

DION ANTHONY'S TWO CHARACTERS IN THE GREAT GOD BROWN DRAMA

I Wayan Parwata Laksana

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the duality of the characters of Dion Anthony in *The Great God Brown* drama by Eugene O'Neill. The duality of characters is represented by the mask of Dion. The mask is created by Dion himself and treated as an object. The masked character is considered as the unreal characters of Dion Anthony and the unmasked one as the real characters. New Criticism is used in analyzing the conflict of this character. Close Reading is used as the method of this paper. This research is using qualitative method of collecting the data it needs. The analysis considers the following formal elements; characters, plot and conflict, and linguistic devices, to determine the theme of the drama. The plot of the drama where the conflict resides is analyzed in need for better understanding of the drama. The conflict of this analysis is focused to the inner conflict of Dion Anthony created by the duality of the characters he has. The duality of the characters, the plot and conflicts, and the irony of the drama are taken account as a step for conclusion of the theme: Tragedy of Love."The Great God Brown" has the theme of Tragedy of Love since Dion Anthony as the protagonist is unable to achieve his objective and dies leaving his problem unresolved.

Keywords: Eugene O'Neill; Mask; Conflict; Character; Dion Anthony

1. Introduction

The Great God Brown is one of the classic drama that portrays the personality of the characters using masks. Since the beginning of the drama the characters already use masks to cover their faces. It tells others by looking to the mask what kind of mask the characters using. Underneath the masks are the true faces of the characters. This is the drama that people made into thinking that everybody wear masks to hide their true faces. The effect of the disguise is, not only to present whatever character is being portrayed, but to protect the actor's identity, to signify to the audience that this is acting as opposed to real life (Devlin 53).

The Great God Brown was one of the drama written by Eugene O'Neill. He is internationally recognized as the quintessential American dramatist of the twentieth-century world stage. Some are uncomfortable with what occasionally seems the melodramatic excess of even his most successful plays (Manheim 1). This is a drama which is mostly emphasizing about the characters personalities. The masks were used to show the aesthetic element in the play and build up the characters personalities. use of masks, personalities are distinguished from appearances; two realities are murdered and lost, while one distorted image of being, a surface mask, remains apparently immortal. From such piercing, critical probing of the soul this drama is constructed (Atkinson 1).

The story of the drama mainly revolves around the main character of the drama, Dion Anthony. Dion Anthony is a man with closed and nonchalant characters, struggling in his life.

Life as struggle. That viewpoint could well be endorsed on all sides of the political spectrum. The radical left sees history and liberty struggling to rise from below; the conservative right sees fact and morals struggling to be preserved from above; and the liberal center sees expectation and development struggling to be free of the past (Diggins 257).

It is showed in his masked face which showing mocking and cynical characters. His masked face is usually showed when he is with other drama characters, such as Margaret and Billy Brown.

Problems in this drama are mainly concerned with the masks of the characters. Dion Anthony has a mask with dark character, mostly cynical and mocking face which different with his sensitive and hurt original face. O'Neill tries to indicate the surface and depth of emotion. Later, when actual masks appear on stage, they function variously as symbols of inhumanity, as representative types of people, or as protective skin. O'Neill dispenses with masks altogether in his final plays (Bloom 132). The drama was created so that O'Neill could make a different kind of characteristic for one player of the drama. It is for the sole purpose of showing the emotion and the character of the player itself.

The research will be analyzing the characters of Dion Anthony, especially only when he is masked and unmasked during the drama and how the drama delivers his character. This research will try to understand the characters of Dion Anthony while he is masked and unmasked, in which way the drama brings his character. By doing this, this research will try to understand the conflict inside Dion Anthony.

The conflicted Dion Anthony is seen in the way Dion make decisions while masked and how it affects him. O'Neill himself says that he tries to express 'the living drama of the recognizable human beings' through the 'background pattern of conflicting tides in the soul of Man' (105). Dion unmasked self and masked one, they are conflicting with each other as well create the negative and dark characteristics of Dion Anthony. The theory used for this research is New Criticism with Close Reading. Methodology of this research is Qualitative Research Method.

2. The masked characterizations of Dion Anthony

The first thing that is needed to be taken into account is the background of the mask itself. How is the story behind the creation of the mask and what purpose it has for the creator, in this sense Dion Anthony? It can be seen from the past of the story in which Dion, for himself, shocked and suffered of the thing happened to him. It was at the moment where Brown pulls a prank to him as a child and makes Dion feel betrayed. As Dion explain it in act two scene three, "One day when I was four years old, a boy sneaked up behind when I was drawing a picture in the sand he couldn't draw and hit me on the head with a stick and kicked out my picture and laughed when I cried. It wasn't what he'd done that made me cry, but him! I had loved and trusted him and suddenly the good God was disproved in his person and the evil and injustice of Man was born! Everyone called me cry-baby, so I became silent for life and designed a mask of the Bad Boy Pan in which to live and rebel against that other boy's God and protect myself from His cruelty" (344).

At that moment on, the mask become and functioned as a protective gear for Dion in dealing the outside world while the real character of him is still the same. The mask creates a presence of another character while at the same time Dion is still Dion. He is conscious as the one who creates and wears the mask as well as conscious to all the act of him as the masked Dion Anthony.

The mask itself is treated as an object. The reason of it is that as an object, the mask is valued differently by the perspective of the characters. Each character has valued the mask in the story differently. The mask of Dion is treated as a protective gear for the owner. It is to give protection from a shameful feeling and for not being looked down anymore because of bad things from childhood. For Margaret, Dion's mask is a signature for the person whom she loves. For that reason also her feeling toward the masked Dion is never changed even after the death of the real Dion. For Brown, it is become a disguise in order to obtain the love from Margaret. Brown is Dion's rival in getting the love from Margaret and after receiving the mask, Brown sees a way to obtain her affection. As for Cybel, it is a hindrance from the real or true character of Dion. She is a woman who knows what lies beneath the mask of Dion and a woman of reason for she also wears a mask.

While the mask is an object, the main point of the mask is that it has its own characteristics and creates a characterization like a single character. For the masked Dion Anthony, the masked characteristics are defiant, cynical, mocker, and reckless. It is believed that these characteristics are the result of Dion desire for a strong person which will be not looked down upon by anybody. It is because the shameful feeling he suffered when he creates his mask.

The defiant trait of the masked Dion characterization is reflected upon action of meeting Cybel, a woman who own a parlor as well as a prostitute. According to Jeffries, in the matter of society the meeting of Dion and Cybel is a defiant act. "Dion emotionally cheats on his wife with a prostitute. I posit that it is Deviant (outside of a few locales) to solicit a prostitute; although in the case of Dion, since he does not have sexual relations with the prostitute, he is (perhaps ironically) Deviant within the group of Deviants that frequent prostitutes" (Jeffries 71). It is common for society to believe that Dion should more open minded to his wife rather than Cybel. Of course, Dion himself understand his situation he is currently. In his way of recognizing Cybel, Dion is fascinated in the way Cybel conduct her lives. She seems lost but strong. It makes him trying to be friends with her. While Cybel ask with a strange sternness, "And never nothing more?" and Dion replies with a smile, "Let's hope never anything less?" (1.3.225-7). But what

makes him continuing his meeting with Cybel until his death is because of needs. The only place where Dion could be Dion is in front of Cybel.

It is reasonable for Dion being defiant towards Margaret even when Margaret trying to help in looking for job. Dion is never being seen as himself while Margaret cannot recognize Dion as himself. Dion needs someone who understand him and that is what Cybel is. His defiant act is directed to Margaret because he cannot see Margaret as his wife who could comfort him. Like Dion said about Margaret who he could not know who is his wife while he love Margaret (2.1.269).

Dion is cynical to the way he is treated. The treatment here is the way other character behave, act, or talk to him in any kind of manner. For Margaret, he is being cynical since the way Margaret loves him is a strange one. It is like a blind love where Margaret is only able to see one part Dion her husband.

Dion uses his cynical character when he is being distrustful. As for Margaret, what he question is the feeling of love. The one who is being questioned is not Margaret but Dion himself. He loves Margaret but his cynical character distrust this feeling toward his wife since the one Margaret loves is Dion's mask. No matter what the other think, even Margaret, Dion love his wife very much. It is what makes him decide to marry her while knowing the truth about her feeling.

In a mocker trait character, his character trait is showed in the way he talk about other or insult in a harsh way. It is showing his true disgust while wearing his mask. To Margaret, he mocks her in the way Margaret shows her love. Dion feels that Margaret only does what she wants without concerning his feeling. The way she loves him and the way she treated Brown whom she reject, insult Dion to mocking her.

A mocker trait of Dion is always directed to other in various locations and situations. A mocker attitude of Dion Anthony is a sarcastic comment in various situations. Mostly about comments to what he thinks about other, it displays how he shows his emotions towards other. The mocking character of Dion mostly directed to Brown or Margaret and some to Cybel.

Dion's action with his mocking character is always spontaneous. He act desperately and sometimes frightened. Other than that he act angrily to something he dies not like. He is commented on everything that displease him and sometimes with a sarcastic body act. It is the act of someone who is full of emotion and considered emotional. It can be considered as an act to keep the image of bad boy as strong as possible. It is to make him looking stronger than the real him as well as to keep Margaret beside him but the act takes him further away from his objective. Since it is creates a wall to make people away from him.

Dion's reckless character trait occurred when he desperately defending something in which he would not lose. It is shown when he is making a decision of his life while not thinking about it. He will decide what to do in an instant while not thinking that the decision he makes is either good or bad for him.

There is important point of reckless decision made by Dion. This decision is affected by his reckless trait. It is the point of Dion decides to marry Margaret. The situation that makes Dion to accept Margaret's love is none other than Dion himself.

MARGARET--Dion! *(She comes running in, her mask in her hands. He springs toward her with outstretched arms but she shrinks away with a frightened shriek and hastily puts on her mask. Dion starts back. She speaks coldly and angrily.)* Who are you? Why are you calling me? I don't know you!

DION--*(heart-brokenly)* I love you!

MARGARET--*(freezingly)* Is this a joke--or are you drunk?

DION--*(with a final pleading whisper)* Margaret! *(But she only glares at him contemptuously. Then with a sudden gesture he claps his mask on and laughs wildly and bitterly.)* Ha-ha-ha! That's one on you, Peg!
(Prologue. 95-8)

Before meeting Margaret Dion feels an extreme joy because what Margaret feels toward him. But after knowing of Margaret's true love over his mask, in order to preserve Margaret's love, he recklessly accepts it without telling the truth. It is the starting incident for Dion as well as the story. When Dion told Margaret he loves her when he wears his mask and Margaret accepts it, it is become the starting point of the struggle to reach his objective in life.

3. The Unmasked Characterizations of Dion Anthony

The unmasked characterization of Dion Anthony is the true characterizations of himself. It is the character which Dion hide with his mask. Since it is the true character of Dion, Dion reveal it by

unmasking his face from his mask. The unmasked character holds the true value of Dion as a person as well as hold what he truly desire in which reflected in his objective.

The character of the unmasked Dion is being protected, hidden to be exact, by his mask and his masked character. From the previous section, the value of the mask for Dion is to make him look strong and hide his true self. The reason behind the hiding of his true character is related to his past as well in his present.

For the part that is related to his past, it is because the shameful feeling he suffered long ago. For the part that is related to the present, it is because the feeling he has for Margaret. He loves Margaret but the feeling between these two are mutual but not at the same time. Dion loves Margaret truly as Margaret while Margaret only loves his masked character or his mask. In other word, Margaret only loves one part of Dion.

The feeling he has toward Margaret as well as other character is related to his true characterizations: passionate, gentle, obedient, and obsessed. Despite being a true character, it is protected by the masked character of Dion. What make the true character of Dion important to him is that the unmasked character of Dion holds his feeling of love.

Passion is one of that had very strong affection to every part of Dion's life. It is an undying life force for Dion to fight the world which he is unable to be success. The mask hangs on his breast below his neck, giving the effect of two faces. His real face has aged greatly, grown more strained and tortured, but at the same time, in some queer way, more selfless and ascetic, more fixed in its resolute withdrawal from life (1.1.117). It could be seen when he speaks to himself or revering himself in a manner of speech. While in this characteristics, he becomes very much poetic and a dramatis to life.

He adores life and love as a person. He also has a poetic sense in talking about these two things. In a passionate moment he will talk differently than when he is masked. It creates a feeling of understanding of what he truly feels for himself and other things.

DION--(*with a suffering bewilderment*) Why am I afraid to dance, I who love music and rhythm and grace and song and laughter? Why am I afraid to live, I who love life and the beauty of flesh and the living colors of earth and sky and sea? Why am I afraid of love, I who love love? Why am I afraid, I who am not afraid? Why must I pretend to scorn in order to pity? Why must I hide myself in self-contempt in order to understand? Why must I be so ashamed of my strength, so proud of my weakness? Why must I live in a cage like a criminal, defying and hating, I who love peace and friendship? ... (Prologue. 76)

The dialogue above is full of questions about himself who is doubtful as himself. In the passionate character he has a way of talking things in a intense feeling. And the way he expresses those feeling is only when he is unmasked.

The gentleness of Dion is only directed to one person in the drama, Cybel. In act two, scene one there is time Dion smiling in front of Cybel, "Dion smiling in seeing the luck of Cybel in playing solitaire, He said that Cybel luck is uncanny while he is unable to finish one play." The gentle side of Dion is almost childlike where he refers Cybel sometimes with 'Mother'.

CYBEL--(*suddenly starts and calls with deep grief*) Dion! (*He looks at her. A pause. He comes slowly back. She speaks strangely in a deep, far-off voice--and yet like a mother talking to her little son.*) You mustn't forget to kiss me before you go, Dion. (*She removes his mask.*) Haven't I told you to take off your mask in the house? Look at me, Dion. I've--just--seen--something. I'm afraid you're going away a long, long ways. I'm afraid I won't see you again for a long, long time. So it's good-by, dear. (*She kisses him gently. He begins to sob. She hands him back his mask.*) Here you are. Don't get hurt. Remember, it's all a game, and after you're asleep I'll tuck you in.

DION--(*in a choking, heart-broken cry*) Mother!... (2.1.286-7)

It is unfortunate for Margaret whom could not receive this gentleness of Dion since there is only one reason of it, the mask. The one Margaret loves is Dion's mask. Since gentle is not one of the characteristics of the unmasked-Dion, Dion never show his gentleness to his wife Margaret.

Dion always try to show his true self which in it lays his gentleness. Nevertheless Margaret always afraid in accepting the unmasked Dion and seems tortured like in seeing something dreadful. Thus his gentle-masked characteristics could only be shown to Cybel which Dion could reveal his true self, his unmasked face and unmasked character.

Dion's obsessed nature is directed to two people in the story: Margaret and Cybel. In Margaret case, it is an obsession towards Margaret's love for him. Although he knows the truth about Margaret's love, he still adores the feeling of love. It resembles his passionate character where he adores love and life and expresses it with intense feeling.

In this obsessed character, Dion always act desperately trying to prevent something happened. He keeps his relation a secret even though he meets Cybel in secret prove him that he is still trying to keep Margaret.

DION--(*wonderingly*) Can Margaret still love Dion Anthony? Is it possible she does?

MARGARET--(*forcing a tired smile*) I suppose so, Dion. I certainly oughtn't to, had I?

DION--(*in same tone*) And I love Margaret! What haunted, haunting ghosts we are! We dimly remember so much it will take us so many million years to forget! (*He comes forward, putting one arm around her bowed shoulders, and they kiss.*)(2.2.314-5)

The person who is able to share a kiss of obsession with him is only Margaret. Dion know for himself the truth about Margaret's love but he who loves love need loves.

As for Cybel, it makes him keeping himself together with her. Cybel had become his sanctuary where he can be himself. He needs someone who understands him and Cybel act more like a mother than Margaret. His love for Cybel is more than a friend but less than a lover. This love is what makes Dion obsessed since he sees it very important. And the most important thing of all, Cybel is the only one where Dion could be Dion. But for Cybel who is a prostitute, a feeling of love is something that is less important. Cybel explain her view that love is not important but Dion signified that word as a lie. Dion's obsession with love is making him to keep what he wanted and never let someone else have it.

Dion is obedient because of the way he keep what he wanted. In being obedient, he always does what the subject wanted him to do. Obedient is the last road or choice for him to keep Margaret for himself. It mostly results in him regretting the result of being obedient. But the most important thing for him is that Margaret will not leave him alone. It is a character trait which is close to a childlike character for him. In this character, he will act like what they told him to do. It is a character of Dion which affect him rather than directed to other.

MARGARET--(*meekly*) Are you going up street, Dion?

DION--Yes.

MARGARET--Will you stop at the butchers' and have them send two pounds of pork chops?

DION--Yes.

MARGARET--And stop at Mrs. Young's and ask the children to hurry right home?

DION--Yes.

MARGARET--Will you be back for dinner, Dion?

DION--No. (*He goes, the outer door slams. Margaret sighs with a tired incomprehension and goes to the window and stares out.*)

MARGARET--(*worriedly*) I hope they'll watch out, crossing the street. (1.1.159-167)

The dialogue happened at the end of act one, scene one, where Margaret tries to confide Dion to accept the job Brown offered. This conversation happened after that when Dion leaving the house. Where Margaret asks him to do some errand, Dion is obediently saying yes in front of her. Dion seems resisting for a short period but his persistency is not long. In order to, at least, keeping Margaret he will do what Margaret wanted.

Since it only affect Dion, there are no significance effect toward other character if Dion in this character. It clearly makes Dion obey to the point where Dion feels annoyed, dissatisfied, and tortured.

4. Tragedy of love

The tragedy part of this drama is closely related to the feeling of love, especially Dion's love. The feeling of love is circulated into three characters in the drama: Dion Anthony, Billy Brown, and Margaret. At first, the drama told about the love Brown has for Margaret but Margaret love Dion. Dion who knows that Margaret loves him is happy and approach Margaret.

1.

DION--(dazedly, to himself) Waiting--waiting for me! (He slowly removes his mask. His face is torn and transfigured by joy. He stares at the sky raptly.) O God in the moon, did you hear? She loves me! I am not afraid! I am strong! I can love! She protects me! Her arms are softly around me! She is warmly around me! She is my skin! She is my armor! Now I am born--I--the I!--one and indivisible--I who love Margaret! (He glances at his mask triumphantly--in tones of deliverance) You are outgrown! I am beyond you! (He stretches out his arms to the sky.) O God, now I believe! (From the end of the wharf her voice is heard.) (Prologue. 90)

The love Margaret has is the love for the other Dion, the masked one, still Dion accept Margaret's blindness to his unmasked one. This strange kind of love is the topic and the main idea of the drama. The characters are struggling upon this kind of feeling while trying to reach their objective. As the leading character, Dion Anthony is trying to reach his objective which is to be able to be understood.

The effort of Dion for his objective ended with a failure. He tries to make Margaret accept his real face but the fact that Margaret's love is toward his mask is remain unchanged until the end of the drama. Even after his death and he give his mask to Brown, which becomes him as the masked Dion, Margaret's love is still to the mask of Dion. As a rival in love, Billy Brown is never in a good term with Dion. Brown is always stealing Dion's work or drawing, claiming it as his own. This condition is making Dion suffering, for he always an obsessed man in keeping his idea as well his life.

He cannot make the person he wanted to understand him understood his situation. As the story reaches the crisis and then climax, he chooses death. He chooses to make all his effort failed and pass his mask to Brown to give Margaret the man she can love forever. He cannot continue to become Margaret husband anymore whom she loves. Thus the theme tragedy of love with the death of the leading character and the failure of his entire attempt to meet his objective is the main idea of *The Great God Brown*.

It is a tragedy since the leading character, Dion Anthony, is cannot achieve his objective and leaving it unsolved. He still cannot make anyone understand him. This tragedy is centered by the feeling of love that Dion's has. As a man who adores love, Dion is always grief for this kind of feeling but at the same time tortured by his love and from the woman he loves.

It is as the result of the conflicting characters of Dion Anthony. First, it makes him does not know what he wanted in the first place. As his unmasked one is trying to keep the love between him and Margaret, his masked one act as bad boy who defying his feeling and confuse him further more. Second, his effort for making other, especially Margaret, is for naught. His unmasked characters are more delicate than his masked one and his masked characters create a barrier from keeping him close.

It can be seen from the way he acts during such characters. It mostly build from negative traits characteristics in which makes him looked as a bad boy. The last thing which makes Dion suffered is the way Brown hates him. Brown's hatred toward what Dion has, including his talent in drawing, is the result of jealousy. Dion suffered because he could not do anything to fight Brown despite what he has, Margaret and talent, and lack of strength.

5. Conclusion

The conflict of Dion Anthony is an internal conflict between his duality of character. The plot of the drama is centered on the feeling of love from three major characters: Dion Anthony, Billy Brown, and Margaret. It could be said that the feeling they have creates love triangle for Brown also love Margaret. As for Dion, his mask is the one whom Margaret loves. His conflict creates four pair of conflicting characteristics. Each has a significance effect for him.

The first conflicting characteristic is cynical and passionate. The conflict affects Dion in his way of talking and expressing his mind. The second is mocker and gentle. It affects him in his act toward other character especially Margaret and Cybel, where he shows his mocker and gentle respectively. The third one is reckless and obsessed. This conflict tends to make him decide in haste while not thinking it thoroughly about the consequences or about his feeling. And the last is defiant and obedient. The last conflict affects him in how he feels toward other. They are conflicting because the feeling of love toward Margaret.

The conflicts are resulted in irony and suffering for Dion Anthony. The irony comes from the fact that Dion is loved by Margaret but not loved at the same time. Their feeling of love is mutual but while Dion loved her truly, Margaret only loves his mask thus her love only loved one side of him. And the suffering

is coming from his confused mind. His dual characters confuse him for his feeling to Margaret. The masked one acted defiant while the unmasked one is obsessed.

Tragedy of love is created from the duality of characters of Dion. They create the love (the unmasked one) in which Margaret has for Dion's mask and confuse him for his feeling to Margaret (the masked one). It creates chivalrous wall for Brown and Dion for Brown always jealous to him and Dion hates him but unable to fight him. And the last, it creates death for Dion and Brown as well, for Dion is tired and Brown suffered because the use of Dion's mask.

The objective of Dion is to make him understood by others but he is unable to achieve it because he chooses death rather than finishing his objective. This is also become part of the theme in tragedy because the objective of the protagonist is unresolved and leaving another problems. While the problems continuing without Dion's actions, it still happened around the characters feeling of love. It complete the theme of the drama as the tragedy of love

6. Work Cited:

- Abele, Chris & co. *English 60A Contemporary Critical Theory*. www.lawrence.edu; 7th November 2011.
- Atkinson, Brooks. *Symbolism in an O'Neill Tragedy*. www.eoneill.com; 7th October 2011.
- Banham, Martin, ed. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1998.
- Bloom, Harold, Ed. *Bloom's Modern Critical View: Eugene O'Neill - Updated Version*. Infobase Publishing: New York, 2007; 132.
- Brietzke, Zander. *The aesthetics of failure: dynamic structure in the plays of Eugene O'Neill*. Mc. Farland & company, Inc: North Carolina, 2001; 63.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach*. 2nd Ed. Print, 2009; 214.
- Clark, Barrett H. *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays*. *New York Evening Post*, 13th February 1926; 105.
- O'Neill, Eugene. *The Great God Brown*. www.gutenberg.com January 2004.
- Manheim, Michael, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2000; 1.
- Murfin, Ross & Ray, Supryia M. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Bedford Books. bcs.bedfordstmartins.com. 7th October 2011.
- Williams, Raymond. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1966.