COPING BEHAVIOR OF FORREST GUMP IN ROBERT ZEMECKIS’ FORREST GUMP: INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

RESEARCH PAPER
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by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

*Forrest Gump* is a film based on Winston Groom’s novel, and first published in 1994. This is a film directed by Robert Zemeckis and produced by Wendy Finerman, Steve Tisch, and Steve Starkey. It was presented by Paramount Pictures and the location of making this film is in Spielberg, USA. The major characters are starred by Tom Hanks as Forrest Gump, Robin Wright Penn as Jenny Curran (Gump), Gary Sinise as Lieutenant Dan Taylor, and Mikelty Williamson as Benjamin Buford “Bubba” Blue.

*Forrest Gump* is one of phenomenal movie. This movie performs discrimination or distinguishes on races, social statues, culture, and especially people’s capabilities happened at that time. One example of discrimination is discrimination in handicap person. The American regard handicapped as useless. They don’t have the opportunity to get better education and put them in the low position in society. This movie makes us understand how a handicap person struggles to reach his dream.

Forrest’s story began when a young child who has mentally slow and braces on his legs, lived with his mother in Greenbow Alabama. Through three decades which full of tragedies, he is passing his life patiently. No one accept his condition, even the principal in his Elementary school doubt of his capability. But, it does not make him surrender. On Forrest’s first day of school, he met Jenny Curran, and immediately fell in love with her. Jenny lived on a farm house near Forrest’s home with her physically and sexually abusive and alcoholic father.
His leg braces and mental handicap made Forrest becomes a popular target for bullies at school. One day while Forrest walked home from school, a few children with their bike start to disturb Forrest, and Jenny told him to run and run. As the bullies chased him on their bikes, the brace on his legs break and fall off, makes him able to run very fast. After that, wherever he needs to go, he runs. One day he ran through University of Alabama football practice. This event led him got a college scholarship for football, and his team named All-American Team. Forrest’s team met President John F. Kennedy at the White House.

After graduated from University of Alabama, Forrest enlisted in the army, where he met two other people who will change his life; Benjamin Buford “Bubba” Blue and Lieutnant Dan Taylor. Benjamin Buford “Bubba” Blue, a young shrimper who accompany Forrest in the Vietnam War and he knew “everything about the shrimpin’ business.” Bubba and Forrest planed to go into the shrimping business together after they went home and Forrest listened to Bubba that told him all he knew about shrimping. Lieutenant Dan Taylor was Forrest and Bubba commanding officer. When their platoons were suddenly attacked in the jungle, Forrest rescued Lieutenant Dan and other soldiers. He was back and looked for Bubba and carried him back to the others. Forrest found that Bubba was shot, but Bubba died when the evacuation choppers arrive. Lieutenant Dan lost his legs because of his injuries. Lieutenant Dan was angry at Forrest, because Forrest saved him. Lieutenant Dan was born from military tradition in which everyone in his family had fought and died in every American war, saved from Vietnam War makes him felt that he had failed.

While recuperating, Forrest was introduced to ping-pong. Ping pong or table tennis is a sport in which two or four players hit a lightweight, hollow ball back and forth with rackets. The game takes place on a hard table divided by a net. His skills at ping-pong took
him to China, and got much money. Forrest used the money from ping-pong to carry out his and Bubba’s plan went to Louisiana and bought a shrimp boat. He has no success at it. Then Forrest met Lieutenant Dan, he told Forrest if he will help Forrest Gump. Forrest’s luck did not improve. They were out in the gulf on their boat, then Lieutenant Dan screaming at God as manifested by the storm. The hurricane destroyed all of the docked boats, leaving them as the only shrimp boat in the area. The business was getting success because there was no competition. Forrest gave some the profits to Bubba’s family and invested the rest to Lieutenant Dan. One of the investments was a fruit company; it is a successful company and their company made them rich. Forrest left the shrimp business when his mother died and then he went home to Greenbow.

In Forrest’s loneliness, Jenny came to visit him. Forrest proposed Jenny to marry him, but in the morning she disappeared. After Forrest realized this, he felt as if he wanted to run away, but instead of returning home he continued to run, eventually becoming famous for running across the country for three years, two month, fourteen days and sixteen hours. He was called “a gardener from Greenbow, Alabama.” in news reports about his country-length runs.

Forrest Gump received a letter from Jenny who had seen him run on television, she asked Forrest to visit her. Then Forrest met Jenny and her son, and together they moved back to Greenbow, Alabama. Forrest and Jenny finally got married, but their marriage ended because of Jenny’s death.

The film ended by Forrest escorting his son to a school bus, where the father and his son told that they love each other.
**Forrest Gump** is a movie which is non-political and thus non-judgmental, and this movie also invites various arguments from viewers, there are pro and contradiction comments. The writer gets some support arguments of Forrest Gump’s movie. They are Roger Ebert and Christhopher Jensen. Roger Ebert thinks that Hanks’ performance in the movie is very breathtaking. Forrest can balances his action between comedy and sadness. Beside that Christhopher Jensen also gives pro argument. He said that all aspects of the movie are first-rate and won six Oscars including Best Picture and Director. The film is well-acted with humor by Tom Hanks. He won a well-deserved Oscar for Best Actor for his performance. He possesses all of the traits.

Furthermore, this is from a Lloyd Kaufman who gives contradiction comment. The man said that Gump’s successes result from doing what he is told by others, and never showed any initiative of his own, in contras to Jenny’s more forthright and independent character who is shown by descending into drugs, prostitution, and death.

One of appreciations to literary work is an award. The movie was a huge commercial success, earning US$677 million worldwide during its theatrical run making it the top grossing film in North America released that year. This movie has gotten some awards, among others are in 1994 Forrest Gump won Best Performance, Best Director, Best Film Editing and Best Picture. In 1995, this movie won a Saturn Award; Amanda Award for Best Film (International), Chicago Film Critics Association Award. The film gained a total of thirteen Academy Award nominations, of which it won six, including Best Picture, Best Visual Effects, Best Director (Robert Zemeckis), and Best Actor (Tom Hanks).

The writer thinks that this movie is very interesting. Tom Hanks as the major character in the movie act is breathtaking, he plays the character as a fool but the truth is not
a fool. Hanks won back-to-back Oscars for Best Actor in 1993-1994. His domestic box offices, which exceed $3.3 billion, make him the third most successful actor. This thing indicates that Tom Hanks is the best actor in some movies, such as *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Philadelphia*, and *The Da Vinci Code*.

The film tells the story of a man with IQ 75 and his epic journey through life meeting historical figures, influencing popular culture and experiencing first-hand historic events of the late 20th century while being largely unaware of their significance, due to his borderline intellectual disability.

Forrest is a man with mentally slow and has deformed foot. But, this does not make him an inferiority man. The inferiority has made him brave to face his life. With full of tragedies, he can oppose his inferiority. He is falling in love with Jenny Curran since he was a child. He got scholarship for football in University of Alabama, and then became football’s star in All-American Team and met with President Kennedy. After that Forrest enlisted in the Army, became a hero in Vietnam War and a successful shrimp businessman. Then, finally he found his love again. Forrest is shown to have been taught much about life by his mother. He often recalls her favorite quotations, including “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re gonna get.” and “Stupid is as stupid does.” Deep in his heart, Forrest knows his limited IQ but his successfully inspired all of the viewers.

Individual Psychology learns about unique personality of human behavior. According to Adler (Ryckman, 1985:95) individual Psychology is a science that attempts to understand the experiences behavior of each person as an organized entity. Individual psychology has important meaning as the way to understand human behavior. The term of fictional finalism, inferiority feeling and compensation, striving for superiority, style of life,
and creative self, give a meaningful guidance for understanding among human (Suryabrata, 2002:191).

Everyone has inferiority feeling which bother the creativity, and it gives influence in superiority progress of personality. The basic assumption will help unique personality to develop the creativity, to change inferiority to be superiority and to cope behavior.

From the explanation above, the writer wants to analyze Forrest Gump movie by applying Adler’s theory of Individual Psychology. That’s way the research is entitled “COPING BEHAVIOR OF FORREST GUMP IN ROBERT ZEMECKIS’ FORREST GUMP: INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH.”

B. Literature Review

There is a previous research, which is related to this research. It was conducted by Fajria Nurul Hidayati (2009) with his research entitled “Struggle for Education and Love in Thomas Hardy’s Jude the Obscure: An Individual Psychological Approach. She analyzed struggle for education and love is reflected in Thomas Hardy’s Jude the Obscure based on individual psychological approach and the structural elements. And she was found that the individual psychological analysis shows that the struggle for education and love of Jude Fawley comes from his fictional finalism. Then, Jude’s struggle for education and love cannot walk together. Jude must forget one to get another.

In this occasion, the researcher takes the Individual Psychological Approach to reveal the cope behaviors to changing life condition which reflected by Forrest Gump as the main character in this movie. The writer collects the data from Forrest Gump’s movie.
The research has similar focus with the previous research in the field of an individual Psychological approach. The differences are in the data source; her research uses novel.

C. Problem Statement

In this research, the writer proposes a single problem statement. The problem of the research is how Forrest Gump as the main character of Robert Zemeckis’ film Forrest Gump copes with his life problems.

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the movie based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the movie based on Adler’s theory of Individual Psychology.

E. Benefits of the Study

There are two benefits expected from this study they are as follows;

1. Theoretical Benefit
   To give additional information and contribution to large body of knowledge particularly the studies of the Forrest Gump movie.
2. Practical benefit
   To improve the researcher’s understand and competence in applying individual psychological approach into literature.
F. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In analyzing Robert Zemeckis’ Forrest Gump the writer uses descriptive qualitative research.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is structural elements and the major character of Forrest Gump movie directed by Robert Zemeckis.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Sources

These studies consist of two data sources:

a. The primary data source of the study is taken from Forrest Gump movie directed by Robert Zemeckis.

b. The secondary data sources are from the book and internet including reference and material related to the study, such as theory of Literature book, theory of personality book, and manuscript of Forrest Gump movie.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The method used in this study is library research by collecting and recording both of the primary and the secondary data.

Some steps of collecting data applied in this study are as follows.

a. Watching the movie repeatedly.

b. Identifying the topic of the movie.

c. Determining the major character that will be analyzed.

d. Reading some related books to find out the theory, data, and information required.
e. Taking notes of important information both primary and secondary data sources.

f. Arranging and developing the selected data into a good unity toward the topic of the study.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique of the data analysis used in this study is descriptive qualitative analysis. The structural elements of the movie and the collected data are described and analyzed in detail through Individual Psychological Approach.

G. Research Paper Organization

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains introduction, which consists of background of the study, literature review, problem statement, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, benefits of the study, research method and paper organization. The second chapter deals with the underlying theory, including the notion of Individual Psychoanalytic and theoretical application. The third chapter is structural analysis of the movie *Forrest Gump*. The fourth chapter deals with the analysis using Individual Psychological Approach. The last chapter draws conclusion and suggestion.