

**DISCRIMINATION IN MARTIN SCORSESE'S
GANGS OF NEW YORK MOVIE:
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Human beings are social creatures. They live and interact with others in the society. In the society, they do their own duty and role as member of the society. Human social life is interesting to be analyzed because there are many phenomena that occur in social life. Even, those phenomena that occur in social life is usually used by the authors in their literary work such as novel, poem and movie.

Social life described in literature usually gives description to the readers how social life where the author lives. It means that social life influences the work of the author in making his/her literary work. When the author makes a literary work, the author will use social condition of certain society as a setting in that literary work. For instance, the author raises social life such as discrimination.

Discrimination is one of the social phenomena that generally occurs in the society. Discrimination often occurs when in one place there are several races, then between one race and others cannot accept, even discriminate to each other. That is the reason why discrimination is raised. Some societies may welcome the new system and accept the risk of the changing of their society and some do not because of their fear of changing. This fear of changing can emerge and causes the discrimination towards new comers.

Discrimination has meaning as “behavior (an action), with reference to unequal treatment of people because they are members of a particular group” (Discrimination, 2009). *Gangs of New York* is one example of movie which describes about discrimination. It is directed by Martin Scorsese. *Gangs of New York* is a 2002 film set in the middle 19th century in the Five Points district of New York City. The film is loosely inspired by Herbert Asbury's 1928 book *The Gangs of New York*. This movie is written by Jay Cocks, Steven Zaillian and Kenneth Lonergan. It was distributed by Miramax Films.

Gangs of New York movie got some awards. It 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 the 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.

Gangs of New York movie begins in 1846 and quickly jumps to the early 1860s. The two principal issues of the era in New York were Irish Immigration to the city and the northern federal government's execution of the American Civil War. This movie tells about the battle between two gangs in New York. In 1846, they fight to determine which gang would be dominated in New York and stop the torture toward Irish Immigrant and other new

comers in New York. Those gangs are Bowery Boys (gang of nativist) and Dead Rabbits (gang of Irish Immigrant).

It was 1846. In the Lower Manhattan "Five Points" district, a territorial war raging for years between the gangs of the "Nativist" faction (comprising those born in America) and the predominantly Irish immigrants, is about to come to a head in Paradise Square. The Nativists are led by William "Bill the Butcher" Cutting (Daniel Day Lewis), a WASP, with an open hatred of immigrants. The leader of the immigrant Irish, the "Dead Rabbits," is Priest Vallon (Liam Neeson), who has a young son, Amsterdam (played as a child by Cian McCormack). Cutting and Vallon meet with their respective gangs in a battle, horrific and bloody, concluding when Bill kills Priest Vallon. Amsterdam is a witness. Cutting declares the Dead Rabbits outlawed and orders Vallon's body buried with honor. Amsterdam seizes his father's straight blade razor, used for a ceremony, races off and buries it. He is found and taken to the orphanage at Hellgate. Sixteen years later, Amsterdam leaves Hellgate a grown man (now played by Leonardo DiCaprio). Arriving in Five Points, he reunites with an old friend, Johnny Sirocco (Henry Thomas). Johnny, now a member of a clan of pickpockets and thieves, introduces Amsterdam to Bill, for whom the group steals. Amsterdam finds that many of his father's old loyalists are now under Bill's control, including Happy Jack (John C. Reilly), now a corrupt police officer in Bill's pocket, and McGloin (Gary Lewis), now one of Bill's lieutenants. Amsterdam soon works his way into the Butcher's inner circle. 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 he plans to kill the Butcher during this ceremony, in front of the entire Five Points community, in order to exact public revenge.

In *Gangs of New York* movie, some years later after the battle that was won by nativist gang, Irish Immigrant and other new comers was discriminated by native of America. Irish Immigrant and other new comers of New York were treated unfairly by America people in New York. They were tortured by native of America. They had to give money of the leader of Bowery Boys gang, William "Bill the Butcher" Cutting. When new immigrants came to New York, they were hit and even killed. In general, immigrant of New York was treated unequally.

This social phenomenon of discrimination of Immigrant shown in *Gangs of New York* movie makes the researcher interested in analyzing it by using the sociological approach and proposes to conduct a research entitled **"DISCRIMINATION IN MARTIN SCORSESE'S *GANGS OF NEW YORK* MOVIE: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH"**.

B. Literary Review

After looking for some literary reviews, the writer does not find the other researches in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta about *Gangs of New York* movie. In this research, the writer will analyze discrimination of

Irish Immigrant in *Gangs of New York* movie directed by Martin Scorsese by using sociological approach.

C. Problem Statement

Considering the phenomenon clarified in the background of the study above, the writer proposes the problem statement as follow “How is the discrimination of Irish Immigrant reflected in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* movie?”.

D. Objectives of the Study

Dealing with the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the movie based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the discrimination in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* movie based on sociological approach.

E. Limitation of the Study

In conducting this study, the writer limits the study only on how the discrimination of Irish Immigrant is shown in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* movie by using sociological approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The writer hopes this research gives some benefits for the writer herself and the readers in general. The research is expected to give benefit as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is expected to give a contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge particularly the literary studies on Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* movie.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and can be used by other researchers to do research related to the sociological theory applied in a literary work, particularly 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 Research

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. Moleong (1995: 6) said “descriptive qualitative research is a type of research which results the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from observed object or the data source”.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is every discrimination of Irish Immigrant reveals in *Gangs of New York* movie directed by Martin Scorsese.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Sources

a. Primary Data

The primary data source is the film itself that is every script and scene in *Gangs of New York* movie directed by Martin Scorsese.

b. Secondary Data Source

The secondary data sources are commentary, critics, journal, and literary criticism of the *Gangs of New York* movie directed by Martin Scorsese.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The data collecting method will be library research, released document to be observed. Meanwhile, the techniques are:

- a. Watching the film repeatedly.
- b. Understanding the film
- c. Focusing the attention to discrimination in the film.
- d. Listing the discrimination event of the film.
- e. Arranging the data into several groups based on its classifications.
- f. Selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis.
- g. Drawing conclusion and formulating suggestion.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The step of analyzing the data of this research are by analyzing the structural elements of the work and analyzing the sociological perspectives of the work. Analyzing the data of this research is trying to clarify the obtained data by selecting the necessary ones.

H. Paper Organization

Research Paper Organization is conducted to give a clear guidance in reading and understanding the content of the study in order to have guidance for the readers in reading the whole content, this research paper is organized as follows:

Chapter I will be introduction which consists of the background of the study, literary review, problem statement, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter II contains underlying theory. It covers theory about notion of sociology of literature, major principle of sociology of literature, notion of discrimination, New York, structural elements of the movie, and theoretical application. Chapter III covers social background of America under Abraham, Lincoln's leadership. Chapter IV is structural analysis. It consists of the narrative elements and technical elements. Chapter V contains sociological analysis. Chapter VI will be conclusion and suggestion. It consists of the conclusion of study and suggestion from the writer.