

**STRUGGLE FOR LIFE IN MARTIN SCORSESE'S
GANGS OF NEW YORK MOVIE:
AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

People were born in a different background. There are so many different backgrounds of life, such as, religion, states, and ethnicity. Those differences stimulate people act differently to each other. They want to keep their personalities based on their background. Realize it or not people will be separated by invisible wall from other groups of society; they make their own group with the same background.

Like in the New York City, many groups have different background over there. English, Dutch, Scottish, Italian, German and Welsh live in New York City for many years. They can accept the background of each other because they have lived together for many years, and called as natives. When new comer comes, he can not be accepted directly. The natives can not receive the new comer style, the tradition even the religion. It makes the new comer struggles for the position, for especially for the life.

Many new comers struggle to get the equal position in such country, or district. Talk about struggle in life, many literary works raise the struggle of a group of people. One of the literary works which raise the struggle is film. For example, *A Knight's Tale*, *Brave Heart*, *Gangs of New York* and More. The film which totally raises the struggle for life in country is *Gangs of New York*.

Furthermore, *Gangs of New York* is film that tells about truth situation in New York.

Gangs of New York is 2002 film about truth situation where many immigrants from Ireland enter New York. In this film New York is described as town which was full of tribes, war chiefs and the gangs. Actually it was not a town. New York was a furnace, where cities someday might be forged. New York was full of conflict among Group of people; the huge conflict came from the Irish and the native who was born in New York.

Gangs of New York movie tells about the struggle of one who comes from Ireland. He tries to live in America although the native could not accept his group, even the native hate him and his group. The natives were led by William Cutting better known as “bill the butcher” (Daniel Day Lewis), with the hatred feeling toward the immigrants. The leader of the Irish immigrant is Priest Vallon (Liam Neeson) who has young son, Amsterdam (played as a child by Cian McCormack). Cutting and priest Vallon meet with their respective gangs in a battle, harsh and bloody, concluding when Bill killed Priest Vallon. Amsterdam was a witness. Cutting declared the Dead Rabbits outlawed and ordered Vallon's body buried with honor. Amsterdam took his father's straight razor, used for a ceremony, races off and buried it. He was found and taken to the orphanage at Hellgate.

Sixteen years later, Amsterdam left Hellgate as a grown man (now played by Leonardo DiCaprio). Coming in Five Points, he reunited with an old friend, Johnny Sirocco (Henry Thomas). Johnny, who was then a member of a

group of pickpockets and thieves, introduced Amsterdam to Bill. Amsterdam found that many of his father's old loyalists are now under William Cutting's control, including Happy Jack (John C. Reilly), now a corrupt police officer in William Cutting's pocket, and McGloin (Gary Lewis), now one of Bill's lieutenants. Amsterdam soon works his way into the Butcher's group. Amsterdam learns that each year, on the anniversary of the Five Points battle (February 16), Bill leads the city in saluting the victory over the Dead Rabbits, and Amsterdam plans to kill the Butcher. While in planning to kill butcher, Amsterdam meet Jenny Everdeane, a pickpocket, Amsterdam is attracted to Jenny, so does Jenny. Amsterdam's friend, Johnny feels jealous to Amsterdam, because Amsterdam gets Jenny's love. It makes Johnny tell to butcher that Amsterdam plans to kill him.

In a certain ceremony, Amsterdam tries to kill Butcher with a knife, but Butcher can avoid the attack from Amsterdam, and reply the attack. Amsterdam affected, and he is tortured by William. Then Amsterdam is released by William. Amsterdam makes a clan that consists of Irish. He gets many supports from Irish people to attack natives. Johnny also joins Amsterdam's Gangs. But he still contact with butcher. Butcher knows that Johnny join Amsterdam's group, then butcher kill him. The Irish cannot accept the death of their friend Johnny; Irish with the leader Amsterdam Vallon declare war to natives.

The second civil war happened in five points, many people was killed in that war. Not only citizen dead in the war, many police also died in the war.

In the end, Amsterdam can kill Bill Butcher, the war is over. In the final scenes, the dead people are collected for burial. Bill's body is buried in Brooklyn, in view of the Manhattan skyline, next to Priest Vallon. Jenny and Amsterdam both visit the grave as Amsterdam buries his father's razor there. The final shot includes the World Trade Center towers.

Gangs of New York is a great film, many awards given from the film and also included as a successful film. *Gangs of New York* won *Gangs of New York* won the Golden Globe Award of Best Director - Motion Picture for Martin Scorsese and Best Original Song for the song "The Hands That Built America" by U2. Daniel Day-Lewis won the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role & the BAFTA award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role. It was nominated for 10 Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director. However, the film was largely overshadowed by *Chicago*, which took half of the awards for which *Gangs of New York* was nominated, and the film failed to win any Academy Awards at all.

Although won many awards, *Gangs of New York* also gets critics. Many critics have opined that the film is flawed compared to other Scorsese films, though it has its share of vocal supporters. Roger Ebert, one of Scorsese's longtime supporters, gave the film a positive review, saying it was "a triumph, but not in the first rank of his masterpieces." The weaknesses frequently cited are its comparatively slow pacing (the film has a running time of over 166 minutes) and perceived lack of character depth. It has also been

criticized for its wide-ranging thematic content; William Goldman, in a *Variety* guest editorial, claimed that the film attempted to touch on so many different themes that it failed to adequately explore any of them, though this argument was strongly rebutted by producer Irwin Winkler among others. On the other hand, many critics praised the film, including eminent *New York Times* reviewer A.O. Scott, who gave it a glowing review.

From the phenomena of struggle which shown above in *Gangs of New York's* movie, the researcher interested to analyze struggle for life in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* by using psychological approach and proposes to conduct a research entitle *Struggle For Life in Martin Scorsese's Gangs Of New York Movie: An Individual Psychological Approach*.

B. Previous Study

After looking for several literary reviews in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, the writer has not found the research about *Gang of New York* movie done by the other researchers.

There has been other researcher who research on *Gangs of New York* movie, the writer found it in the web site of Eadon. Eadon research the movie just focused on the structural elements.

Here, the researcher will analyze *Gangs of New York* movie focusing on struggle for life by using individual psychological approach.

C. Problem Statement

Considering the phenomenon, the researcher formulates the problem statement in this study as follow: “How is the Amsterdam’s struggle for life reflected in Martin Scorsese’s *Gangs of New York* movie?”.

D. Objective of the Study

Based on the Problem Statement above, the researcher can propose some objectives of the Study below:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie in order to identify the unity of the movie
2. To analyze the Amsterdam’s struggle for life reflected in Martin Scorsese’s *Gangs of New York* movie based on psychological approach.

E. Limitation of the Study

To make the research appropriate with the objectives of the Study, the researcher will make a limitation to the research. The researcher will only focus on how the Amsterdam’s Struggles are shown in Martin Scorsese’s *Gangs of New York* movie.

F. Benefit of the Study

The reason why someone makes a research is to get the benefit from it. By doing so, the researcher expects some benefits are produced from this research, those are:

1. Theoretical Benefit

By doing this research, the researcher wants to have contribution in criticizing a literary work and producing criticism as objective as the writer can.

2. Practical Benefit

This research can be used by the next researchers to do a research related to psychological approach, especially on Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* movie.

G. Research Method

Research method is derived from research and method. Research is the process of solving the problem. Research also means an organized and systematic way or process of finding answer to questions using scientific method. Method is way for doing something.

In this part, the writer presents five points of research method. They can be explained clearly as follows:

1. Type of the Study

The writer will use descriptive qualitative research in this literary work. Creswell (1998: 15) defines that Qualitative Research is an inquiry process of understanding based on the distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* movie because the movie reflects the struggle for life in New York city.

3. Type of Data and the Data Source

In this study, there are two sources of data namely primary and secondary data sources.

a. Primary Data Source

The primary data taken from a movie entitles "*Gangs of New York*" which released in 2002 and written by Jay Cocks, Steven Zaillian and Kenneth Lonergan and directed by Martin Scorsese. This film was produced by Miramax film.

b. Secondary Data Sources

The researcher takes the secondary data source, including the scrip of the movie and the other information from the book and website from internet that were relevant to the subject matter.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The technique of collecting data was purposive sampling. Where the researcher took sample of dialogue and capture of picture of the movie the used it as starting point to analyze the issue. The analysis of the sample and dialogue and capture of picture could be used as a representation of a general phenomenon in social life. In order to make the data more complete, the researcher do some steps. The necessary steps are as follows:

a. Watching and finding out the important sentence on the dialogues

- b. Reading the script of the movie
- c. Reading the book that are connected to the research
- d. Browsing to the internet to get some information articles that are related to the research
- e. Finding out the important data
- f. Arranging the important data based on its
- g. Developing the data that are provided

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The data are analyzed by using descriptive analysis. It concerns with structural element of the movie and individual psychological analysis. The steps are as follows:

- a. Classifying the data
- b. Verifying the data
- c. Interpreting the data based on underlying theories

H. Paper Organization

In order to make this paper easy to be followed, the writer gives some order for the paper organization. Chapter 1 contains introduction that consist of background of the study, previous study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter II is about underlying theory that deals with theory of individual psychology, major principles of individual psychology and theoretical application. Chapter III covers structural elements of the movie

that includes character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme of movie and other aspect which support to the movie. Beside, this chapter also contains discussion of the structural elements of movie. Chapter IV is individual psychology analysis. It is about application of the theory individual psychology toward the movie. Chapter V consists of conclusion and suggestion.