



MYTH ADAPTATION AND THE FORMATION OF MODERN IDENTITY IN
RICK RIORDAN'S *PERCY JACKSON* SERIES

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Abstract: *This paper explores the adaptation of classical mythology and its role in shaping modern identity in the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan. By reimagining Greek myths within a contemporary American setting, Riordan bridges the gap between ancient narratives and modern adolescent experiences. The study examines how mythological figures, themes, and structures are transformed to address issues of identity, belonging, diversity, and self-acceptance in the modern world. Through literary analysis, the paper demonstrates that myth adaptation in the Percy Jackson series functions not only as a narrative strategy but also as a cultural tool for constructing modern identity, particularly for young readers. The research highlights how ancient myths remain relevant by being reshaped to reflect contemporary values, social challenges, and psychological development.*

Keywords: *Myth adaptation, modern identity, Greek mythology, young adult literature, Percy Jackson, cultural reinterpretation.*

Introduction

Myths have played a central role in shaping human understanding of the world, identity, and morality since ancient times. Traditionally, myths explained natural phenomena, social norms, and human behavior through symbolic narratives involving gods, heroes, and supernatural forces. Although modern society relies less on myth for explanation, mythology continues to influence literature, culture, and identity formation.

In contemporary literature, myth adaptation has become a powerful narrative strategy, particularly in young adult fiction. By reinterpreting ancient myths within modern contexts, authors enable readers to connect timeless archetypes with present-day realities. One of the most influential examples of this approach is the *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordan, which reimagines Greek mythology in a modern American setting.

This paper investigates how myth adaptation in the *Percy Jackson* series contributes to the formation of modern identity. It argues that Riordan's adaptation of Greek myths allows young readers to explore questions of self-discovery, cultural belonging, and personal responsibility. The study focuses on how mythological elements are modernized and how these transformations reflect contemporary social and psychological concerns.

Main Body

1. Myth Adaptation in Modern Literature

Myth adaptation refers to the process of reworking traditional mythological narratives to suit new cultural, historical, and ideological contexts. In modern literature, myths are often adapted to address contemporary issues such as identity, power, diversity, and morality.





Rather than preserving myths in their original form, authors reinterpret them to make ancient stories accessible and meaningful to modern audiences.

Rick Riordan's work exemplifies this trend. By placing Greek gods and heroes in the modern United States, he transforms mythology into a living system that interacts with contemporary society. This adaptation allows myths to function as tools for cultural continuity while simultaneously reflecting modern values.

2. Reimagining Greek Mythology in the *Percy Jackson* Series

In the *Percy Jackson* series, Greek gods are portrayed as immortal beings who adapt to modern life, residing in places such as New York City. Mount Olympus is reimagined as existing above modern skyscrapers, symbolizing the coexistence of ancient and modern worlds. This spatial and temporal blending emphasizes that mythology is not confined to the past but remains relevant in the present.

Classical mythological figures such as Zeus, Athena, and Poseidon retain their traditional characteristics but are given modern personalities and flaws. This humanization makes them more relatable to contemporary readers and reflects modern attitudes toward authority and power.

3. Identity Formation and the Hero's Journey

The protagonist, Percy Jackson, embodies the modern reinterpretation of the classical hero. Like heroes in Greek mythology, Percy embarks on quests, faces monsters, and confronts divine forces. However, his struggles are also deeply personal and psychological. Percy's experiences with dyslexia, attention difficulties, and feelings of alienation resonate strongly with modern adolescents.

Through Percy's journey, the series explores identity as a process of self-discovery rather than a fixed state. The revelation of Percy's divine heritage parallels the adolescent search for identity, emphasizing that difference can be a source of strength rather than weakness.

4. Diversity, Inclusion, and Modern Values

A significant aspect of Riordan's myth adaptation is the emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Characters in the series represent various cultural backgrounds, abilities, and personal identities. This inclusive representation reflects modern social values and challenges traditional mythological hierarchies. By adapting myths to include diverse perspectives, the series promotes a more inclusive understanding of heroism. Heroes are not defined solely by physical strength or noble birth but by empathy, loyalty, and moral courage. This redefinition aligns mythology with contemporary ideals of social equality and personal authenticity.

5. Myth, Memory, and Cultural Continuity

The *Percy Jackson* series demonstrates that myths serve as cultural memory, preserving values and narratives across generations. By adapting Greek mythology for modern readers, Riordan ensures that these ancient stories remain part of contemporary cultural consciousness. The series suggests that modern identity is shaped by an ongoing dialogue between past and present. Myth adaptation becomes a means of negotiating cultural heritage





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in a globalized world, allowing young readers to engage with ancient traditions while forming their own identities.

Conclusion

The adaptation of mythology in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* series plays a crucial role in shaping modern identity. By reimagining Greek myths within a contemporary context, Riordan transforms ancient narratives into relevant frameworks for exploring selfhood, belonging, and moral responsibility. The series demonstrates that myths are not static relics of the past but dynamic narratives capable of evolving alongside society. Through myth adaptation, the *Percy Jackson* series bridges the gap between ancient cultural heritage and modern values, offering young readers a meaningful way to understand themselves and the world around them. Ultimately, the study confirms that myth adaptation remains a powerful literary and cultural tool in the formation of modern identity.

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