

**THE ANALYSIS OF THEME THROUGH
THE PROTAGONIST OF WINSTON GROOM'S
*FORREST GUMP***

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ABSTRACT

Tugas akhir ini membahas tema dari novel *Forrest Gump* (1984) karya Winston Groom yang dianalisis melalui penggambaran karakteristik tokoh utama. Winston Francis Groom, Jr. atau yang lebih dikenal sebagai Winston Groom merupakan seorang penulis novel berkebangsaan Amerika yang terkenal dengan karyanya yang fenomenal yaitu *Forrest Gump*.

Tokoh utama novel *Forrest Gump*, yang bernama Forrest Gump, adalah seseorang yang memiliki keterbatasan intelektual, yaitu memiliki IQ sebesar 70. Novel ini menggambarkan petualangan hidup Forrest dengan keterbatasan intelektualnya. Namun, keterbatasan intelektual Forrest tidak membuat hidupnya menjadi sebuah kegagalan, melainkan dia bisa menjadi seseorang yang berhasil dalam mencapai hal-hal hebat. Dalam novel ini, Forrest memiliki tiga karakteristik, yaitu tidak mementingkan diri sendiri, gigih, dan berani. Ketiga kualitas positif inilah yang membawa Forrest berhasil mencapai hal-hal hebat dalam hidupnya.

Dari hasil analisis dapat disimpulkan bahwa tema dari novel ini adalah “dalam kehidupan, seseorang bisa menggapai hal-hal hebat dengan kualitas positif yang dimilikinya meskipun dirinya memiliki keterbatasan intelektual.”

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Winston Groom is one of the most phenomenal American writers in the late 20th century. He is a bestselling author of eight novels and some non-fiction books. His co-authored book entitled *Conversations with the Enemy* (1983) was nominated for 1984 Pulitzer Prize and his book entitled *As Summers Die* (1980) won several prizes as well. He is also the author of the No.1 New York Times bestsellers *Forrest Gump* (1986), *Gumpism: The Wit and Wisdom of Forrest Gump* (1994), and *Shrouds of Glory* (1995). In February 2011, Groom was honored with the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer of the Year. Due to his works and achievements, Groom received several honorary Ph.D. degrees as a “Doctor of Humane Letters.” Groom’s achievements and contributions in the literary worlds show that Groom’s works are exquisite. His works are not only enjoyable as entertainment but also worth analysing for educational purpose. In this thesis, I would like to analyse the work which has elevated Groom’s career into a bigger audience, *Forrest Gump*.

Forrest Gump (1986) is a novel that focuses on a journey of an intellectually-deficient man (IQ of 70) named Forrest as the protagonist, in discovering his life goal, purpose, value, and meaning. After its release in 1986, *Forrest Gump* became a big phenomenon in the literary world. This novel catapulted Winston Groom, the author, to the mainstream scene and even to Hollywood. Though the novel did not actually win any significant award, it brought Winston Groom's career into another level. *Forrest Gump* is not only a book to be read but also to be experienced. The reason is because the book offers a non generic adventurous life story of Forrest Gump who has a unique persona. What makes the book not generic is explained by Brandon Griggs, a journalist from CNN who said, "*Forrest Gump* blends drama, comedy, reality and fantasy into a genre-busting saga that almost defies description. It should not work, but it does." (Griggs) This book finds the perfect formula when the non generic story harmonizes with the unique protagonist, creating such a fascinating piece of art which is very reasonable to be honoured as a masterpiece. In 1994, the book was adapted into a blockbuster movie with the same title, *Forrest Gump* starring Tom Hanks. Before the movie adaptation, the novel was only sold an estimated 30,000 copies but after the adaptation, *Forrest Gump* sold 1.7 million worldwide. The movie itself won six Academy Awards nominations including "Best Picture", "Best Actor", "Best Director", "Best Writing Adapted Screenplay", "Best Visual Effects", and "Best Film Editing".

The protagonist's persona is unique because behind his intellectual deficient look and traits, he is actually a pure genius; in a specific term it is called idiot savant. According to *Dictionary.com*, idiot savant is described as "a mentally

defective person with an exceptional skill or talent in a special field, as a highly developed ability to play music or to solve complex mathematical problems mentally at great speed” (“Idiot Savant”). Moreover, the use of the first person point of view makes the distance between the story and the reader closer. The protagonist talks in southern informal language which is used in daily conversation. Those factors make the character Forrest Gump the part of the novel which the readers could sympathize the most.

In this thesis, I choose to analyze the theme of the novel because this novel carries a strong message about human’s struggles in life and from the novel, the readers can also pick some lessons which are inspired by Forrest’s virtues. This notion is supported by a definition from *Literary Devices* saying that a theme is defined as “... a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work that may be stated directly or indirectly” (“Theme”). Owing to the facts that the novel focuses on Forrest’s journey and he is the spotlight of the whole story, the theme of the novel will be analyzed through the protagonist. According to *Literary Devices*, protagonist is defined as “... the central character or leading figure in poetry, narrative, novel or any other story” (“Protagonist”).

In analyzing this novel, I choose formalism as the criticism because the important information to understand the work has been provided in the work. “In literary criticism, Formalism refers to a style inquiry that focuses, almost exclusively, on features of the literary text itself, to the exclusion of biographical, historical, or intellectual contexts.” (“Formalism”) The readers do not need to look for more information in other sources, such as historical, biographical, or

philosophical ones to analyze the work because the information provided in the work is enough for the readers to understand or analyze the work.

Statement of the Problem

The problems that are going to be discussed in the analysis are:

1. What is the theme of Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump*?
2. How is the theme presented through the protagonist?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

1. To show the theme of Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump*.
2. To show how the theme is presented through the protagonist.

Method of Research

The method used in writing this thesis is library research. First, I read the novel *Forrest Gump* several times. Second, I collected some supporting data from the Internet and other references. Third, based on the theory and data that I collected, I analyzed the theme through the protagonist of Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump*. Lastly, I drew some conclusions to sum up my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter

contains the analysis of theme through the protagonist of Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump*. The third chapter contains the conclusion of the analysis from the previous chapter. The thesis ends with the Bibliography, which contains the list of sources used in this analysis, and Appendices, which consist of the summary of the novel and biography of the author.



CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF THEME THROUGH THE PROTAGONIST OF WINSTON GROOM'S *FORREST GUMP*

Forrest Gump is a novel about a journey of a man with intellectual deficiency named Forrest Gump. Despite his limitation, Forrest manages to travel around the globe and even space doing various unexpectable things. Later, as he gets older he manages to become a rich and successful man. Through his actions and decisions during his journey, Forrest is able to achieve many things in life which may seem unlikely to happen as he has intellectual limitation. In this thesis, Forrest's actions and decisions throughout various events in his life will be analysed to gain the theme from the characteristics which are shown from those events. By analysing the protagonist of *Forrest Gump*, I come up with a theme which is, "In life, individuals may be able to achieve great things with their positive qualities despite the intellectual limitations they have."

The first characteristic which is revealed from Forrest is his being selfless. According to *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*, the definition of the word 'selfless' is "thinking more about the needs, happiness, etc. of other people than about your own" ("Selfless"). There are several proofs which reveal that Forrest is selfless. The

first one is when Forrest rescues his comrades in the Vietnam War. At that time, Forrest and his comrades are brutally attacked by the enemies and unfortunately they cannot fight the enemies back. This terrible situation is described by Forrest's narration, "This time they has caught us with our pants down. We is crossin this rice paddy an all of a sudden from everywhere they start thowin shit at us. People is shoutin and screamin an gettin shot an somebody says, "Fall back!"'" (Groom 28) A lot of Forrest' comrades are badly injured and cannot save themselves. Subsequently, Forrest rescues his friends by taking them into a safe place one by one. At this moment, Forrest could have just run away and saved himself to survive, but he decides to save his friends without minding his own life. It can be seen from the following quotation,

But halfway out I nearly step on a feller from 2nd platoon who is mighty hurt, an he look up at me with his han out, an so I think, shit, what can I do? So I grap him up an run back with him fast as I can. Bullets an stuff be flyin all over ... I brung that boy back an run out again an damn if I don't come across somebody else. So I reach down to pick him up an bring him back, too, (28)

Due to his deed, the U.S. president honors Forrest with a Congressional Medal of Honor when he is being hospitalised in Danang, as Forrest says, "A few days later some muckity-mucks from Field Force Headquarters come over to the hospital all excited an say, "Private Gump, you is been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for extreme heroism, an is bein flown back to the U.S.A. day after tomorrow to be decorated by the President of the United States. '" (31)

It is obvious that evacuating his comrades during a battle is a dangerous thing to do, which is proven by Forrest's getting shot in his buttocks while rescuing his comrades. However, he still helps them even if his action puts himself in danger. Thus, his action of evacuating his comrades shows his positive quality, that is, his being selfless. This positive quality of his leads him to being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, a great thing for a man with intellectual limitation.

The second proof that portrays Forrest's selflessness is when he saves President Mao, the president of the People's Republic of China, from drowning. When Forrest is in China to participate in a ping-pong championship, he goes to a river where President Mao is swimming for publicity. Forrest and his team are invited by the Chinese officials as a part of the welcoming ceremony for the US ping-pong team. When Forrest realizes that President Mao is drowning, he voluntarily jumps into the water and saves him. This situation is shown as Forrest narrates, "Chairman Mao wave for a third time, an suddenly it begun to dawn on everbody that he is not waving, he is drownin! ... I say, the hell with this, cause I saw where he went under, an I thowed off my shoes an into the river I went." (39)

In this moment, Forrest could just watch President Mao drowning to death because he is aware that China and America are enemies back then from the information he gets from a Pentagon staff, "... This is a special honor, because for the first time in nearly twenty-five years our country is having anything to do with the Chinamen, an it is an event far more important than any damn ping-pong game. It is diplomacy, and the future of the human race might be at stake". The condition between the two nations makes Forrest's superior tells him that he should not have saved President Mao as he says, "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 lifetime.” (39) However, he chooses to save President Mao because he thinks that it is the right thing to do as he says, ”I dunno. I am still jus try in to do the right thing.” (39) Thus, because of this action, Forrest is honored as Chinese national hero and the Chinese throw a parade for him. Moreover, due to Forrest’s action, China agrees to reopen various negotiations with the United States. Forrest’s selflessness is clearly shown from how he voluntarily jumps into the water to save President Mao without considering about any personal benefit or his own safety. This proof shows the connection between the theme of the novel and Forrest’s characteristic. It is shown that Forrest’s positive quality of being selfless makes him being honored the Chinese National Hero, which is considered a great achievement despite his intellectual limitation.

The third proof that reveals Forrest’s being selfless is when Forrest decides to give eighty percents of what he gets from the shrimp business to Jenny and her son. Jenny is the woman whom Forrest has a crush on for his entire life, but his love is unrequited by Jenny leaving Forrest and deciding to marry another man. Even though Forrest has achieved his goal which is owning a shrimp business and becoming rich, he realizes that without Jenny, none of his success has any meaning. It is shown in Forrest’s following narration:

I look in the mirror now an I got wrinkles on my face, an my hair is turnin gray at the edges an I ain't got as much energy as I used to. I know things are movin along with the bidness, but mysef, I feel like I'm jus spinnin in place. I'm wonderin jus why am I doin all this for? ... An I

spose Jenny Curran has somethin to do with it, too, but since ain't nobody can do nothing bout that, I might as well forget it. (110).

Forrest decides to grant eighty percent of what he gets from his shrimp factory after Forrest moves to Savannah and makes a new life there being a musician. One day while he is playing music in the street, he accidentally meets Jenny with a boy who turns out to be Forrest's biological son. There, Forrest knows that Jenny and their son are currently living with Jenny's new husband. After the bittersweet meeting, Forrest decides to give eighty percents of the money that he has made from the shrimp factory to Jenny so that she could raise his son, which is shown in the following statement, "I called Mister Tribble an tole him that anything I got comin in the srimp bidness, to give ten percent of my share to my mama an ten percent to Bubba's daddy, an the rest, send it all to Jenny for little Forrest." (114)

Forrest's selflessness is revealed through the fact that he gives almost all of his money without thinking about his own welfare or expecting any payback from Jenny. The only reason why Forrest gives eighty percents of his wealth is to increase Jenny and his son's welfare. This can be seen from what Forrest says about the situation,

. . . here I have done foun Jenny again after all this time. An she have got our son, an maybe, somehow, we can fix things up. But the more I think about this, the more I finally understan it cannot work. And also, I cannot rightly blame it on my bein a idiot— tho that would be nice. ... I figger the little boy be better off with Jenny an her husband to give him a good home an raise him right so's he won't have no peabrain for a daddy. (115)

From this situation, Forrest's selflessness is also shown by him letting his son live with Jenny's current husband even though Forrest wants to live together with them. He realizes that he may not be a good father for Little Forrest due to his limitation. Thus, his action reveals one of his positive qualities, that is, being selfless. Forrest's positive quality renders him into someone who is able to do great sacrifice for people he loves, which is considered a great thing for someone with an intellectual limitation.

Forrest's second characteristic is persevering. According to *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*, the definition of the word 'persevering' is "showing determination to achieve a particular aim despite difficulties." ("Persevering"). Forrest is portrayed as a highly persevering individual who becomes successful at many things because of his perseverance. This notion is supported by several proofs which are found throughout the novel.

The first proof is when Forrest manages to become part of the all-state football team even though he has a problem understanding how the game works. When he is still in high school, he is recruited to the football team by a talent scout called Coach Fellers.

Forrest's deficiency at understanding the football game is shown from his narration, "Coach Fellers an one of the goons hepped me out special since I didn't know how to play. . . they were tryin to splain it all, but when we tried it a bunch of times everbody seemed to be gettin disgusted cause I couldn't remember what I was sposed to do." (Groom 4) Coach Fellers even has to teach Forrest how to put his football suit on, as Forrest narrates, "Coach Fellers an the goons got me dressed up

in the football suit, an then they made me undress again, an then do it all over again, ten or twenty times, till I could do it by myself.” (4)

However, despite his deficiency of understanding the game and negative responses from his teammates, he still manages to be chosen as one of the all-state football team because he always does the best he can. His action can be seen in the following quotation:

. . . an suddenly the quarterback give me the ball an I'm sposed to run outside the right end of the line to the goalpost. When they all start chasin me, I run fast as I can— it was seven or eight of them before they could drag me down. Coach Fellers is mighty happy; jumpin up and down an yellin an slappin everbody on the back.” (5)

Due to his great performance during the season, Forrest succeeds in becoming part of All-State Team and getting All-State Football Award.

From this proof, Forrest's perseverance can be seen from how he is struggling to play and learn about football as well as he can, even though he hardly understands the game. Moreover, his perseverance brings him into the peak of his football career, that is, being one of the All-State Football Team which is a great achievement for him due to his having an intellectual limitation.

The second proof is the process of how Forrest manages to build his own shrimp factory. Forrest has this sturdy vision of building his own shrimp factory due to him promising Bubba, Forrest's friend who died in the Vietnam War, to continue their dream which is to become owners of a shrimp factory. In order to get the fund to make his own shrimp factory, Forrest does some difficult things such as being a wrestler with a stage name “The Duncie”. Though at the begining Forrest

has a doubt in doing it, as he says, “I was kinda thinkin bout goin back home an startin a little srimp bidness” (77), he later realizes that he has to do it to earn money to start his shrimp factory after Dan convinces him by saying, “I mean, how else you gonna earn enough money to start a srimp bidness?” (77)

Being a wrestler is not easy for Forrest because he finds some hardships. The first one is the fact that Jenny is against Forrest’s decision of being a wrestler. She does not want Forrest to get hurt, as Forrest says, “Jenny is not too keen on the rasslin bidness on account of she say I might git hurt, ... but I am lookin foward to makin us some money anyhow” (77). Jenny also does not want Forrest to be humiliated in front of the crowd because of his silly costume and role in the wrestling ring. It ends up with Jenny leaving Forrest due to her disagreement of Forrest still doing wrestling to make money to fund his shrimp factory. Forrest also experiences violence while being a wrestler even though he has been promised that nobody will get hurt. He is physically hurt several times by his opponents. It is shown in his narration, “The sumbitch damn near broke my arm. Then he shoved me down on the canvas an begun to hit me in the back of the head with his elbow. . . . I ain’t never felt so humiliated in my life.” (80)

It is obvious that Forrest’s perseverance is shown by how Forrest continues wrestling despite the disagreement from his loved one, Jenny and also he is willing to endure such pain and humiliation in the ring. He realizes that he needs the money badly to start his shrimp factory. He shows determination to achieve his goal of establishing a shrimp factory that he has promised to Bubba despite the difficulties he experiences. This positive quality of his leads him to being someone who is

willing to endure such pain and humiliation to achieve his goal, which is great thing for someone who has an intellectual limitation.

The third proof that shows Forrest's perseverance is when he is trying to make his mother's life better. The trigger is when Forrest sees his mother being manhandled by her boss, which leads Forrest to pick him up and thrust him into a washing machine. After Forrest's mother loses her job, she blames Forrest because she does not have anything else to do for a living, as she says, "Oh, Forrest, now I done lost my job!" (102). However, the blame becomes a motivation for Forrest to make his shrimp factory successful to be able to finance his mother. It is shown from Forrest's narration, "Don't worry none, Mama, . . . everthin gonna be okay, cause I have got a plan." (102)

Later Forrest goes to Bayou La Batre to initiate the shrimp business. Being a shrimp harvester is not easy for Forrest in the beginning. He has to stay in an inappropriate place and does not have any appropriate equipment to harvest the shrimp. These hardships are described in Bubba's father's narration, "It used to be lived in by ole Tom LeFarge, but he been dead four or five years now. Ain't nobody own it. You wanted, you could fix it up a little an stay there. Last time I looked, he had a couple of ole rowboats pulled up on the bank. Probly ain't worth a damn, but you caulk em up, they'd probly float." (103) and Forrest's narration, "It rained some an the roof leaked like crazy" (104). It takes quite a long time for Forrest to get all the preparations done, "It took almost a month to get things goin— makin the shack nice an fixin up the rowboats an the duckboards in the marsh an layin the mesh nets aroun one of them ponds" (104).

After struggling with his shrimp business in the beginning, later the business turns into success, as Forrest describes in his narration, “By that evenin we had pulled in about three hundrit pouns of srimp, . . . After everthin is toted up, we got ourselfs a check for eight hundrit, sixty-five dollars! ” (105). The shrimp business has turned out to be so successful for Forrest that he hires his mother and makes a better living for her.

It can be concluded that Forrest’s perseverance is shown from how he aims to be able to finance his old mother. It can be seen that despite the difficulties he experiences, Forrest shows such determination to achieve his goal. Moreover, Forrest’s mother’s disappointment turns into proudness when Forrest tells her about the success, as she says, “Oh, Forrest, . . . I am so proud of you— doin so good an all for bein retarded.” (105) It is shown that due to Forrest’s being persevering, he manages to build his own shrimp factory and make a better life for his mother. Forrest’s positive quality helps him to be able to make a better life for his mother as he has promised. Being able to make a better life for his mother is such a great thing for someone with an intellectual limitation like Forrest.

The third characteristic revealed is that Forrest is brave. According to *Cambridge Dictionary*, the definition of the word ‘brave’ is "showing no fear of dangerous or difficult things" (“Brave”). Forrest is portrayed as a brave individual who succeeds in many things because of having the bravery within himself. This notion is supported by several proofs which are found throughout the novel.

The first proof is when Forrest saves his injured comrades in the Vietnam War. It happens when Forrest and his army squad are ambushed by the communist army. Forrest and his teammates cannot fight back and a lot of them get shot. This

situation is described in Forrest's narration, "We is crossin this rice paddy an all of a sudden from everywhere they start throwin shit at us. People is shoutin and screamin an gettin shot an somebody says, "Fall back!"'" (Groom 28) In this shoot-out, Forrest tries to find Bubba, but he cannot find him. In his search for Bubba, Forrest finds that a lot of his teammates are injured, subsequently he helps them by carrying them one by one into a safe place. Forrest describes this situation as seen in the quotation below:

But halfway out I nearly step on a feller from 2nd platoon who is mighty hurt, an he look up at me with his han out, an so I think, shit, what can I do? So I grap him up an run back with him fast as I can. Bullets an stuff be flyin all over ... I brung that boy back an run out again an damn if I don't come across somebody else. So I reach down to pick him up an bring him back, too, (28)

In this situation, Forrest's bravery is seen from how he ignores all the danger that takes place before his eyes. The danger in this situation is strengthened by the fact that Forrest also gets a shot in his buttocks, as he narrates, "I got myself shot, an, as luck would have it, I was hit in the ass. I can't even remember it. We was all in awful shape. I don't know what happened. Everthing all fouled up." (29) In order to save his comrades, Forrest ignores all of the danger and shows no fear of it.

Due to his act of heroism, Forrest gets a Congressional Medal of Honor from the President of the .U.S. The Medal of Honor itself is the highest award given to a soldier for their valor or bravery. It shows that even though Forrest has an intellectual limitation, his positive quality leads him to become someone who is

worthy; moreover, he gets a Congressional Medal of Honor, which is a great achievement as not everyone can get it easily.

The second proof that reveals Forrest as a brave person is his action when he saves President Mao from drowning. When President Mao is swimming in a river for publicity, he accidentally drowns into the riverbed. Realizing that President Mao's does not appear to the surface for a long period of time, Forrest jumps into the river to save President Mao. This situation can be seen from Forrest's narration, "Not too long after that, Chairman Mao wave for a third time, an suddenly it begun to dawn on everbody that he is not waving, he is drownin!" (39) After diving down for three or four times, Forrest finally manages to bring President Mao back to the surface and saves his life, as Forrest narrates, "I say, they hell with this, cause I saw where he went under, an I thowed off my shoes an into the river I went. . . . I dived down three or four times an sure enough, I bumped into the ole bastid floatin around underwater. I haul him up an some Chinamen grapped him an thowed him in the boat an took off." (39).

Due to his action of saving President Mao's life, Forrest is honored as Chinese national hero. It is shown from Forrest's narration, "But what has happen in the meanwhile is that on account of my pullin ole Chairman Mao out of the river, I has become sort of a national hero to the Chinamen." (39) From his action, it can be seen that Forrest is a brave person. It shows that Forrest puts aside his own comfort to save other's life despite the difficulty he gets. It is shown by how he struggles to find President Mao underwater by diving for several times. This proof shows that even though Forrest has an intellectual limitation, his positive quality

brings him an achievement that not everyone can achieve, that is, being a national hero.

The last proof is when Forrest manages to run away from a cannibal tribe. It happens when Forrest and his team are stranded in New Guinea after their spaceship crashes. In New Guinea, they are forced to do forced labor by farming cotton by a local tribe which is headed by a man called Big Sam. One day, Big Sam's tribe is attacked by a cannibal tribe. Forrest and his team are tied up by the cannibals, meanwhile Big Sam's natives are about to be boiled to death. Forrest describes this situation in his narration, "Then a bunch of other pygmies come an cut us down an tie our hans an feet an lead us back to the village. . . . They has captured Big Sam an all his natives an has them tied up han an foot too. Look like they is bout to thow them into the boilin pot." (66)

After the whole of Big Sam's tribe has been boiled, Forrest and his team are about to be boiled as well. Knowing that they are in danger, Forrest comes out with an idea. After knowing that the cannibal king really loves American music, Forrest makes an escape plan. He tells the king that he can play harmonica, and also Sue and Major Fritch, who are Forrest's team, can play spear and knife as music instruments.

The first thing that Forrest does is to buy some times by playing harmonica, so that the king would believe that Forrest and his team are real musicians. This situation is described in Forrest's narration, "I get out my harmonica an start playin a little tune— "De Camptown Races." King of the pygmies listen for a minute, then he start clappin his hans an doin what look to be a clog dance." (67) As soon as the cannibals lend them a knife, at Forrest's command, Sue hits the cannibal king with

the knife. After that Forrest and his team run off to the jungle and they succeed to escape from the cannibals. This situation is described in Forrest's narration, "Soon as we get the spears an knives, I say, "Okay— now!" an ole Sue conk the king of the pygmies over the head with his spear an Major Fritch threatened a couple of pygmies with her knives an we run off into the jungle with the pygmies in hot pursuit." (67)

In this event, Forrest's bravery is shown by the fact that he can still think clearly even though he knows that he and his team are in a real danger. He is also brave enough to make such a risky action without showing fear of the dangerous situation he is in. Moreover, in this near-death situation Forrest manages to come out with an idea which brings him and his team into safety. Due to Forrest's act of bravery, the President of the U.S.A throws a big welcome reception for Forrest. This situation is described in Forrest's narration, " . . . as we landed in Washington bout a million people was on han, cheerin an clappin an actin like they is glad to see me. . . . they was takin me to the White House to see the President." (68) This positive quality of Forrest's leads him to being someone who is able to make a very risky decision in a difficult situation. Moreover, it makes him to be invited to the White House again, which is a great thing for someone with an intellectual deficiency. Thus, through Forrest's positive qualities or characteristics, it is revealed that the theme of this novel is, "In life, individuals may be able to achieve great things with their positive qualities despite the intellectual limitations they have."

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the portrayal of the protagonist in Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump*, I would draw some conclusions. Forrest Gump, the protagonist, is a man with an IQ of 70. Due to his intellectual limitation, Forrest has to struggle more than normal people in doing things. However, Forrest's limitation leads him into an adventurous and meaningful journey. Despite his limitation, Forrest manages to be someone who can achieve many great things that even anyone without an intellectual limitation cannot achieve. Thus I come out with a theme statement, which is, "In life, individuals may be able to achieve great things with their positive qualities despite the intellectual limitation they have." After analysing the protagonist, I found what makes Forrest able to achieve many great things in his life is his positive qualities, which are selfless, persevering, and brave.

The first positive quality of Forrest's, which is selfless is revealed through several proofs. The first proof is when Forrest saves his injured comrades' lives in the Vietnam War. Due to this act, Forrest is honored Congressional Medal of Honor by the President of the U.S.A. The second proof is when he saves President

Mao, the president of the People's Republic of China, from drowning. Due to his act of heroism, the Chinese government honors Forrest the Chinese National Hero. The third proof is when Forrest decides to give eighty percents of what he gets from the shrimp business to Jenny and her son. The only reason why Forrest gives eighty percents of his wealth is to ensure Jenny and his son's welfare. Due to this action, Forrest achieves to be someone who is able to sacrifice himself for the people he loves. These proofs show that Forrest is a selfless person due to the fact that Forrest always prioritizes the others before himself.

The second positive quality that Forrest has is persevering. This positive quality is revealed through several proofs. The first proof is when Forrest manages to become part of the all-state football team even though he has a problem understanding how the game works. Due to his perseverance, Forrest is awarded to be a part of the All-State Football team, which means he has played very well during the season. The second proof is the fact that Forrest struggles in getting money to fund his shrimp business as a wrestler. While being a wrestler, Forrest experiences some difficulties, such as being humiliated, experiencing violence, and disagreement from his loved one Jenny. However, Forrest decides to keep on being a wrestler because he needs the money so badly to start his own shrimp business. The third proof is when he is trying to make a better life for his mother. To make his mother's life better, Forrest struggles to make his shrimp business successful, so that he could finance his mother. Being a shrimp harvester is not easy for Forrest in the beginning. He has to stay in an inappropriate place and does not have any appropriate equipment to harvest the shrimp. However, eventually the business turns into success after some rigorous processes and he is

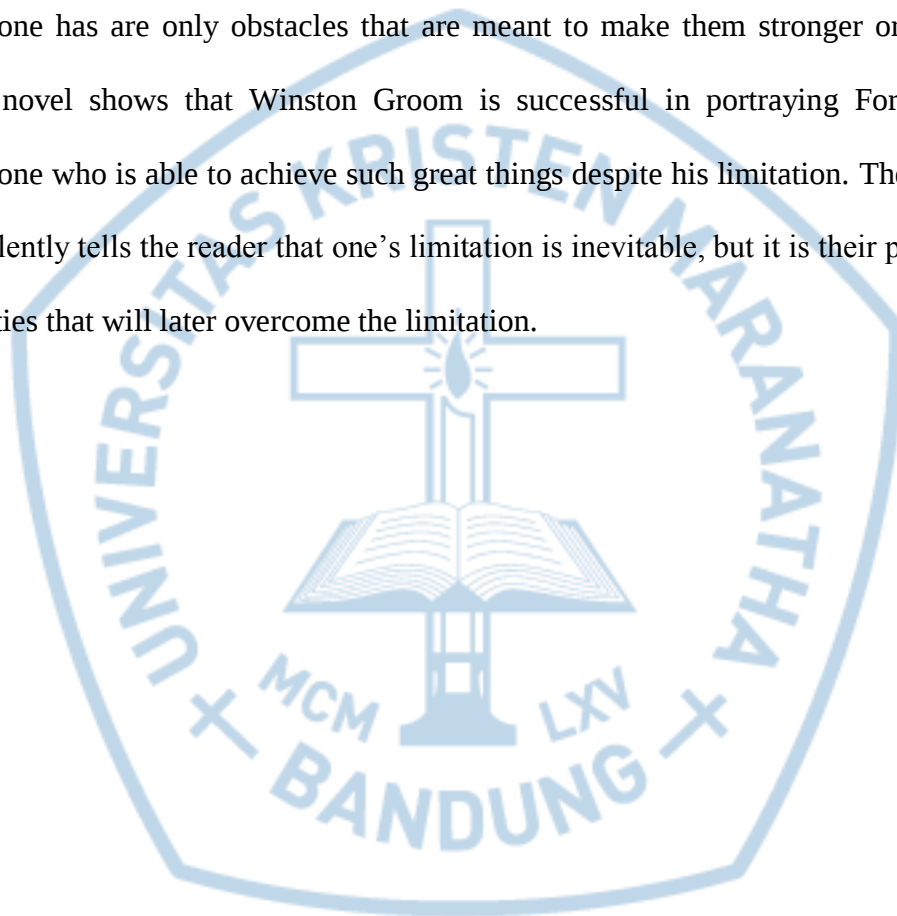
able to make his mother proud. These proofs show that Forrest is a persevering person as Forrest always struggles and goes the extra miles to achieve his aims despite the difficulties he experiences.

The third characteristic is that Forrest is brave. This positive quality can be seen from several proofs. The first proof is when Forrest saves his injured comrades in the Vietnam War. He finds that a lot of his teammates are injured, subsequently he helps them by carrying them one by one into a safe place. The second proof that reveals Forrest as a brave person is his action when he saves President Mao from drowning. Due to his act of bravery, Forrest is honored the Chinese National Hero. The third proof is when Forrest manages to run away from a cannibal tribe. It happens when Forrest and his team are stranded in New Guinea. When finding the tribe king is off guard, Forrest commands Sue and Major Fritch to hit the tribe king's head, and they can subsequently run away from the cannibal tribe. Due to Forrest's act of bravery, the President of the U.S.A throws a big welcome reception for Forrest. Moreover, it makes him invited to the White House again. These proofs show that Forrest is a brave person as Forrest shows no fear of the dangerous things to save others' lives.

After analyzing the action, reaction and speech of the protagonist, I can clearly see that the protagonist's characteristics are the aspect that makes Forrest able to achieve the great things in his life. Even though Forrest is living with an intellectual limitation, it does not mean that his life would be a failure. Forrest's selflessness, perseverance, and bravery lead him to be someone who can even surpass people without an intellectual limitation like him. The author Winston

Groom smartly puts these characteristics to show that Forrest struggles and overcomes many of the obstacles even though he has a major limitation.

Personally, I found that Forrest's journey can be related with anybody's life. For instance, it shows that someone's deficiency or limitation cannot stop them from being someone who is successful or excels. It is one's positive qualities that will lead them to the point they want to reach. Moreover, the limitations that someone has are only obstacles that are meant to make them stronger or learn. This novel shows that Winston Groom is successful in portraying Forrest as someone who is able to achieve such great things despite his limitation. The novel excellently tells the reader that one's limitation is inevitable, but it is their positive qualities that will later overcome the limitation.



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