

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Generally, Utopia is an imaginary and indefinite place. In Merriam Webster dictionary, the word “Utopia” means “a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions”. Utopia in its broadest sense generally refers to a hypothetical of perfect society. As a view of a perfect world, Thomas More has coined it in the 16th century in his book Utopia (1551). Furthermore, before the term “utopia” is generally used, the term utopian Impulse or desire to imagine and create a perfect society had already been found in Ancient Greece and Rome. In the book The Utopian Impulse by Sylva Sylvarum in 1951, mentioned: “Looking at a range of items, including Platonic dialogues, architectural treatises and plans, literary and theatrical works, historical documents and texts, and maps of real and imagined places, this exhibition explores the many ways that the utopian impulse has found expression in the western world” (2). However, so many cultural works imagine the kind of utopian world since a long time ago. Architectural treatises, historical texts, and literary works contain utopian, which is the ideal and perfect structure of society. It proves that utopia is not the new term in the literary world.

In the 15th through 18th centuries, however, there was a dramatic increase in expressions of the utopia for many reasons. One of that factor is the Italian

Renaissance, which is the “rebirth” of ancient ideas including a focus on the planning of ideal cities and societies. However, the rebirth of ancient ideas from Italian Renaissance was not merely the application of Utopian ideals. Thus, this showed that Utopia would not be achieved without a work.

According to Sylvarum, this “New World” seem to offer the potential for the actual creation of ideal communities (1951:4). However, since literature is a reflection of a real life, according to Adam Roberts in Fredric Jameson (2000), every text has two levels of meaning, manifest and latent content (60-62). It means that every work implies something in real situation of human’s life. Additionally, it is also believe contains unconscious sides that offers imaginary solutions by picturing conflicts as human’s tendency and social contradictions. In particular, each literary work can be viewed using the viewpoint of Jameson, ranging from classic until contemporary works. It means that it is not only the literary works that have a high philosophical value, but also popular works. One of the famous popular works in its time is The Lone Ranger Rides.

The Lone Ranger as radio script is a work that had found success in radio show in 1933 during Great Depression. The period of the Great Depression causes many impacts on the lives of American society at the time, around the year 1929 - 1939. Meanwhile, it was expanded into books, television series, comics, and motion pictures. Consequently, it created popular culture figure that became iconic on its time. He is The Lone Ranger.

Born in Buffalo, New York, in 1903, American author Francis Hamilton Striker has created some of the most indelible characters that is present in pop culture today, including The Lone Ranger and The Green Hornet. Both of his works have enjoyed tremendous success on radio broadcast and television, in comic books, and as film adaptations and novelizations. Striker is a prolific writer who has produced 156 Lone Ranger scripts in a single year, while simultaneously wrote stories for The Green Hornet, submitted comic strips and worked on novelizations of The Lone Ranger.

The Lone Ranger Rides is the one of the 156 scripts written by Fran Striker which was also adapted into novel. First, this novel was a radio script that was broadcasted after post-first world war in the United States. Moreover, The Lone Ranger Rides was an action adventure novel written during the Great Depression era in United States.

Nowadays, The Lone Ranger has become one of the iconic popular culture's figures in the United States. He remain as someone beyond famous figure, with his mask, as representation of the outlaw's hero figure in his era even until today. However, the writer is interested to analyze this novel because the iconic Lone Ranger is one of the important figures of American pop culture. He has the big impact of popular culture to the American people. Thus, the writer hopes the reader knows what kind of collective desire that is hoped by people on this iconic figure. Moreover, it is related to the social crisis that was latent in American conditions during the Great Depression.

The Lone Ranger Rides tells the story of the main character, the Lone Ranger,

an outlaw ranger who is looking for justice for all the people in his country. His fighting with the robbery, crimes, and murder is the action to uphold the justice. He also believes that spread wealth to all the people in his country is a kind of the way to make the world better.

In short, the story tells the struggle of The Lone Ranger to uphold justice during the Great Depression, while law on his period is not in stable. Interestingly, during his duty to eradicate the crimes, The Lone Ranger who is seriously injured has rescued by the Indian named Tonto. Tonto is the last remaining Indian after the massacre of the “white people” against the Indian in the colonial era, for the sake of stealing the silver mine. Shortly afterward Tonto and the Lone Ranger cooperate in doing their mission to catch the robbers and to avenge the death of other five Rangers. The Lone Ranger with his Indian friend, Tonto, want to uphold justice in Texas, where people are interested to money and opulence. However, friendship and closeness between the Lone Ranger and Tonto, as an Indian, gives an overview and symbol that is far from presumption of racism.

In accordance with this condition, the writer identifies and focuses on social contradiction as inevitable impact of capitalism. In order to fully understand the impact of capitalism, it is important to state Marxist thought as the basic theory. The writer believes that this story contain social critique about the system through the narrative if we read this novel deeply. To explore the idea, the writer found a method that seems appropriate to analyse this novel that is from perspective of Utopia by Fredric Jameson.

In every literary text we can find the presentation of progressive sides and reactionary sides; or what Jameson call as with totality. Accordingly, this research focus on the utopian impulses that is reflected in the story of The Lone Ranger Rides. The writer assumes it is quite interesting to analyse how utopian impulses reflected in action/adventure novel.

This study generally finds and proves how text proposes utopian impulse through the intrinsic elements. Afterward, the writer demonstrates how the text presents utopian impulses to show the progressive voice of the text. These reading later will reveal the unconscious side of the text in order to prove how important this story in its participation in class-conflict. The writer was keen to raise this novel as research material which is a requirement of undergraduate thesis of English Department. Finally, this research is entitled: **The Utopian Impulses during the Great Depression in Fran Striker's The Lone Ranger Rides.**

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Literary works always represents the socio economic problems in an environment or society. The problems such as crime, injustice in law enforcement, and racism in The Lone Ranger Rides come as reflection of socio economic condition of society. The writer wants to know how the view of the ideal society is reflected in the novel, especially in the post-first world war in America during the Great Depression

that happens in 1929-1939.

This research focus on how the iconic figure, The Lone Ranger, in this novel brings a hope or collective desire as reflection of socio economic problems in society. Furthermore, the text has likely offered an optimistic solution for the problems of American society. Moreover, it is important to answer the question: How does the text The Lone Ranger Rides play its role as a critique for society during Great Depression era?

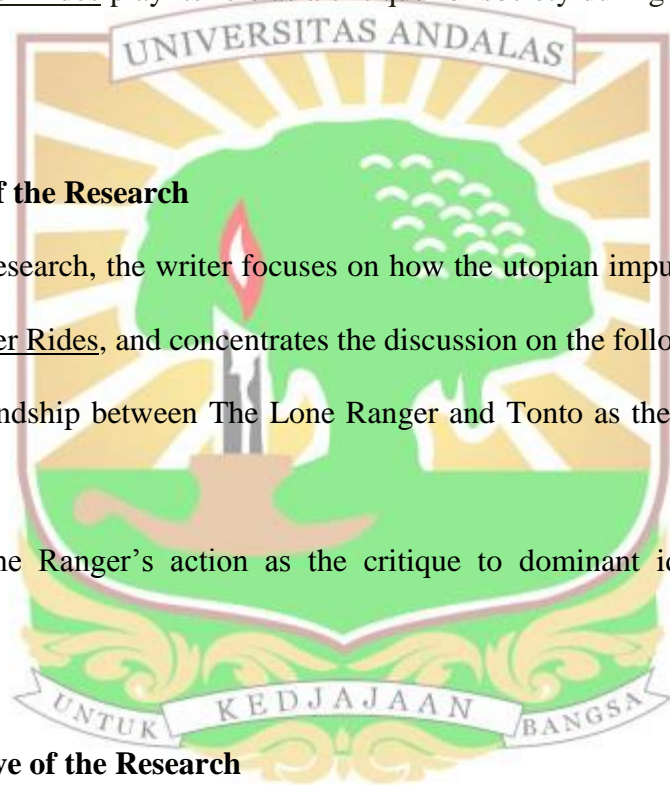
1.3 Scope of the Research

In this research, the writer focuses on how the utopian impulse is reflected in The Lone Ranger Rides, and concentrates the discussion on the following issues:

1. The friendship between The Lone Ranger and Tonto as the critique to racial prejudice.
2. The Lone Ranger's action as the critique to dominant ideology in Great Depression.

1.4 Objective of the Research

This research will be conducted as a contribution for sociological sphere in literary criticism research. The writer assumes that there is less research regarding The Lone Ranger Rides. Hence, the writer hopes it explain the function of the text as ideological tools as a progressive source that criticize that system by the application of Jameson's Political Unconscious through The Lone Ranger Rides story.



Hopefully, the reader of this novel could be more aware with this issue and can take something good from this study. In the end, the writer hopes that this research can assist readers to gain a wider perspective about the application of Political Unconscious in literary work.

1.5 Review of Related Studies

In doing this research, after doing the library research and internet browsing, the writer did not find a thesis about The Lone Ranger Rides. Afterward to support this study, the writer added several studies that were found such as; articles and literary researches that have same theory to this analysis. There are some articles and journal that the writer uses to support this thesis.

In the article “The Lone Ranger: Justice from Outside the Law” by Robert Siegel and Gary Hoppenstand, American Studies professor, and editor of the scholarly *Journal of Popular Culture* in 2008, they rank the Lone Ranger among a handful of important iconic figures in American popular culture. They state “He's a vigilante lawman who protects the criminal justice system by working outside it — a hero made for radio audiences of the Great Depression” (8). In addition, Siegel and Hoppenstand approve that The Lone Ranger is a figure that entertained the people during Great Depression era. The article also quoted Frank Striker who said "If the Lone Ranger accepts the Indian as his closest companion, it's obvious to the child listener that great men have no racial or religious prejudice". It means that The Lone Ranger is a character who accepts people no matter what their race or religion. This article convinces the

writer to do this research. Moreover, the article is different from what the writer does because it only deals with the importance of Lone Ranger for America as iconic figure.

In the next article by Nina Rothberg entitled “Native American Spatial Imaginaries and Notions of Erasure in Sherman Alexie’s *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*” in 2015, she states “The Native American identity in The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven finds space for expression in the third spatial imaginary, the collage-dreamscape of Indian imagination” (67). Rothberg’s article attempts to appoint The Lone Ranger from an Indian perspective. She believes that The Lone Ranger expresses the Indian imagination and it gives a space for Native American to create the utopian world.

In addition, Rothberg also says, “This passage is emblematic of the third space, a literary and imagined place that defines Western configurations of logic and temporal linearity, a space in which a new language is born from ancient legend and defiant claiming, resisting the past of European domination” (2015:67). Rothberg believes The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven is a counter of white tyrannical pressure to the Native American. However, this is also different from the writer’s research.

The articles above support the writer’s research and then help the writer in conducting this research. The first article by Robert Siegel discussed about The Lone Ranger as the hero that find justice from outside the law. And article by Rothberg found that The Lone Ranger is an imaginary or utopian by Indian people.

In conducting this research, the writer also adds a thesis by Andira Clara

Aksarani entitled “The Dilemmatic of Presence of Robots: Utopian Desires and Its Challenging in Sci-Fi Omnibus; Isaac Asimov’s *I, Robot*” (2015) as a previous studies. From this thesis the writer summarizes that with the political unconscious, this thesis has proved that *I, Robot* can be read as having two ideas or interpretations. This text can be understood to be critical of the contradictions in the capitalist system, and at once the text also supportive of that system.

However, Aksarani proves that human characters are isolated in the world of work and are just obsessed solely on money and profit, so that human beings become objects and life becomes a matter of numbers. *I, Robot* shows a loud protest against reification symptoms in the relationship between humans and the robot or a machine which exchange functions and roles between them. This article use the same theory with the writer use.

None of those articles above has similar scope with the writer’s research. Above all, the writer has just found few writing of journal articles on *The Lone Ranger* that is used to help the writer to complete this research. Hence, this research is the new research about The Lone Ranger Rides which is discussed about utopian impulse with Marxist perspective supported by Political Unconscious theory of Jameson.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This research will focus on mimetic theory; a literary work is a reflection of the real world. M. H. Abrams in Glossary of Literary Terms (1999), he stated that, —In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines poetry [literary work] as an imitation (in Greek, mimesis)

of human actions. By "imitation" he means something like representation" (123). Aristotle defines the literary works as the imitation of the real world. Then, we can compare the literary works with the worlds as the witnesses of the society itself.

In literary world, a theory that talks about society is Marxism. Hence, the writer applies Marxist criticism as the basic criticism to the novel. Marxism believes that the text is the product of social condition of human life. We can see something that is hidden behind the reality. It is not just the content of a work but also the structure of the text. In his book Fredric Jameson (1971) Roberts mentions that "Marx believed that all the things we observe in human life, from poverty and wealth to religion, art, politics, and even sport, are all determined by the economic relations between people" (17). The writer summarizes that according to Jameson, everything that exists in this world can be seen as the product of economic relations between people. So we can observe all the things in this world using Marxist perspective including literary texts.

In this research the writer uses Political Unconscious as the theory to analyze The Lone Ranger Rides. This concept is traditionally associated by Marxist practicing of the ideological analysis. It is developed by Fredric Jameson, the most prominent American theorist and Marxist critics. However, Jameson has been expanded the reach of his idea to analyse cultural products. In addition, Jameson focuses on text which always has historical moment where in this context it is all about conflict to take over power between two classes, capitalist and proletarian (1971).

The writer also use some quotation to support this analysis. Peter Barry states

in his book, Beginning Theory (2000), that Marxist sees literary works that “...constantly formed by their social context in ways which they themselves would usually not admit. This is true not just of the content of their works but even of formal aspects of their writing which might at first seem to have no possible political overtones” (158).

According to Barry, Marxism sees that all aspects in social life based on economic and political overtones. If we relate it with the novel, *The Lone Ranger* faces the common ideologies that is believed in society. Hence, he fights for equality and spread the wealth to all the people.

As the framework, the writer adds an insight of Marxist critic that any cultural texts produced in these historical and political contexts need to be read as ideological. According to Roberts in Fredric Jameson, for Marx, ‘ideology’ was ‘false consciousness,’ a set of beliefs that obscured the truth of the economic basis of society and the violent oppression that capitalism necessarily entails (13). Subsequently, Marxist thinkers have refined Marx’s original simple conception of ‘ideology’ that Roberts says, “Ideology becomes the system of ideas by which people structure their experience of living in the world; this is not something straightforwardly ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but rather a complex network of relations and attitudes” (19). By using Marxism, it is discussed the impact of the emergences of capitalism.

Capitalist grows rich because the labourers that work for them produce goods, but they get less. Indeed, capitalism alienates them from themselves by seeing them in

terms production as production units and as objects rather than human beings. Furthermore, the capitalist mode of production generates a view of labourers, even world focuses on profit, in which ultimately function us as objects and become alienated from ourselves.

In capitalist society, this social contradiction is considered as natural thing, objective, and rational. Therefore, creativity, intellectuality, and love are not considered in human relation. Then this phenomenon turns everything into commodity, which is all matter only profitable matter, selling and buying. Aside from the description of problems, the writer also analyses the symbol of imaginary utopia which is considered as the imaginary solution.

Utopia is the term coined by Thomas More in his novel Utopia (1551). It is a place built by General Utopus where there are no wars; a place where people live peacefully even when they have a different race and religion. Utopia as Marxist term was brought by Ernst Bloch, a German Marxist philosopher. He introduced that the critique demonstrate the error of the bourgeois culture and ideology. His book, the Principle of Hope (1954), describes the utopian concept of something better from what we see in our real life; focused on social and political utopian, including technology and ideology. It is similar with Jameson thought in his book Marxism and Form in (1971). Jameson states “For Utopian thinking may be said to unite both the philosophical and the artistic impulse.... The impulse of fantasy, in which alone the pleasure principle remains pure and unrepressed, now negates the existing real

world...” (111).

The writer summarizes that Jameson sees literary works as the reflection and contain the perfect works that people want: the thing that never exists in the real world. The author escapes from real world and tries to create the utopia from their writing. Hence, unconsciously it can explain and reflect the social phenomenon or class conflict in society. It is something hidden in the manifest of text.

In order to find the meaning in a text, it considers two levels that are manifest and latent content. Jameson’s Political Unconscious also spreads the idea of Freud about repression. Therefore, Jameson says that narration contains story simultaneously depict characters, events, descriptions within narration, which has potential to present the traces of political unconscious. Jameson ties the aims of Political Unconscious in his book The Political Unconscious; Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (1981) a concept which adapts of the Freudian concept that each individual’s unconscious is repository of repressed desires, which Jameson describes as his collective or political.

The texts are the symptoms of the repression by a predominant ideology of the contradictions of “history” into the depths of the political unconscious and the content of this repressed history, as Jameson says “...that the *surface* meanings of the texts are not necessarily reliable indicators to the important stuff, to what is really going *underneath the surface*. A critic, by paying attention to the ‘symptom’ of the text, can access the unconscious ‘reality’” (Roberts 76).

According to Jameson, narratives requires interpretation, the interpretation is, essentially allegorical. Text is not only a form but it also has a symbolic meaning. The text have a strong connection to reality of social life in the capitalist era. Jameson asserts the revolutionary of the collective struggling to the wrest a realm of Freedom to a realm of Necessity (Jameson 3).

The writer also found other quotation to support the idea. According to Vincent Geoghegan in Marxism and Utopianism (1987) “The utopian impulse or mentality can however be found at all level of activity, in leisurely dreaming, in the various form of personal display, in eroticism, art, etc, etc,..” (15). As the reflection of reality, however, in every literary text we can see the presence of utopian impulses. Literary texts always bring the image of ideal or perfect world.

Furthermore, the aesthetic of Fredric Jameson’s idea is that it considers the text in his three horizons which interprets them as the political, social, and historical (modes of production). The *political* is a text that plots by some individual voice. The *social*, is the text that emergence into our awareness of its being a conflict of what Jameson calls “ideologemes” that is a sort of ideological atom, the smallest unit into which ideological discourse can be broken by analysis” (Roberts 90). Finally, the historical, which in terms of literary analysis, has to do through understanding the overlap of the succession modes of production as texts unfold in historical time.

Jameson argues for the primacy of Marxism, the horizon history and the socioeconomic, they totality provide the most comprehensive framework in which

gender, race, class, sexuality, myth, symbol, allegory, and other more limited concerns that can be explored and interpreted. Thus, Jameson's Marxism is far from conventional. He utilizes a dual hermeneutic of ideology and utopia to criticize the ideological components of cultural texts while setting their utopian dimension, which includes those visions of a better world that provide perspectives to criticize existing society. The writer use this Jameson perspective to analyze this novel.

Finally, like Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne say in their books, Marxist Literary Theory (1996), that interpretation grasps literary works as symbolic practices which provide imaginary and ideological solutions to otherwise unresolved socio-political contradictions (1). The literary works criticize the society and produce their own analysis on the perfect society. This argument is in the line with the Jameson's theory of utopia.

1.7 Method of the Research

There are three important steps used in the writing process of the thesis: collecting the data, analyzing the data and presenting the result of analysis. The first step is collecting the data using library and internet research. The writer commences it by exploring the concept which is related with object of the research, The Lone Ranger Rides, and theory that will be employed, Political Unconscious. The primary is the novel of The Lone Ranger Rides, while literary criticism, journal, thesis and literary theory book support as secondary sources.

1.7.1. Collecting Data

In order to collect the data, the writer uses two kinds of data in this research, the primary and secondary data. The primary data are taken from the works itself that are quotations, and the secondary data are taken from various sources that are related to this research such as literary theory books and articles. In conducting this research the writer also do library research and has found some articles to support this analysis.

1.7.2. Analyzing Data

To analyze data the writer applies phenomenological analysis in The Lone Ranger Rides. It applies Political Unconscious by Fredric Jameson which focus on Utopian Impulse based on Political Unconscious by Fredric Jameson.

1.7.3. Presenting Data

The writer applies descriptive method to present the analysis's results. The results include quotations which are taken from primary and secondary data as accurate evidence to support the research results.