

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general information of the study. It consists of the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the research methodology, the significance of the study, the clarification of key terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of The Study

Currently, the issue of intellectual diffability has raised attention in many fields of studies, including the study of literature. For instance is the study conducted by Ellis (2014) which talks about diffabled character in the TV series entitled *Game of Thrones*. Intellectual diffability itself is said to be a new term replacing the ‘intellectual disability’ term. Intellectual diffability is the condition when someone/somebody has a significant limitation in intellectual functioning and adaptative behavior (AAIDD, 2010, p. 1).

Regarding the intellectual diffability issue in the study of literature, literary works, which are often said to be the depiction of real-life situation, also concerns on the intellectually diffabled characters and how they deal with the society around them. There are many literary works that include intellectually diffabled character as its main character of the story; for example, Daniel Keyes’ (1958) works *Flowers for Algernon*, Mark Haddon’s works (2003) *A Curious Incident of a Dog in a Nighttime*, Lee Harper’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), and John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* (1937). Another works that also uses intellectually diffabled character as the main character is *Forrest Gump* (1986). *Forrest Gump* is a novel that tells about how Forrest, who is considered as an intellectually diffabled man, deals with his own life. In this novel, Forrest experiences many amazing things because he is intellectually diffabled and he rarely complains about his own condition. According to *Box Office*

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Mojo, this novel has been adapted into a film version in 1994, and it is said that this movie gets so many achievements since the first time it was released.

Since the novel is considered as the best-seller novel, many have analyzed it from different perspectives. However, the studies and articles that have discussed *Forrest Gump* mostly criticize or comment on the film version, not the novel version. One of the studies comes from Montreal Film Journal. Montreal Film Journal (2000) states in its article that Forrest Gump in this movie is represented as a man who is the perfect example of American Dream, a simple man who achieves many great things in his life. Gump here provides a new sight of American history from the perspective of a simple man, without any cynical view. This article also says that Forrest's strong characterization comes from the foil characters around him, such as his mother, Jenny, Bubba, and Lieutenant Dan. Another study states a different issue. Byers (1996) states that *Forrest Gump* is a movie that tries to bring up the issue of race and the relation among races in America since it came up first in the 1960's and still became a hot issue in the 1990's. This study also states that the innocence of Forrest character indirectly portrays the struggles of Americans in enforcing the equality of civil rights among Americans. Wang (2000) in its study also states something about Forrest Gump. It focuses on Forrest Gump as the representation of gender and race and its visualization of postwar history. This study also examines how political conservatives make the film as a tool to articulate the American history and to reveal their political ground in 1994.

Different from those studies above, this study analyzes the intellectually diffabled character in *Forrest Gump* novel. This work is chosen since there are so many perceptions shared by other characters and the main character that construct a perspective about intellectually diffabled character. This study also focuses on the construction of intellectually diffabled character through narrative and characterization of the character. In literary studies, this construction can be analyzed using focalization. Focalization, which is the branch of Narratology, is an approach

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proposed by Gerard Genette which focuses on six particular areas on how the story is narrated (Genette, 1972 as cited in Barry, 1995, p. 230).

Hopefully, this study that focuses on the construction of intellectually diffabled character in *Forrest Gump* novel will fill the gap between the study of the film version and the novel version.

1.2. Research Question

To see how the issue of intellectually diffabled character is presented, this study questions:

- How is the intellectually diffabled character constructed in the *Forrest Gump* novel?

1.3. Aims of The Study

The findings from this study are aimed to find how the intellectually diffabled character is constructed in the *Forrest Gump* novel based on focalization approach by Genette and the characterization of the main character. They are also aimed to see the society's perspective about intellectually diffabled people based on the construction of intellectually diffabled character in the text.

1.4. Scope of The Study

This study discusses the construction of intellectually diffabled character in the *Forrest Gump* novel. This novel tells about Forrest, an intellectually diffabled person, who experiences many amazing and terrific things in his life because of his diffability. The construction of intellectually diffabled character is tracked down from the perceptions of the main character shared by other characters, the perceptions of the main character shared by the main character himself, and the characterization of the main character. So, this study only focuses on the perceptions of the main

characters shared by other characters in the novel and the perceptions of the main character shared by the main character himself.

1.5. Research Procedures

To track the construction of intellectually diffabled character from the text, this study employs Genette's focalization, which focuses on six particular areas on how the story is narrated (Genette, 1972 as cited in Barry, 1995, p. 230). In this study, one question focusing on six areas of how the story is narrated based on Genette's focalization is used as the tool to analyze the data. The question is, "How is the narrative focalized?"

This approach is chosen since it focuses on the creation of meaning through the analysis of the narrative structure of the text. It also relates to this study which tries to find how the intellectually diffabled character is created or constructed through the narrative structures.

This study also employs the content analysis method. Duke & Mallette (2011) state that content analysis method focuses on the presence of certain words or concepts within the text or set of texts. This method is chosen since this study deals with the data that appear in the word form and this study looks for the meaning that is tracked down from the presence of certain words or concepts within the text. Since this study also has a relation with intellectual diffability, the definition of intellectual diffability from several articles and books are used as the tool to interpret the data.

The elaboration of the Research Methodology of this study is discussed more in Chapter III.

1.6. Significance of The Study

Hopefully, this study gives a contribution to the study of literature, especially the study which focuses on the construction of intellectually diffabled character in the

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Also, this study is significant in explaining how the construction of intellectually diffabled character is built. From this study, it is hoped that the society's view of the intellectually diffabled person changes. They will not only see the intellectually diffabled person as a person who is always mocked since he/she is lack of ability and skill in learning something and the society will not see the intellectually diffabled person differently. They just need to be accompanied, not to be mocked since they are "different" from others.

1.7. Clarification of Key Terms

Here are some clarification of key terms that are used mostly in this paper:

1. Intellectual Diffability

The term that is said to be a term that replaces 'intellectual disability' term. However, this term has the same definition with 'intellectual disability'. It is a condition when someone or somebody has a significant limitation in intellectual functioning and adaptative behavior (AAIDD, 2010, p. 1).

2. Narratology

According to Barry (1995, p. 223), Narratology is the study about narrative structure and can be considered as the branch of structuralism. It focuses on how narrative makes meaning and how the story is narrated.

3. Focalization

As stated by Genette (1972 as cited in Barry 1995, p. 230) focalization is a term about the focus or viewpoint of the story. Fludernik (2009) says that

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focalization focuses on “Who sees?”, or as Niederhoff (2011) states that focalization is a term which is used to reformulate the term “narration” and “point of view”. Focalization is also coined by Genette to give the general presentation of standar point of view.

1.8. Organization of The Study

This study is organized as follows:

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter contains the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research procedures, clarification of key terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter II Literature Review

This chapter contains all of the theories and sources (articles, journals, and documents) that are related to the study. This study employs Narratology approach with the focus on the focalization. This approach is used since this approach only focuses on the text and it can be employed to track the construction of intellectually diffabled person in the novel.

Chapter III Research Methodology

This chapter consists of the methodology of the study used to answer the research questions. The methodology used is the content analysis method. The method is used since this study deals with the data that appear in the word form and this study looks for the meaning that is tracked down from the presence of certain words or concepts within the text.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussions

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This chapter reveals the findings of the study and discusses the findings of this study using the theories proposed in Chapter II. The findings are based on the internal and external focalization found in the novel and the characterization, and the discussion part relates the findings with the theories and previous studies related to this study.

Chapter V Conclusion

This chapter consists of conclusion of this study and suggestions for further studies that are related to this study.