

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the study, previous related study, problems of the study, purposes of the study, scope of the study, and significances of the study.

### 1.1 Background of The Study

Myths are still widely interpreted in conflicting ways. Levi Strauss defined myth as collective dreams, a kind of aesthetic play, and the foundation of ritual and mythological figures which are realised as personified abstractions, and shows the existence of heroes or gods (2011: 2). Myths are usually seen by common people as something that really happened in past times which makes people believed that it is another part of ancestor's life. Most classical mythological stories provide the readers with focusing the story in something that is believed had happened in past time with rejecting the real situation in present life and is created as the result of authors' imagination and fantasy (William Hansen, 2004: xiii). Some people take myth as a sacred thing and part of their life and should be regarded by humans forever. David Leeming in his book *The world of Myth* gives information to the readers about the definition of myth as something or a condition that is really happened in the world thousand years ago (Dan

Peretti, 2007: 2). Related to the definition of myth, Levi Strauss adds further explanation about mythological creatures as abstract figures related to mythological story especially to heroes or ancient gods (Levi-Strauss, 1995: 2).

Since myth is well believed as a part of human life, it is interesting to find out how myths are continuously being spread from one to other generations. In a dark age, myths are started to be told orally, by mouth to mouth (Joel Skidmore, p.1). As time goes by, people started to visualize mythological story through written text such as novel, short story, poetry, and other genres of prose fiction. This leads to the existence of mythopoeia. Mythopoeia itself is the creation of myths in literary works (Thierry Groensteen, 2012:9). It is related to how an author describes and portrays myths with all of its characteristics through the narration, dialogue, characterization, and other elements in a literary work. Etymologically, mythopoeia comes from the Greek *mythos*, meaning myth, and *poiein*, meaning to make. Thus, mythopoeia is taken as a process of mythmaking in a literary work (Mihai C. Bocarnea & Bramwell Osula, 2008:199).

Literature also has various definitions. Mario Klarer said that literature is referred to written expression with a principal that not all written text can be said as literature and it usually has additional adjective such as 'aesthetic' or 'artistic' to make it different from other written texts such as newspapers, legal documents, and telephone books (2004:1). Drama, poetry, and prose are the three major types of literary work (Olaofe, 2008:22). They are then divided into fiction and non-fiction work. Prose fiction is coloured by the power of author's imagination and good combination of words and expressions. Further, Olaofe explains that

situations of life in a prose fiction are not presented in the way a historian will present it. This is because in literature, the author has no limitation in creating his own world by using words or language. How the writer likes and feels can be vividly presented.

Prose fiction is categorized into some types: fable, allegory, romance, novel, novelette, and short story (Olaofe, 2008: 40). As well as the three major types of literature, novels are also distinguished into two parts: novels with real story, or non-fiction novels, but most of them are the representation of authors' fantasies, or fiction novels. Generally, fiction novel is a long prose narrative which presents imaginary characters and events (Olaofe, 2008: 40). A fiction novel is a novel created through the imagination of an author and the story is rarely existed in the real world. An author describes what is in her/his mind with visualizing the imaginations into a written story. Fiction novel is then classified into some genres such as mystery, drama, romance, horror, adventure, science fiction, fantasy, youth, and social issue in life.

There are many kinds of prose fiction that have been created through authors' fantasies. One of those popular genres is a story which provides the existence of folklore or traditional story. *Percy Jackson and The Olympians* series written by Rick Riordan are five prose fictions (*The Lightning Thief, The Sea of Monsters, The Titan's Curse, The Battle of The Labyrinth, and The Last Olympian*) that are made through his fantasies about ancient Greek story combined with the mythmaking process about how gods, goddesses, demigods, and monsters of ancient Greek story in present or modern life.

Compared with some other novels which provide mythological creatures such as *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling and *Twilight Saga* by Stephanie Mayer, the five series of *Percy Jackson and The Olympians* by Rick Riordan show more unique kinds of mythological creatures like *Cyclops*, *Centaur*, *Minotaur*, *Cerberus*, *Satyr*, and *Medusa*. Besides, the stories of the five series of *Percy Jackson and The Olympians* are collaborated with the story of ancient Greek gods and goddesses, so the story also shares information about ancient myth of the Greek gods with additional action-adventural experiences that is made through the author's fantasies and imaginations. In additions, J.K. Rowling used centaur, a mythological creature that is originally came from ancient Greek history, as one of mythological creatures in her novel.

*The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* is the first of *Percy Jackson and The Olympians* series. The story tells about the existence of Percy Jackson, a demigod as a son of a god, Poseidon, and a human, Sally Jackson. Percy Jackson is first unaware as his status as a demigod until he is accused by Zeus as the theft of the lost lightning thief. The rest of the story tells about the adventure of Percy and his friends (Annabeth Chase as a demigod of the goddess Athena and Grover Underwood as a Satyr) to find the lightning thief and prove his ability as a son of Poseidon.

There are some researches about mythological narrative written by the students of English Department of State University of Jakarta. In 2010, Nurmelia Haryaningsih conducted a research about fantasy characteristics in *New Moon* novel entitled *Fantasy Characteristics and Structure in "New Moon" Novel*. Her

research focused on John H. Timmerman's theory about fantasy characteristic and John Grant and John Clute's theory of fantasy structure. Another study is entitled "Mythical Characteristics in *Eclipse* by Stephanie Meyer". This research was made in 2011 by Fivtina Putri Hardianti and focused on analyzing mythical characteristics found in *Eclipse* novel by using William Bascom's theory of mythical characteristics. The novel *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* also has been used as a data source by Ria Afriyanti in 2012 entitled "Archetypal Schema and Hero's Journey in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*". Her research focused on the archetypal schema and Christopher Vogler's theory of hero's journey in this novel.

Related to the connection between myth as a part of human life, in this study the writer want to identify and analyze how the author of *Percy Jackson and The Olympians* series, Rick Riordan, creates myth and its characteristics in a fiction novel.

## **1.2 Problems of The Study**

How are myths created in *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* novel?

To help the researcher answer the research question, there are sub-questions arose as follow:

- a. How are the characteristics and criteria of mythological narrative created in *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* novel?

- b. How are the characteristic and criteria of Classical Mythological Characters created in *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* novel?
- c. How are the characteristic of Classical Mythological Settings created in *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* novel?

### **1.3 Purposes of The Study**

This study aims to give descriptions about how myths are created through the dialogues and narrations by the author in novel *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians* as one of literary works, especially prose fiction.

### **1.4 Scope of The Study**

Due to the limited time this study focused in analyzing myths and its characteristics created in the novel *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and The Olympians*, consisting twenty two chapters, through the selected and narrations and dialogues by using the theory proposed by William Hansen in his book *Handbook of Classical Mythology* about mythological narrative, classical mythological characters, and classical mythological settings.

### **1.5 Significances of The Study**

The significances of this study are to add research collections in literature field especially in the way of how myths are created in prose fiction as a literary work and also to show some mythological characteristics and criteria in a prose fiction. Moreover it can be used as a previous related study for the

students of English Department of State University of Jakarta to discover more about myth especially the portrayal of myth in prose fiction.