

THE MAIN CHARACTER'S EFFORTS TO SEEK JUSTICE IN *WINTERSET*

(A Court Case Study in Maxwell Anderson's Play)

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Abstrak: *Drama merupakan bentuk karya sastra yang terfokus pada dialog dan perilaku karakter yang tercermin dalam plot. Karakter dalam drama berkaitan erat dengan permasalahan untuk mencapai tujuan utama dari drama tersebut. Permasalahan tersebut bisa berupa konflik internal maupun eksternal. Studi ini bertujuan mencari tahu usaha karakter utama, Mio, dalam mencari keadilan, yang terfokus pada usaha merehabilitasi nama baik sang ayah yang telah dijatuhi vonis hukuman mati. Mio mengetahui jika ayahnya tidak bersalah. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang datanya diambil dari drama *Winterset*, karya Maxwell Anderson. Data dianalisa dengan secara induktif berdasarkan pada analisis pendekatan struktura, yang terfokus pada analisis aspek intrinsik, terutama dalam hal plot dan karakter. Hasil studi menunjukkan karakter utama harus bergulat dalam pencairan keadilan yang restoratif dan distributif, yang berkaitan dengan pemulihan nama baik dan vonis yang tidak adil bagi sang ayah.*

Kata Kunci: *Aspek Intrinsik, Drama, Keadilan*

Abstract: *Drama is one of literary form which mainly focuses on the character's dialogue and action in the course of the plot to reflect the character development. The characters have to deal with various problems in achieving their ultimate goals. Such problems deal with the internal and external conflicts or both. This study focuses to find out the main character's demand for justice. It concern with his efforts to restore the name of his father who has been sentenced to death by the court. The main character, namely Mio, knows that his father is innocent. This study is qualitative study which uses Maxwell Anderson's drama entitled *Winterset* as the main data. The data are analyzed inductively based on the structural approach of analysis. This approach focuses to analyze the intrinsic aspects, especially the main character and the plot. The result of the study showed that the main character has to deal with the restorative and distributive justice. The distributive deals with the unfair trial of his father. The restorative justice concerns with his efforts to restore the name of his father.*

Keywords: *Intrinsic Aspects, Justice, Play*

INTRODUCTION

Drama is a literary work. It emphasizes the action of the characters in a specific setting. This emphasis is reflected in the word drama itself. It is derived from Greek "draein" which means to do or to act (2004: 43). So, drama mainly focuses on the

character's dialogue and action in the course of the plot which reflects the development of the character

The characters have to deal with various problems in achieving their ultimate goals. Such problems deal with the internal and external conflicts or both. The characters in *Winterset* deal with the problem of injustice. The death of the father's main character is caused by the unfair trial by the court. The father is sentenced to death although he is not involved in the murder of the payroll master. The government which is represented by Judge Gaunt declares him guilty based on the fact that the father is merely a black man. The government never calls the true witness of the crime. The decision of the court then is made wrongly to punish the innocent man. This drives the main character to seek the truth of the crime. In his efforts, he should die in the hand of the true murderer in the crime. His action reflects the ultimate quest of the justice.

Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset* (1935) is one of the most important verse dramas, or plays written largely in poetry, in the twentieth century. It was first produced on New York City's Broadway at the height of the Great Depression. The play is a striking tragedy that deals indirectly with the famous Sacco-Vanzetti case, in which two Italian immigrants with radical political beliefs were executed. *Winterset* is widely considered as Anderson's best verse drama. Its ambitious political and philosophical agenda, as well as its elegant poetry, earned Anderson the Drama Critics' Circle Award of 1936.

The plot of *Winterset* follows Mio Romagna's quest to prove his father's innocence in the years after Bartolomeo Romagna was executed for a robbery and murder he did not commit. This quest is complicated by Mio's newfound love for Miriamne, Esdras' sister and the difficult ethical decisions that resulted from his connection with her family. It is a challenging political play, with philosophical meditations on faith, truth, justice, love and duty. The play mostly deals with the mysterious death of the father. This death becomes the starting point which leads the main character to find justice.

There are many theories of justice. The first is entitlement theory of justice. According to entitlement theories, a distribution is just if and only if it came about without violating anyone's rights (entitlements). Justice, on this view, is a matter of respecting rights (2012: 7). There is a wide variety of accounts of what rights people

have: people may have rights to get what they deserve, rights to have their needs satisfied, rights to equal shares of some good, and so on. This theory underline the importance of fair distribution of the people right which should not violate other's right.

The other theory is Desert theory. Desert theory of justice holds that an action (social structure, etc.) is just if and only the distribution of benefits and burdens is appropriate given what people deserve (2012: 4).

This theory underlines the importance of appropriateness in the distribution of the people right. The social structure should be maintained to achieve this ultimate goal. The existing social structure and institution should guarantee that the right of the people is distributed fairly and rightfully.

Meanwhile Aristotle has defined justice in the term of habit. Justice is the action of rendering to others his or her rights (1999: 55). It can be represented a commutative justice, distributive justice and legal justice. It should become a basic principle which directs the person action to give rights to others and to avoid injury to others.

Justice always concerns with two opposing interest. The first is individual interest and the second is the society interest. On the side of individual, justice relates to the freedom of individual and in another side, the freedom of individual should be restrained for the safety of the society (Spencer, 2010: 56).

It is obvious that the ultimate individual can be dangerous and it is limited by the other individual right. The limitation should be clear since it can potentially stimulate angry passion through a sense of injustice. A clear limitation the freedom of individual can increase the satisfaction of the individual.

In psychological domain there are four kinds of justice which are usually looked for by the people. The first is distributive justice. It mainly concern with the principle of fairness and equality. Next is procedural justice. It deals with the process of the distribution of the person's right in a society. The other kind of justice is restorative justice. This is The first thing that the betrayed person may seek from the betrayer is some form of restitution, putting things back as they should be. The last is restorative justice. It is the justice which intends to restore the person's right as the result of the injustice (1999: 30).

However, Meyer et al give a different classification of justice. According to him justice can be classified into three categories. The first is distributive justice. It refers to

the extent to which society's institutions ensure that benefits and burdens are distributed among society's members in ways that are fair and just. When the institutions of a society distribute benefits or burdens in unjust ways, there is a strong presumption that those institutions should be changed.

The second is retributive or corrective justice. Retributive justice refers to the extent to which punishments are fair and just. In general, punishments are held to be just to the extent that they take into account relevant criteria such as the seriousness of the crime and the intent of the criminal, and discount irrelevant criteria such as race. Yet a third important kind of justice is compensatory justice. Compensatory justice refers to the extent to which people are fairly compensated for their injuries by those who have injured them; just compensation is proportional to the loss inflicted on a person (2012: 3). These kinds of justice are clearly reflected in the drama of Anderson. The discussion of the justice in the drama then is closely related to these kinds of justice.

Thus individual differences cannot be the reason for the difference of right and obligation. Individual should be treated the same without considering the difference of sex, race, social class and other forms of difference. However there are many factors and cases which make us to treat people differently. This cases have been also illustrated by Mayer. He stated completely that there are, however, many differences that we deem as justifiable criteria for treating people differently. For example, we think it is fair and just when a parent gives his own children more attention and care in his private affairs than he gives the children of others; we think it is fair when the person who is first in a line at a theater is given first choice of theater tickets; we think it is just when the government gives benefits to the needy that it does not provide to more affluent citizens; we think it is just when some who have done wrong are given punishments that are not meted out to others who have done nothing wrong; and we think it is fair when those who exert more efforts or who make a greater contribution to a project receive more benefits from the project than others. These criteria—need, desert, contribution, and effort—we acknowledge as justifying differential treatment, then, are numerous.

On the other hand, there are also criteria that we believe are not justifiable grounds for giving people different treatment. In the world of work, for example, we generally hold that it is unjust to give individuals special treatment on the basis of age,

sex, race, or their religious preferences. If the judge's nephew receives a suspended sentence for armed robbery when another offender unrelated to the judge goes to jail for the same crime, or the brother of the Director of Public Works gets the million dollar contract to install sprinklers on the municipal golf course despite lower bids from other contractors, we say that it's unfair. We also believe it isn't fair when a person is punished for something over which he or she had no control, or isn't compensated for a harm he or she suffered. And the people involved in the "brown lung hearings" felt that it wasn't fair that some diseases were provided with disability compensation, while other similar diseases weren't (2012: 7) In these case, the different context of situation determine whether a specific treatment is considered injustice or justice.

So, this article intends to discuss the main character's demand for justice in *Winterset*. The discussions are focused on the main character's motive and problem in his struggle to demand for justice and his efforts in demanding justice.

METHOD

The analysis used in this study is based on the theory of analyzing justice (Meyer, 1965) which consists of three classification; distributive, retributive, and compensatory justice. The object of this study is Maxwell Anderson's Play, entitled "Winterset". The steps of the analyzing data include; (i) determining the value, (ii) picking up the relevant act, (iii) identifying the type of justice, (iv) explaining the collected data, and (v) interpreting the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Seeking justice is the major motivation of the main character in *Winterset*. The main character of the drama is Mio since he is the character who determines the theme and the plot of the drama. He is also the protagonist and at the same time the tragic hero of the play.

Mio is the only son of Bartolomeo Romagna. When he was four years old his father was confronted with murder charge. The authorities resolved to pass the death sentence against his father, though in fact the father did not take part in the murder of pay roll master so that he became an orphan.

His father becomes the victim of the unjust trial. The death of his father drives his mother to an extreme grief that causes her immediate death. He has no properties and no permanent house. He only inherits his father's message to oppose the unjust verdict and the grievous death of his mother. He lives in very poor condition and look like a tramp, who wanders from one place to another. He remembers going to the death cell together with his mother, waiting for his father's execution. He remembers listening to his father's crying for justice. In this case his father is powerless to evade the verdict. Before the death sentence is passed against him, in the electric chair, he still has time to ask his son to fulfill his father's message. His father will have him desert his home country to another where law and justice are fairly guaranteed. It all can be judged from the following quotation:

Mio: when I was four years old,
We climbed through an iron gate, my mother
And I,
To see my father in prison. He stood in the
Death cell
And puts his hand through the bars and said,
My Mio,
I have only this to leave you, that I love you,
And will love you after I die. Love me then,
When this hard thing comes on you, that you
Must live
A man despised for your father. That night
The guards.
Walking in flood-lights brighter than high
Noon,
Led him between them with his trousers slit
And a shaven head for the cathodes. This
Sleet and rain
That I feel cold here on my face and hands
Will find him under thirteen years of why
In prison ground. Lie still and rest my
Father,
For I have not forgotten. When I forget
My I lie blind as you. No other love,
Time passing, nor the spaced light years of
Suns
Shell blur your voice, or tempt me from the path
That clears your name---
Till I have these rats in my grip
Or sleep deep where you sleep. (To Miriamne).
(Act I, Scene III, 11. 895-926: 17)

It is quite clear his father told him the father did not commit the murder. A man has despised him and put him in a jail for the thing that the father never did. He keeps this memory in his whole life. The ultimate objective he has in life is to clear his father's name. Thirteen years later Mio discovers that his father has been wrongly executed. The state does not uphold the law and justice so that it can do harm to the innocent people. The authorities accuse his father of being a murderer and a robber and they decide to pass the death sentence against him, though in fact his father is not guilty. For that reason Mio's mind is always saddened by untimely death of his father. He hates deeply the authorities who acted unlawfully towards his father's case. He thinks that the trial was unfair since it has been already arranged by attending a false testimonies from the one who is not the eye witness of the murder.

Judge Gaunt is the one who lead the trial and passed sentence of death to Mio's father. It is clear that the trial is unfair since there are biased arguments for the verdict. The trial is not the process to keep and guarantee justice. It has transformed to be a process to kill the innocent. Furthermore, the trial which represents one of the government body to protect the citizen has failed to run keep its duty. It is dangerous since it reflects that the government is directed by the interest of certain people who have a specific objective to maintain their own interest over the greater interest of all citizens.

In this case, Mio actually does not only fight against the unfair decision of the trial caused by the personal judge but also struggle against the corrupt institution of law. The jury which has been instituted by the state has also violated its fundamental function. It is formed to protect the individual from the tyranny of the dominant actors in society but it inversely has become the instrument of that tyranny.

Thus the verdict upon Bartolomeo clearly shows that it is motivated by the sense of prejudice over the minority. There is inequality before the law between the white people and the black people. The white always right even though they do injustice. Meanwhile the black people does not have his right to protect themselves.

Mio wonders what will happen to him if the authorities regard his father as a criminal. He certainly feels that, being the son of a criminal, he has lost his place in society. Through his investigation, he discovers that his father is not involved in the crime and he is there only by chance. For that reason h should regain his rightful place

by disclosing his father's case to the world that his father is innocent. He is strongly opposed to the judge's unjust verdict because the cobra-mouthed judge may have spat the truth that it can do his father harm. He urges himself to clear his father's good name by telling everyone that the state has wrongly executed him.

Later on, Mio's determination to clear his father's name is gaining a clear clue. One day, professor Hobhouse, a distinguished lawyer, publishes an article dealing with the Bartolomeo Romagna's case. He does not agree with Judge Gaunt because the latter is unjust in his verdict. Professor Hobhouse is of the opinion that the trial of Bartolomeo Romagna is unfair because the true eyewitness is not called in. Garth Esdras is mentioned to be the true eye witness. Everybody comes to know the sensitive case through this famous article. Owing to this information Mio wants to find out Garth Esdras with the hope he will be able to solve his father's trial immediately. For Mio the sooner is the better.

Upon arriving at Esdras's apartment he discovers Judge Gaunt there arguing about the Bartolomeo Romagna case with Esdras. Mio tries to join the discussion but, at first he is refused to come into the apartment. He is permitted to join the conversation only after he disguise himself as a newspaper boy who collects old newspaper to support his hard life. Judge Gaunt is one of the lawyers who presided the trial of Bartolomeo Romagna. He has winnoaed out the truth and justice. During the trial he carries out his own judgement regarless of the true fact. He abuses the law to disgrace Mio's father for he is a black and a well-known radical in the state. The reason for his madness is that because Judge Gaunt is terribly anxious about his own decision to have passed a capital punishment against Bartolomeo Romagna. His verdict was felt against the sound reason from the bottom of his heart. Being unable to overcome his anxiety he becomes mad. Judge Gaunt, after having criticized by professor Hobhouse flatly denies the accusation. Professor Hobhouse is not quite in agreement with what Judge Gaunt decided in the trial.

The trial is arranged in a way that to reflect a fair trial. However, it is based on his personal dislike and is full of legerdemain. Judge Gaunt angrily declares that Bartolomeo Romagna is guilty and the great injustice lays on Mio's side., not on his side. In this case Mio's efforts to do what his father wants, is confirmed wiyth a great obstacles.

Mio happens to meet Miriamne, Garth Esdras' sister. He tells her that his only reason to come here is to pay his father's revenge. Owing to professor Hobhouse article, Mio finds that Garth Esdras is the man who knows a lot about the crime. Had he been called in to give the testimonies Bartolomeo Romagna would not have been declared guilty. However, Garth Esdras is intentionally not given the rights to present his testimonies to the trial. The authorities understand well about this, and they avail of this opportunity to punish Bartolomeo Romagna. For this purpose the true eyewitness is not called in during the trial and instead they present the state witnesses who give their fake testimonies. As the result, Bartolomeo Romagna is wrongly decided to be guilty and that he deserves a death sentence.

Later on Mio tries to confront Garth Esdras's statement with Judge Gaunt, but the latter denies him and Judge Gaunt assures him that Bartolomeo Romagna is guilty. Whereas Bartolomeo Romagna is found not guilty by all due to the process of the law. Every words Bartolomeo Romagna speak during the trial is sweet and tolerant so that, when Mio is in search of the records, he finds out not one unbiased argument to fix the crime on Bartolomeo Romagna, Mio shows Judge Gaunt the true fact of this crime and says that his father does not take part in the accused crime. It is difficult for Judge Gaunt to answer him and he seems to neglect his questions. Finally, he confesses that the article by professor Hobhouse are all true. He is unfair in taking his decision because the judge intentionally does not present the true witness.

It seems that government does not materialize the law and justice sincerely and honestly. The verdict on the case of Bartolomeo Roimagna is the proof. Before the trial begins the charge is arranged in such a way so as to keep the wording in balance and to trap Bartolomeo Romagna so that he is to meet his death in disgrace.

Mio repeatedly disclose his chief attention to seek the truth. By means of the truth his father's name will be cleared from nhis notoriety. Now he tries to confront the evidence proving his father's innocence with Trock Estrella.

The real culprit is Trock Estrella who is capable of escaping the arrest with some bags of money. He does not fell free enough in his life. In the meantime Trock Estrella flatly denies Mio's accusation charging him as the real murderer. However, he is shocked into his confession by the reappearance of Shadow, his accomplice, whom he shoots down recently. Trock Estrella believes that Shadow is already dead. His

reappearance surprises him very much. Shadow tells Mio that the true criminal is Trock Estrella, and Bartolomeo Romagna is not involved in the crime. Shadow whose body is soaked with blood from the wounds of Trock Estrella's bullets tries to aim his gun at Trock Estrella but before he fires a shot he collapses.

Trock Estrella is in great trouble now. It is impossible for him to hide the true facts in which Bartolomeo Romagna is really not involved in the crime and the culprit is Trock Estrella himself. Mio is well-informed about this. Therefore, Trock Estrella regards Mio as a danger. Mio is firmly convinced now that Trock Estrella is the real murderer. Garth Esdras is the eye witness but he is not called in to give his testimonies while Judge Gaunt has conducted an unfair trial towards his father. He resolves to prove to the world that his father is innocent and his trial is unfair. However, before he manages to make it known publicly Trock Estrella fatally shoots him. His love, Miriamne, swears to do this on his behalf but a few shots is enough to make her breathless. His demand for justice lot of obstacles that cost his own life.

CONCLUSION

The play of Maxwell Anderson clearly describe the wretched condition of the state. The whole part of this drama contains the quarrel and the struggle and the bloodshed among the characters. The writer can find a lot of unlawful actions that are committed by the authorities to oppress the citizens. They do not pay attention to the citizens. They think more of their own need than that of the common people. Of course such situation is disadvantageous and unbeneficial to the common people. The tragedy of the play concerns with the struggle against the social injustice to reach peace and order. It costs a lot of lives to achieve such a goal. As far as the writer know the character who commit crimes and who dislike the establishment of justice as always fearful, doubtful and anxious in their life. Furthermore we come to know that there are conflicts. Without conflict there will be no tragedy. First is the conflict involving the leader of the crime against his close friend and against the characters who dislike justice and the second is the conflict between the hero and the characters who exploit the establishment of justice

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