

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **“FORREST GUMP”**

#### **AS SEEN THROUGH GENETIC STRUCTURALISM**

The analysis will start by identifying certain structures within the text. It begins from character, plot, and setting. The second step is to relate them from concrete historical and social conditions, to a social group and social class associated with the writer and to the world vision of that class. The emphasis throughout is on the text itself as a whole and on history as a process. The world vision is used as a working model to comprehend the structure coherence. Therefore, the next step is returning to the text seeking to explain the whole; it means the structure, by reference to the working model. This dialectical method is a continual oscillation between text, social structure and the model (Jefferson, 1986: 25).

#### **4.1. INTERNAL ASPECTS**

##### **4.1.1. Character**

Forrest Gump is an Alabama mentally retarded man who contributes in most of United States important events during 1950s and 1980s. Most people consider him idiot and strange. They often make fun of him. Actually, he is not an idiot or a strange boy, but he is someone special.

Forrest is an extraordinary person who has some magnificent talents. He is able to run very fast to avoid the firing machine guns when he was in Vietnam. He plays

ping-pong very well even though he learned it in a very short time. He is also able to catch the tone of songs. He is able to solve the most difficult problems in physics. Gump acts and looks normal. He displays no overt or obvious signs or retardation which enables him to take care of himself adequately. Even though his reading skill is poor, Gump can travel around familiar locales with ease. However, as an adult, Gump still thinks like a child. Therefore, he has an innocent mind and always says things exactly as what they are. Forrest Gump will only do the thing what is told.

The author conveys that Gump is classified as savant idiot. Most scientists thought that savant syndrome is associated with retardation or autism. The source of savant abilities may be purely biological; that is, one area of the brain may be rendered abnormally efficient by the same structural change that rendered the rest of the brain abnormally inefficient. Whatever the source is, savant phenomenon is still enigmatic. As for Forrest Gump, his mind is in the level of a sixth grade student, but his body is adonis.

“A person who cannot tie a necktie, who can barely lace up his shoes, who has the mental capacity of perhaps a six- to ten year old and in this case, the body of, well, adonis. .... But in the mind... the mind of the idiot savant has rare pockets of brilliance, so that Forrest here can solve advanced mathematical equations that would stump any of you, and he can pick up complex musical themes with the ease of Liszt or Beethoven.”  
(Forrest Gump 36).

Having an IQ of 70, Gump needs help from other people, especially, his mother. He follows his mother's instructions word by word how to do the right things throughout his life. Other persons who have important role in Gump's life are Jenny and Dan. Jenny is his forever love whom he met since childhood. Dan helps him to understand happening on his life which is hard to comprehend, such as, the war. Dan convinces him that he is absolutely not an idiot, therefore, Gump should find his place in the world. When he has already found it, he should maintain his existence in his chosen path.

“... I sense Forrest, that you are on the verge of something very significant in your life, some change, or event that will move you in a different direction, and you must seize the moments, and not let it pass... I believe what I saw was almost a genesis of our ability as humans to think, to create, to be... take the tide my friend, and as you are carried along, make it work for you, fight the shallows and the snags and never give in, never give up.” (Forrest Gump 75)

With his childlike brain, Forrest Gump is able to face the world with his talents, his mother and his friends' guidance. Having a child-like mind, Gump considers the world is fine. Therefore, he does not understand the war, the political games and other cynical attitudes which happen throughout his life. The world and the people often cause him sufferings, but Gump treats them nicely. He

accepts everything that happen to him open-heartedly without any intentions to make revenge.

Throughout his life, Gump always tries to do the right thing. However, what is right in his mind is sometimes not suitable for others. Gump is considered stupid by his supervisor for saving the China's leader Mao Zedong from drowning. Mr. Wilkins, his supervisor, prefers the chief dead to live since it is more advantegous for the sake of United States policy. Infact, Gump's stupidity turns out advantegous for his nation since the Chinese envoy are willing to discuss the possibility of re-opening their foreign relations.

In Forrest's mind, "life is like a box of chocolates"; you will never know what you are going to get. He never gives up when facing the hardest time in his life. Sometimes he can not reach his dreams, but he keeps on being optimistic. Either good or bad, he considers life as wonderful. We are not supposed to surrender if we do not know what lies ahead.

"Let me say this: bein a idiot is no box of chocolates. People laugh, lose patience, treat you shabby... even so I got no complaints, cause I reckon I done live a pretty interesting life, so to speak." (Forrest Gump, 1)

People might call him idiot, but he has a superior heart. As absurd, arbitrary and cruel as it sometimes is, Gump's world is still rather a good place to be: not without its share of heartaches and catastrophes (both personal and national), but full of joy and humor.

#### 4.1.2. Plot

Gump's mother is a boardinghouse owner who lives in Mobile, Alabama. He is raised under the care and protection of his beloved mother which causes his dependencies on her. He enters a mental institution after being rejected from the elementary school. For him, a mental institution is just a place to keep people like him from hanging around in the street and annoying others.

Gump joins the local highschool football team and is awarded The All State football player of the year. He receives this reward because he explores his talents on running at superhuman speeds. His success is a passport to enter Alabama University which grants him a scholarship. When he was studying in this university, he happened to meet Bubba, his best friend to whom he honors a promise to build a shrimp business. Forrest also falls in love with Jenny, his childhood friend whom he meets again at the university. However, he is very disappointed when he knows that Jenny is in love with a banjo player.

The university refuses to give scholarship for the next semester since he is considered very poor in his studies. Gump is called to fulfil the military obligation in the battle against Vietnam. He never knows what the war is because he used to have an easy and calm life at Alabama. It shocks him and makes him depressed especially when he has to lose his friend, Bubba. He does not like the war which he calls "a bunch of shit". However, President Lyndon Johnson gives him The Congressional Medal of Honor as a Vietnam-War hero.

Life takes him to meet Dan at Danang hospital. It is Dan who helps Gump to understand the reality of the world. For Gump, Dan is not like any simple-

minded lieutenant he ever knows. He has his own philosophy about life and about their existence in Vietnam that is perhaps doing the wrong thing for the right reason. Talking to Dan is the great impression in Forrest Gump's life.

“I think that sitting there talking to Dan was a thing that had a great impression on my life. I know that bein a idiot an all, I ain't sposed to have no philosophy of my own, but may be it's just because nobody never took the time to talk to me bout it. It were Dan's philosophy that everything that happens to us, or for that matter, to anything anywhere is controlled by natural laws that govern the universe. His views on the subject was extremely complicated, but the gist of what he say began to change my whole out look on things.” (Forrest gump 68)

Dan's explanations make the world becomes clearer for Gump, although he can not digest all the words like normal people.

Since he is given The Congressional Medal of Honor, he has to promote the army in order to attract more youth to join The United States Army. He is asked to give speech in front of college students from various universities, but he can not say much. Gump has difficulties on memorizing the speech, therefore the sentences are shortened into a slogan, “Join the army and fight for your freedom”, (Forrest Gump 82). On the other hand, Gump conveys his disagreement of the war when those students ask him.

From Washington, Gump goes to China on the ping-pong tournament. The United States government and the Red China are looking for possibilities to re-

open their diplomatic pouch after twenty-five year of closing. So, Gump's participation on the tournament has a diplomatic mission. He realizes that he is representing the whole human race now.

“... It is diplomacy, and the future of the human race might be at stake.... I am just a po ole idiot, an now i have got the whole human race to look after.” (Forrest Gump 86)

The government of China has agreed to re-open their foreign relationship with the United States since Gump managed to save Chairman Mao from drowning in the river. The Chairman wanted to swim in the river and all the guests are invited to watch him. Gump saw the Chairman waved his hands as a sign for help and he jumped into the water to help him. The people of China are very grateful to him so that they welcome him as a hero. Gump's action is considered stupid by Mr. Wilkins, his supervisor; however, his stupidity has opened a wider opportunity for China and United States relationship

He looks for Jenny as soon as he gets back to the United States again. Jenny, Gump's forever love is playing for a band called The Cracked Eggs at that time. When they meet each other, Jenny takes him to play with the band and lives together for several months. The world becomes a lot more wonderful for Gump until he is addicted to heroin. Jenny finds him making love to other woman, so she leaves him.

Forrest finds Jenny again in Washington, marching in a big demonstration against the war in Vietnam. In order to win her heart, he is willing to throw away his medals in front of the White House. The medal lands on the head of the clerk

of the United States senate. For this, he is sent to St. Elisabeth mental hospital for thirty days of psychiatric observation.

The mental hospital shows that Forrest Gump has a magnificent talent on physics. For his brilliance, he is forced by the Army to join the NASA outer space mission. The nasty thing is, he goes up accompanied by a wild male "orangutan" and an annoying woman major from the army. NASA is supposed to put a trained female orangutan in the mission, but they put a wild male orangutan. Because of this small mistake, the spaceship blows apart and they get lost in a remote island in the South Pacific. They have to wait for two years in the middle of the jungle until the army rescues them.

After resigning from the army, Gump starts to look for Jenny again. Gump finds his love, Jenny in Indianapolis working at a rubber factory. Jenny wants him to open a shrimp business as soon as possible, but Gump enjoys his new profession as a professional wrestler. Jenny gets tired of always running away, so she wants to settle and has a family of her own. Since Gump can not fulfil her desire, she decided to leave him. Forrest Gump realizes his mistakes and decides to go to Bayou La Batre immediately after Jenny's escape.

Accompanied by Sue, the orangutan, Gump starts the business. The shrimp business is one of the most profitable businesses in the South at that time. Moreover, Gump had learned to breed shrimps from Mr. Chi, when he was in Vietnam. Since he is a hard worker, no wonder his business grows bigger and bigger. His prosperity makes him a business tycoon. Even though he has become a wealthy man; Gump never forgets his mother and his friends. He contacts them



and offers them positions in his company based on their capabilities. Some of his friends have caused him pain, but he forgives them all. Therefore, his friends are very grateful for his kindness and are willing to work hard. He asks Mr. Tribble to be his right hand because he knows how to invest his money. With Gump's permission, Mr. Tribble runs the everyday business in the company. Following his success, people from his region encourages him to join the senator election. He loses because the media issued reports on his strange experience in the past

Deep in his heart Gump feels unhappy for all his achievement because that is not the kind of life he ever wants. He only wants to have a simple life with Jenny besides him. Wealth, fame, and status in the society are not the important things in Forrest Gump's life so that he decides to leave them behind. He gives his shares and asks his friends to manage the company while he continues his life by travelling from town to town.

One day, he finally meets Jenny in Savannah. She tells him that she is married to someone else. The most surprising fact is Jenny tells him that he has a little boy name Forrest. However, the reality shows that they can not live together, so he receives all the realities open -heartedly. It would be better for Jenny and the child to settle in one place so that Little Forrest will not have an idiot father like him. He spends his life in New Orleans together with Dan and his friends. Gump realizes his idiocy, but most of the times, he tries to do the right thing. It does not matter whether he can reach his dreams or not; at least his life is not a boring one.

### 4.1.3. Setting

Forrest Gump life begins in a nice and calm Mobile, Alabama where he finds comfort under his mother's protection. This makes him depend on his mother so that he does not know how to defend himself from others. He does not know how to deal with the world. Mental institution is the first rejection he receives from his society. Even so, he is chosen to play in a highschool football team and is given The All State football player. Gump's interaction with football is his first experience in facing the world because he is learning to defend himself from other people who try to hurt him. He gets a scholarship from Alabama University for playing football under Coach Bryant. Alabama University is well known for being the football champion at that time. Gump enters the university in August, the hottest month of the year. All the players would not dare to mess up with the coach since they do not want to be punished in such a hot day. During his time there, he stays at "The ape dorm" that looks nice from the outside, but full of dirt and shit inside. It reflects the kind of persons who live in it; most of them are rude and dummy.

After being rejected from the university, Gump is obliged to join the army. He is trained at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he finds "nobody smarter" than him. From there, he is assigned to go to Vietnam and gets there on February. They were trucked from Qui Nhon on the South China Sea coast up to Pleiku in the highlands. The scenery is so beautiful until it is as if there is no war at all. Not long after that, Gump finally knows the meaning of war because the enemy attacks their headquarters. He sees so many people died miserably and he does not

like it. The most embitter experience is that he has to lose his best friend, Bubba, in the war.

Gump goes to China to play ping-pong on the international tournament. China and The United States are looking for an opportunity to open their diplomatic relation after twenty-five years of closing. The United States believes that China might implant its influence over Asia; therefore, they used many ways to make this country lose its power. Gump does not understand this political matter that is why he wants to save Chairman Mao from drowning. Gump only wants to do the right thing because in his eyes, Chairman Mao is a human being who needs help.

The United States's foreign policy concerning the Vietnam War made a big demonstration held in front of the United States Capitol. In order to win Jenny's heart, Gump is willing to take off his medals that are followed by other veterans. He does not agree to the war, but it is hard for him to take off the medal. His action causes him to be put in the mental hospital for thirty days.

NASA, a well known place where scientist work for science has made a simple mistake which caused the spaceship to blow apart. They are not supposed to send a wild male orangutan to an outer space mission. Even an idiot like Gump knows that the ape would bring a mess. This experience is criticizing people for their intelligence and arrogance.

“... It ain't Sue – it is a male ape, an he don't look none to glad to be here. He might even be violent... It took awile for the

message to get there an a reply to get back to us, but some feller down there say," awe pooh! One ape is jus like any other."

... an after a minute or two a voice came cracklin over the radio say,"look, you is ordered not to tell anybody about this, or we will all be made laughing stocks. As far as you or anybody else is concerned, that ape is Sue – no matter what it's got between its legs." (Forrest Gump 124)

Gump encounters the wrestling world, even though Jenny does not like it. She does not want to see Gump to be humiliated by his promotor by exploiting Gump's talents. Gump realizes his mistakes after Jenny is gone. Therefore, he makes a decision to start the shrimp business immediately, which proves to be correct. He enjoys every moment of his life and it makes him believe that he belongs to some place. Soon after that he becomes a business tycoon.

He is appointed as a candidate Senator of the United States following his success. Unfortunately, the media investigate his past experience and it causes his failure. Forrest Gump never enjoys his life as a famous and rich person because he is not used to have such kind of life before. He likes to travel and meets many people. He only wants to have a simple life as an ordinary people and doing things like most people do. Therefore, he leaves all his possession and chooses to wonder around with his friends.

## 4.2. EXTERNAL COHERENCE

### 4.2.1. Socio-culture

The discussion of American Socio-culture in Forrest Gump's story involves the explanation on the politics, culture, economics and values system. The coherence of those fields will give a large contribution on knowing the background of the novel's creation.

Americans according to Greenberg are immersed in liberal culture in a set of ideas, values and assumption that seems natural, inevitable and based on the common sense. Liberal culture is the milieu, the growth medium within which all Americans find them. It determines how Americans think about themselves, about other persons and about society around them.

At the heart of Americans, liberal culture is a belief that human nature is selfish, individualistic and competitive (Greenberg 1983:30). The brilliant French observer of the early Republic, Alexis de Tocqueville, through Greenberg's *The American Political System* described Americans in the following terms: They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing to any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands". They believe that people are meant to stand on their own two feet, that other people owe them nothing, nor do they in turn. It is clearly shown in the archetypical American hero; they are always a loner, whether in the traditional myth or in today stories (Greenberg 1983:30)

Forrest Gump is also a loner character, because he wanders alone in the world. Even though he is retarded, he is able to stand on his own feet. With the

help of Dan, Gump learns that he should find his own destiny. Dan encourages him to find his place in the world and never gives up for any obstacle in his life. Forrest Gump is different from other American characters because he is not selfish or competitive. With his pure and kind heart Gump is always ready to help others. He never thinks of himself since his life is emphasized on friendliness and goodness. He never pays revenge for those who have hurt him. He was humiliated by his wrestling promotor, was called idiot by Professor Quackenbush, the English teacher from Havard University; threatened by Curtis, his football friend in Alabama University. However, Gump returns all their treatment with kindness by giving them positions in his company.

Not All-American values will be discussed in this writing, since the writer will only choose those which are closely related to this novel. The writer shall begin with the achievement and success. American culture is marked by a central stress upon personal achievement. A society in which ascribed status in the form of heredity social stratification has been minimized. Therefore, the value attached to achievement does not comprehend the person as a whole but only his accomplishments. It is emphasizing the objective results of his activity.

Society often underestimates Gump for being an idiot who can not work and produce. They think that Gump can not achieve anything in his life. They know that Gump has many special abilities, but they argue whether he is able to explore his talents. Making decision in his life is the hardest thing to do for Forrest Gump. We know that his weakness is caused by his lower IQ that is why he needs other people's help to make a decision.

Gump starts to open a shrimp business after Jenny leaves him. He is too busy becoming a wrestler so that he does not care for Jenny's wishes. The good thing is he learns from his mistakes. He starts his business and for the first time in his life he is doing the right thing. He is very successful and is able to help his friends by giving them positions in his company. Gump has made the best decision which can be put as achievement also. His decision has made him a successful person. Giving shares and positions in the company for his buddies are also a kind of achievement since he is able to defeat those who hurt him with love.

In The United States the success pattern is still linked to achievement. Achievement is linked to work and work is invested with an almost organic complex of ethical values.

“Everyday for nearly two weeks Sue and me harested srimp an brought em in to the packin house. When it was finally over, we had made a total of nine thousand, seven hundrit dollars an twenty-six cents. The srimp bidness was a success.”

(Forrest Gump 227)

Success is a derivative reward for active, instrumental performance. Dixon Wexter through *American Society* suggested that American heroes must be successful within a certain ethical framework : they must be or appear to be “self-respecting, decent, honorable, with a sense of fair-play no neither Machiavelian nor Mussolini need to apply” (Williams 1970: 60). Forrest Gump's success is the result of his hard work not with cheating others.

The American logic is be intelligently good and you will be successful. The assumption that men were created equal, within an equal ability to make an effort and win an earthly reward, is maintained everyday by their folklore and daydreams. They consume that work brings its own rewards and failure is the fault of himself. The saction of failure in this case, is not guilt, but shame. Dan no longer holds his philosophy of life. He experiences failure and feels ashamed of it. Since he can not face shame any longer, he turns to drink and always thinks of death. On the other hand, Gump is a good and successful person, but he lacks of intelligence. This novel merely explores Gump's superior heart. It is as if brain is not the main condition to gain success.

“He took to drinkin an lost his job an jus didn’t do nothin for awile... “I dunno, Forrest,” he say,” I guess I’m jus waitin to die or somethin” (Forrest Gump 159)

American society has traditionally been an open-class society, in which individuals could advance according to their merit. Strictly defined, equal opportunity means that all significant differences were equalized at the start. Each individual would have identically the same chance as every other to advance in the social scale. Even though in reality this doctrine does not go far, but the society still hopes to get ahead. It is true that the son of a doctor and the son of a truck driver, given the same biological capacity, do not have an equal opportunity to become distinguish scientists. This does not mean that the ideal of equal opportunity has no effect in our society. As long as there is some opportunity to advance, as long as the ideal is practiced to some extent, every person can hope to



get ahead. Equal opportunity would be meaningless without material inequalities, because there would be nothing to strive for. This novel still holds this value, as Gump does not belong to upper society with particular social status. However, Gump finally reaches fame and wealth that are longed and dreamed for most Americans. Gump also has the same equal chance even though society considers him idiot.

The other value is individuality which in American point of view means that each individual has the right, whatever possible and within his own framework to enjoy a fairly wide range of choices. Ethically, the individualistic ideal is expressed in terms of the "inalienable rights" of the individual, the desirability of self expression, the integrity of the self, (Kingsley, Davis. *Modern American Society*, 1951: 700). The individual has a value of his own, and therefore can be entitled to uniqueness. It is carried into the family system that is each must live his own life: into economics, private property and individual initiative; and into government that is individual liberty.

Closely related to the image of individual standing alone is the common belief that people are naturally competitive, they are always striving to better themselves in relation to others. Many philosophers have contributed to this theory of human nature, one of them was Thomas Hobbes. He conveys through Greenberg's *The American Political System* (1983: 47) that man is aggressive, competitive, ever striving being, moved by the compulsion to fill his unlimited appetite, engage in an ongoing war of all against all.

Gump does not know what competition means since he only possesses the ability to prevent himself from danger. For Forrest Gump, the world is fine and wonderful, therefore he never tries to compete others in the matter of material comfort. He is not the kind of person mentioned in the Hobbesian world who has unlimited appetite and engaged in an ongoing war against all. He is quite comfortable with his life as long as he does not have to hurt others. He let go of his company because living as a business tycoon is not what he wants to achieve. He would rather have a simple and unhurried life of the ordinary people.

In liberal culture, a society that stresses aggressive, individualistic competition is likely to be deficient in fellowship and community. Philip Slater through *The American Political System: A Radical Approach*, argues that liberal society is essentially a frantic place, a Hobbesian world where the success of one race is challenged almost immediately by the next race, and where the natural human longing for fellowship is frustrated by the need to prevail over one's competitor (Greenberg 45). This does not happen to Forrest Gump because he is taught to be kind to others that is why he never abandons his friends. He takes care of his friendliness above his individual needs. Therefore, he never feels alienated like everybody else who are addicted to work and never pays attention to his or her surroundings.

The American meaning of individualism, in brief, is that the individual should be successful in competition with other individuals under quite rigid rules of the game (including the ethical judgment that everyone should start with equal opportunity), and in certain materialistic or secular directions, an individual must

compete for success. If he success, he is virtuous; if he is not virtuous, he will not succeed; if he fails, the fault is his own.

The last value is moral orientation. Americans tends to see the world in moral terms. They do not mean mere conformity to the detailed prescriptions of a particular moral code, but rather to a systematic moral orientation, by which conduct is judged. It is asserted that typical American thinks in terms of right or wrong, good or bad, ethical or unethical.

Since he was a child, Gump's mother stressed him to do the right thing throughout his life. With his talents and kindhearted heart, Gump is able to judge the right and the wrong, even though he often makes mistakes. The best achievement that is found in Forrest Gump is his love and forgiveness to others. Most people in his society can not find peace in their heart because they do not want to forgive those who hurt them. Hatred will not cure the heartache and Gump knows that. In the world full of cynicism, he appears to be the most superior person since he possesses a superior heart. This fact makes him different from others in his society. Most people find their strength from their cleverness and power, but Gump finds his strength from his fresh minds and beautiful heart. His existence in this world is able to open our eyes for humanity, optimism and love for others. He is willing to sacrifice for the happiness of Jenny and Little Forrest, his son; Gump also encourages Dan not to give up in facing his life.

“... What good am I? I'm a goddamn legless freak. A bum. A drunkard. A thirty-five year-old vagrant.”

“it could be worse,” I says.” (Forrest gump 160-161)

To obtain success and fame are the dream of most Americans. They will do anything in order to get the highest ranks in the society. Most of them improve themselves with particular skills to win the competition. Getting lost is something that will make them down to frustration. Success is still counted in a matter of how much money the person could get. Wealth and fame are the measurement for success. Gump's story can be associated with Horatio Algers's concept of American dream, that is in order to be successful one must work hard, honest, decent and kind (Williams 1970:60). Gump's success is not in the material side, but more in the peaceful personality. What he actually wants is not fame or wealth, he just wants to be together with the people he loved. Gump does not enjoy his success as a business tycoon because he can not find Jenny. Moreover, he prefers to have a simple and normal life of ordinary people to a public figure's life.

“... It ain't haf as much fun as the time I played against them Nebraska corn shucker jackoffs in the Orange Bowl, or took a ride on my harmonica up at Boston with The Cracked Eggs or, for that matter, watched The Beverly Hillbillies with ole president Johnson. ... An I spose Jenny Curran has something to do with it, too, but since ain't nobody can do nothin bout that, I might as well forget it.”

(Forrest Gump 238)

Gump lives in the industrial capitalism society which stresses upon profit gaining. In this kind of society, men are forced to produce. Human are one of the production tools, therefore, if he or she can not produce something the society will dump him or her. This happens to Dan, Gump's best friend. He is neglected since he is a crippled and considered useless by the society.

Humans are pursued to work and to be active in order to fulfil the American standard of living. They are addicted to work until they do not have time for social relations among individuals. In this case, humans only interact with their institution. A deeper individual or personal relationship is hard to find. It is because the capitalist society emphasizes on individualism that makes people depend on themselves. Since they are asked to be active and to produce, they do not have enough time to build a nice and warm friendship. Their lives are always in a hurry in which people become alienated. They believe that the relation among human beings exists only in a matter of profit; therefore, they socialize themselves in order to gain profits. Persons with profit-oriented minded in the Forrest Gump's life is Mike, his wrestling promotor. He asked Forrest to lose against somebody by the name of The Professor so that he could get a lot of money. He did not care whether Forrest Gump was injured or humiliated.

Americans still believe on the dream, especially concerning success. They believe that success will not come by itself, it should be reached through hard work and having the right skills. For the achievement means the ability to consume their money for their daily needs and acquiring luxurious things. This phenomena causes strong emphasis on materialism in American life. They tend to

consider material success as the measurement for success. Such kind of consumption activity will give a birth to a hedonistic value which has already emerged in the American way of life. In this kind of society, failure is considered a shame, and therefore, people like Dan will lose his soul and spirit of life.

“I have suffered a loss, Forrest, far greater than my legs. It’s my spirit, my soul, if you will. There is only a blank there now, medals where my soul used to be.... Fuck all that... It was just a bunch of philosophic bullshit.” (Forrest Gump 160)

Dan has lost in the competition, he felt desperate and humiliated.

Individualism, competition and aggressive attitude give birth to a cynical society. Moreover, the people of The United States have undergone many hard events in history, such as economic troubles in the forties, government involvement in Korea and Vietnam. Therefore, the result of their disappointment is cynical.

A cynic tends to see selfishness and fake as the core of human nature. People in the cynic society often see the world in their own subjectivity and never concern with the problems of other people or understand the feelings of others. They are more apt to compartmentalize their views and see the world through the eyes of strong emphasis on realism. They believe people have little control over their lives. Here we see that cynics are more likely to believe that people are manipulated by their environment. This is an indicator of their frustrations in negotiating with the world around them. The example of cynics is Dan and Jenny. Dan is painfully embittered by his experience in Vietnam, while Jenny is hopeless

in finding her true love and happy life. Mr. Wilkins, Gump's supervisor in the ping-pong tournament, is also a cynic profile since he prefers Chairman Mao is death to live for the benefit of The United States policy.

"Mister Wilkins come up to me an be shakin his head. "You big dumb goof," he say," do you not realize that the best thing that could of happened for The United States was to let that sumbitch drown! You, gump, is lost us the opportunity of a life time."

(Forrest Gump 91)

The media also give the opportunity for cynicism through their cynical words. However, the inputs of the media do not in themselves constitute the raw materials of society; they are simply delivery systems. The media reflects the substance of society at least as much as they shape it, and changes in the political, economic and religious institution, our values and attitudes (Kanter, Donald & Mirvis, H. Phillips 40).

It often happens when somebody is elected to be a the senator candidate of The United States, the newspapers and other media look forward to know his or her background. Gump also experiences this problem. *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* send down their investigation reporters to investigate him.

" "They axed me questions an was real nice and friendly-sounding, but then they went back and begun to dig up my past. One day the stories broke on the front page of ever newspapers in the country, "Senatorial Candidate has Checkered Career," say the headlines." (Forrest Gump 236)

Gump's society tends to regard a person with high IQ rather than an honest mentally retarded person like Gump. Those people can be very successful, but their emotions sometimes are unstable. Nowadays, IQ is no longer considered as the only measurement to see a person's intelligence. At the time this novel was written EQ had not been popularized yet. Dan, Gump's best friend, is a very clever person; he knows much about philosophy of life. Yet, he could not maintain his optimistic view and becomes the member of cynical society. Dr. Patricia Patton explains that there are five qualifications for EQ measurement; which are authenticity, adaptability, integrity, sympathy, and love for others. Authenticity means a person knows and regards himself. He should be able to control his emotion and to receive everything happened on him open-heartedly. It enables him to learn from his mistakes in order to make the right decision in his life. Adaptability is a person's ability' to compromise and to change. This ability enables him to build a warm friendship with all the people surrounding him. Integrity gives a person a chance to express their feeling honestly. Integrity can be seen on how a person treats his enemy like his own friend. Sympathy is a gift that able to influence a person to have pity on others. Love is a person's ability to care, to show empathy, to be a best friend for those who need it, (Patton 1997:15). Forrest Gump has fulfilled all those five qualifications. He receives everything happened in his life without complain. He is also able to make the right decision after learning from his failure. Gump manages to control his passion and to be a nice friend for those who need him. Otherwise, he would not give his friends positions in his company. In the matter of Integrity, Gump treats those who have



hurt him nicely and forgives them all. Gump shows his love for Jenny by letting her to have a family life with another man. He wants her to be happy even though he can't live together with Jenny.

Forrest Gump's story is not just a story about "an idiot makes good" but rather an "I can make myself better". It has connection with the optimistic way of life that the writer mentioned above. Through his life's story he wants to convey us that we need to improve ourselves, not just in the matter of material but also in the matter of our soul. Forrest's achievement is his pure love towards others. Sometimes we make friend because it can bring us benefit, therefore, we never know how to be a real friend. Forrest gives us an example through his actions of forgiveness and kindheartedness. Forgiving those who have hurt us is a hard thing to do, but Gump manages it successfully. Gump improves himself by trying to do the right thing for him and for others. He becomes more humane and more normal compared to other people in his cynical world.

#### **4.2.2. World Vision**

Based on the biography of the author and the analysis, the writer concludes some points which are conveyed by Winston Groom through Forrest Gump, they are; the easy and unhurried life, friendliness, optimism, American dream, the right way to deal with the world and the matter of right and wrong.

As a Southerner, Forrest Gump, as the model of Winston Groom's view, adopts the simple, easy and unhurried life; the kind of life that can be found in most Southerners. They take life as it appears to be without complains. It is quite

different from most Americans who are always addicted to work so that they do not have enough time to enjoy their life. Their minds are always full of profit gaining, not like Gump who enjoys every moment in his life.

“...At night I would set out the porch of the shack an play my harmonica an on Saturday night I would go into town an buy a six pack of beer an me an Sue would get drunk.”

(Forrest Gump, 225)

The emphasizing on individual does not reduce the sense of friendliness possessed by Gump. It is true that like any other American heroes, Gump can be classified as a loner, but he never resists others. Gump's main concern is the relation among humankind. He is always ready to help others without hidden tendencies. His main concern is not profit like those of the capitalist society. He is honest and his mind is fresh from corruption. He considers all human races as humans like him. Winston Groom, through the character of Forrest Gump wants to say that goodness means the ability to bring peace to the entire human race.

Gump suffers from broken heart, pain and loneliness. He is often rejected by his society for his idiocy. People mock him and always make fun of him, but he never puts them in heart. He quickly realizes his mistakes and never lost spirit; failure makes him learn and forces him to do much more better action in the future.

Forrest Gump optimism is gained from his simple philosophic way of life that is "life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get". These words are strengthened by Dan's letter to him which told him not to give up

in any conditions and that he should follow where life would take him. On the contrary, Dan in the later life has plunged into desperation. He becomes cynical to the world around him and has lost his philosophic way of life.

Like most American writers, Groom also emphasizes on the American dreams. Everybody has the right to dream, even for a Vietnam vet like Gump. The difference is that Gump dreams for a much better world and happiness which are far from material comfort. Most of his dreams can not be achieved, but he never regrets it. He often thinks of things that are supposed to happen, but it will not change the reality. The only action he can do is receiving the reality itself. A dream is just a dream, it does not matter whether we can reach it or not. The important thing is how we deal with the world and our life. We should do the right thing in every step we make. Life will not end only because we have lost our dream. If we are able to take what life has given us, the world will seem beautiful.

Winston Groom also conveys the value of right or wrong in his novel. Right for him is friendliness, caring, honesty, and simple good will. We should pay ill manner with kindness and love. Optimism is also right because it can lead people to be courageous in facing the future. The qualification of wrong for him is the desperation in life which might lead to cynicism and the profit minded people who always consider human relationship merely as profit gaining.

#### **4.2.3. Collective Subject**

The cynical outlook has always been part of the American character. The cynical society that we find nowadays has its roots in the sixties. Political

conflicts inside the United States government, the war, the emergence of drugs and LSD, and the rush in economic field have given a chance for the cynicism. The Americans suffered from desperation, disappointment of the conditions around them. Some expression such as, "what I think does not count anymore", "the people running the country don't really care what happens to me", "the rich gets richer and the poor gets poorer", and "most people with power try to take advantage of people such as myself", are often heard, (Kanter, Donald & Mirvis, Philips H. 1989:25).

Cynicism is one lens people use to see other people and the world around them, (Kanter, Donald & Mirvis, Philips H. 1989:30). It informs their philosophy of life and governs their pattern of relating to other people. Most of the cynics believe that the average person is unconcerned with the problems of other people. They hardly see goodwill in the world around them. People begin to abandon idealism and adore the virtue of being "realistic".

At the time of Vietnam War, for example, university students were deferred, but working class students went into service. This can be seen as an unjust war. Gradually, this rising wave of injustice led to mass protest. It was unprecedented in the United States at wartime. For the first time, the majority of people began to question whether America was "wrong" and lost moral bearings. For the students, the ineptitude and hypocrisy of the American government in trying to justify the war and its method leave scars. This ineptitude led many people to question the motivations and credibility of public officials. Hypocrisy,

lying, scoffing, negativism, sophistry, disparaging, and mistrusting are the examples of the ways that people put their cynicism into action.

Forrest Gump is written based on this kind of society. Through this character, Winston Groom presents the opposite of a cynic. He does not follow the wave of pessimism, desperation, and mistrusting the government. Gump has his own philosophy of life that is more ideal rather than realistic. He cares for others, honest, decent, and innocent. He also experiences failure and sorrow like others, but never loses spirit because of that. He sees life as a fine and wonderful place because he receives all the reality open-heartedly.

#### 4.2.4. Dialectical Interpretation

Forrest Gump is an idiot as many people say, but he has some magnificent talents. With his talents, Gump is able to travel and experienced many things around the world. Scientist classified him as a savant idiot. He has an innocent heart, good attitude and simple philosophy of life, which are proved useful in his life. Gump's life is a light of realization for "normal people" in his society.

Since he was a child, his mother instructed him to do the right thing throughout his life. The right thing in this case is the ideal "right". His value contradicts to other's value sometimes. He has to go to Vietnam even though he does not approve of the war. In this battle, his friend, Bubba, died after he got shot. However, he never hates the people in the government. He never feels hatred to human kind. In this case, he has achieved "peace" in his heart.

Achievement in the United States is still linked to material comfort. It has to do also with work and product. Society underestimates Gump because he is an idiot, but in the future, he has made the right decision. He turns to shrimp business and it is very successful. Making the right decision and being kindhearted are also his achievements, which people find difficulty in following them.

The success pattern of Forrest Gump is based on a certain ethical framework that is decency, honor, with a sense of fair-play; neither Machiavellian nor Musolini needs to apply. The seeking for a better life in the cynical society often applies those two techniques, (Kingsley, Davis 1951:50). Since they have lost their moral bearings, they see the world in a gritty realism. Those kinds of people use many ways either good or bad in order to achieve material comfort.

Cynics believe that a person is not supposed to care for other people's problems. It is not necessary to understand the feelings of other people. This view is clearly reflected in the Industrial capitalist society in which the main concern is profit. They see human relation merely as a profit gaining. Winston Groom contradicts this condition with Gump's friendliness and care for others. The intention of Gump's character is humankind. Even though most of his friends have hurt him in the past, he manages to forgive them. Gump receives them completely as a human being who often make mistakes. He even gives them opportunity to have a better life by working in his company.

American value of individuality has to do with the view of cynics and profit gaining matter. They are urged to compete and to strive others in order to be the best. Mostly, they do the competition in a Machiavellian way. The main stress

in this case is the individual himself. They even use others in achieving their purposes. These kinds of person have unlimited appetite and are engaged in an ongoing war against all. They experience alienation and lack of social relation. In this kind of society, failure is considered the fault of one's own. The punishment of failure is shame, which may led to despair. Dan, Gump's best friend is desperated for being a failure. Instead of doing something to better his life, he has drawn himself in the point of no return life. He becomes the member of a cynical society.

With his goodwill and friendliness, Gump is far from a cynic or alienation in human relation. His only purpose in life is to live as a happy ordinary person. He does not care for wealth, fame, or even honor. For him, living as a simple humble person is much more fun than being a well-known person. The ability to receive everything open-heartedly has made him far from being a cynic. Like most people, he also experiences disappointment or broken heart or rejection. He often muses at things that should have happened, but he realizes that it will not change anything. Like most people, he has his own dreams and plans. He wants to be together with Jenny, but the fact shows that she has married someone else. He does not want to ruin her happiness. Whenever he faces sorrow and disappointment, he never took pity on himself. He continues living as a straight honest person. He considers that he should face his life. There must be some ways to solve problems. Gump is successful in maintaining his emotional intelligence since he has fulfilled the five star qualifications. He becomes more normal than the normal people do in his society.

# **CHAPTER V**

## **CONCLUSION**