



## Magical Phenomena in Reality in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*

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### ABSTRACT

*This research examines the elements of magical realism, using descriptive qualitative method, a literary genre depicting magic in the modern world, in Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief." Applying Wendy B. Faris' theory of magical realism's five characteristics: the irreducible element, the phenomenal world, unsettling doubts, merging realism, and disruption of time/space/identity. The research identifies these aspects in the novel. The analysis reveals the novel contains irreducible magical elements like worlds, characters, and objects, exemplified by Percy's encounter with the shape-shifting monster Erinyes disguised as his teacher. The phenomenal world encompasses magical places and beings. Unsettling doubts arise from Percy directly addressing the reader about his experiences. Merging realism intertwines the magical realm rooted in myths with the tangible world, as monsters and gods frequently intermingle with reality. Disruption of time manifests when Percy experiences slowed time at the Lotus Hotel during his quest. The study concludes that "The Lightning Thief" exhibits all five characteristics of magical realism by integrating mythological magic into the contemporary setting. Irreducible magical elements, a phenomenal, magical world, narrator-induced unsettling doubts, the merging of mythical and real realms, and space-time distortions collectively categorize the novel as an exemplar of magical realist fiction.*

**Keywords:** *Magical Realism, Magical Character, Magical Object, Magical Phenomena, Greek Mythology*

### INTRODUCTION

Magical realism in narrative work refers to a type of short story in which the view of man as a mystery surrounded by realistic data dominates (Kostadinović, 2019). Moreover, according to Christopher Warnes, this genre is distinctive because it embodies an oxymoron, blending two contradictory ideas. "Magic" signifies the extraordinary or imaginative, while "realism"

refers to a factual, fantasy-free world (Warnes, 2009). Hence, this genre challenges readers' conventional perceptions of reality by integrating extraordinary phenomena into extraordinary settings, creating enchanting and thought-provoking stories.

Initially, this genre was characterized by a modern, neo-realistic style of painting in early 20th-century Germany, later expanding to

encompass Latin American fiction and critical contemporary topics in global literature (Hart and Ouyang, 2005). In today's interconnected world, As Ali and Ramli (2019) said, magical realism provides a unique lens through which writers can comment on issues such as migration, identity, environmental crisis, and systemic injustice. By embedding these critical themes in a narrative that includes magical elements, writers can highlight contemporary life's surreal and often paradoxical nature. This evolution has made magical realism relevant and extremely important in modern fiction, as it offers readers a means to engage with pressing global concerns imaginatively and reflectively (Kulkarni, 2020). Even so, a lot of magical realism is pervaded by Tzvetan Todorov's (1970) formulation of the fantastic things that exist.

Central to the study of magical realism is Wendy B. Faris' framework, which outlines five essential elements (2004): (1) the work contains magic's "irreducible elements"; (2) magical phenomena in reality descriptions highlight the phenomenal world's strong presence; (3) the reader may feel uneasy when trying to reconcile two opposing interpretations of events; (4) the narration combines multiple dimensions and merges realms; and (5) magical realism disrupts conventional notions of time, space, and identity. It clarifies that magical realism disrupts and redefines our understanding of reality by combining multiple worlds and challenging conventional notions of time, space, and identity (Foster & Scerbo, 2019). This comprehensive

approach not only enhances appreciation of the complexity of narrative but also highlights the genre's capacity to address deeper cultural and social issues, making it a powerful tool for literary analysis and interpretation.

Further scholarly exploration of magical realism extends to studies such as Wati's investigation into 'Magical Phenomena in Reality in Riggs' Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children' (2019), which reveals how magical elements are intricately presented within the narrative. Similarly, Ferly Hasanah et al. (2018) analyse the meanings of magical phenomena in Sylvie Germain's novels, and Ahmadi and Ahmadi's (2018) research delve into the strategic use of magical realism in 'The Hound of the Baskervilles.' Lastly, Laily (2021) identifies Faris's five essential elements in *The House with The Clock in Its Walls*.

This study uses Faris's framework to examine Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief," focusing on how these elements construct magical events in everyday life. The protagonist of this novel, Percy Jackson, comes across a number of paranormal events connected to his status as a demigod. The irreducible elements of Percy's magical experience, in-depth explanations of the phenomenal universe that serves as the setting for Percy's magical experience, readers' concerns about young people's magical experiences, the novel's convergence of the domains of scientific rationality and conventional mythology, and Percy's disruption

of time, space, and identity are examples of findings.

## **METHODS**

The literary approach in the current work is magic realism or magical phenomena, which is an irrelevant approach, as Aziz and Yahya (2019) argue that the extrinsic approach in literary criticism is used to evaluate literary works from disciplines outside of literature. In line with that, fictional characters live within a world distinct from the readers. In this instance, the writer employs disruptive reality to enhance the world, incorporating cultural significance (Setiawan & Nurhidayah, 2022). In addition, Figlerowicz and Mertehikian (2023) explain that magic realism can be better understood as a global phenomenon, with definitions competing and overlapping across different languages. So, the extrinsic approach is used to explore the disruptive phenomenon of reality represented inside the fiction.

The study's primary source is the novel *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. There are 22 chapters and 375 pages in this novel. The information is presented as direct and indirect quotes from the novel.

In collecting and analysing the data procedure, the novel was subjected to a comprehensive reading, during which instances of magical realism were identified and marked for further analysis. The annotated instances were categorised according to Faris's five characteristics (2004). Each instance was

analysed to discover which characteristic(s) it exemplified. Subsequently, each quote was subjected to a comprehensive examination within the broader context of the novel to identify its relevance and contribution to the narrative's magical realism.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

There are five characteristics of magic realism or magical phenomena found in the novel. They are the fundamental elements, the phenomenal world, unsettling doubts, merging realism, and disruption of time, space, and identity, each of which is elaborated below.

### **The Irreducible Element**

In the novel, things that include magical components as peculiar elements or that defy human logic up to this point are classified as Irreducible Elements. Greek mythology inspired the magical aspects of Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. This novel's irreducible elements include magical worlds, magical characters, magical objects, and magical worlds.

### **1. Magical Atmosphere**

Natural disaster-related incidents that frequently occur recently in the novel are those that depict a magical atmosphere. Engaging in outdoor activities is frequently linked to the power of deities. Zeus, the deity of lightning and heaven, appears in the novel. He is able to alter the weather to his desire. The world's weather is impacted by his emotions as well. Zeus is upset that someone has stolen his lightning during the

Christmas season in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. The sky is negatively impacted by this. This whole thing has been "weird," according to Percy, since Christmas. The following quotation demonstrates it:

*I thought maybe it was global warming or something because since Christmas the weather had been strange all over New York State. We had major storms of snow, rains, wildfires from lightning strikes.*  
(Riordan, 2005:8)

This incident had a fantastic ambience because Zeus's anger is what caused the catastrophic disaster. Percy mentions a variety of natural disasters that originate from the sky, including snowstorms, flooding, and wildfires caused by lightning strikes. Zeus's domain and power include the sky, lightning, and weather, as the story mentions.

Another magical atmosphere that occurs in the novel is experienced by Percy when he is on vacation to the beach with his mother. There, Percy has a vivid dream. There is a white horse and a golden eagle who are trying to kill each other on a stormy beach. There is a sound from the underground laughing as the two animals kill each other. Percy discovers there is a storm on the beach as he wakes up. It is the same as Percy's dream before. It can be seen in the below quotation:

*There was no horse or eagle on the beach, just lightning making false daylight, and twenty-foot waves*

*pounding the dunes like artillery.*  
(Riordan, 2005:22)

Percy's dream is a sign. As stated in the previous quotation. Zeus is the master of the sky, so he sends storms and lightning on the beach. The golden eagle in Percy's dream is also the symbol of Zeus. While Poseidon, Zeus older brother, is a Sea God. He can control the sea including the waves. Apart from that, he is also known as the God who creates horses. Because of that, the white horse in Percy's dream symbolizes Poseidon. Seeing the storm and the noisy sea forming a hurricane after Percy dreams about eagles and horses, it is certain that Zeus and Poseidon are fighting. Therefore, the event is a magical atmosphere.

## 2. Magical Character

The characters in this study relate to irrational figures in the novel. The existence of these figures in the real world cannot be accepted by human rational thought. These characters include mythological creatures, monsters, and Gods. In Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, she is alone with Percy. It can be seen in this quotation.

*Percy meets many monsters in his adventure. His first encounter is with Erinyes. She is a subordinate of Hades who disguises herself as Percy's mathematics teacher, Mrs. Dodds. She attacks Percy while he is on a school tour with his friends at the museum and changes her form when She wasn't human. She was a shrivelled hag with bat wings and claws and a mouth full of yellow fangs, and she*

*was about to slice me into ribbons.*  
(Riordan, 2005:8)

Mrs. Doods is one of the Greek mythological creatures called Erinyes or Furies. She works for Hades, the God of Death. These mythological creatures usually target demi-gods or sons of gods because of their aura and power. Instead of calling them by their real names, these creatures are called the Kindly Ones, because names carry their strength. She is classified as a magical character because her transformation and original form cannot be reasoned by human logic.

In addition to Erinyes, Percy is enclosed by other mythological creatures. At the academy, even Juring School, Percy's friend, is a Satyr. A minotaur pursues Percy on the route to Camp Half-Blood, whereupon it assaults his mother. Afterwards, he defeats the Minotaur and reaches the Camp. But by then, he's drained and unconscious. Percy still cannot accept what has happened to him when he awakens. The following quotation demonstrates this:

*"Well, Percy. You know your friend Grover is a satyr. You know"— he pointed to the horn in the shoe box— "that you have killed the Minotaur. "*  
(Riordan, 2005:35)

Greek mythology describes the satyr as a mountain and forest dwelling. They share a tight link with Greek mythological figures Dionysus and Pan. They are mostly men. Another monster from Greek mythology is the minotaur. He is a monster with a bull's head and a human form.

Because legendary monsters and creatures cannot exist in the real world and are also outside the realm of human reason, they fall under the category of magical characters.

In addition to monsters and mythological creatures, in Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, Percy meets directly with a God named Dionysus. He is the God of Wine who is also the son of Zeus. Percy meets him at the Half-Blood camp as a camp headmaster. In the beginning, Percy doubts the existence of the Greek Gods, but after seeing the power of Dionysus and his characteristics, Percy believes in the existence of gods.

*"The skin of a tiger. The satyrs that all seemed to work here. The way Grover cringed, as if Mr. D were his master. "You're Dionysus," I said. "The god of wine." (Riordan, 2005:37)*

Dionysus is a Greek god who is often associated with satyrs and centaurs. That is why Percy's friend Grover, who is a Satyr, looks cringed because Dionysus is his master. In the real world, God is present in people's beliefs, but he does not have a physical form like in a novel. His existence in the novel with his strength and eternity makes him a magical character.

### **3. Magical Object**

Irreducible elements that are magical in nature come next. The storyline of Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* is significantly impacted by the object's existence. Each of these objects has unique qualities, capabilities, and specializations. Since

human technology is incapable of producing objects that meet the novel's standards, the objects' abilities defy human comprehension.

Riptide is the magical object in the novel. The sword known as Riptide will eventually be Percy's unique weapon. To make it easier for Percy to carry, Riptide may transform into a pen. Chiron, a.k.a. Mr. Brunner, gave Percy Riptide. In order for Percy to defend himself, Mr. Brunner offers him a riptide. It is then that Mrs. Dodds, an Erinyes posing as a human, attacks him. As evidenced by this quotation:

*It was a sword—Mr. Brunner's bronze sword, which he always used on tournament day. (Riordan, 2005:8)*

Poseidon the Sea God, Percy's father, gave him Riptide. Chiron keeps Riptide for years until he eventually encounters Percy, at which point he is persuaded that Percy is the real owner of the sword. In its initial incarnation, Riptide was a double-edged blade forged from celestial bronze, a unique kind of bronze that is lethal to monsters but harmless to people. Riptide is a magical object since it is a gift from a god.

*"The sword is celestial bronze. Forged by the Cyclopes, tempered in the heart of Mount Etna, cooled in the River Lethe. It's deadly to monsters, to any creature from the Underworld." (Riordan, 2005:79)*

The second thing that is also a magical object in the novel is Zeus's bolt. This object is the most important in the course of the story in the novel. As the name suggests, Zeus's bolt is a

special weapon belonging to Zeus, the leader of the Gods. Percy's adventure starts with the loss of this thing. As he begins the mission, Chiron explains how magical and important this thing is as seen in the following quotation:

*"Do not take this lightly," Chiron warned. "I'm not talking about some tinfoil-covered zigzag you'd see in a second-grade play. I'm talking about a two-foot-long cylinder of high-grade celestial bronze, capped on both ends with God-level explosives. Zeus's master bolt. (Riordan, 2005:70)*

The quotation above explains that Zeus's Bolt is part of the irreducible element. Zeus's bolt which is a weapon of God is a magical object that cannot be explained by human reason. Other objects or materials that can be categorized as magical objects are nectar and ambrosia. Nectar and ambrosia are known in Greek mythology as food for the gods. In this novel, nectar and ambrosia exist in Camp Half-Blood in a trendier form. The specialty of Nectar and Ambrosia can be seen through the quotation below:

*He gave Annabeth and me each a canteen of nectar and a Ziploc bag full of ambrosia squares, to be used only in emergencies if we were seriously hurt. It was God's food, Chiron reminded us. (Riordan, 2005:77)*

As food is devoted to the Gods, nectar, and ambrosia are magical objects. Only the Gods and their descendants can consume them, demigods who have the blood of gods such as Percy (son of Poseidon the Sea God) and

Annabeth (daughter of Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom). The magical side of nectar and ambrosia can also be seen in its ability to heal almost any injuries.

Another thing that has magical abilities is Luke's magic sneakers. This magic sneaker is an object that was given by Hermes, Luke's father who is a Messenger of God. The magical characteristic of Luke's sneakers is that they can temporarily make the user fly. Luke lends the sneaker to Percy as he embarks on a mission to find Zeus's Bolt. It can be seen below quotation:

*He handed me the sneakers, which looked pretty normal. They even smelled kind of normal. Luke said, "Maia!" White bird's wings sprouted out of the heels, startling me so much, I dropped them. Riordan, 2005:78)*

If concluded, all the magical objects in Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* have their different characteristic. These objects come from magical characters or can only be used by magical characters. Even so, everything explained by the quotation above is an object that does not exist in the real world and does not follow human logic. Since the objects are known as part of mythology, they can be said to be part of the irreducible element.

#### **4. Magical World**

Magical Realism successfully blends reality and imagination, making it the most appealing and believable type of Realism through, that can be, a magical world (Rajabi et al., 2020). It is the state of reality that is irrational, endowed with

qualities, and populated by characters that are either magical or irrational. The magical realism or magical phenomena in reality portrayed in the novel is connected to the gods' existence in Greek mythology. There are Greek gods and they each have their own realms. Hades, the god of death, is the owner of the Underworld, which is a part of the magical phenomena in reality in this novel.

Percy reaches the Underworld, often known as the World of the Dead, on his quest to locate Zeus' lightning. In order to meet Hades and learn the location of the lightning, Percy and his friends venture into the Underworld. Once one has reached the Underworld, Percy, Grover and Annabeth had to go past Cerberus, the three-headed hound that watches over the gates of death leading to the Fields of Asphodel. The place where the deceased spend eternity is called Fields of Asphodel. The quotation below provides descriptions of the Asphodel fields:

*Imagine the greatest audience you've ever seen at a gig, a football field overflowing with a million people. Now imagine a million times the size of a stadium, full of people, and imagine that the power has gone out. (Riordan, 2005:300)*

The text describes a magical world as the Underworld, which is a place that distinct from the actual world. The afterlife is a realm where the deceased are for their life's work. A distinct field is occupied by those who live morally upright lives, commit many good deeds, or are extremely wicked. Other magical beings include

Erinyes, who are charged with tormenting people who have committed evil in their lives, and Cerberus, who watches over the gates of death against trespassers like Percy. There are notable distinctions between the Underworld and the outside world, as the story above illustrates.

In addition to all the magical things with the Underworld formed in it, another magical world narrated in the novel is Olympus. Olympus is the abode of the Gods and is led by Zeus. In the novel, it is told that Olympus is originally in Greece, but the magical world moves to follow the heart of Western culture. For now, in the novel, Olympus is above the Empire States Building, in New York. Percy goes there when he has completed his mission to find Zeus's lightning and will return it to its owner. Zeus then invites Percy to Olympus. A description of the magical world of Olympus can be seen in the quotation below:

*My trip through Olympus was a daze. I passed some giggling wood nymphs who threw olives at me from their garden. Hawkers in the market offered to sell me ambrosia-on-a-stick, a new shield, and a genuine glitter-weave replica of the Golden Fleece, as seen on Hephaestus-TV. (Riordan, 2005:168)*

The magical world as found in Olympus is very different from the real world. Olympians are fantasy creatures such as gods, nymphs, satyrs, and naiads who are not found in the real world. The items found in Olympus are also

magical objects. When compared with fellow magical worlds, the Underworld, Olympus has a very different atmosphere. While the Underworld seems gloomy, Olympus feels festive. Given that Olympus is the abode of the Gods, this place is truly described as heaven or utopia.

Based on these explanations, the irreducible element in this novel in the category of the magical world is shown as a world or other dimension that has astral life, which cannot be reached by ordinary people. This world is far different from the real world. Its existence is originally only a myth that is believed by ordinary people. The existence of this magical world cannot be proven through science, and therefore its position in modern thought is considered illogical.

### **The Phenomenal World**

The second part of magical realism or magical phenomena in reality is the phenomenal world. The elements in this category highlight the text's or work's realistic aspect of magical phenomena in reality. Realistic narratives have the ability to create fantastical worlds that closely mimic our own, frequently depicting it in great detail. "is the realism of magical realism or magical phenomena in reality, setting it apart from a great deal of fantasy and allegory" (Faris, 2004). Objects, characters, and events that correspond with or accurately depict the real world (as it makes sense) and occur in everyday human existence are referred to as realism. After explaining the irreducible element, the second



characteristic will be discussed in terms of 1) Phenomenal world objects (things and places) and 2) Phenomenal world characters.

### 1. Phenomenal World Objects

Given that multiple realities exist based on our social context and considering that "*Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*" is authentically real within its literary context, it falls under the category of a Phenomenal World. The text's actual object narrative begins when Percy describes his life as a student at the start of the story. The following quotation demonstrates this:

*My name is Percy Jackson. I'm 12 years old. Until a few months ago, I was enrolled at Yancy Academy, a private school for troubled kids in upstate New York. Am I a troubled kid? Well, yes, you could say that. (Riordan, 2005:1)*

Yancy Academy and Percy's school are the real-world locations that are described. From his point of view, Percy describes Yancy Academy as a dysfunctional children's school in New York. The city of New York exists. He also says he is a troubled young man; someone we can discover. It demonstrates that the Yancy Academy's environment in the book is realistic.

Besides Yancy Academy, this novel also depicts Fifth Avenue. This place is a large bustling street in the center of the boroughs of Manhattan in New York City, USA. Fifth Avenue is a real place that we can access in our world. Percy also described real activities on Fifth Avenue, such as streams of cabs. He also

mentioned his mother's apartment, which was close to that place. This can be seen through the quotation below:

*I watched the cabs streaming down Fifth Avenue and thought about my mom's apartment, just a bit uptown from where we were. I hadn't seen her since Christmas. I desperately wanted to hop into a taxi and go home. She'd hug me and be happy to see me, but she'd also be disappointed. (Riordan, 2005:6)*

Percy's description of Fifth Avenue illustrates the conditions we can find in the real world. There is no magical element on Fifth Avenue in Percy's perspective. All activities run normally and feel real. Some objects are by reality, such as cabs and taxis, likewise, with the term places like uptown and apartments. This real place prevents fiction from becoming a form of fantasy fiction that can soar away from reality.

### 2. Phenomenal World Characters

Character is the next Phenomenal World category. The characters that are the subject of this discussion are connected to the narrative's character vocations in the amazing world. The characters that affect the plot are the ones covered in this study. Percy's mother and his stepfather, Gabe Ugliano, are the people that are discussed.

*She worked different jobs, took night classes to get her graduation from high school, and raised me on her own. She never protested or became frustrated. (Riordan, 2005:33)*

Percy's mother is an ordinary person in the novel. She has a very genuine disease and lives like most people do. It won't be difficult to locate Percy's mother in the real world. She is a typical working mother who provides for her child. In addition to raising her kids and attending night school, Percy's mother also engaged in regular activities. This demonstrates how Percy's mother exists in the Phenomenal World Reality.

Besides Percy's mother, Gabe Ugliano is another character who links the novel to reality. Gabe is Percy's stepfather, who married her mother when Percy was still a kid. He is an ordinary human with non-magical characteristics. This can be seen through the following quote:

*Finally, she married Gabe Ugliano, who was nice the first thirty seconds we knew him, then showed his true colours as a world-class jerk. (Riordan, 2005:16)*

The portrayal of Gabe Ugliano's character shows his role as part of the Phenomenal World. He is an ordinary man with bad characteristics and traits. As with Percy's mother, we can also easily meet Gabe Ugliano's characteristics in the real world. Percy also describes Gabe as a smelly man and wearing gym shorts. This confirms that the existence of Gabe is real and is not related to magic

### **Unsettling Doubt**

Unsettling misgivings or unsettling doubts are another feature of magical realism or magical

phenomena in reality. There could be some uncomfortable doubts as the reader struggles between two conflicting interpretations of what happened. Faris states that "The reader's main uncertainty usually lies in whether to interpret an event as a character's dream or hallucination, or as a miracle." (Faris, 2004). While events in magical realism may appear to be dreams, they are not. Still, the narrative may persuade the reader to classify them as hallucinations or dreams.

Unsettling doubt in Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* starts from the beginning of the novel. Here, Percy interacts with the reader by describing his own experience. Percy invites readers to continue reading this novel and gives choices on whether to not believe or believe the stories in the novel. That can be seen in the quotation below:

*If you're a normal kid reading this because you think it's fiction, great. Read on. I envy you for being able to believe that none of this ever happened. (Riordan, 2005:10)*

Here Percy's words that warn the reader make the reader think about the reality in the novel. Readers will doubt whether this novel is a person's original experience or fiction. Percy refers to readers as 'normal' kids if they believe that this novel is a fiction novel. Then add that if the readers find themselves in the novel, it means they are one of Percy's groups, namely demigods.

The second troubling doubt appears when Percy and his friends visit the museum during a school trip. Mrs. Dodds frequently assigns Percy punishments because she views him as a problematic student. At the museum throughout their visit. Mr. Dodds gives Percy a call. Then Percy observes Mrs. Doods' peculiar gait when she moves. This is evident in the quotation that follows.

*The school psychologist told me that this was part of ADHD, misinterpreting stuff in my head. (Riordan, 2005:7)*

Percy's apprehension regarding Mrs. Dodds's rapid movements demonstrates unsettling doubt in this instance. At the start of the novel, the author does not reveal Mrs. Dodds' true magical abilities, though. The explanation provided by the author explains this phenomenon and how it is like what occurs before to Percy's diagnosis of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). The school counselor explains that this ADHD is the reason for the way his brain perceives objects. Percy thus frequently feels as though something was omitted.

The incident that triggers the reader's subsequent doubts is when Percy successfully fights Mrs. Dodds. Mrs. Dodds breaks down into sand which then disappears. But after that, Percy, who is alone, is confused over the events that occurred before. This can be seen through the quotation below:

*I was alone, holding a ballpoint pen. Mr. Brunner was gone. There was no*

*one around but me. My hands were still shaking. Maybe my lunch had been tainted with magic mushrooms or something. Had I imagined everything? (Riordan, 2005:9)*

Percy's doubts about reality also make the reader doubt whether what he experienced is real or not. Percy also mentions that maybe his lunch has been contaminated with magic mushrooms. Magic Mushroom is a mushroom in the real world that can give hallucinatory effects. Percy's thoughts overwhelm the reader with questions about whether the magical events in the novel are only part of Percy's imagination or happen.

The last unsettling doubt is found in Percy's story about Mrs. Dodds, which seems to disappear without a trace. Percy has defeated Mrs. Dodds but doubts if he is only hallucinating. When Percy asks about Mrs. Dodds other normal children, they don't recognize him. But then Percy hesitates again when Grover reacts like hiding something. It can be seen through the quotation below:

*It got so I almost believed them—Mrs. Dodds had never existed. Almost. But Grover couldn't fool me. When I mentioned Dodds to him, he hesitated and claimed she didn't exist. But I knew he was lying. (Riordan, 2005:10)*

Grover's reaction, of course, is the key to the previous Unsettling Doubt. Percy doubts his memory of Mrs. Dodds. He originally thought that Mrs. Dodds was just his imagination. But then he becomes suspicious again with Grover's

reaction, which is seen lying when Percy asks him about Mrs. Dodds. This matter then makes the readers doubt again, who has thought that Percy is hallucinating over time, then open the option to conclude that there is something big hidden by Grover so that Percy's experience about Mrs. Dodds happens.

### Merging Realms

Merging realism intertwines or combines the magical realm, rooted in traditional beliefs, with the tangible world in Merging Realms' or Magical Phenomena in Reality features. Faris states, "From a cultural perspective, magical realism frequently blends ancient or traditional, occasionally indigenous, and contemporary worlds." Faris (2004). The point of intersection between two realities, or the theoretical point in a two-way mirror that reflects in both directions, is where magical phenomena in reality perception is found.

The real world and the magical realm or magical phenomena in reality in the novel are next to each other. In reality, monsters exist, but they wear human disguises. Ordinary people cannot perceive their shape as a monster if they reveal themselves in their genuine form. The mist' phenomenon is the reason behind this. To maintain the natural equilibrium, this mist conceals and covers the existence of monsters before mankind. From Chiron's statement to Percy, it is evident:

*"Yes. Reads The Iliad. The stuff is full of references. They generate Mist whenever divine or monstrous*

*elements mix with the mortal world, which obscures human vision."*  
(Riordan, 2005:155)

In *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan, monsters, gods, and legendary beings frequently cross paths in the actual world. When humans are in the space dimension, "mist" exists as a barrier separating them from monster existence. On the other hand, Demigods—who possess the characteristics of both humans and gods—are exempt from the mist. Because both the magical and human worlds are home to demigods.

Another merging realm in the novel is the existence of Olympus which merges with the Empire States Building. At the end of the story, Percy visits Olympus to return Zeus's Bolt to its rightful owner. He then went to the Empire States Building and took the 600th elevator to get to Olympus. Up there, he witnessed merging realms between the Empire States Building and Olympus. It can be seen in the following quotation:

*My eyes followed the stairway to its end, where my brain just could not accept what I saw. Look again, my brain said. We're looking, my eyes insisted. It's there. (Riordan, 2005:167)*

The Empire State Building in general has become a cultural icon of the United States. This building was designed in the Art Deco style and was dubbed one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World by the American Society of Civil Engineers. Olympus, the abode of the gods, moved with the heart of western culture. This

explains the merging of realms that occur between the real world represented by the Empire State Building and the magical world represented by Olympus.

### **Disruption of Time, Space and Identity**

Lastly, this fiction challenges conventional notions of time, space, and identity in addition to fusing merging realms. Numerous works of magical realism or magical phenomena in reality fiction, according to Faris, draw boundaries around near-sacred or ritual enclosures. Yet, these sacred sites extend their enchanting tales into other texts and the realms they depict, just as the outside world pervades them. (Faris, 2004). Not only does magical realism realign our sense of identity, but also our habits of time and space. In order to classify Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief's* magical realism disruption, the following categories will be used:

#### **1. Disruption of Time**

Sacred time can be replaced by new time when time is disrupted in magical realism or magical phenomena in reality works. In Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, Percy's slowed time at the Lotus Hotel during his quest to locate Zeus's Bolt serves as evidence of the qualities of time disruption. According to contemporary knowledge grounded in Western empiricism, nothing can stop time from moving forward. Thus, the novel's slower time is undoubtedly a type of time disruption.

Percy and his friends have stopped at the Lotus Hotel while searching for Zeus's Bolt. That

location is a hotel with full facilities, including a playground. It is only after Percy notices that they had been there for a long time that they realize. As seen in the quotation below:

*I met a guy who told me that 1985 was the year. I was told by another guy that it was 1993. (Riordan, 2005:262)*

Time is disrupted as seen by the time discrepancy between Lotus Hotel and the actual world. The residents of the Lotus Hotel never get older. When they initially arrive at the motel, their physical state is unchanged. They also hold the belief that they have only been there for a few days, even if they have spent decades in that place.

#### **2. Disruption of Space**

Similarly, to how magical realism or magical phenomena in reality can explain time disruption and narrative space confusion, it can also create new, distinct places from the one we are in right now. Although a location can be used to depict a region or cavity, that is not the end of the concept. Because space is flexible, numerous and heterogeneous shapes have been generated within it. This type of space instability is shown in Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief* through several spatial dimensions that alter or diverge around them.

The disruption of space in *The Olympians and Percy Jackson* by Rick Riordan: This is Camp Half Blood, the Lightning Thief. There is a space there that not just any creature may enter. Monsters and regular people are unable to penetrate it and view that area as nothing more

than a valley. It's only open to a select group of mythological creatures and demigods. The following sentence is how Annabeth explained this to Percy:

*"Not if they are purposely stored or summoned by anyone inside in the bush."*

*"Why would anybody want to summon a monster?"*

*"The point is, the borders are sealed to keep mortals and monsters out." (Riordan, 2005:97)*

Not only is Camp Half-Blood off-limits to both monsters and regular people, but it also defies space laws by disregarding the surrounding weather. Despite the adverse weather conditions in the surrounding area, Camp Half-Blood has remained stable. Rain will not fall within the area unless the locals desire it to. The following passage, which comes from Grover's conversation with Percy, demonstrates this:

*I asked Grover if we needed an umbrella. "No," he said. "It never rains here unless we want it to." (Riordan, 2005:55)*

In Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, Percy's encounter with his father, the Sea God Poseidon, on Santa Monica beach, causes the second disruption of space. At that time, he hopes to get a hint for his mission. He gets a feeling of entering the sea. Magically, Percy can breathe and then meets with a shark. The shark takes

him to the deep sea. The disruption of spaces is described through the quotation below:

*It was like standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon at midnight, not being able to see much, but knowing the void was right there. The surface shimmered maybe a hundred and fifty feet above. (Riordan, 2005:135)*

In Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, Percy, Grover, and Annabeth experience the final Disruption of Space when they enter the world of death. After bribing Charon, the rower, to take them to the Underworld, they were ushered into the elevator. That is when disruption of space occurred. The elevator they are riding in turns into a wooden barge. This can be seen through the quotation below:

*We were standing in a wooden barge. Charon was poling us across a dark, oily river, swirling with bones, dead fish, and other, stranger things. (Riordan, 2005:144)*

From that previously mentioned quote, it may be inferred that Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, contains multiple instances of spatial disruption. These spaces are in real places but have their magical qualities. These places change the reader's perception of space in the real world. And those spaces become a link between the magical realm or magical phenomena in reality and reality world.

### 3. Disruption of Identity

The existence of demigods is one way that Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief* disruption of identity. The offspring of gods and mortals are known as demigods. Their presence creates new traits and modifies pre-existing identities. The personalities of each Demigod vary according to their godparents.

Additionally, they typically receive their godparents' strengths and talents. Annabeth sets the stage for the first demigod to be introduced when Percy is at Camp Half-Blood. The just arrived Perch has no idea that he is a demigod at all. Percy has questions about his biological father's identity because he has only ever lived with his human mother and has never had a face-to-face meeting with him. When Percy was originally sent to a Demigod camp, he did not comprehend his mother's choice. It can be seen from question below:

*"I felt like when my mother spoke of my father sometimes, I felt it. I said, "God, "Annabeth grinned, "Half-god." "Your father isn't dead, Percy. He's one of the Olympians." (Riordan, 2005:94)*

Percy is also given an explanation by Annabeth on the general traits of demigods, including the fact that their mental features set them apart from other children and make them seem like troubled kids. Moreover, they are all dyslexic and have ADHD. All of that has a purpose.

*"Taken together, it's almost a sure sign. The letters float off the page when you read, right? That's because your mind is hardwired for ancient Greek. And the ADHD—you're impulsive, can't sit still in the classroom. That's your battlefield reflexes. In a real fight, they'd keep you alive. (Riordan, 2005:46)*

When Percy is on an adventure to find Zeus's Bolt, he and his friends, Grover and Annabeth, infiltrate a car filled with wild animals. The transportation is illegal and the animals there want to be freed. Surprisingly, Percy can communicate with Zebra but not with other wild animals. It can be seen below quotation:

*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. (Riordan, 2005:128)*

Percy's ability to communicate with horses and their families such as zebras is a characteristic of his godparent, Poseidon. Poseidon, the sea god, is also known as the god who created horses from the sea foam. Because of that, Percy's specific ability to communicate with horses is his innate as a child of Poseidon. Even so, Percy's ability was certainly not shared by other demigods who were children of different gods.

### CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that there are five elements of magical realism or magical phenomena in reality that can be identified in Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*.

According to the data analysis, the characteristics of magical realism or magical phenomena in reality are found in the novel. First, this novel's irreducible elements include magical worlds, magical characters, magical objects, and magical world. For example, Percy meets many monsters in his adventure. His first encounter is with Erinyes. She is a subordinate of Hades who disguises herself as Percy's mathematics teacher, Mrs. Dodds. She attacks Percy while he is on a school tour with his friends at the museum and changes her form. Second, the phenomenal world includes phenomenal world objects (things and places) and phenomenal world characters. Third, unsettling doubt in the novel starts from the beginning of the novel. Here Percy interacts with the reader by describing the beginning of the novel. Here Percy interacts with the reader by describing his own experience. Fourth, merging realism intertwines or combines the magical realm, rooted in traditional beliefs, with the tangible world in merging realms. In the novel, monsters, gods, and legendary beings frequently cross paths in the actual world. Last, Percy's slowed time at the Lotus Hotel during his quest to locate Zeus's Bolt serves as evidence of the qualities of time disruption.

When all the elements of magical realism or magical phenomena in reality are taken into consideration, Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* fits into the magical realism category. It is hoped that magical realism in literary works becomes the

interesting topic to be researched for it deals with magic and reality altogether.

In line with previous paragraph, this research contributes to the continually increasing body of research on magical realist literature, particularly in the context of young adult fiction. The identification of magical realism elements in a highly popular series such as Percy Jackson highlights the appeal and relevance of the genre to contemporary readers. Further research could explore how magical realism is utilised in other young adult novels and its potential impact on readers' perceptions of reality and fantasy. In addition, a comparative analysis of magical realist techniques across different cultural contexts and literary traditions could provide valuable insights into the diverse representations and functions of this narrative mode.

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