

PROJECT: SCREENPLAY METAMORPHOSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explains the processes and the result of my final project in a form of screenplay entitled Metamorphosis. The screenplay is a story of a man, Johan Tanuwijaya who transforms from a psychologically sound man to a psychologically disturbed man. To develop my story, I used trauma as one of the themes and the theories. At first, he experienced traumatic childhood, then he recovered until his adulthood and marriage life, where he married his dire attention-seeker wife, Renata. Slowly, he was thrown back to his childhood trauma and that drove him insane. Eventually, he killed his wife and he created another himself in his daughter. From this screenplay I expect that people will have new principles and views about domestic violence and abuse, so that Indonesian society will have improvements in the future.

Keywords: screenplay, trauma, drama, transformation, psychological drama.

Thoughts come and go when I decided to choose final project as a method to pursue my bachelor's degree. I settled on making a screenplay because I am much comfortable writing a screenplay than writing anything else because my narrating style tends to be less descriptive, unlike descriptive narrative style in novels. In my opinion, screenplay writing tells the entire story with a bit more straight to the point manner. Therefore, I opted to make a screenplay for my final project.

I have been exposed to drama films since my childhood and I have always been eager with dramatic stories because drama stories always captivate and mesmerize me. Thus, I chose to make a drama story. Drama is a genre that show "a struggle against manmade institutions rather than showing a struggle against insurmountable odds like in tragedies" (Letwin, J. Stockdale, R. Stockdale, 2008, p. 106). In order to create a twist to my screenplay, I decided that I wanted to make a psychological drama story. Psychological drama is the subgenre of drama genre. Psychological drama is "the subgenre of social drama genre, a genre that identifies problems in the society and writes that it is a genre of a story that struggles with mental illness" (McKee, 1997, p.83).

I am aware that drama is a very broad genre. According to Karg, Sutherland, and Over (2007), drama is "the broadest genre in the filmmaking world". As a way to make my screenplay stand out, I used nonlinear plot. I have included a hyperlink cinema plot with a lot of match cuts in order to get the audience's curiosity and attention. The idea comes from films like 500 Days of Summer, Memento, Pulp Fiction, and Irreversible.

Modern drama has two kinds of spanning and two kinds of emotions. The spannings are spanning of a curiosity and the second is spanning of identification. In the spanning of identification, audience will want to integrate themselves emotionally with a character in the story. Furthermore, the two emotions that reinforce the spanning are pleasant emotion and rescuing emotion. In the rescuing emotion, the audience identify themselves with the character, but they do not want to be as miserable as the character in the story. In my screenplay I have included is the spanning of identification and the rescuing emotion. I would like the audience to identify themselves with the main character and I wish the audience get the unpleasant feeling from my story.

Lastly, I have decided to make the female supporting character as the anti-hero in my story. My decision is based on the reality of domestic violence and abuse nowadays. Basically, I would like to make people aware that sometimes males are as vulnerable as females when it comes to domestic violence and abuse by making a female anti-hero.

I am going to continue to the original concept of my screenplay. The very first concept of my story is the tragedy of a western man who transforms into a person he will never want to be. I

wanted to make a story that opens the eyes of people. Therefore, I settled on making a story with domestic violence and abuse issue and I wanted to make the male character as the victims, because I have an opinion that everywhere, the media shows women or children as the victim of domestic abuse and I wanted to change that. The setting of my original story was in Maine, United States of America. I want to create an irony in my original screenplay. I made a crime story in the safest state in United States of America, I made the male character has feminine sides, and I switched the character's roles in household and marriage life.

BODY

As I have stated briefly before, I have a personal concern on the reality of domestic violence and abuse nowadays. There are plenty of pictures about domestic violence or abuse that show women and children as the victim. On the other hand, I have read some articles that show men as the victim of domestic violence or abuse. Unless for campaign purposes, media rarely show men as the victim of violence. This is because men are “typically seen as much more physically stronger than women, so unconsciously, the society expect men to display strength much more often” (Synder, 2011).

In my opinion, the society gives indulgences to women because the society relates women's aggressive behavior to stress, fatigue, and hormonal period. As a result, those indulgences blind the society's view on domestic abuse. People will not believe easily when they hear women do domestic violence or abuse to men. Therefore,

Another problem that motivated me to make this story is that people hardly acknowledge that men can be the victims of domestic violence and they endure the similar emotions as female victims. Nevertheless, men feel that they have to keep their abuse problem as a secret because the society expect men to fulfil their masculinity gender roles. Also, the fear of embarrassment and the fear of being mocked and teased for being not 'man enough' prevent men from seeking help or report their domestic violence or abuse matters.

Upon the problems of domestic violence in the society, I feel that I need to make a screenplay that shows how a woman can be the committer of abuse and violence, what triggers women to do the abuse, how the abuse and domestic violence may happen, what kind of things that can be reckoned as verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, and how badly women perpetrators impacts men victims psychologically and emotionally, since men are the side whom the society have a high expectation to.

I wish that my story will make people realize that small things can be a form of abuse and violence. I also want to change the typical victimization of women as the ones suffering from domestic violence or abuse. I hope people comprehend that everyone can be counted as the perpetrators and there is no excuse to it, even the usual tolerance like hormonal behavior. I believe that even when few people have new principles about domestic violence, together I and they can improve Indonesia for the better.

The themes of my screenplay is psychological transformation and trauma. Some things can change a person from a psychologically sound person into a psychologically disturbed person. A person will not guarantee how long she/he will stay psychologically safe because a lot of things can change one's psychology. One of those things is trauma.

Trauma is basically a mental disorder that occurs from witnessing or experiencing a terrifying event. In this project I am specifically bringing post-traumatic stress disorder as the issue. PTSD is “a debilitating mental disorder that follows experiencing or witnessing an extremely traumatic, tragic, or terrifying event” (Grohol, 2013). I want to show that life does not prepare our lives for trauma because it can happens at any time whether it is expected or not. Moreover, I want to show that post-traumatic stress disorder can be very painful to its sufferer.

Inevitably, I had to do some research in order to make a strong story in my screenplay. I had collected my research through secondary research, which is a “data that already exists and has been collected by someone else for another purpose” (Riley, 2012). Specifically, I have done library research that I got from films, library, internet, and some trusted websites that I could find in the internet. I partly relied on internet because I found that internet could help me finding the right books for my library research.

In every screenplay proposal, there will be three sentences which covers the whole story in a screenplay. The three sentences are called pitch. Below, I am showing the pitch of my screenplay.

1. Johan has overcome his childhood trauma and in his adulthood wants to have a happy and warm life where he can completely forget his trauma.
2. However, he meets and later marries to Renata, a woman who has attention issues and a bit of mental disorder that makes Johan reminded of his trauma.
3. In the end, Johan becomes insane and kills Renata and their daughter after he has been reminded of his trauma and has been receiving a lot of abuses done by Renata.

From this pitch, I developed my step outline and then I made the treatment out of my step outline. Then, I used the treatment as my screenplay guide and finally, I finished creating the screenplay. The whole paper of the screenplay, theories, statement of the problems and significances can be seen in the academic report.

After the proposal defense, I found out that it was easier to catch the attention of Indonesian people about my story by changing the setting and the characters. Therefore, I decided that I wanted to make a story that sets in Java Island because Java is quite populous. The characters were changed to Chinese-Indonesian people because I personally am more familiar with Chinese-Indonesian people.

Then, after the progress report, my academic advisor told me that I was a little too melodramatic in making the story because the villain character were very villainous while the protagonists did not have any flaws. I had to make my characters three-dimensional in order to make my screenplay more realist.

Also, I was suggested to change the ending of my story and changed the way I showed the pictures in my screenplay because it was considered a little bit gory. I was suggested several ending of my screenplay. First, I was recommended to make the villain change in the end, but got murdered by the main character. Second, I was recommended to make a twist by making another victim of trauma. Third, I was advised to make an open ending.

CONCLUSION

In the final version of my story, I finally added some humanities in the villain character. I also have added the background of the villain—what shaped the anti-hero character and how the background of the villain created a psychological problem inside the villain.

As for the ending, I have decided that I wanted to make a twist by making the daughter of Renata and Johan another victim of trauma. I decided to end up with that ending because I feel that it is more psychological than my original ending.

Before I proceed to the synopsis of my creative work, I would like to state the things that I have learned during the process of making my creative work. First of all, I have learned that it is quite hard to make a good story. Secondly, I realized that I have a tendency to tell rather than show in writing a screenplay. This is the result of reading a lot more books and short stories than screenplays. Thirdly, this final project has taught me to not focus only on one side because in my case, I neglected my academic report because I was too preoccupied with my screenplay. Last of all, I discovered that I need to be more disciplined.

The complete story of my creative work can be foreseen in the synopsis. The story begins with Dani and Tessa, Johan's parents, who were once a happy couple got their marriage life broken because of Dani's disloyalty. Dani's affair left a huge crack in the family. Both Dani and Tessa were apathetic towards their family, leaving the children neglected.

One day, when Dani was out to meet his mistress, a couple of burglars robbed the house and raped Fiona and Tessa. Johan, who was forced to watch the incident, became terribly traumatic. Tessa attempted to escape, but got caught and murdered. Fortunately, Johan and his sister survived the most traumatic and painful event of their lives, but unfortunately, both of them are terribly shaken.

Johan and his sister were taken by their uncle, Adjie to Surabaya and he sent them to psychologist. Johan made progress but his sister did not. Johan grew up to be a fine and agreeable man who are admired and adored. He made friends with anyone but he has only one closest friend called Lusi, whom he met in junior high school.

Lusi, introduced Johan to Renata whom she just got acquainted to. Then, Renata and Johan got very close and they got married six months after their first meeting. However, Renata turns to have an attention-seeking issue. She began to abuse Johan when Renata thinks that Johan does not

care about her. In worst case, Renata forces Johan to have sexual intercourse with her even though Johan does not want to do it.

When Renata physically abused him, Johan sometimes lost control and he would lock his daughter alone in a dark room. Renata made him worse by forcing him to penetrate her when Johan did not want to. Johan went to psychologist one more time so that he would not lose himself. The method did not work and Johan got worse treatments from Renata. Finally, Johan became insane. When Renata was asleep, he killed his wife and after he was finished with his wife, he went away.

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