

The Concept of Hybridity Between Greek and Roman Cultures in The Novel The Mark of Athena by Rick Riordan

Inayah Nuralifah, Juanda

English Literature Program Study, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Email: juanda@email.unikom.ac.id

Abstract. This research analyses about the concept of hybridity between Greek and Roman cultures in The Mark of Athena by Rick Riordan. The study aims to explore how hybrid identities emerge through cultural interactions between these two major groups and how they shape the novel's characters. Through the use of Homi K. Bhabha (1994) about theory of hybridity from The Location of Culture, the main focus of this research is to analysis the characters of Annabeth Chase and Reyna Avila Ramirez-Arellano, examining how their different cultural background shapes their identities, this can be shown from their actions and dialogue. The approach is qualitative textual analysis, focusing on dialogue between two characters. This research investigates how their distinct cultural backgrounds create tensions and adaptations, ultimately leading to the formation of hybrid identities. This research contributes to postcolonial literary studies by demonstrating how hybridity functions as a tool identity formation and resistance within fictional narratives. By illustrating how hybrid identities allow for redefinition of power and cultural belonging, this study provides a deeper insight into the complexities of cultural integration and adaptation in literature.

Keywords: Hybridity, Postcolonialism, The Mark of Athena.

1. Introduction

The postcolonial approach to literary studies examines how literary texts in various ways reveal postcolonial traces, such as confrontations between races, nations, and cultures in conditions of unequal power relations that have been significantly formed since the era of European imperialism (Foulcher, 2008). Novel is a literary work that offers an idealized model of life, containing an imaginary world built through various elements intentionally created by the author to resemble the real world, complete with events and settings [7]. One of the concepts that has become a primary focus in various literary studies, especially in the context of encounters between different cultures, is the concept of hybridity. In the novel The Mark of Athena, the concept of hybridity is not only depicted through the intersection of cultures but also by illustrating the influence on character dynamics, such as in the characters Annabeth Chase and Reyna Ramirez Arellano, who will be the focus of the hybridity in this research.

The Mark of Athena by Rick Riordan is the third novel in the series of The Heroes of Olympus that was published in 2021. Rick Riordan's imagination as the author in this story tells about Annabeth's plan to peacefully retrieve Percy, who is at Camp Jupiter, but it fails due to Leo's recklessness in attacking New Rome with Argo II, which is considered a declaration of war from Greek to Roman, forcing all of them to flee from Roman forces. These seven demigods realized that they had to go to Roman first, then come to Greek to stop Gaea, the mother of earth, as well as find Nico D' Angelo and close the doors of death. On the other hand, Annabeth has a special mission from her mother, Athena, to find the Athena Parthenos, a giant statue of Athena that was stolen by Romans from Greek in ancient times [9]. The mission aims to unite Greek and Roman demigods to fight Gaea. So, the seven demigods left Camp Jupiter for the Great Salt Lake [3]. Each time, they all had to face challenges and problems that threatened their lives and thwarted their mission to prevent Gaea's awakening. The Mark of Athena is a novel that belongs to the genres of fantasy, adventure, and mythology. It also falls under the category of young adult fiction. The novel received a warm welcome from fans of Greek and Roman mythology when it was first published. The high enthusiasm for this novel is not only due to the storyline that Rick Riordan tells by creating a thrilling and action-packed narrative, plot, storyline and complex conflict, but also because Riordan delves explore more deeply the identity and cultural mixtures that his characters will face in the story he creates [8]. This is depicted through the hybridity of the demigod characters identities, which are a combination of two different parts, half-human and half-god. Additionally, there is the conflict between the descendants of Greek and Roman gods, the differing perspectives between these two major groups, and the dilemmas faced by the main characters in confronting their ancestor's legacy. The elements of hybridity present in this novel not only appear in the setting and characters but also in the symbolism that connects Greek and Roman mythology, which makes me interested in studying it more deeply [1].

Research on hybridity in the world of literature has been extensively conducted, using various approaches. One of the approaches I use to examine this research is character hybridity in the novel The Mark of Athena with postcolonialism as its analytical tool [10]. Previous research that has been conducted related to postcolonialism on the issue of hybridity, such as the studies by Ika Handayani, Zuriyati, and Siti Gomo Attas that titled "Hibriditas Tokoh Utama Dalam Novel Ayat-Ayat Cinta Karya Habiburrahman El Syirazi" with the aim of seeking forms of hybridity as evidence of postcolonial culture with the concept from Homi K. Bhabha [6]. Another study was "Hibriditas, Mimikri, dan Ambivalensi dalam Novel Kirti Njunjung Drajat Karya R. Tg. Jasawidagda: Kajian Postkolonialisme" which aims to describe the forms, emergence, and biases of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence in the Novel [5]. Another study, "Hibriditas Poskolonialisme Homi K. Bhabha Dalam Novel Midnight's Children Karya Salman Rushdie" aims to reveal which aspects constitute hybridism in the novel, particularly in the aspects of identity (subject formation), language, and the characters inner struggles [4].

This research aims to explore how the characters, Annabeth Chase and Reyna Avila Ramirez-Arellano represent the concept of hybridity in the novel The Mark of Athena. This research itself focuses on how the identities of these two characters, which are a combination of half-god and half-human often referred to as demigods, as well as the merging of Greek and Roman cultures, and also discussed how these two characters overcome the existing cultural differences [2].

2. Literature Review

According to Homi K. Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* (1994), hybridity is the process of identity formation that occurs in the interstitial space, or can be called the third space, where this space is the meeting point between two cultures that then creates a new identity or cultures that is dynamic and complex. (Bhabha, 1994, p.112). Hybridity is different cultural interactions that produce new forms of culture and identity (Foulcher, et al., 2002). According to Ratna, hybridity is understood as the relationship between two cultures with different identities (Ratna, N. K. 2008). Hybridity is a new cultural product that arises from the process of uniting two or more different cultures, as an effort to equalize degrees and status. Hybridity influences a person's mindset (Sanditama, E & Kurniasih, D., 2021). The concept of hybridity is relevant for understanding how characters in literary works can overcome conflicts, whether related to identity or cultural differences, that shape their identity through the interactions they engage in.

The concept of hybridity aids in the explanation of how Annabeth and Reyna, two characters in the novel *The Mark of Athena*, develop their identities in the face of their identities amidst the cultural differences between Greek and Roman that exist between them. Annabeth, who has Greek ancestry and Reyna, who symbolizes Roman power, have to meet and interact with each other. They both have to negotiate the space between two difference cultures that often have conflicts. In this novel, Rick Riordan depicts how their identities are formed in a hybrid manner through the storytelling of their journeys and the challenges they face, such as Annabeth's journey to Rome and Reyna's efforts to bridge the differences between Camp Jupiter (Roman) and Camp Half-Blood (Greek). This illustrates how their identities are formed by their experiences and differences, as well as the dynamics of cross-cultural interactions that Bhabha talks about.

This research expands on previous studies by specifically applying Bhabha's concept of hybridity to the Greek and Roman cultural interactions in the novel *The Mark of Athena*. The research that uses Rick Riordan novel as a data source is already exist like Bagus Dani Nugroho, Ayu Sutarto and Ikwan Setiawan that analyze the archetypal on the novel by Rick Riordan or another article is about analysis on the monomyth through the novel Rick Riordan by Mohammad Sugeng, Meilia Adiana, and L Dyah Purwita or research that analysis about adaptation and cultural Study of Mythology by Jennifer Andersen. Different with previous research that focused on mythology, archetypal gender or cross cultural on general, this study focuses on how Rick Riordan uses hybridity as a literary device to shape identity, resolve cultural tensions and redefine power dynamics. By analyzing the hybrid identities of Annabeth and Reyna, this research provides new insights into how young adult literature can engage with complex postcolonial themes.

3. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach through text analysis. The main data source used in this research is the novel *The Mark of Athena* by Rick Riordan, who got the #1 New Yorks Times Bestseller author. By analyzing how representation in the characters Annabeth Chase and Reyna Avila Ramirec-Arellano, whether it is hybridity in their own identities or the cultural hybridity that is created. In analyzing the data sources for this

research, the hybridity theory by Homi K. Bhabha is used. This theory helps to understand the identities of the characters Annabeth and Reyna, which are interpreted through their dialogue, actions, or ways of dressing that reflect the hybridity of identities they experience. After the data is collected, it is categorized and then the data is analyzed through three simultaneous steps; identification, categorization, and interpretation (K. Krispendoff, 1993: 17).

4. Results and Discussion

The Mark of Athena is a sequel to the previous novel titled *The Son of Neptune* and is part of the series *The Heroes of Olympus*. This series is a continuation of the series previously written by Rick Riordan, namely *Percy Jackson and The Olympians*, which takes the theme of mythology combined with modern adventure. *The Heroes of Olympus* is a continuation of the previous series, which continues the adventures of the demigods to fight their enemies. However, what sets it apart from the previous series is that Rick Riordan added a Roman mythology aspect to this series, so the depiction of the story is not only from Greek mythology. The addition of Roman mythology depicted by Riordan adds complexity to the story he created, thereby introducing the concept of hybridity within it.

The hybridity present in the novel *The Mark of Athena* is evident in several aspects, whether in character identities, culture, or even clothing styles. The concept of hybridity is rooted in the postcolonial theory proposed by Homi K. Bhabha, which emphasizes the blending and mixing of cultures that create new meanings. In this novel, there are two main aspects highlighted by the author, namely the hybridity of the characters' identities who exist between two worlds and the cultural blending between Greek and Roman. I chose two characters as the focus of my research, who represent their respective cultures, Annabeth Chase as a demigod from Greek and Reyna Avila Ramirez-Arellano as a demigod from Roman.

4.1. Hybridity of character identity

Rick Riordan took the concept of demigods for the novels he created, one of which is this novel. In Greek and Roman mythology, a demigod or half-blood is the child of God and a human. The merging of these two different entities creates a new type that possesses a combination of aspects from both. They possess extraordinary power inherited from their divine parents and inherit the human body, whether physical or emotional, from their human parents. In this case, the characters depicted by Riordan represent a form of hybridity between the world of gods and humans.

In **table 1**, the dialogue, Annabeth shows her hybridity as a demigod. She does not rely on the supernatural powers inherent to the gods, instead she uses her intelligence as a human. For the context, Annabeth Chase, who is the daughter of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and war strategy, with a human named Frederick Chase, a professor of military history from Boston. As a demigod, Annabeth possesses extraordinary intelligence and skills that she inherited from Athena, but she also has emotions and fears that are very human and not possessed by the gods. At this moment, she cannot solely rely on the divine power of Athena, but she must also use her human intellect. This shows that on one hand, she is a descendant of the gods, but she also has to solve problems on her own without direct help from Athena.

In **table 2**, the dialogue between Reyna and Annabeth shows that Reyna, as a demigod, possesses divine powers and extraordinary strength, yet still has feelings and emotional burdens as a human. The hybridity of Reyna's identity makes her not only related to physicality

or strength but also to the psychological aspects she experiences. She has to play the role of a strong leader like her mother, but also as a young girl who has to face many burdens alone.

Identity of annabeth chase and reyna avila ramirez-arellano	
<p>"I'm a daughter of Athena," Annabeth said. "I know how to weave the truth." (Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 48)</p> <p>(table 1)</p>	<p>"No demigod can heal my heart, Annabeth. I am used to being alone." (Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 36)</p> <p>(table 2)</p>

Rick Riordan illustrates through the characters Annabeth and Reyna that the hybridity present in his novels is not merely a biological hybridity as the child of a god and a human, but rather a new, more complex identity that combines strength, intelligence, vulnerability, and emotion. From these two characters, it shows how the harmony between their humanity and divine power allows them to overcome great challenges and serve as a bridge between the worlds of the gods and humans, while also provide more significance to the idea of hybridity itself.

4.2. Characterization of characters

In this novel, the author combines two different mythologies, namely Greek and Roman. These two beliefs systems have many similarities but also striking differences, which then lead to encounters and conflicts between the two great cultures. A hybrid culture is created among the characters as a result of their adaptation to all differences that now exist in order to establish harmony. In Greek mythology, demigods and gods are depicted as more independent, prioritizing freedom of thought, creativity, and flexibility in facing and making decisions. This is demonstrated by the demigod's manner of life at Camp Half-Blood, a summer camp that serves as a refuge for demigods. One of the demigods that living in Camp Half-blood is Annabeth. She always turns to her Greek cultural strength of intelligence, strategy and independence to deal with any situation or issues that comes up. However, she also shows a more structured and discipline side that reflects Roman values, which makes her more militaristic than other Greek demigods. This is depicted from one of the battle scenes as the demigods are suddenly attacked, and Annabeth takes authority right away and instruct them to follow her commands.

In **table 1**, the hybridity of Annabeth is seen in this dialogue. She is not only fixated on the Greek methods that prioritize creative thinking, intelligence, and strategy but she also employs the distinctive Roman military strategies which are strongly influenced by discipline and formation. In these tactics, she blends the traditional Roman defence technique – the shield wall formation – with the quick and inventive attacks that are typical of Greek tactics. These two approaches show the current hybridity and cultural adaptability, which prompted Annabeth to combine them to develop a new, more successful strategy.

Same as Greek, there is a refuge for demigods of divine decent called Camp Jupiter. This camp reflects Roman culture because it emphasizes discipline, hierarchical structure, adherence to tradition, and a collective approach to leadership. Reyna became a part of Camp Jupiter and also served there as a praetor. She represents Roman values, upholding the norms of militarism and discipline with a severe demeanour and always emphasizing the importance

of order in every decision. However, there is a personality in her that show her kind and empathetic humanity, akin to the more emotionally expressive character of Greek demigods. As we can see from **table 2**, that statement depicted the hybridity of Reyna's leadership style, which combines of Roman assertiveness with the warmth and care more typical of Greek culture. It also demonstrates that Reyna recognizes the value of interpersonal relationships and the emotional side of things, showing that she is not only reliant on military firmness but also shows concern and care for her colleagues.

Cultural Hybridity of Annabeth Chase and Reyna Avila Ramirez-Arellano	
<p>"We must hold formation and use the Roman shield wall tactic, but then, once our enemy is within range, let's unleash a burst of unpredictable manoeuvres to confuse them." (Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 37)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(table 1)</p>	<p>"I demand order and discipline, but I also understand the pain and struggles each of your faces. We must be strong together, not only body but in heart." (Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 42)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(table 2)</p>

4.3. Hybridity on fashion

A character identity and background are often reflected in the clothing they wear. It's common to see Annabeth dressed in jeans, sneakers, and an orange Camp Half-Blood t-shirt. In Greek culture, clothing is more often associated with freedom of expression, and Annabeth, as someone who highly values about her thinking abilities, she prioritizes function over appearance. However, in battle situation or when in the environment of Camp Jupiter, where Roman norms are more dominant, Annabeth is seen wearing combat gear or additional armour to adapt to the demands of the Roman militaristic. She adapted her appearance by using protective gear that was more in line with Roman standards to survive on the battlefield.

In **table 1**, that quote shows the hybridity within Annabeth, she integrates the harder, more structured and functional visual of Roman culture, but her inherent Greek identity remains visible. The orange colour is distinctive symbol of Camp Half-Blood and Greek culture, showing warmth, creativity, and a spirit of rebellion against strict formal norms. This colour stands out among the neutral or dark colours more commonly seen on Roman soldier's armour.

Different with Greek cultures, Reyna as a praetor at Camp Jupiter, has a strong Roman background, and this is reflected in how she dresses. She's always wearing full armour, which gives her a more formal and stiff appearance, Reyna's purple outfit is a Roman symbol of high status. Leadership in the Roman system was based on both appearance and behaviour. Reyna uses her attire as a sign of dominance, in order to be strong and well-respected in front of others she must always maintain image through her appearance. This shows how authority, discipline, and power were more closely associated with fashion on Roman society.

However, in **table 2** beneath all of that, Reyna demonstrates a hybrid nature. There is a moment where small details in her appearance, such as her choice of jewellery or the way she styles her hair, show that she is less set in her ways. There is still a touch of a more subtle and

expressive aesthetic that is characteristic of Greek culture. The storyline occasionally demonstrates Reyna's adaption in adopting jewellery or accessories with patterns influenced by classical Greek culture, such as pendants shaped like columns or leaf motifs that are uncommon among the Roman demigod or military, even if Rick Riordan did not describe it explicitly and it appears to be implied.

Cultural hybridity of annabeth chase and reyna avila ramirez-arellano	
<p>"In the heat of battle, Annabeth's gear transformed subtly – she donned protective armor pieces reminiscent of Roman soldiers, yet her trademark orange hue still."</p> <p>(Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 35)</p> <p>(table 1)</p>	<p>"Reyna's purple cloak billowed behind her. She wore full Roman armor over a purple tunic, with a golden belt around her waist."</p> <p>(Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 4)</p> <p>(table 2)</p>

4.4. Religion or belief of the characters

Religion or belief in the author universe is something that actually exists rather than only being an abstract mythology. The author describes the actual existence of the gods and their interactions with human. However, the relationship between gods and demigods in this novel is different, between Greek and Roman.

As Athena's daughter, Annabeth sees Athena as a mother figure who guides her rather than as someone to be worshipped or revered. Annabeth often relies on herself rather than hoping for help from her mother. Demigods have more freedom to live their lives in the Greek system because the gods and humans have a relationship seems like the protector and the protected. The gods typically expect the demigods to solve their problems on their own rather making many demands of them. In the **table 1**, that quotation makes it clear that Annabeth is not blinded by her hybridity with regard to her believe in the gods. She still adheres to Greek values, which place an emphasis on freedom of thought and choice as opposed to complete submission to divine will of the gods.

On the other hand, in **table 2** shown how Annabeth demonstrates a willingness to embrace the faith values of the Roman demigods. A more formal and ritualistic approach to the values of belief is occurs in Roman culture, which emphasizes the significance of structure and tradition. While Annabeth appreciates it, she also starts to realize and accept the significance of formal rituals in her environment. From that quote, it is evident how Annabeth values the principles of both belief system. She remains loyal to the principles she holds, but she also allows herself to be influenced by Roman customs, which can provide stability in certain situation.

In the Roman system, it teaches obedience and sacrifice, the gods are more often considered rulers who must be respected and obeyed. Although Bellona is Reyna's mother, she also sees her as the goddess of war, and her leadership style serves as an example for Reyna. Reyna believes that Bellona has chosen her fate to become a leader, and she must embrace it as a duty rather than a choice. In **table 3**, the dialogue occurs when Reyna talks to Annabeth about the Athena Parthenos and how the fate of the Greeks and Romans. Reyna appears to show her

loyalty to Bellona, making her a source of strength and guiding principles in her life, and this also reflects the Roman perspective on the gods.

At certain moments she reflects on fate and destiny, Reyna occasionally reveals that her prayers and reflections contain elements that more personal and heartfelt, similar to the way of praying or meditating in Greek culture that emphasizes individual experience. She respects the traditions and formal ritual that are core of Roman culture. She becomes more open to a religious approach that was grounded on reflection and human experience rather than just ritual as a result on her interactions with Greek characters. As we can see in **table 4**, despite her strong adherence to Roman values, Reyna also shows her desire to get more closer to the gods on a personal level. The combination of Roman religious structure and intimacy in prayer reveals a subtle Greek element within her.

Both Reyna and Annabeth are figures from diverse cultural backgrounds, they stand in for two opposing worlds between Greek and Roman. In different various aspect of their lives, both of them encounter hybridity. Annabeth and Reyna are both characters with different cultural backgrounds; they represent two opposing worlds between Greek and Roman. Both experience hybridity in various aspects of their lives. The interaction between them shows that hybridity does not only mean the merging of two cultures, but how each individual can adapt to their identity that lies between two conflicting worlds.

Cultural Hybridity of Annabeth Chase and Reyna Avila Ramirez-Arellano	
<p>"She was not a child of Rome. She was a Greek. She was a child of Athena. She did not follow orders blindly. She made her own choices."</p> <p>(Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 49)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(table 1)</p>	<p>Athena inspires me to question and innovate, yet I see how the Romans find strength in their formal rituals and structure. Perhaps there's wisdom in both – if only we could blend creativity with order." (Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 4)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(table 2)</p>
<p>"Bellona gives me strength. She teaches that war is not always about bloodshed. Sometimes it is about negotiation, compromise. But it is always about victory."</p> <p>(Riordan, The Mark of Athena, Chapter 35)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(table 3)</p>	<p>"We must honor our traditions, but sometimes, the heart knows what the ritual cannot express."</p> <p>(Riordan, The Mark of Athena, chapter 48)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(table 4)</p>

4. Conclusion

Rick Riordan, the author of *The Mark of Athena*, explore the intricacies that take place within the book in addition to telling a tale of demigod adventures. The many personalities of each group demonstrate the relation between gods and demigods, their trust in the gods, and the cultural variances that represent their separate identities. This hybridity is a result of the disparities between the Greek and Roman civilizations. Through the interaction between characters like Annabeth and Reyna, we can see that two different cultures can merge to create a new identity that might become stronger and more flexible. Despite having a strong Greek ancestry, Annabeth can adapt to Roman values through leadership strategies, adjustment in appearance, or through flexible way of thinking. On the other hand, Reyna, who traditionally adheres strongly to Roman structure and discipline, also shows an empathetic, reflective side, and even an aesthetic sensitivity that reminds one of Greek values. The freedom of thought and creativity that represents the Greek side, meeting with the discipline and hierarchical structure of the Romans, does not always create conflict between them but also opens up opportunities for cooperation to achieve a common goal. Rick Riordan illustrates how cultural identity is dynamic through dialogue and narration, such as in fashion, belief, and characterization of characters. Cultural differences can work together to create a more complex and adaptive strength, as demonstrated by the two characters dynamic interactions of elements from both cultures to overcome challenges. This hybridity eventually enhances the characters and the plot while also encouraging readers to consider how seemingly opposing values can complement each other and create a new identity that is more complete.

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