

**THE STRUGGLE OF *PATCH ADAMS***  
**TO BE A DOCTOR IN TOM SHADYAC'S *PATCH ADAMS*:**  
**AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**



**RESEARCH PAPER**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*Patch Adams* is a comedy-drama film, it is directed by Tom Shadyac. Tom Shadyac is a director and executive producer. He has resulted *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, the smashed hit *The Nutty Professor*, *Liar Liar*, and in December 25, 1998 Shadyac released *Patch Adams* movie, written by Steve Oedekerk, based on the book "Gesundheit: Good Health is a Laughing Matter" by Hunter Doherty Adams and Maureen Mylander. Starring by Robin Williams (Patch Adams), Monica Potter (Carin Fisher), Bob Gunton (Dean Walcott), Daniel London (Truman Schiff), Philip Seymour Hoffman (Mitch Roman), Arthur Mandelson (Harold Gould) and Rudy (Michel Jeter)

This film is generally considered as a box-office success, grossing over twice its budget in the United States alone. This film was shot in the three locations: Treasure Island, California (near San Francisco), Asheville (North Carolina) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a diner in Point Richmond (a district in Richmond, California).

This film tells the story of Hunter "Patch" Adams (acted by Robin Williams) a doctor who believes in laughter as medicine and will do just about anything to make his patients laugh - even if it means risking his own career.

After a suicide attempt, Adams is treated in a mental institution, Fairfax Hospital, psychiatric wards. He is slated by Dr. Park who does not really

hear him. Then he meets Rudy (Michel Jeter) and Arthur Mandelson (Harold Gould) who change his life forever. They inspire him to become a doctor and discover that he is able to forget his own problems by helping others.

Two years later, he enrolls at Virginia Medical University and he is the oldest first year student. He is a smart student, he has many friends and develops relationship with a fellow student, Carin Fisher (Monica Potter). But everything does not go straight since he amusing the hospital patient. He applies his theory "Health is Laughing Matter", he was criticized in his official medical school record for "excessive happiness" and was once told by a faculty advisor, "If you want to be a clown, join the circus", and he did. He clashes with Dean Wallcot (Bob Gunton) because in his belief in the necessity of personal interaction with patient.

Meanwhile Patch's roommate Mitch (Philip Seymour Hoffman) considers him to be no more than a childish goof and accuses him that he cheats in exam. Because of this and other incidents, including a prank during a medical conference he is dismissed from the school, although he is later reinstated.

Together with Carin and Thruman (Daniel London) Patch develops his idea for medical clinic built around of his philosophy of doctor-patient interaction. With the help of Arthur Mandelson, he purchased 150 acres in West Virginia to construct the future Gesundheit institute.

The way Patch treats his patient, makes Carin fascinated, her friendship turns into deep love, but it does not go long, because Carin is

murdered by Patch's patient, Lawrence "Larry" Silver (Douglas Robert), it makes him devastated and guilty by Carin death.

When he becomes desperate and suppressed, he decides to end everything and burry his idea to become a doctor, his rival Mitch Roman comes to him and confesses that his method in lifting the patient's quality of life is the best method and asks him to continue his efforts. It makes Patch realize and continue his work.

He dismissed from his school for the second time, because he ran a clinic and practice medicine without license. In the final speech Patch said that there's nothing else but a doctor that he wanted to be, and he can convince the juries that he did the best to help people that came to him.

He encourages medical student to cultivate relationship with nurses and argues that death should be treated with dignity and even humor. Using unconventional methods and wacky surprises to ease patients' anxiety and enhance their healing, he then-startling idea that doctors should treat people, not just disease, compassion, involvement and empathy are needed. In the end the juries accept Patch's medical methods and do not prevent him from graduating to be a doctor.

Since this movie released in Desember, 25, 1998, this movie became box-office in United States and Canada, ranking number one at the box-office. It raises many intentions and comments from viewer. From internet more than 336 comments in total, lots of them are fascinating with Robin Williams performances in playing Patch Adams character, another with Patch Adams

himself who sacrifices for being a doctor and applying his unique medical methods, this film sends powerful messages that diseases not only cure by medicine but by treating the soul to a laugh which can lessen the pain and suffering.

Besides the good comment from viewer there are many comment which contains spoilers, one of them says that Robin Williams is playing himself rather than the character he is supposed to be portraying. And this movie is more about Robin Williams than Patch Adams. For Roger Ebert, Patch Adams is a shameless movie, it is ridiculous for a doctor who treats his patient by wearing a rubber nose.

This film was nominated for an Academy Awards for Best Music. Original Musical or Comedy Score by Marc Shaimand, and the film was nominated for Best Picture and Best Actor (Robin Williams) Golden Globe Awards in the Musical or Comedy Categories and in 2000, ASCP Film Television and Music Awards Patch Adams won ASCP Awards Top Box Office film.

*Patch Adams* is a very interesting movie, especially the character of Patch Adams. Patch Adams is a very ordinary, smart and humble person, who is old enough to study in Medical University, but it does not fail his ambition to be a doctor and help other, he is also an outrageous person but an ambition and dedicated doctor. He never wants to be part of the system, he has to create a new system, when he treats his patient there are not differences between insane and health senses. His character refuses to surrender his belief in the importance of a

gentle, caring bedside manner. He's the kind of doctor who by sheer presence makes you feel better.

The conflict from this movie is very real, the viewer can feel like involve in the conflict, and feel the emotion from each characters. This is an inspiring story with comedy and romance and drama. That is what makes it so effective: a good combination of genres. One minute laughing, a few minutes later you have tears in your eyes.

Besides the other interesting part of *Patch Adams* movie is Robin Williams, who is acting Patch Adams character, he is an amazing actors, he is a genius in creativity and comedy, but knows how to bring every aspect of a person's life out on the screen. Although he is just playing the role, but he wraps the viewers entirely into a movie and makes it seem like he is the man.

*Patch Adams* movie performs the struggle of Patch Adams to become a doctor. In his struggle he finds obstacles which makes he feels inferiority and almost fails his ambition, but he never gives up because he sure that every effort will produce result, there is nothing in vain in this world. And finally he proves that he can through the obstacles and become a doctor.

After watching the movie and reading the theory of individual psychology, the writer wants to analyze *Patch Adams* movie by applying Adler's theory of individual psychology. It is why the writer takes the title "THE STRUGGLE OF PATCH ADAMS TO BE A DOCTOR IN TOM SHADYAC'S *PATCH ADAMS* MOVIE: AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH"

## **B. Literature Review**

This is the first research of *Patch Adams* movie. Thus the writer decides to conduct a research of the main character in *Patch Adams* movie by using an individual psychological approach.

## **C. Problem Statement**

The problem of the research is “What are the motives underlying the struggle of Patch Adams as the main character to be a doctor in Tom Shadyac’s *Patch Adams* movie?”

## **D. Limitation of the Study**

To carry out the study the writer needs to limit the study. The writer is going to analyze Patch Adams’s struggle to be a doctor who is done by Patch Adams as major character in this movie based on Individual Psychological approach.

## **E. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie.
2. To analyze the movie based on Adler’s theory of individual psychology

## **F. Benefit of the Study**

### 1. Theoretical Benefit

To give additional information and contribute to larger body of knowledge particularly the study of *Patch Adams* movie.

### 2. Practical Benefit

By doing this research the writer gets much information about the structural elements of the movie and it improves the writer understanding and competence in applying an individual psychological approach to literature.

## **G. Research Method**

### 1. Type of the Study

In analyzing Tom Shadyac's *Patch Adams* the writer uses descriptive qualitative research.

### 2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is *Patch Adams* movie. This is based on the true story of Hunter Doherty Adams or "Patch Adams". This movie is directed by Tom Shadyac and release on December 25, 1998.

### 3. Types of the Data and the Data Source

The study uses library data, which are classified into two.

#### a. Primary Data Sources

The primary data is taken from Patch Adams film and the movie script downloaded from [http://Patch Adams/Script/Patch Adams Script - transcript from the screenplay and-or Robin Williams movie.mht](http://Patch%20Adams/Script/Patch%20Adams%20Script%20-%20transcript%20from%20the%20screenplay%20and-or%20Robin%20Williams%20movie.mht)

b. Secondary Data Sources

The secondary data include the references and materials related to the study whether by picking up from books or internet.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

a. Observation

The data are taken by watching *Patch Adams* movie in order to understand about the movie.

b. Library Research

The method used in this study is library research by collecting and recording both of the primary and secondary data. In processing data the writer will do some steps as follows:

- 1) Watching the movie continuously to understand the content of the movie.
- 2) Identifying the topic of the movie.
- 3) Looking for and selecting the correlation of the data and theory using individual psychological analysis.
- 4) Taking notes of important information in both primary and secondary data sources.
- 5) Drawing the conclusion of the analysis.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The writer uses two techniques in analyzing the data:

- a. Analyzing the structural elements of the movie includes narrative and technical elements.

- b. Analyzing the struggle of the main character using descriptive qualitative analysis.

## **H. Paper Organization**

This paper consists of five chapters. Chapter one is introduction which covers background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and research paper organization. Chapter two consists of underlying theory involves the notion of individual psychology, basic assumption of individual psychology, theoretical application and structural elements of the movie. Chapter three deals with the structural analysis of the movie. Chapter four deals with the analysis of the movie by applying individual psychological approach. And chapter five consists of conclusion and suggestion.