PSYCHOPATH IN GONE GIRL: A STUDY OF GENRE

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Abstract

The researcher investigated the relationship between psychopath genre movie and society. It aims to describe and analyze the development of formula in psychopathic genre and to find the reason why this genre entertains the audience. This research deals with analyzing genre in psychopathic movies through Gone Girl. In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research method. There are 20 movies used in this analysis. Those movies are taken from several production houses during the year 1971 - 2014. All of this movies tell about female psychopath. The researcher uses concept of formula based on Cawelti’s theory. There are five formulas in psychopath genre movie and it has developed over the time. The changing of psychopath genre’s formulas is based on desire of society. Environment become a major factor of someone to be psychopath. Many criminality and pressure happen in our society affect the increasing number of psychopath. It is the reason why this genre still exist because it reflects society’s life.

Keywords : Psychopath, Movie, Genre, Formula

I. Introduction

Gone Girl is a movie that is released in 2014, directed by David Fincher. It is adapted from a novel by Gillian Flynn. This movie’s title same as the title of the novel by Gillian that is released in 2012. This Movie is starring by Ben Affleck, Rosamund Pike, Neil Patrick Harris, Tyler Perry, and Carrie Coon. This movie is released on 26th September 2014 at the New York Film Festival, it is able to reach the box office and receives several awards. Gone Girl garnered four Golden Globe Award nominations, including best director for Fincher and best actress-drama for Pike (from http://www.imdb.com, 2014 ). This movie tell about Amy who is an ambitious and cruel woman. She always intends perfectly and good impressed to people around her. She wants to create public opinion that she is persecuted and murdered by her husband. Amy aims to jail her husband and get sympathy from the public.

The researcher choose psychopath genre movies as the object. This genre movie still exist over the time, it has appear since talkie time. Psychopath is a disease which is dangerous and very disturbing society. They like to break the norms and does criminality. They seem good from the outside but in fact they like to manipulate and violate norms. They are selfish.
person and will do anything to make what they want achieved despite of violating exist norms. It would be challenging to study psychopathic symptom in the movies. This study start with theory of popular literature from Ida Rochani Adi. Popular literature as reflection of people’s behavior. Those explanation refers that popular literature is mirror of society (Adi, 2011: 20). Adi also states that popular literature as a product that is very easy accepted by society and becomes popular identified by many people consume it (Adi, 2011: 24). It means that we can know what is trend in the society from movies and it is relate with the society.

In analyze this genre, the researcher needs theory from Cawelti about Formula to construct formulas inside of psychopath genre. Formula is products of culture which combine into specific cultural convention. The form of the story is universal (Cawelti, 1976: 6). Different culture will have different formula because formula reflects culture in certain time and place. The society will affect the development of story pattern. Something that become trend in society will be reflected in formula of literary work.

Based on those reason, the researcher choose the psychopathic genre movie as the focus of analysis. It is interesting topic to do research since it will do with other movies in the same topics and see the relation with the society. The analysis will start from the formula of Gone Girl movie.

**II. Method**

In analysing development of psychopathic genre through Gone Girl movie, the researcher uses qualitative research method. Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon for example investigating the human behavior (Kothari, 2004: 3). The primary data is Gone Girl movie and secondary data are nineteen other psychopath movies, books about psychopath, articles, websites and journal relate with primary data.

In collecting the data, the researcher uses documentation technique. The researcher uses Documents of popular culture such as books, films, and videos. (Ary *et al.*, 2010: 442). In analyzing data the researcher uses a Content-analysis (Kothari, 2004: 110). By using this technique the researcher can explain both verbal and non-verbal in movies that describes about development of psychopath characters over the time in movies.

**III. Result**

There are five formulas in psychopath genre movies. All formulas relate each other and form the genre. The formulas have change over the time based on desire of society. Formulas is same but the embodiment of formulas is different.
Table 1.1. Development of Formulas in Psychopath Genre Movie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formulas</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
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| 1. The perpetrators’ obsession grow their cruelty.                      | Get love from a man.  
Get something that they have ever had.  
Get love from another woman or lesbian.  
Dreams and desire in life.  
Get love from a man.  
Perfection in life.  
|                                                                         | Knife  
Gun  
Various tools around the house  
Knife and Gun  
Syringe  
Axes, saws, hammers, drill and fork.  
|                                                                         | Knife |
| 2. The perpetrators use any weapons to kill victims.                    | Knife  
Gun  
Various tools around the house  
Knife and Gun  
Syringe  
Axes, saws, hammers, drill and fork.  
|                                                                         | Knife |
| 3. The perpetrators do manipulation to get victims                      | Create a good impression and care to victims.  
Sexual activity.  
Using others people as a prime suspect.  
Portrayed as a mysterious quiet person.  
Religion doctrine.  
Death scenario.  
|                                                                         | - |
| 4. The perpetrators terrorize the victims                               | Stalking and kidnaping.  
Lock up and threaten to kill.  
Kill the victims brutally.  
Kill, kidnap and torture members of family.  
Give religion doctrine.  
Create public opinion.  
|                                                                         | - |
| 5. The perpetrators end their crime story.                             | The perpetrators die.  
Variation ending.  
The perpetrators is still alive.  
Fight and Die.  
Free and still alive.  
|                                                                         | - |

All formulas develop towards a more variation in plot of story. Overall movies which is released recently has developed in plot. It is more creative so it is not easy to guess the end of the story and make audience curious about the ending of the story. Scope of the story is
also more spacious and incorporate other elements that make the story become more interesting.

Psychopath genre movie still exist over many years. Audience interest to watch this genre movie. There are three factors why psychopath genre preferred by audience. Those are: environmental condition, increased psychopathic patients, and the role of the mass media. All those factor relate each other. It is reflect society and what is demand in society. It cannot be separated by culture developed in the society.

IV. Discussion

Psychopath genre movie is one of genre that exist over the time. The researcher interesting to see the formula inside this genre. This research focus on female psychopath. The researcher uses Gone Girl as primary data and to give evidence that those movie tells about psychopath the researcher uses nineteen other movies.

After do this research, the researcher finds there are five formula inside this genre. Those formula relate each other and form this genre. All of this movies have all those formulas. Those formulas has change to fulfill desire of society.

First formula is the perpetrators’ obsession grow their cruelty. The perpetrators do their psychopathic acts caused by their obsession. The obsession shown by each character is very different and shifts some variation. It starts from the perpetrators’ obsession to love a man who led them to do all things to get love from the man. Developed into an obsession with something missing that they had ever have such wealth, happiness and love. Love still become the main reason for the perpetrators in doing their acts. In here it is a love to another woman or lesbian relationship. The story begin more variation in which the perpetrators’ obsession is to get dream and goal in their life. There is repetition of the perpetrators’ obsession of love to other women and men occur repetition. But the story is more various and complex.

In Gone Girl, Amy is obsessed to get perfection in her life. She wants people to look at her as perfect and amazing woman. She does not want people to regard her as evil and cruel person. She creates a good impression to everyone. She does a lot of things so that people regard her as a mistreated wife. She made a scenario of her death perfectly. She made public opinion that her husband is a murderer who kill her.

Second, the perpetrators use any weapons to kill victims. Weapons that use in movies are developed from simple weapons like knife to unreasonable and brutal weapons such as axe, hammer, saw, and fork. The first weapon appears is a knife and evolves into equipment in house until the gun. Syringe and poison are also used in a crime by the perpetrators.
Weapon that often appears in psychopath genre movies is knife. Almost every movie use knife as the weapon. In Gone Girl Amy uses a cutter to kill the victim. She slits the throat of the victim.

Third, the perpetrators do manipulation to get victims. Manipulation is one way that is used by the perpetrators to commit their action. The perpetrators do manipulative act begin from simple thing such as close to the victim as a friend develop to manipulation by using a scenario of murder that is full of mystery and clues which must be solved. Sexual appeal is also used to attract the victim. They are care, friendly, and charismatic but they plan crime for their victims. In Gone Girl Amy manipulate public opinion about her. She creates herself as a perfect and charismatic woman. In fact, she manipulates her death with perfect scenario. She makes her husband as the killer, make public sympathy to her and feel sad for the loss of Amy.

Fourth, the perpetrators terrorize the victims. In carrying out their action, the perpetrators are trying to create anxiety and terror to the victim. At first time, forms of terror are kidnapping children, killing pets but now it is growing rapidly by creating public opinion as scenario of terror and crime. Terror can be done in the form of fear by creating insecurity and uncomfortable atmosphere in society. At first terror is addressed only to the family but grow up to the society. In Gone Girl Amy makes terror to her husband, Nick. She makes public opinion that Nick kills his wife, Amazing Amy. Each clue that is made by Amy became surprise and terror for her husband. She makes her husband frustrated with her terror.

The last formula is the perpetrators end their crime story. The end of the story will be the final part of the anticipation of a mystery. The end of the story is variation start from the perpetrators who die tragically, imprisoned and even freed from their crime. In the beginning, it is described that the crime will be revealed and the perpetrators will die but over time the perpetrator can free from their criminal actions and get what they want. It also changes the ending of the perpetrators who are caught and punished. In Gone Girl Amy returns home by manipulating her kidnapping. She said that she had been kidnapped by her ex-boyfriend, Desi. She killed her ex-boyfriend to save herself from insulting. It makes the sympathy of the public increased and she can back to her life. She becomes increasingly well-known and loved by the public without accusation to her crime.

Psychopathic genre movie attracts the public attention. It cannot be separated by culture developed in the society. We can know about a society and its culture from movie. Movie and society are interrelated and influence each other. Barsam (2010: 414) explains that society and culture affect the
movie production and vice versa. Society, culture and movie cannot be separated. Furthermore, Barsam also states that in order to study a society, it can be learned from the movies that exists in a society. Movie in the society always evolves and changes in line with the development of society. Phenomena and trends that happen in society can be reflected in a movie.

There are relationship between psychopathic genre with the condition of society. There are three condition in the society that portrayed in psychopath movies. First is about environment condition that influence in formation of psychopath. Psychopathic disorder can occur due to the influence of environment. An environment where is full of violence, crime, pressure can form someone becomes a psychopath. Cleckley (1988: 24) explains that environment is factor that can support development of psychopathic behavior. Another, Kirkman (2002: 158) states that there are two factors as causes of psychopathy, those are biological predisposition and social environment.

Social environment is main factor cause psychopathic disorder. Environment with poor economic conditions or low-social class is able to form a psychopathic behaviour. Psychopath is easily found in society with low socioeconomic status and urban settings (DSM-IV, 1994: 647). Psychopath is not only found in low Socio-economic society but also business or government. Cases such as corruption, embezzlement, and fraud commonly occur in the business. Manipulation of the products that will be sold to consumers commonly happens. It can be strategy of running a business to get high profit.

The criminality of a psychopath also happen in a company, government or any other field where they are in a position to exercise power. They have position and power to make decision over other people. Psychopaths in company or government do not commit violence or murder. They are type of individual who are ambitious and obsessed with power, money and recognition from others (Stevens, 31-32: 2008). People who live in low-social class conditions have economic distress. It is caused by pressure and discrimination from others, so it is difficult for them to obtain justice. They often becomes object of violence. They will see as minorities group who cannot do anything to survive their life.

People who work at company or government cannot be separated from psychopathic symptoms. They are obsessed with power and wealth to enrich themselves. They do not care about condition of other people who are in a low-social class and their environment. Lifestyle demands and public recognition make them act without conscience. In here, the gap occurred in social
environment that cause many problems in society. High-social class increasingly enrich themselves and the poor are getting afflicted with the condition that full of violence. Imbalance in society give negative impact on all aspects of society. Problems in each environment can cause psychological distress for the individual.

In low-social class society psychological distress is in the form of disappointment, anger, fear and rebellion within them. While in government and corporation pressure is in the form of their ambition to fulfill their lifestyle and high demands from their environment. They will do anything to fulfill their ambitions for money and power. This situation makes them ignore their conscience. The pressure makes them blind in doing any act. They only think about themselves.

*Gone Girl* movie also illustrates how the environmental affects the psychopathic disorders suffered by Amy. Amy's family is full of manipulative acts. Amy’s parents utilize Amy to be an amazing personal who inspires many people. They make a fictional story about Amy’s life look as a real story. They make Amy like what they want as a perfect, brilliant and admirable girl. Then they make a story book about their daughter entitled "Amazing Amy" with excessive improvisation. They do this manipulation to their business because a lot of people are interested with this book. Amy does not agree with her parents and she felt confined. Amy’s parents always demand Amy to do all of things to look admirable even she does not like it. They always ask Amy to look perfect in front of the public. Her parents formed Amy as an ambitious and selfish person. She grew into an individual who always care to herself and obsessed to popularity. She did everything to achieve what she wants. She was also versed in manipulation. She manipulated her death, made her husband as the killer and story about her abduction by her ex-boyfriend.

Second condition is increased psychopathic patients. Recently, many researcher do research to find out how many people with psychopathic disorder. Some researchers do research on this disorder and the development. There are a great number of people with psychopathic disorders in America. In his book, Hare (1993: 2) states that in North America there are at least 2 million psychopaths. More specifically, in the New York City, USA there are 100,000 psychopaths who live among the society. In different sources, Kiehl & Buckhlozt (2010: 28) states that in United State there are 0.5 to 1 percent, or about 250,000 people with psychopathic disorder live freely in the US. Even though they do not commit crime, they still break the norms that harm others. Some of the psychopath live...
freely in the society but some of those who commit criminality such as murder, theft, robbery or other crimes are imprisoned. Some researchers say that the imprisoned psychopathic patients amount 500,000 (Kiehl & Buckholzt, 2010: 28).

Based on a study in the United States around 1993, about 20 percent of psychopaths incarcerated (Hare, 1993: 87), but in 2010 it increased to 15 and 35 percent psychopaths (Kiehl & Buckholzt, 2010: 24). Increasing percentage shows that more psychopaths are criminal. It should be emphasized that not all criminals are psychopaths and not all psychopaths are criminals.

In Gone Girl movie it was not only Amy who had psychopathic disorder but also her parents. Psychopathic disorder may be caused by heredity but environment is still the main factor. There are differences in psychopathic trait showed by Amy and her parents. Amy’s parents were more manipulate to get money and fame without doing violence while Amy even killed people to achieve her obsession. Amy’s parents would be categorize individuals who have psychopathic traits. They manipulated story about "Amazing Amy" for their business. They made life story of perfect and she was demanded perfect as in their story. They made Amy’s life is so complicated and stressful. Although depressed Amy cannot complain, she obey what her parents want. They were good in lie, selfish and manipulative. In order to achieve what they want they use Amy as a way of achieving their obsession about wealth, popularity and recognition from society.

Because of her family, Amy was formed into a psychopathic person. Amy is an egocentric person who manipulate other people around her. She had ability to successfully lie and make people believe in her. In carry out her crime she use other people around her without conscience. She has lack of remorse when hurt or manipulate someone. She does what she wants and never care about how it affects to people around her. She only cares about herself without care with other people around her.

The last condition portrayed in movie is the role of the mass media. Many mass media reported the incident that is becoming a hot issue. It includes murder or crimes committed by the psychopath. Many famous psychopathic offenders are reported through the mass media. One of them is Aileen Wuornos, a woman who killed seven victims to get money. She was a prostitute, robbers and cold-blooded killer. Crimes committed by Wuornos attract the public attention and one of production house make Wuornos’s case into a film entitled Monster (Myers, 2005: 8). It is an evidence that a story life of a psychopath can be produced to a movie and get success when the mass media report this case excessive.
News about psychopath in mass media make public interested and want to know more clearly about this disorder. Coverage of mass media about murder by a psychopath will attract public attention. Indirectly will make people follow all of things relate to this news. Curiosity of the public made the moviemakers discovered new innovations on the genre of movie to be produced. They are attracted to produce a psychopath movie to be easily successful in the market. It is because everything about psychopaths attracts the public attention. Moviemaker makes interesting psychopath movies and make it more realistic. Some of them make movie based on the real story of a famous psychopath such as Monster and Fatal Vision. It will get a positive response from public and demand by the public.

Now days, role of mass media is very important and closely with society life. All of information we can know through mass media. The role of mass media in convey news portrayed in Gone Girl movie. Mass media reported all about the loss of Amy. It causes public become interested to know and follow the case of loss of Amy. Amy known as "Amazing Amy" and when she disappears public feel lost her. The loss of Amy is a mystery because Amy's body was not found and it is unknown whether she is still alive or not. It makes the public become curious and mass media report all of news about the loss of Amy. Amy's parents also make the excessive advertising that attract attention of the public and mass media. All mass media reported the loss of Amy and show their concerns. Many people and mass media involved in the search of Amy.

Movie with psychopath genre still exist because this genre still attracts the public attention, so moviemakers still produce psychopathic genre film. Over the time this movie genre has change the plot and content of the story. It cannot be separated with the changes in society. Moviemakers make innovation and change the plot based on the society.

Movies with psychopath genre is not the new one. This genre has appear since the first talkie (Rafter, 2006: 95). Now, there are a lot of psychopath genre movies that have been produced and success in over the world. Some of them even made a remake or sequel such as Psycho (1960) four sequels and one remake, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974) made five remakes, Silence of the Lambs (1991), six remakes, Saw (2004), four sequels and many more. The success of these movies show that psychopath genre is great demand by the public. This movie genre can exist from time to time. It cannot be separated from the purpose of producers to fulfill the public interest.
Gangster environment becomes the main focus in the beginning of the emergence of a psychopath. This environment is identical with violence, so it is possible to find a psychopath. Scarface (1932) and Kiss of Death (1947) are psychopathic gangster. The story change where the psychopath is people around us. Movie The Hand that Rocks the Cradle (1992), The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999) and Night of the Hunter (1955) are movies that describe that psychopaths are those who live among us.

Movie Pacific Heights (1990), The Bad Seed (1956), and Body Heat (1981) illustrated that figure psychopaths do all their actions because they cannot control themselves. They commit crimes in uncontrolled condition. Female Psychopath has also appeared in Hollywood film. Female psychopath gives something new to the audience in the genre of this movie. It is because the psychopath usually identical with male. Thus, the genre of this movie is still demand by the public.

Another factor that supports the existence of this genre is the increasing number cases of psychopaths. It is reported by mass media and be public consumption. For example case of Aileen Wuornos, a psychopath who has killed seven victims within one year. Mass media reported this case and make this case as hot news. Finally, public follows this case and wants to know everything about it. Mass media make the high of curiosity of the public. At the end, all of things relate to this case will interest the public. For example, there is a movie entitled Monster as an adaptation of the life story of Aileen Wuornos. This movie succeed getting positive response from public. This movie tells about Wuornos life when she was childhood until she was an adult and the murder case which she did. This attracts people's curiosity, succeeds in the market and gets some awards.

V. Conclusion

Psychopathic genre has changed over the time. It can be seen from changing of formulas inside the genre. It is the evidence that this psychopathic genre is preferable. The embodiment of formulas used in the movie is various and interesting for audience.

It begins with simple plot story about female psychopaths then shifts to more complex story that raises a lot of the enigma along the storyline of Gone Girl. Complexity of the story and plot in each formula makes this genre has a special place to audience. The main problem of psychopathic obsession combined with other elements to make the story more complex and diverse. This development and change in line with the changes of society that demand new innovations in the story of psychopathic genre based on their environmental condition.

The psychopathic genre movies exist over many years. This genre still attract public
interest because it reflects their life. Nowadays, the world may becomes harmful for people. Many crimes occur such as violence, theft, harassment, and fraud may cause the increase of psychopathic disorder. Increasing number of environmental pressures and demands causes a person suffers the psychopathic disorder. Gone Girl portrays the impact of environmental condition to Amy who has psychopathic disorder. To satisfy her obsession, she commits criminality that harm others.

References:


