

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 History of Structuralism

First time structuralism approaches to literature, it faced some difficulties with the ancient belief of people at that time. Since long time ago, people believe that story is a reflection of the author's imagination, thought, and feeling. Some people even have assumption that a good book is the book that tells about the truth of human's life. In the other side, structuralism try to convinced people that literary work has no truth function. (Selden, Widdowson, Broker, 1997: 66-67)

For structuralists, the most important thing is the systems of organization themselves. These structures are similar to Saussure's concept of language. They signify a system of differences that managed the possibilities of their contents, which are similar to the concept of parole. Sausurre defines parole as the individual realization of the system in actual instances of language. (Selden, Widdowson, Broker, 1997: 66-67)

2.2 The Scope of Structuralism

According to Peter Barry in his book the “Beginning Theory”(1995 : 46-47), the scope of structuralism theory is not limited only in language and literature. It has been shown in some analysis and study of many experts in this field. For example is the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss who applied the point of view of structuralist into the interpretation of myth story. Here he applied structuralism in the field of history and culture. The things that he has done can be said as the structuralist process of moving from something particular to something general by positioning the individual work within a wider structural context.

It does not stop up to the application above. Even structuralism can be applied in the scope of fashion. From its point of view, fashion can be read like a language. Fashion does have the complex rules as we said it is grammatical rules in language. For example we do not come to a party with evening clothes or we do not combine our picnic clothes with high heels shoes for a party. Therefore, we can say that structural context is giving the meaning for each component (Barry, 1995: 46-49).

The role of structuralism analysis also can be seen in the field of cultural studies. It is shown in the study of Roland Barthes who applied the method of structuralism to the general picture of modern culture in France 1950s. He analyze

things that never been analyze before by people, such as the different between boxing and wrestling. His analysis then brings structuralism as a very popular study in Paris and world wide (Barry, 1995: 46-49).

From all the explanations above it can be concluded that structuralism has passed many process of observations and applications in many field of work. After many years it already develops into wide, sharp, and simple theory which can be applied as an approach in analyzing some particular topics. Besides that, from the explanations above it can also be concluded that structuralism is not only can be applied to language and literature, but also to human's life style and culture.

2.3 The Structuralism Criticism Theory of Tzvetan Todorov

Based on Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker in their book "A Reader Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory" (1997 : 75-76), Tzvetan Todorov's works in structuralism criticism theory are categorized in the structuralist narratology field. It is the field in structuralism which studies a text by examining the structure to find out its relationship with language. It is essential to remember that we can not identify *language* and *literature*. The two things are not identical in structure, although literature does use the language as its medium.

Through his study of literature, Todorov classify it into 3 groups which are verbal, syntactic, and textual semantic aspects (Todorov, 1985, 12). These aspects actually have been known since years ago with different terminologies. The ancient rhétorique called describes them as *elocutio* (verbal), *dispositio* (syntactic), and *inventio* (semantic). The Russian Formalist classifies them as *stylistique*, *composition*, and *thématique* (Todorov, 1985, 12).

Tzvetan Todorov in his book “*Qu’est-ce que le structuralisme? 2.Poétique*” which has been translated into “*Tata Sastra*”, stated that each literary work can be interpreted into smallest element (Todorov, 1985: 40).

“Kini kita beralih pada masalah-masalah pengkajian sastra yang terakhir, yang dikumpulkan dengan nama aspek sintaksis sebuah teks. Disini diperlihatkan bahwa setiap karya dapat diuraikan dalam unsur-unsur terkecil. Jenis hubungan yang terdapat antara unsur-unsur yang ada inilah yang dapat digunakan sebagai kriteria pertama untuk membedakan satu struktural tekstual dengan yang lainnya.”

In quotation above and in correlation with previous paragraph, Todorov says that there are some aspects which become the key factor in recitation of literature. The statement above is the statement of Tzvetan Todorov that there is syntactic aspect in a text which can also be interpreted into the smallest elements. This kind of aspect can be used in further to differentiate the structural of a text. It can also be said as the final recitation of literature.

The works of Tzvetan Todorov can be considered as the last summary of the other structuralists such as Greimas, Propp, and others (Selden, Widdowson, Broker, 1997: 75). He once again stated all the syntactic rules of language by establishing three units of narrative. Start from the smallest unit of narrative is *proposition*, and then it grows to the higher levels called *sequence* and the *text*. The proposition can be an *agent / subject* (person) or a *predicate* (an action). For example, by using Todorov's method,

here are some propositions:

X = Man	X marries Y
Y = Woman	Z kidnaps Y
Z = Monster	

The example above can be considered as narrative sentence. There are *subject* (X, Y, Z) and *predicate* (Married, kidnap).

Then a group of propositions will form a sequence. The basic sequence could be made up of five propositions which might be designed like this:

Equilibrium ¹	(e.g. Peace)
Force ¹	(Enemy invades)
Disequilibrium	(War)
Force ²	(Enemy is defeated)
Equilibrium ²	(Peace on new terms)

If we apply the propositions above to the novel “Cinderella Man”, then the propositions might be design like this:

Equilibrium¹ (Glory as a winner)
 Force¹ (Entering the Great Depression Era)
 Disequilibrium(Series of hard life)
 Force² (Win the world heavyweight championship)
 Equilibrium² (Glory on new terms)

At the end, the sequences will form a text. There are several ways to organize the sequences. Some of those ways are by embedding (story within story, digression), it can also by linking (string of sequences), or by alternation (interlacing of sequences), or by a combination of these. (Selden, Widdowson, Broker, 1997: 75-76)

2.4 The Synopsis of “Cinderella Man”

The novel “*Cinderella Man*” was inspired by the true story of legendary athlete James J. Braddock. So this novel is written based on the story of Jim Braddock’s career as boxer and also his life.

The story begin in November 1928, a year before the Great Depression, when Jim Braddock had a fights against Gerald “Tuffy” Griffith seized the Light Heavyweight Championship title. It was the golden era of Jim Braddock. He successfully defeats Griffith and gets the championship title. Less then a year after he win the fight, the

nation was hit by a crash and unexpectedly enters the Great Depression era in 1929. The Depression affected almost all level of the nation include middle class people such as Jim Braddock. Then everything had changed, Jim lost almost all he had achieved during his career.

Since the Depression, Jim suffered string of loses and his career was very bad. He not always gets match so he had to work any job to support his family. There are so many difficulties he must face during the Depression. Doing a backbreaking work at the dock, working so hard for very small cash, struggling to pay a past due, all of that have been horrible routines for him.

Everything gets worse when he broke his right hand on a fight against Abe Feldman. The violation for going into the ring with injured hand has caused him being dismissed by the boxing commissioners. He could not have a fight anymore, which means that he could not earn extra money from it. He then can only depend on the work at the dock. Working by using only left hand is almost like to kill Jim, but he keep fighting and hardly refused to give up.

Months after that, when his right hand was free from its cast, everything seems to grow better. Then he got his second chance to once again change his life. Gould reveals to Jim that the commissioners have decided to give him a second chance. Jim got a

match against Corn Griffin after retired for so long. For everyone amazement he win the match and keep winning after that. Until the waves of faith and as the result of his hard work, he got a chance to fight for the World Heavyweight Championship title against the champion, Max Baer.

During the times, Jim Braddock unconsciously has been the inspiration for most of American peoples especially them who suffer hard times like him. Jim Braddock become a hero for most people and by having people's support, Jim finally wins the match against Max Baer and he becomes the new World Heavyweight Champion.

Jim Braddock holds the title for 2 years until 1937. After then he released the titled to a young promising boxer Joe Louis after lose the fight on the eight round. Jim Braddock has achieved everything for he got nothing to lose for the match. He ever been a champion, he has a happy family, and also the value as an American people.

2.5 American Values (Life, Liberty, and pursuit of Happiness) in *Cinderella Man*

American is a nation which has a great diversity / pluralism of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups, among any other nation in the world. Due to the history of United State as “the land of opportunity”, American people then set up a set of values.

The most basic values among those which define into three basic values: Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness was then declared in the Declaration of the Independence.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

--The Declaration of Independence—

(Datesman; Crandall; Kearny, 1997)

2.5.1 Life

Include in this value are *Individual Freedom* and *Self-Reliance*. Long time ago in 1776, the British colonial settlers declared their independence from England and established a new nation, the United State of America. There are no more the power of the kings, church, or noble family. They declared and believe that in the new nation, there will be an *individual freedom*, where there is no more interference from the government or any other parties.

To achieve this individual freedom, there will be a price should be paid called *self-reliance*. What meant by *self-reliance* here is the ability of an individual to take care and fix up everything they do and be responsible for the things. Due to there is no more

controls from any parties, individuals must learn to rely on themselves. (Datesman; Crandall; Kearny, 1997)

This is what value we can see from the character of James J. Braddock in *Cinderella Man* especially during the Great Depression. Jim Braddock always relies on himself to do anything. He decides everything he thinks is good for himself and his family. He believes on the decision he made, and nobody can influence him to change his mind, not even his own wife. For that freedom, he should rely on himself and cannot depend on any other people or parties.

...Before he left for the day to go to the loading dock, the coal company, the rail yards, or whoever would pay him a day's wage, he stood at the door and gazed at his family, unable to shake the fear that they would be gone—vanished, like his career and his fortune—by the time he returned home again. (Cerasini, 2005, 104)

2.5.2 Liberty

There is another reason why many people come to United State since centuries ago. It is the belief that everyone has a chance to succeed there. There is what American people claim as American Value: the *equality of opportunity*, since there are no titles of nobility or any other class system developed in the United State.

American people believe that every individual has *equal opportunity* to be succeeded. For doing so, there is also a price they should pay, it is *competition*. Since

everyone has the same chance, they must compete with others if they want to be succeeded. (Datesman; Crandall; Kearny, 1997)

We can find the same values on James J. Braddock's character. Jim Braddock believes that everyone has the same chance to improve their life, even though in a hard time like the life during Great Depression. That is why when he got the chance he called "*second chance*", he does his best to use it, and he no doubt compete with the other fighter to reach the success.

"I guess..." Braddock rubbed his chin. "I guess I'm grateful for the opportunity. Not everybody gets a second chance these days..." His eyes claimed Mae's. "I guess I got a lot to be grateful for."
(Cerasini, 2005, 191)

2.5.3 Pursuit of Happiness

The third important reason why people formerly came to United State is to have a better life. People wish to raise their standard of living more than they have in their former nation. For that reason, *material wealth* becomes a value to the American people. They pursuit of what they called happiness for their life, which is achievement of material success (Datesman; Crandall; Kearny, 1997).

Price should be paid by American people for the material wealth is *hard work*. They believe there is no way people can succeed if they do not work very hard. But it

does not mean that American people are loving only materials thing. In fact, they do have other values and ideals. (Datesman; Crandall; Kearny, 1997)

Similar values also represented in James J. Braddock's character. Suffering years of losing anything, Jim Braddock feels exhausted. Therefore, he always works hard in order to change the condition. He believes that there will be a fight to be won, and he also believes there will be a way to pursuit of Happiness for himself and his family.

Jim found Mae's eyes. "May be I know what I'm fighting for this time around."

"Yeah, what's that?"

Jim shifted in his chair, adjusted his tie. "I just got tired of the empty milk bottles, is all."

(Cerasini, 2005, 193)

2.6 The American Great Depression and the New Deal

Since the novel discussed in this thesis is about the American Great Depression Era, it is necessary for writer to give brief information about the history of American Great Depression (1929-1941) and also some information about the national policy during the years stated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the New Deal.

2.6.1 The American Great Depression (1929-1941)

In October 1929, the stock market crashed and the United States of America enters the Great Depression Era. The depression hit the nation very hard and the stock

market collapsed. In the same time, the politicians and industry leaders still believe that the condition was just a temporary manner and it will grow better. The fact that happened was far from the prediction. The Depression had gone deepened, no more confidence and many people lost their life savings. Situation getting worse in 1933 when the value of stock on the New York Stock Exchange was less than a fifth of what it had been at its peak in 1929. Business houses closed, factories shut down and banks collapse. Agricultural income fell some 50 percent from it used to be. By 1932 approximately one out of every four Americans was unemployed (*Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika, Perpustakaan FIB UI*).

The main problem for America was the huge differences between the country's capacity to do production and the ability of people to consume. Great innovations in productive techniques during and after the World War I raised the output of industry beyond the purchasing capacity of U.S. farmers and wage earners. Many people especially them from wealthy and middle class speculated in stock market or real estate. When the stock market collapse, suddenly all their hope gone and like a high structure that had been leveled to the ground (*Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika, Perpustakaan FIB UI*).

The Presidential campaign in 1932 had brought something that might be able to be the remedial for the Great Depression. Herbert Hoover, who was the President before and during the Great Depression, can not set the wheels of industry in motion again. His Democratic opponent, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was the governor of New York during the Depression, argued that the Depression comes from the defected U.S. economy. In the other side, Hoover said that the economy was actually normal, it just affected by worldwide depression. From their opinion about what happened to America at that time, people start to thought that Hoover had to depend widely on natural processes of recovery, while Roosevelt was prepared to use the federal government's authority for bold experimental remedies. Hoover's way will take much time and Roosevelt will be the opposite.

Then the election resulted in a great victory for Roosevelt. With Roosevelt as the new President, the United States was about to enter a new era of economic and political change. By 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt set up a program called the New Deal. To build up the spirit and optimism of the nation, the President declared in his first address to the nation "*The only thing we have to fear is fear itself*" (*Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika, Perpustakaan FIB UI*).

2.6.2 The New Deal

First time the New Deal was introduced in 1933, only a year after President Franklin D. Roosevelt won the election against previous President Herbert Hoover. The effect of the New Deal that could be seen in those times was the increase of people's optimism and self confidence. (*Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika, Perpustakaan FIB UI*)

In some particular sides, it could be said that actually New Deal only reintroduced the typical reformation of social and economic which being known long time ago in Europe. Besides, New Deal also decreased the influence of *laissez-faire* (economics matters without intervention from government). America back to the era where there were so many government regulations toward the social economics matters in the nation. (Nelson Manfred Blake, 485-486)

What really new about New Deal was how fast the regulations being made. It took only a short time to set up the regulations. Therefore, there were so many critics and complain to the cabinet of Roosevelt. Surprisingly, by those actions made by government, they successfully bring back the interest of American people toward their government and national matters. (*Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika, Perpustakaan FIB UI*)

The New Deal penetrated almost in all sector of social and economics matters. The government started to manage the problems of unemployment by sending the young people to a camp and gave them job with certain payment. Besides, the government also penetrated to agricultural field by issuing the Agricultural Adjustment Act which supplied the farmers economically. It also took part in reformed the Industrial and Workforce sectors. One act that popular in this field was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) which issued by the National Recovery Administration (NRA).
(Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika, Perpustakaan FIB UI)

In it early first years, New Deal had made a lot of changes in many sectors, but still it could not completely remove the Depression Era. There even so many complain and disagreements appeared from politicians and economy practical. Facing so many aggressions, President Roosevelt made some movements to support a series of new steps in economy and social. Some of them were the war against poverty, fight the unemployment by opened as much as work field instead of giving fund support, and also provided the social security network. (Nelson Manfred Blake, 485-486)

At the end of Great Depression Era, the New Deal could be said as a brave movement made by government to reform their system in order to prevent the national economical and social foundation. It prove that to get away out of a national problem,

the government should be able to takes any movement and dare to face the critics from its people. Besides, the people must support and give chance to the government to put their best efforts to lead their nation.