Jackson's Resurrection of his eco-hero's journey.

## 13. Return with the Elixir

The Hero completes the journey, commencing to a new life with something new gained, ending in a circular or open-ended form, mirroring the Hero at the start of the journey and at the end (Vogler, 2007).

*For the first time at camp, I felt truly alone. I looked out at Long Island Sound and I remembered my father saying, The sea does not like to be restrained. (p. 370)*

All three; Percy Jackson, Annabeth Chase, and Grover Underwood, go on their separate ways. Percy

Jackson listens his father's word of wisdom on how "the sea does not like to be restrained," how his friends continue to move after the journey, learns from the journey about the love for his mother, how insignificant his peers and teachers see him negatively, and how to survive on his own. Percy Jackson returns to his new Ordinary World that is to continue his education and be with his mother without the abusive stepfather this time, only staying at camp during the summer break rather than be afraid of the outside world filled with monsters, armed with wisdom from his journey, the skills to survive against monster attacks, and with his close relationships with nature.

## CLOSING

### Conclusion

Percy Jackson's eco-hero's journey through Greek mythology in *The Lightning Thief* follows act one to three of the hero's journey model by Vogler. Act one, such as The Ordinary World, follows Percy Jackson's status quo before he goes on his journey, where Percy Jackson leads an unusual life compared to other children of his age, with water is closely involved in his life. Act two, such as the Tests, Allies, Enemies, follows Percy Jackson's journey to get to the Underworld and encountering the rules of the supernatural world, becoming closer to his Allies and growing into his own person and recognizing his own worth from going through the trials such as when he almost dies from falling into a polluted river and having heart-to-heart talk with his Allies in an illegal animal transport truck. Act three, such as the Ordeal, is the culmination of Percy Jackson's journey; what he learns during his journey and how he uses those lessons and information, and Percy Jackson chooses to abandon his mother to prevent a war between nature first.

Vogler sees character archetypes not as rigid roles but rather as flexible character functions to get certain effect in the story. Percy Jackson's best friend and travelling companion is his Mentor and Ally, Grover Underwood, a satyr which is a nature spirit, offering Percy Jackson the perspective from the side of nature by being Percy Jackson's Mentor and humanizing nature by being Percy Jackson's Ally. Luke Castellan is the Shapeshifter, appearing as Mentor and Ally of Percy Jackson by helping Percy Jackson in his sword training, a close friend of Annabeth Chase and Grover Underwood, gifting them with flying shoes, which give the revelation of his betrayal and the Shadow archetype more impact. Luke Castellan's revelation that he is the true lightning thief through littering, his hatred for the gods, and attempt on Percy Jackson's life makes him the Shadow archetype, appearing as Percy Jackson's rejected self, what would happen if Percy Jackson fails to save his mother and unloved by his



father, this contrast helps making Percy Jackson's role as the eco-hero stands out more.

Due to the nature of the book *The Lightning Thief* meant for the children/juvenile audience, the implementation of environmental and nature aspects in the story is done by first establishing Percy Jackson's connection and interactions with water and nature through the use of the persistent and vast Greek mythology's archetypal nature and many nature-related aspects to create an interesting a hero's journey narrative so as to not bog down the narrative nor distract the audience so they can be invested in the story. *The Lightning Thief* is able to showcase Percy Jackson's hero's journey to become an eco-hero through gradual and indirect ways such as personifications of nature interacting with him, having the ability related to water and a close connection to water, and the environmental problems being integrated into the places in his journey. These gradual and indirect exposures of environmental and nature aspects to Percy Jackson throughout his journey, come to a conclusion in Percy Jackson's Ordeal, where he decides to leave behind his mother in order to stop the war between nature and save the world, rejecting the "hero's Self" to reach the "ecocentric Self."

### Suggestion

The research covered the first book in the *Percy Jackson* series. Other books in the series have environmental messages as well as Greek mythology. Other books set in the same universe as the series written by the same author or other authors and approved by the same author of *The Lightning Thief* have environmental messages and mythologies beside the Greek mythology. The research has not analyzed the effects of environmental messages on the readers, and have not analyzed how writing ecological messages could be effective, efficient, and improved.

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