

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of research problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the Study

As Klarer stated that to this day, novel still maintains its leading position as the genre products the most innovation in literature (2004: 11). It shows that among the three other genres of literary works people are mostly interested in novel. One of the famous novels read by children and people in twenty first century is Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*. This novel is one of Rick Riordan's The Heroes of Olympus series which are *The Lost Hero* (2010), *The Son of Neptune* (2011), and *The Mark of Athena* (2013). The novel is considered a popular book due to the novel is one of *New York Times* #1 best-selling The Heroes of Olympus. The Heroes of Olympus is series of Rick Riordan's novels which tells about Percy Jackson who joins a war between Olympians' demigods against Titans led by Gaea in modern time. Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune* is chosen because the novel consists of mythological tales and its storyline has similarity with a folktale. Both mythological tales and folktales are the story based on tradition of certain place that survive for thousands years. Therefore it is easier to analyze by using narrative structure.

As Riordan himself (2010: 164) tells in his previous novel, *The Lost Hero* that he lives with his wife and two sons in San Antonio, Texas. He is also the author of the *New York Times* #1 bestselling author who has already won the top three awards in mystery genre. The reason of choosing Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune* as the novel to be analyzed in this study has been explained clearly and the reason of choosing Propp's narrative structure will be explained below.

Narrative structure is chosen because the narrative structure can give more understanding about storyline in Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*. Actions of the characters are extremely important in this study because as Propp suggested that characters took on the role of narrative sphere of actions or functions. Scott explained that there can be no doubt that Propp's analysis is a landmark in the study of folktale (1968: 4). Scott implies that Propp's theory is the first and the landmark which inspires other experts in analyzing narrative structure. Propp took around 100 folktales and identified them based on the acts of the characters that build plot of the story. As the result of his analysis he generally formulated narrative structure into thirty one functions of *dramatis personae*. Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action (Propp, 1968: 8). Propp explained shortly that character's act can be defined as function. There are chains of functions in a folktale which build a narrative structure.

Propp's functional theory is used to analyze folktale but there is a recommendation that the theory can also be applied in other forms beside folktale. As Scott argues that Propp's analysis should be useful in analyzing the structure

of literary form (such as novels and plays), comic strips, motion picture and television plot, and the like (1968:3). Further, he translated the Vladimir Propp's book into English and he explained that the thirty one functions of Vladimir Propp are not always used to analyze folktale. The theory can also be applied to analyze novels, plays, comic script, motion picture, television plot, and the like.

Propp's functional theory is applied to analyze Riordan's *The Son of Neptune* which is in form of a novel. The novel is taken as the source of data in this study. It is going to make this study unique because Propp's functional theory is applied to analyze a modern novel which this theory is mostly applied to analyze folktale.

There are four studies related with the theory. The studies were performed by Houtman and Latifah Ratnawati (2004), Jay S. Arns (2005), Deana Jones (2005), and Zhang Kai (2008). All of the studies apply Propp's theory in several media, such as folktale, TV program, novel, and the like. While these have been some researches applying Propp's functional theory, none has been applying in Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*. Based on the explanations above this study apply Propp's functional theory because it is never used to analyze Riordan's *The Son of Neptune* before.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the research problem is formulated into how is Propp's functional theory applied in the novel?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the research problem above, the objective of the study is to explain Propp's functional theory that is applied in the novel.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study applies Propp's functional theory in Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*. There are two significances that are expected from this study:

1. Theoretically, this study can enrich the reader's knowledge about Propp's functional theory applied in a literary work especially for Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*.
2. Practically, it is expected to use this study as the reference for the next studies of English Department particularly the study using Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the utterances of the characters and narrations of the narrators in the novel which belong to Propp's functional theory. It consists of his thirty one functions and seven spheres of actions that is used to analyze Rick Riordan's *The Son of Neptune*. Furthermore, this study is limited on characters' utterances and narrators' narrations according to Propp's functional theory that build only the main storyline.