

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature* state that "the natural and sensible starting point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the work of literary themselves" (130). It means that the very beginning consideration to bring a literary work into discussion shall be the content of the work itself. Based on those opinions the writer of this thesis, therefore, in analyzing this thesis, deals with the story of Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, namely its intrinsic elements.

A. Intrinsic Theory

A narrative fiction may have a number of intrinsic elements. However, the writer focuses her attention to plot, character and setting as the basic of her analysis. According to James W. Kirkland and Paul W. Dowel in *Fiction: The Narrative Art*, "plot is an action or a sequence of interrelated actions that the storyteller has selected and arranged in a time sequence" (61). This action is inseparable from conflicts. A good

story shall arise out of some sort of conflict: "a collision of opposing forces in a story" (Cohen 119). As a matter fact, "at the base of the plot there is a conflict" (David 8). Conflict is very important in a story that Cleanth Brooks, John Tibaut Burses and Robert Penn Warren in *An Approach to Literature* define that "there maybe a collision between one character and another, between a character and some elements in the world about him-even the world of physical nature-or between impulses and values within himself. No conflict, no story" (11).

"A story typically begins by explaining the situation at the start and by introducing the characters. Incidents are used to carry the action forward, to share the protagonist and antagonist in action. The conflict grows more and more intense until it reaches the point where something has to be done. The problem has to be settled and the conflict decided. The high point of the struggle is the *climax*. The action before the climax is called *rising action*; after the climax, it is called *falling action*" (David 8). "The resolution is the rounding-off of the action, the conclusion, one way or the other, of the conflict" (Little 85).

In the story of Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, the writer starts her discussion, that is Frederick Douglass' life, ever since his early childhood until his escape from bondage. Yet, the

writer emphasizes her analysis on Douglass' process of gaining self-consciousness, the flow of his inner feelings and emotions through the conflict within himself. This process is potential for the establishment of his self-dignity, that he is motivated to free himself from slavery.

Characters are people in the story. According to Roberts and Jacobs in *Literature, An Introduction to Reading and Writing*, "character is a reasonable facsimile of a human being, with all the good and bad traits of being human" (56). In a story, the plot develops from the characters' desires, weaknesses and strengths. Those qualities can be found through what the author has put down on the page, how he describes the characters, how the characters themselves speak or how other characters speak about the other. In short, a good character is "lifelike" as though "they were real people in our own lives" (Mayhead 63).

Characters in fiction are either "round" or "flat". A flat character, usually a minor one in a novel, is constructed around a single idea or quality. His personality can often be expressed in a single sentence, and he remains a type. A round character is a greater achievement than a flat character. A round character must be himself, an individual, and he must be fitting to his role. He must reflect his environment. The round

character, furthermore, changes. He becomes fuller. He may become wiser, braver, more cowardly, more tolerant or intolerant (Jones Jr. 84).

In Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Frederick Douglass as the main character brought into discussion is concluded as a round character. He changes much from a slave to a free man. He becomes a worthy representative of his tribe, indeed. His mental state develops from humility to a man with dignity. This progress shall be pointed out as the important one since that is the beginning of his life, in fact. A life of human being as a whole.

"Setting designates the place and time of the events of a plot, either in prose or poetry". In literary analysis, setting cannot be left behind because setting "helps create the atmosphere, the mood radiating from a given environment" (Cohen 137). A character may develop because of the influence of his surroundings, the background in which he lives. It may shape a character to changing mood or doing a certain action. The elements making up a setting are: "(1) the actual geographical location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room; (2) the occupations and daily manner of living of the CHARACTERS; (3) the time or period in which the ACTION takes place, for example, epoch in history or season of the year;

(4) the general environment of the characters, for example, religious, mental, moral, social, and emotional conditions through which the people in the NARRATIVE move" (Harmon 465).

In this thesis, the whole element mentioned above each seems to give its contribution to the deep analysis of the story. The symbolical places, the daily living, the period, the social and moral conditions in which the main character lives all have its purposes in shaping him to a reform character. The symbolical places present Douglass' both sadness and happiness as well as what are experienced by other slaves'. The routine torture and whippings, and the abuse of human rights, create Douglass to a tough person, having a strong will to change his fate.

B. Psychological Approach

In term of Douglass' gaining consciousness, the writer of this thesis applies Crow and Crow's approach to conflict which motivates an individual to conduct a certain behaviour. However, human beings, although they retain the physiological need that becomes their motives to behave, their expression still has to undergo some considerable changes as they bring it into thinking. Human society values and moral standards may become some restriction on what an individual can and can not do.

Freudian terminologies of *id*, *ego* and *superego* are then applied to understand the psychological basic or explanations of Douglass' actions.

In *General Psychology*, Lester D. Crow and Alice Crow explain that "conflicts arise out of failure to adjust to people or things in the environment or to choose between two different interests. A conflict is closely associated with mental and emotional disturbances that result from the blocking of individual desires, especially if the individual is unable to shift other interests. Either a thwarting of social ambition or a denial of a personal satisfaction may result in conflict" (181). Meanwhile, "mental conflict sometimes takes the form of combat with reality and is beneficial if it motivates individual behavior toward satisfactory adjustment" (Crow and Crow 181).

In the story, Douglass' disagreement to accept the inhuman treatment given by his masters urges his desire to prepare himself to gain liberty. Freedom becomes his single motivation for his many typical actions, such as educating himself, disobedience and escape from his master, because motivation refers to "the regulating of an individual's behavior as inner needs or drives and environmental incentives" that "stimulate him to satisfy his wants or needs or to strive toward the

attainment of a desired goal" (Crow and Crow 132). Douglass' struggle in the story is meant to achieve his life goal, that is freedom.

B. 1. Freud's Concepts Of Id, Ego and Superego

"The term *id* that Freud used comes from German word "es", which means "it," implying an alien force, something in a person that is not recognized as part of the self" (Bootzin 413). According to Freud, the id is "the oldest of mental provinces," which "contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is fixed in the constitution," including the drives "which originate in the somatic organization" (Munn, 139). So, the id is the very origin biological need that drive an individual to do something. Id becomes the source of "energy" that once this need is aroused, human beings develop "wishes" that motivate and direct behavior. As the important point, the id is made up from "instincts" that they take no account of logic or reason, reality or morality. It is based on "pleasure principle," to satisfy personal desires, regardless of the physical or social limitations as the restrictions (Bootzin 414-415).

"The *ego* comes from the word "Ich," which means "I," the part of the personality recognized and accepted as oneself" (Bootzin 413). The primary job of the ego is to satisfy the id impulse but in doing so, it also considers the realities of the situation. The ego takes for itself part of the

energy of the id and proceeds to serve as the mediator between the id and reality". It is more "conscious" than the id and is often called as "the executive agency of personality, because it controls the individual's actions and manipulates the environment". It is based on "reality principle" that function "of finding realistic means to satisfy the id" (Bootzin 415).

"The *superego* (uberich) means "over the I," refers to the moral component that is imposed on the self by society" (Bootzin 413). The function of the superego is "to prohibit what is morally wrong and to promote what is morally right" (Bootzin 416). It represents the moral principles and society's values that it restricts an individual of what they can and cannot do.

The example of such case in Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* can be found in the episode when Douglass decides to fight for his liberty. It has been years that Douglass realizes the hypocritical justification of slavery. His disagreement to the practice of slavery, the miserable torture and humiliation of being a slave has developed his "wishes" to be a free man. His id cries for freedom, to live freely as other man, to educate himself, to be free to express his mind and other basic rights as a man. This "wishes" motivate him to search for the

satisfaction of his needs. When he wants to educate himself, he asks for the help of some white boys in the neighborhood. He also uses Master Thomas' copy-books to teach himself to write. Of why Douglass does those acts secretly, it is because he is aware that such acts are considered unlawful at that time when are done by a slave, and that death shall be the consequence. His superego teaches him that those acts are "dangerous" and that he shall be careful in preparing everything to achieve his goal.

C. Sociological Approach

Conflict in sociological definition is "a form of interaction in which people (individually or in groups) perceive themselves as being involved in a struggle over resources or social values" (Zanden 314). People in conflict see themselves at disapproval of the values in which they live, see the other as enemy or at least as the opponent to their ideas, and sometimes their action is antagonistic, or, is considered as deviance.

In the story, Douglass' struggle over his enslavement represents also the struggle of the other fellow slaves. Although when he is a slave principally he struggles alone, when he becomes a free person, he struggles for his brothers of all Blacks. He becomes an abolitionist.

Douglass' movement, in that case, in sociology can be included as "class struggle," the term in which Karl Marx defined as "the conflict rising out of the contradictory interests of different economic classes in society" (Babbie 35).

In Marx's view, the conflict usually appears "between the exploiters (the owners of the means of production), whom he referred to as the *proletariat*, and the exploited (the workers), whom he called the *bourgeoisie*" (Schaefer 14). The conflict occurs because "those who owned the factories exploited those who did the work. Given that situation, then, Marx saw social life as a process whereby the workers attempted to gain power and money from the owners while the owners, for their part, did whatever they could to retain what they had and get more" (Babbie 35). The oppressive condition because of human exploitation would create poverty to the workers' life and as the result, they would struggle to rise out of it, while the owners would fight to keep them down.

This theory of Marx basically appears to observe the early social consequences of the Industrial Revolution, yet this view inspires the basis for the contemporary sociological perspective of conflict theory, not merely as a class phenomenon, but also a part of everyday life in all societies. This conflict theory also concerns with "the conflicts between

women and men, parents and children, the cities and the suburbs; and whites and blacks” (Schaefer 18). Thus, by understanding this theory of class struggle, the writer of this thesis wants to show that basically the conflict between Frederick Douglass in the story is the conflict between black and white, between the master and his slave. The masters tend to exploit his slaves, including Douglass, while Douglass, given such treatment, finally decides to struggle, first for himself and then for all the Blacks.

D. Related Studies of Other Works *About Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Frederick Douglass is one of American Negro abolitionists and reformers. He is born a slave, and after his escape, he starts his career as an abolitionist. First, he relates his slave experiences at an abolitionist meeting in Nantucket, and then, despite many indignities, he lectures throughout the East for ant slavery groups.

Because Douglass was well-known as a lecturer, his publication of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* has invited many debates and discussions. One of those is about the truth whether he is really a slave, but mostly is about the book itself. Some critics and

essayists has made some commentaries, interpretations or comparisons of the book with Douglass' other narratives. Still, the writer of this thesis finds it interesting to analyze the story and to make a plain interpretation of Douglass' gaining self-consciousness to escape from slavery.

Robert B. Stepto in *Black Literature and Literary Theory* tries to explain by his method of comparing the story with Douglass' *The Heroic Slave*. His discussion is that "since both leading the facts connected with (his) experience in slavery, giving names of persons, places and dates, Stepto explains that the book basically is Douglass' response to the taunting cries that he has never been a slave "-thus putting it in the power of any who doubted, to ascertain the truth or falsehood of (his) story of being a fugitive slave" (177).

The more intense insight into the story is the commentary of Lea Baechler and A. Walton Litz in *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*. They view that the story of Frederick Douglass is "at once a personal tale of suffering and human endurance and the story of America's evolution toward social and racial equality through the turbulent years before the Civil War when the democratic experiment is being watched closely by critics not only in United States but also in

Europe. The autobiography also stands as the representative nineteenth-century slave narrative, which accounts of the lives of victims, tales of unendurable torment that alert the reader to a counterculture present in America" (155).

CHAPTER III

THE INTRINSIC ANALYSIS OF THE STORY