

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Norse mythology is the main body of myths of North European, from Denmark, Norweign, Iceland and Sweden. This happened in 13th century before Christ spreading in North Europe. The myths are from the archaic people in North Europe who believe in Cosmology, Supernatural, and Magical Creatures which are written in some poem or prose. All of them are summarized in Poetic Edda.

Poetic Edda is the name for an unknown collection of Old Norse anonymous poems. Some of the versions exist, all consisting primarily of text from the Icelandic medieval manuscript known as the Codex Regius. The Codex Regius is arguably the most important extant source on Norse mythology and Germanic heroic legends, and from the early 19th century onwards, it has had a powerful influence on later Scandinavian literatures, not merely by the stories it contains but also by the visionary force and dramatic quality of many of the poems.

In the second stanza of the Poetic Edda poem to the god Odin says that she remembers far back to “early times” being raised by jotnar, recalls nine worlds and “nine wood-ogresses”. When Yggdrasil was a seed (“glorious tree of good measure, under the ground”). In Stanza 19, the volva says:

“An ash I know there stands,  
 Yggdrasil is the name,  
 A tall tree, showered  
 With shining loam  
 From there come the dews  
 That drop in the valleys,  
 It stands forever green over  
 Urdr’s well”

In the urban legend of Scandinavia, that story is still alive in some village or a place which is still believed in Myths. Although some of the European have been modernized from era to era but those mythology inspired them. Most of North European who still believe in those myths are old people. After centuries, those myths starting to inspire the world. People from overseas learn Norse Mythology and also make them into a beautiful poem, story, and even movie. The names in the Norse Mythology are really strange and beautiful, some times it sound scary. People use them to name something in their story which sounds like the same as Edda has described.

One of the famous Norse Mytology is about Cosmology. It is related with Immortal and something which is unseen. In M.L. Kiser’s poem, Cosmology represents life and destruction. Norse Mytholgyhasan Mystical Tree namedYggdrasil. That tree connects nine different worlds. It is the center of the life and if the tree broken the world will end. There are some of the World in its branch, stem and root: Asgard, Vanaheim, Alfheim, Midgar, Jotunheimr, Svaltarheim, Niddhavellir, NiflheimandMuspel. M.L. Kiser depicts the tree using Personification. As the poem said, western culture called something beautiful and caring some kindness like a woman. They believed that woman is a symbol of mother and birth.

The words which show personification appear explicitly in the poem. It also shows directly to the things which are described in the poem. Western people agreed that something they made or they believe which is related to a magnificent or extraordinary called beautiful. The beautiful word related to a female, that is the reason why western people called a car, a ship, and even a tree in “her” or “she” word. The poem tells that the tree has some ability like a human form, especially in the form of woman.

The woman concerns with the motherly. Motherly is a woman nature which has already become the main characteristic of woman. The characteristic of woman here is the similar to the tree of life. In regard with it, the tree of life named Yggdrasil called “she” or “her”. She has the power which is what a woman does. Without her power the world will fall into chaos. Therefore, beside mythology the research will discuss motherly that will be revealed by some personification in the poem.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

From the background above, there are two main interesting problems to be discussed in this study. The problems are as follows:

1. How is Norse Mythology depicted in M.L. Kiser’s “Tree of Life”?
2. How is the personification revealed the humanity in M.L. Kiser’s “Tree of Life”?

### **1.3 Scope of the Problem**

There are so many poetic devices to elaborate this poem and also has so many related with Norse Mythology. The limitation is applied to limit the study. Based on M.L. Kiser poem, the personification about Yggdrasil is explicit within the word “her”. A figure of speech which endows animals, ideas, or inanimate objects with human traits or abilities. Yggdrasil the mystical tree, has ability to keep the creatures under her protection alive. It also has a form of each creature of each world to visit the nine worlds as a disguise. Giving some wisdom and mercy. Yggdrasil has so many poems about the depicted of destruction and war. The Poetic Edda mostly describes about how Yggdrasil destroyed, war of Ragnarok and Odin sacrificing himself upon Yggdrasil. But in M.L. Kiser’s, he depicted the capable of Yggdrasil and how beautiful she is.

### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

Based on the problem stated above, this research aims to answer those two questions as below:

1. To describe Norse Mythology in M.L. Kiser’s “Tree of Life”
2. To find out personification dealing with humanity in “Tree of Life” depicted in M.L. Kiser’s

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

In every poem of Yggdrasil, it always shows how the Ragnarok destroys the Yggdrasil. However, M.L. Kiser shows how Yggdrasil works and gives the humans life, knowledge and shelter. In other words, this study is

to show how beautiful Yggdrasil and not depicted by war or something which is destruct her into ashes. This study of Yggdrasil can be a reference for the other researcher and for the reader, to give more knowledge about the mythology and humanity.