CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

According to Wellek and Warren, myth means stories whose authors are unknown, an anonymous. Myth is originally means to provide education to children about the values of life such as human behavior, image of nature, and the purpose of human life (1956). To explain rules, including the values of life, it will be easier to understand by telling stories. This means that myths grow and develop in society, similar to literary works. Literary works are made by the community and for the community. Literary works are also built by stories, similar to myths. Therefore, authors of literary works who were also born from the community will produce literary works that close to them, with their surrounding conditions. Problems of culture, religion, social system, law and including myths are things that can influence the authors in making their works.

Literary plots, characters, themes, and images are basically complications and displacements of similar elements in myths and folktales. That is the reason why some authors of literary works use myths as the basis for the creation of their works. However, as the assumption of the relationship between reality and literature, the presence of myths in literary works have also transcended the creative process. Edgar Allan Poe with his *The Black Cat* and Simon Hawke with

his *Friday The 13th* are two of many examples of literary authors that uses myth as their element of story. Anthony Doerr is one of them.

Anthony Doerr is an American author who lives in Boise, Idaho, with his wife and two sons. He is the author of the story collections *Memory Wall and The Shell Collector*, the novel *About Grace*, and memoir *Four Seasons in Rome*. He has won numerous prizes both in the United States and overseas. *All The Light We Cannot See* is one of his marvelous works. The novel won the Pulitzer Prize award in one year after publication, 2015. Doerr was declared successfully use the style of writing sort of like 'vision-able' way because of the descriptive language he used in every sentence in the story of the novel that make them so real.

This fiction novel takes place in Europe, in three locations, mainly Germany, Paris, and the walled-city of Saint-Malo in Brittany, from the mid-1930s to the roaring and murderous years of World War II. It focuses on two main characters, one a German soldier-to-be, an orphan named Werner who rises in the ranks because of his talent for electricity and science in general, and radios in particular. The other is a blind French girl named Marie-Laure, whose father is the locksmith in charge of all the keys and vaults at the Museum of Natural History in Paris.

Doerr created two elements of story builders, namely myth and technology. Throughout the story, Werner is told very close to everything that smells with technology. As for Marie-Laure, the blind girl who is interested in all these things depicted in the story has a doubt in her heart to trust the cursed stone, the Sea of

Flames. However, in the novel, Marie-Laure is the person who is very close to this cursed stone, the myth. The depiction of these two distinctly perceived things may be the intention behind the presence that Doerr deliberately created.

By adding myth as one of the story elements, Doerr purposes an attempt to demystify the myth with the present of the contra myth (technology). And for that reason, the writer would like to entitle this research **"Myth versus Technology in Anthony Doerr's _All The Light We Cannot See"._**

1.2 Identification of the Problem

There are several problems that the writer wants to discuss in this research based on the explanation of the research background above. The most interesting thing from this novel is, how Doerr uses myth and technology as the elements in the story. This novel makes us, the readers, wonder whether technology ought to be trusted or it is the myth that destined everything.

Myth and technology are two things that collide with each other. Technology is very identic with the thinking of modern people who always connect everything logically. They believe that every problem can be solved by logic and explanation. However, in society, it can not be denied that myth is still perceived existence. Although it is true that the belief in myths connotes to traditional thinking.

Through this novel, the writer finds out that Doerr gives mythical touch to the story of the novel which is set in War era. The writer considers that Doerr as the author intends to overhaul the existing myth by presenting the superstition and

then also carried out science in the novel. The writer sees this purpose as an attempt to demystify a myth.

1.3 Scope of the Research

In this research, the writer focuses on the myth of Sea of Flames that posed by Doerr in the story. The writer sees an effort or attempt to demystify myth by Doerr as the author by adding technology as one of the story elements in this novel. Hence, the writer analyze how Doerr present the myth and technology as the demystification of the myth in the novel and find out whether the two distinct things opposing or supporting each other. This research is applying objective approach, which means the writer will only focus in understanding the whole text to find the data to analyze.

1.4 Research Questions

To limit this research, the writer will focus on answering the following questions:

1. How does Doerr present myth and technology in *All The Light We Cannot See*?

2. Are the two elements (myth and technology) oppose to each other?

1.5 Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to expose how myth and technology are presented in the novel *All The Light We Cannot See,* which can reveal how the two things oppose or support each other.

1.6 Review of Related Studies

To support this research, the writer reads several related studies that discuss the same object of research with different topic and also different object but has similar topic. The purpose is to compare the topics that the writer takes to deeper understanding. The writer reads four related studies, two articles and two thesis to find a different point of view.

The first related study is a thesis written by Barbora Bilova entitled *The Second World War and Technological Progress in Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See: A Thematic Analysis (2017).* This bachelor's thesis discusses about the themes of war and technological progress and their impact on the main characters Marie-Laure and Werner in the book *All the Light We Cannot See*. The thesis comes to the conclusion that war, together with the impact of technology, has transformed both characters. Although one of them is occupier and another one is occupied, both of them are portrayed as victims of the war. Technology, concretely the radio, serves as a tool of connection, as it connects both characters and leads to their meeting. This thesis has interesting topic to discuss. There are many issues that Doerr delivers in his novel. But the writer sees that technology in

the novel posed generally and basically, so that the readers of the novel can easily guess and have their assumptions about the topic.

The second related study is an article that discuss the same object with the writer but has different topic. The article's titled *Gender Narratives in Anthony Doerr's All The Light We Cannot See: Women in An American War Literature* (2017) is written by Egie Danarko. This research is aimed to prove and explain how female subordination and male domination in Anthony Doerr's *All the Light We Cannot See* are narrated by identifying the novel's gender narratives. The theory of poststructuralist narratology and feminist criticism on gender and war are employed to analyze the problem. This topic that has been discussed by the author of the article is also interesting to be discussed but the writer thinks that the author should has been elaborated his idea more, because there are more evidences in the novel that posed about gender's narrative.

The third related study is also an article by Sarmianti, titled *Pengukuhan Mitos Pada Cerpen Bambang Kariyawan* (2016). This article discusses the same topic about myth and contra myth that posed in literary work. The author of the article takes sampe from two short stories by Bambang Kariyawan, a Riau-malay author. In the two short stories "Numbai" and "Lukah yang Tergantung di Dinding", the myths are also presented by the author and are attempted to be freedom by the new myths. The author of the article also uses the theory of structuralism by Levi Strauss to analyze the research. By applying structural analysis, the intrinsic elements of the myth will be discovered. This article helps the writer to find an example on expanding the idea of this research's topic. But

unfortunately, the author of the article does not give many explanation and elaboration about the use of Levi Strauss' structuralism theory in her research.

The forth related study is a thesis written by UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta's student, Chusnul Chotimah. Her thesis title is *Diskursus Kata dalam Kitab Mahabarata Karya C. Rajagopalachari (Analisis Strukturalisme Levi-Strauss)* (2015). The reason why the writer take this thesis as the review of related study is because the author of the thesis discuss and explain many things about Levi Strauss and his structuralism theory. By reading this thesis, the writer gets many information of how the theory can be apply in literary works. From the thesis, the author takes sample from C. Rajagopalachari's *Kitab Mahabarata*. The author of the thesis uses the analysis of Levi-Strauss' structuralism as her tool to convey the myths that are discuss in the book.

From these readings, the writer finds a different point of view. The writer would like to discuss and analyze the myth and technology that are seen in *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr which the writer assumes is what Doerr would also like to express.

1.7 Theoretical Frameworks

According to Tyson (2006), structuralism is an interdisciplinary movement of thought which became fashionable though the 1960s and early 1970s, but which has left its most durable mark in the fields of linguistics, anthropology and literary theory. What unites structuralist in these different fields is the principle, derived from Ferdinand de Saussure, that cultural forms, belief systems, and 'discourses' of every kind can best be understood by analogy with language, or
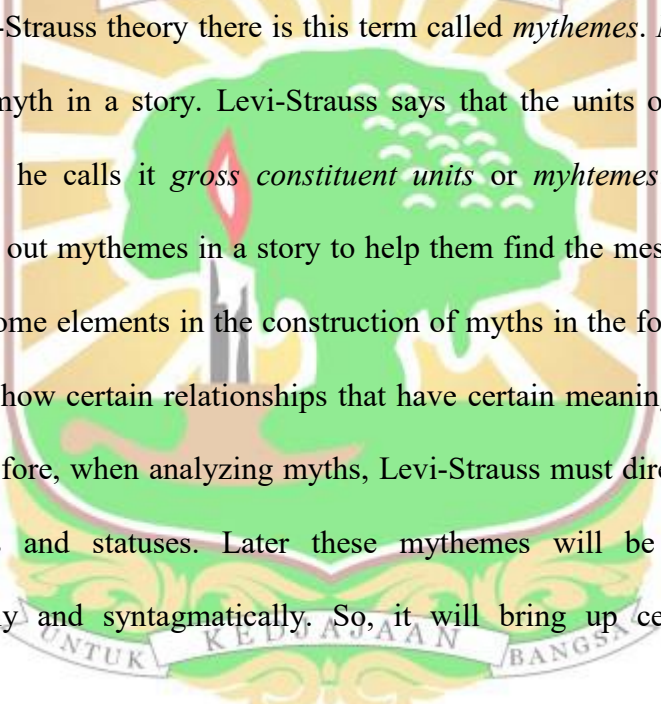
with the properties manifested in language when treated form a strictly synchronic standpoint what sees to analyze its immanent structures of sound and sense.   In other words, Tyson stated "structuralism sees itself as a human science whose effort is to understand , in a systematic way, the fundamental structures that underlie all human experience and, therefore, all human behavior and production" (210).

In conducting this research, the writer uses structuralism theory by Claude Levi-Strauss. The understanding of structuralism theory is taken by the writer from the discussion of the books *Myth and Meaning (1978)* by Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology (1963)* by Levi-Strauss, and *Strukturalisme Levi-Strauss Mitos dan Karya Sastra (2006)* by Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra.

Myths are primarily acknowledged as oral traditions, while literature is in the form of written text. Lévi-Strauss suggests that the structural approach and mental processes dedicated towards analyzing the myth are similar in nature to those in science. This connection between myth and science is further elaborated in his books, *Myth and Meaning (1978)*. He offers that the basis of structuralism is based on a natural understanding of scientific processes, which trying to break down complex phenomena into their component parts and then analyze the relationships between them. The structuralist approach to myth is the exact same method, and as this method can be easily applied to the literature (5-14).

In his book *Structural Anthropology (1963)*, Levi-Strauss divides his argument into three main parts. The meaning is not isolated in specific

fundamental parts of myth, but in the composition of these parts. Although myths and languages have the same category, languages function differently in myths. Finally, language in myths shows more complex functions than other linguistic expressions. From these suggestions, he draws the conclusion that myths can be divided into constituent units, and these units differ from language constituents. Finally, unlike language constituents, mythical constituents, which he labeled "mytheme", function as "bundles of relation" (211).

In Levi-Strauss theory there is this term called *mythemes*. *Mythemes* is the small unit of myth in a story. Levi-Strauss says that the units of myth were in complete rank, he calls it *gross constituent units* or *myhtemes*. The reader is ordered to find out mythemes in a story to help them find the message of a myth. Mythemes become elements in the construction of myths in the form of sentences or words that show certain relationships that have certain meanings in a segment or event. Therefore, when analyzing myths, Levi-Strauss must direct myth first to these relations and statuses. Later these mythemes will be interconnected paradigmatically and syntagmatically. So, it will bring up certain meanings (210-211).

Ahimsa-Putra in his book *Strukturalisme Levi-Strauss Mitos dan Karya Sastra (2006)* states that myth for Lévi-Strauss as well as a fairy tale for us. In it there is a story or a story that was born from the reason and the human imagination, and of the human imagination. However, one thing that appeals to Lévi-Strauss is the fact that if ever a fantasy or human reasoning that got the expression of the most free in the fairy tale, why often found tales that are similar

or somewhat similar to one another, either on some elements, in several parts or in several episodes (77-78).

According to Ahimsa-Putra, Levi-Strauss composes *mythemes* that are found to be segments of fairy tales or events that occur, then form a pattern that turns out to be interconnected. These patterns are formed based on events. The myths that are discovered later shows the relations of the way human thinking works with various variations such as social status, friendship, disputes, dependence, sacred, and so on. These relations are displayed in myths either explicitly or implicitly (76).

After all the *mythemes* or segments are arranged structurally and form patterns, the meanings and intentions of the author will be seen in pouring out his thoughts into a literary work. It can be seen here that myth serves to explain contradictions, new thoughts and even criticism. Furthermore, the *mythemes* will form the same or different relationship. The interpretation of a story will be determined by the relationship between the stories as a whole (94).

Based on the information given above, the writer decides to use Levi Strauss's theory of structuralism to analyze the myth in   the novel *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr and his attempts in the demystifying the meaning of the myth by adding technology as another element of the story.

1.8 Methods of the Research

This research is a qualitative research, which all the findings will be written in a form of words and paragraphs. In conducting this research, three steps are

used. First, collecting the data. Second, analyzing the data. Third, presenting the result.

1. **Collecting the Data**

   There are two kinds of data used in this research, primary data and secondary data. The primary data is taken from the novel *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. The secondary data used to support the primary data which is taken from various literary books, article journal, and internet websites that are related to myth and technology in literature, Levis Strauss's structuralism theory book and Anthony Doerr's work analysis.

2. **Analyzing the Data**

   In analyzing the data, the writer applies some steps. First, the writer reads the novel entitled *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr comprehensively to get a better understanding. Then, the writer rearranges the plot chronologically. The writer identifies myth and technology based on the appearance in the plot of the story. The writer also identifies the meaning of the myth by using the theory of structuralism by Levi-Strauss. The writer first arranges all the segments found into one episode (*mythemes*). After all the *myhtemes* are collected and arranged, the writer groups these segments into story structures that are displayed in the form of table and then produce a scheme. After that, the writer draws conclusion whether myth and technology are opposing or supporting each other.

3. Presenting the Data

The last step is presenting the result of the research. Seeing as this research a qualitative one, the method that is used in presenting the result of the research is descriptive method. As Peter Woods explains in *Successful Writings for Qualitative Researchers* (1999), qualitative method should have a focus on natural setting, an interest in meaning, perspective, and understanding, an emphasis on process, and inductive analysis and also grounded theory (2). Then, this research is presented descriptively by stating the evidence found in the main source.