

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Many writers use idiots in their novel to convey their thoughts. Most of their idiot character employ the device of double-entendre, permitting them to let the fool makes a fool on himself and at the same time allows the reader the revelation of the greater meaning of the foolishness. Occasionally, a great writer like Shakespeare let his jester makes a fool on his principal characters: thereby he is providing a twist for the readers' enlightenment, (Forrest Gump 100-101). Forrest Gump was written based on the same term in a different content. He is the object of mockery, but he also makes a fool on other characters. His idiocy arouses the readers to find the significant meaning behind his actions. This novel is worthwhile to be examined because it is not only a heart-warming story about a mentally retarded man. It is more of a meditation at this times as seen trough the eyes of a man who lacks cynicism and takes things for exactly what they are.

Lao Ma, a Chinese philosopher stated that a person's ability to beat himself is his truly strength to face the world. Normal persons often have difficulties in implementing Lao Ma's theory. The author, Winston Groom in this novel presents a mentally retarded man who is able to control his passion, hatred and desires. He does

not care for material comfort that is why he gives his company's shares to his mother and his friends. He also pays those who have hurt him with love and a warm friendship. Forrest Gump has achieved the true strength that is hard to reach even for a normal people.

Forrest Gump is a mentally retarded man with an IQ of seventy who is involved in every major events of the United States' history. Even though he is retarded, he has some magnificent talents, especially in mathematics, physics, and music. Winston Groom, the author conveys that Forrest Gump can be included as an idiot savant, an enigmatic syndrome. He is an extraordinary idiot.

He gets a college football scholarship from Alabama University. Soon after this university drafts him and makes him a star, Forrest is called to join the army in the war against the Vietnamese. The army needs a great number of young people to fight in the battle. That is why an idiot like Forrest Gump is also called to fulfil the military obligation. Then, he becomes a Vietnam-war hero and is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In the next occasion, he turns out to be a ping-pong champion, a wrestler and a business tycoon. He gets a chance to meet President Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. An ordinary idiot will never experience those things.

The world will never be the same once you have seen it through the eyes of Forrest Gump. As an idiot, Forrest looks at the world in a fresh way. He lives in the middle of people whose minds are full of cynicism. Forrest Gump is normal except for having an IQ lower than most people. The difference is that Forrest acts with his

heart, without considering other hidden purposes. He only wants to do the right thing, but what is right for him does not always suit others. Most people consider the way he thinks foolish. However, his tender heart makes him more normal than normal people themselves.

## **1.2.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study of Forrest Gump can be formulated as the following:

1. How do most people think of Forrest Gump?
2. How does Forrest Gump view the world surrounding him?
3. What does he learn about the world?

## **1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This writing is to find out three important points, which are:

1. To learn about what people think of Forrest Gump.
2. To understand how Forrest Gump View the world.
3. To learn about the things he obtains from his experiences.

#### **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM**

This writing will describe the world in *Forrest Gump* completely; the world which belongs to the cynical society that emerged in the sixties. It also explains the differences between Gump and his society; between an innocent man and a cynical society. Therefore, it is expected that we have some understanding regarding the creating of the novel.

Hopefully, this writing will give a contribution to the American Studies; since this work has developed a better understanding of American Literature.

#### **1.5. SCOPE OF LIMITATION**

In this writing, the writer will only convey the world around *Forrest Gump*. The world here is concerned with all human affairs and activities that are faced by the central character in his life.

#### **1.6. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Literary works are the result of authors' imagination and their reflection towards social condition surrounding them. Therefore, literary works are considered as a part of the society's life. The author of the novel as an individual subject tends to convey his world vision for his collective subject. The elaboration of an individual subject toward his or her social reality shows that a literary work is based on a specific culture and society. Literary work is a social means, which reflects the

author's vision du monde. World vision is not a direct empirical fact, but an idea, aspiration and feeling that unite the society's social group.

In *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra* Goldman through A Teeuw says that structuralism analysis is a priority task for investigating a literary work, before moving to the next step (1983; 61). Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the structure of the novel before discussing the other aspects, which builds the novel. In this case, the writer selects Genetic Structuralism as a means to understand the genetic of this novel. By using this theory, the writer is able to explain the world in *Forrest Gump* completely, and further more the society's role in *Forrest Gump* that will be examined closely. These explanations are useful to know the difference between him and his society.

Analysis on *Forrest Gump* is also involving Emotion Quotient's measurement. Dr. Daniel Goleman the inventor of Emotional intelligence said that IQ shares only 20% of the success' factors; the rest of 80% comes from Emotional Intelligence and other factors, (Goleman through Patton 1997:2). Emotional Intelligence is the power behind the intellectual ability; it is a basic for a person's emotional development. It covers a person's ability to control his passion, to be optimistic in every condition, to control his emotion in a positive way, to handle his own weakness, to show empathy for others, to build a self consciousness and a self understanding.

## 1.7. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The method used in analysing Forrester Gump is qualitative method, which points out to a wider comprehension of meaning. Data and sources are taken from several books and Internet. To analyze the text, the writer tries to implement genetic structuralism in order to describe Forrester Gump's world completely.

## 1.8. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

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|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. The world         | : | Human affairs, active life  |
| 2. Cynic             | : | Person who believes that people do not do things for good, sincere or noble reason.   |
| 3. Mentally Retarded | : | A general level of intellectual functioning that is significantly below the average.  |
| 4. Idiot             | : | Person with very limited intelligence who cannot think or behave normally.  |
| 6. Idiot Savant      | : | A mentally retarded person with highly surprising ability in a narrow intellectual sphere – for example, performing certain types of mathematical calculations. |

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

