Three Dimensional Aspects of the Major Character in Oscar Wilde's V*era*

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Abstract

Drama is a portrait of a real life situation and the theme of a drama is closely related to daily life conditions experienced by the character. A Character is defined as an entity, human or animal, that is created by the author. A good character should be natural and lifelike, especialy in physiological, psychological and sociological dimensions known as three dimensional aspect of a character. These dimensions are very interesting to discuss since they are very important to determine the qualities of the characters in a drama.

Physiologically, Vera is described as a beautiful young lady with beautiful eyes. Sociologically, Vera is concluded as coming from an average family in Russia, living in a poor society, and living under tyranny. She has lived in an inn with her father before she saw her brother taken away to prison for seeking for liberty as a Nihilist. Psychologically, Vera is seen as a loving person though she does not put love as priority. She loves her country and her brother. She wants to revenge on the King for being a tyrant. She is a brave woman. It is seen from how she becomes a Nihilist to revenge for her brother and to end up the tyranny in her country.

Keywords: *physiological dimension, psychological dimension, and sociological dimension*

A Brief Note on Characters in Drama

Literature is a part of human works in written forms through language. According to Wellek and Warren (1973:20-21), literature is anything in written form which contains idea and thoughts. Literature is a written product of human's activity in expressing their ideas, thought and expression. Human creates literature for many purposes. One of those purposes is for aesthetic reasons and amusements. This purpose of creating literature then leads to the existence of literary works. Literary works are divided into three namely poetry, prose and drama. These three parts of literary works have their own characteristics. Drama has characteristics which differentiate it from the other two types of literary works. Drama consists of dialogues and is performed on stage. It is interesting since the audiences can directly enjoy the story that the writer wants to deliver through visualization. Therefore, it is not surprising that drama gets a lot of attention from those who love literary works but find difficulties in visualizing the idea in their minds.

Similar to the other types of literary works, drama is usually considered as the reflection of the society. Many of famous dramas in the world have a closed relation to the condition of the society where and when it was created. Drama usually portraits a real life situation and the theme of a drama is usually closed to things that human beings face in daily life, such as love, war, and family. Those themes are arranged in dialogues and are played by the characters on stage. Character is defined as an entity, human or

animal, that is created by the author. A good character should be natural and lifelike. In building up a character in a drama, there are three dimensional aspects that usually contribute to the representations of the character. Those three dimensions of character are physiological, psychological and sociological dimensions. The physiological dimension of a character covers the physical aspects of the character such as sex, age, and physical appearance. The psychological dimension of a character deals with, among others, the ambition, behavior, and feeling of the character. Meanwhile, the sociological dimensions cover the contribution of society or environment surrounding the character. Those three dimensions of character help the author convey the qualities of the character so that the audience can visualize the character in their mind.

Many dramas have been played and produced by great authors in this world. One of those great dramas is *Vera* written by a famous dramatist, Oscar Wilde, in the 19th century.

Intrinsic Elements of Literary Works

In building up literary works, there are two important components included, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. According to DiYanni (2001:44), intrinsic elements are the basic elements or characteristics of story. Intrinsic elements such as theme, plot, setting, style, character, and point of view, build the structure of literary works. Each intrinsic element has its own role. Intrinsic elements build the structure of a literary work so that it stands strong as the product of ideas and imagination. It gives the beauty of the literary work itself and brings the literary work to the higher value, not only as the product of literature without any purpose, meaning, and message. DiYanni (2001:50) states that there are seven basic elements or literature, they are: theme, plot, character, setting, point of view, language & style and irony & symbol.

Character and Characterization

A character (DiYanni, 2001: 55) is defined as the imaginary person that the writer creates. Characters are divided into two types, namely major character and minor character. Major character is the prominent figure of the play and minor character is the supporting figure of the play.

Based on the changing of the character in the story, characters are divided into static and dynamic characters. A static character is a character that undergoes no change in the characteristic, personality, or outlook appearance from the beginning until the end of the story. A dynamic character is character that has permanent change, some or a lot, in characteristic, personality, or outlook appearance as the story goes by (DiYanni, 2001: 60).

Characters in literary works convey many aspects such as the physical appearance of the character, the quality of the character, and the social life. Those aspects can be seen through various methods. According to Kenney (1966:34), the methods of presenting character is called characterization. An author should have an ability not only to choose what characters take part in the story, but also to choose the method of presenting the characters in the story. Kenney (1966:34) divided characterization methods into five: discursive method, dramatic method, character on characters method, contextual method, and mixing method.

a. Discursive method
   Discursive method is the method in which the author presents the character in the story directly through narative statements.
b. Dramatic method
   Dramatic method is the method in which the author lets the characters describe themselves to the readers by their own words and actions.
c. Character on character method
   Character on character method is the method to present one scaracter through other character. It means that one character describes or talks about another character in the story.
d. Contextual method
   Contextual method is the method of presenting the character thruogh certain description of their surrounding condition.

e. Mixing method
Mixing method is the use of more than one methods in presenting a character.

Three Dimensions of Character

Egri Lajos (in Hamzah, *1985:107)* states that a character has three dimensions as its fundamental structure. Those dimensions are physiology, sociology, and psychology. They are the elements which build the characterization in a literary work and they are bound to each other. Different combination of those factors will result in different characteristics of people. Roucek and Warren state,

> *Personality is the organization of biological, psychological, and sociological factors which underline the individual's behavior. It consists of habits, attitudes, and other characteristics, whatever their source, according to which one individual behaves differently from another. It is the organization of the behavior of the individual as it is developed in interaction with other people* (1963:23).

a. Physiological dimension
Physiological dimension is the description of the physical aspects of a character, e.g. appearance and general health. Physical appearance may effect on the character's feeling regarding his/her surrounding, or the feeling of being secure/insecure. Physiological aspects of a character are observed through sex, age, or physical appearance such as the body shape, whether or not a person is beautiful or handsome, or the color of skin and hair.
b. Sociological dimension
Sociological dimension is related to the description of the condition of character's environment. Sociological aspect can be effectively analyzed through the social life of the character, e.g. the house, the job, the education, and the social status.
c. Psychological dimension
The last dimension of character is psychological dimension. Psychological dimensions deals with the characteristics of the character, e.g. behavior, emotion, and thought.

Discussion on Vera Sabouroff in *Vera*

1. The Physiological Dimension of Vera Sabouroff

Physiological aspect of a character is observed through sex, age, physical appearance such as shape of body, whether or not a person is beautiful or handsome, and the color of skin and hair.

Data 1

PETER. Has Vera not come back yet, Michael?
MICHAEL. No, father Peter, not yet; 'tis a good three miles to the post office, and she has to milk the cows besides, and that dun one is a rare plague creature for a wench to handle.
PETER. Why didn't you go with her, you young fool? She'll never love you unless you are always at her heels; women like to be bothered (365).

Data 2

PETER. Ay, ay, he was a merry lad. It is the girl that has the seriousness – she goes about as solemn as a priest for days at a time.
MICHAEL. Vera is always thinking of others (365)

Data 3

VERA. They are hungry and tired. Let me go to them.
ONE OF THE SOLDIERS. Let the wench be, if she pays us
SERGEANT. Well, have your way. If the Colonel sees you, you may have to come with us, my pretty one (368).

Data 4

VERA. We were rehearsing a new tragedy.
GENERAL. Your answer are too honest to be true. Come, let me see who you are. Take off those players' masks. By St Nicholas, my beauty, if your face match your figure, you must be a choice morsel! Come, I say, pretty one; I would sooner see your face than those of all the others (378).

Data 5

CZAR. The Governor of Archangel shoot on his own country yard by a woman! I'm not safe here. I'm not safe anywhere, with that she-devil of the revolution, Vera Saburoff, here in Moscow. Prince Paul, is that woman still here.

PRINCE PAUL. They tell me she was at the Grand Duke's ball last night. I can hardly believe that; nut she certainly had intended to leave for Novgorod today, sire. The police were watching every train for her; but for some reason or other, she did not go. Some traitor must have warned her. But I shall catch her yet. A chase after a beautiful woman is always exciting (385).

Data 6

ALEXIS. I shall be there; but I shall return alone. Remember, not a word about my strolling players.

GENERAL. Or your pretty gypsy, eh, prince" your pretty gypsy! I' faith, I should like to see her before I go; she has such fine eyes through her mask. Well, good-night, your highness; good-night (379).

Data 7

CZAR. You must hunt her down with bloodhounds, and when she is taken I shall hew her limb from limb. I shall stretch her on the raeck till her pale white body is twisted and curled like paper in the fire.

PRINCE PAUL. Oh, we shall have another hunt immediately for her, sire! Prince Alexis will assist us, I am sure (386).

From data 1 above, Vera's sex is female since Michael uses nominative pronoun "she" in the conversation to refer to Vera. Besides, Peter also uses accusative and genitive pronouns "her" to refer to Vera. The use of pronoun "she" and "her" proves that Vera is a female. Vera is a young lady seen from the data 2. Peter says "the girl" and Michael responds that "Vera is…" It can be seen that "the girl" that is meant by Peter is Vera since Michael directly says something about Vera. Peter uses "the girl" as the substitution to refer to Vera. In data 3, the utterance uttered by the Sergeant implied the physiological dimensions of Vera. From that aspect, the reader can imagine how the character looks like. From the Sergeant utterance's, it can be concluded that Vera is a beautiful woman. The way the sergeant addresses Vera as the pretty one implies that Vera is a beautiful woman.

From data 4 and data 5 above, it is known that Vera Sabouroff is a beautiful woman. It can be seen from the General's and Prince Paul's opinion about Vera. Both of them said that she is a beautiful woman. In his dialogue with Vera in act one, The General says that she is beautiful and pretty. In his dialogue with the Czar in act two, Prince Paul also says that she is a beautiful woman. From both opinions it can be concluded that Vera Sabouroff is a beautiful woman.

From data 6, it is known that Vera is a beautiful woman with a pair of beautiful eyes. It is known from the General's utterance when he sees Vera. Even though Vera is wearing a mask, the General can see her beautiful eyes. In addition, Vera has white pale skin, the common characteristic of Russian people. This is described through Czar's utterance in data 7.

2. The Sociological Dimension of Vera Sabouroff

Sociological aspects can be effectively analyzed through the social life of the character, for instance the house, the job, and the education.

Data 1

PETER. No, no, no, boy; no man could live if he took his neighbor's pack on his shoulders. (Enter Vera in peasant's dress) Well, my girl, you've been long enough away – where is the letter?

VERA. There is none today, father.

PETER. I knew it.

VERA. But there will be one, tomorrow, father (366).

Data 2

COLONEL. Bring me there. Sergeant post your picket outside, and see that these scoundrels do not communicate with anyone. No letter writing, you dogs, or you'll be flogged for it. Now for the vension. (To Peter bowing before him)

Get out of the way, you fool! Who is that girl? (sees Vera)
PETER. My daughter, your highness (367)

Data 3
VERA. Let me see your face.
DMITRI. You will see nothing but suffering in it. They have tortured me.
VERA. Oh, god! Dmitri! My brother! (368).

In the conversations provided in data 1 above, Vera uses the substitution of "father" to refer to Peter. In the data 2, when the colonel asks, "Who is that girl" to Peter, Peter answers that the girl is his daughter. The girl is Vera, because the colonel is looking at Vera when he asks the question. Both data show that Vera is Peter's daughter. In data 3, the conversation between Vera and Dmitri shows that Vera is Dmitri's sister. It is clearly seen when Vera exclaims "My brother!" to Dmitri.

Data 4
PETER. Has Vera not come back yet, Michael?
MICHAEL. No, father Peter, not yet: 'tis a good three miles to the post office and she has to milk the cows besides, and that dun one is rarely plague creature for a wench to handle (365).

From the conversation between Peter and Michael above, we can see something about Vera; that she usually does some works related to farming such as milking a cow. From this conversation, we can also conclude that Vera lives in an inn. This conversation is taken from the prologue of the drama.

3. The Psychological Dimension of Vera Sabouroff

Psychological dimension deals with the characteristics of the character, i.e. behavior, emotions, and thoughts.

Data 1
VERA. Some evil has on him; he must be dead! Oh! Michael, I am so wretched about Dimitri.
MICHAEL. Will you never love anyone but him, Vera?
VERA. I don't know; there is so much else to do in the world but love (p. 366).

This conversation is taken from the prologue of the drama. It is between Vera and Michael. Vera's first utterance shows her love to her brother Dimitri. She cares Dimitri so much that it makes her feel anxious when her brother did not send any letter. The conversation shows that Vera, psychologically, is a loving person. However, Vera does not put love in the first place. In her opinion, love is not the only important thing. There are many things that are more important than love. It shows that Vera is a woman with a vision and this makes her different from other women in the story.

Data 2
VERA. Oh, God! Dmitri! My brother!
DMITRI. Hush! Vera; be calm. You must not let my father know; it would kill him. I thought I could free Russia. I heard men talk of liberty one night in a café. I had never heard the word before. It seemed to be a new god they spoke of. I joined them. It was there all the money went. Five months ago they seized us. They found me printing the paper. I am going to the mines for life. I could not write. I thought it would be better to let you think I was dead; for they are bringing me to a living tomb.
VERA. You must escape, Dmitri. I will take your place.
DMITRI. Impossible! You can only revenge us.
VERA. I shall revenge you (368).

Data 3
VERA (who has remained motionless, pick up paper now from under her foot and reads). *'Number 99, Rue Tchernavaya, Moscow. To strangle whatever nature is in me; neither to love nor to be loved; neither to pity nor to be pitied; neither to marry nor to be given in marriage, till the end is come.' My brother, I shall keep the oath.* (Kisses the paper) *You shall be revenged* (369).

In data 2, Vera gets surprised to know that the man she is talking to is Dmitri. However, she keeps calm when Dmitri asks her so. Vera is able to control herself even though she gets very surprised by seeing her brother. When she begs Dmitri to replace

him, Dmitri refuses. Then, Dmitri tells her something. Vera listens to Dmitri carefully and when Dmitri asks her to revenge on him, Vera agrees to do so. Her behaviour is planned since she has already listened to what Dmitri told her. In data 3, Vera says that she will revenge her brother. It is seen that she is planning something after reading the note given by Dmitri.

Data 4

VERA. Who are our masters?
COLONEL. Young woman, these men are going to the mines for life for asking the same foolish question.
VERA. Then they have been unjustly condemned (367).

Data 5

VERA. 'Number 99, Rue Tchernaaya, Moscow. To strangle whatever nature is in me; neither to love nor to be loved; neither to pity nor to be pitied; neither to marry nor to be given in marriage, till the end is come.' My brother, I shall keep the oath. You shall be revenged! (369).

Data 6

VERA. Ay, martial law. The last right to which the people clung has been taken from them. Without trial, without appeal, without accuser even, our brothers will be taken from their houses, shot in the streets like dogs, sent away to die in the now, to starve in the dungeon, to rot in the mine. Do you know what martial law means? It means the strangling of a whole nation. The streets will be filled with soldiers night and day; there will be sentinels at every door. No man dare walk abroad now but the spy or the traitor. Cooped up in the dens we hide in meeting by stealth, speaking with bated breath; what goo can we do now for Russia? (372).

Data 7

ALEXIS. It is true. Michael has told what he saw. I did pass that night in the Czar's palace. Michael has spoken the truth.
VERA. Stand back, I say; stand back! Alexis, I do not care. I trust you; you would not betray us; you would not sell the people for money. You are honest, true! Oh, say your are no spy! (p. 377)

The conversations above are taken from the prologue and act one of the drama. The data 4 above shows the psychological dimension of Vera. Psychological dimension gives life to ambitions, frustrations, temperaments, attitudes, and complex of the character. Psychology studies such patterns such as behavior, emotions, and thoughts. The conversation above shows Vera's thought about tyranny. Vera opposed tyranny in her country, Russia. Though she is a woman, she is not afraid of expressing her thoughts. It shows that Vera is a brave woman, belief in liberty.

The data 5 is taken from the prologue of the drama. The utterance of Vera after reading the paper implies the psychological dimension of Vera. From Vera's utterance, it can be considered that Vera has the character of faithful woman. It can be seen from Vera's statement after reading the paper from his brother, Dimitri. Vera feels upset and wanted to revenge for her brother. This becomes the root of Vera's ambition to oppose the tyranny and defeates the tyrant for liberty.

The data 6 is taken from the act one of the drama. The utterance of Vera implies the psychological dimension of Vera. From Vera's utterance, it can be seen that she never give up to fight against the tyranny. It can be seen from Vera's statement to try everything that she can do to protect the people. She wants people around her to act something good for Russia to stop the pressure from the tyranny. Therefore, she encourages the people to react against the gloomy situation in Russia before it becomes worse and more innocent people die. From data 7, it is known that Vera is a person who trusts her friends. She is not easy to unbelieve to her friends. She always believes that her friends will not betray her. She believes that every person always has a good side.

Data 9

VERA. Oh, they are breaking in below! See! The bloody man behind you! (Czar turns round for an instant) *Ah!* (Vera

snatches dagger and flings it out of window)

CONSPIRATOR (below): *Long live the people!*

CZAR. What have you done!

VERA. I have saved Russia. (dies) (406)

From data 9 above, it can be seen that Vera is a patriot who loves her country and the people. She is even willing to do anything for her country and its people. From the conversation above, Vera is willing to die for Russia. She will do anything for Russia.

Conclusion

Physiologically, Vera is described as a young beautiful lady with beautiful eyes. Sociologically, Vera is concluded to come from an average family in Russia, in a poor society and lived under tyranny. She lives in an inn with her father before seeing her brother taken away to prison to seek liberty as Nihilist. Psychologically, Vera is seen as a loving person though she does not put love as priority. She loves her country and her brother. She wants to revenge the King for being a tyrant. She is a brave woman, and it is proven from how she becomes a Nihilist to revenge her brother and end up the tyranny in her country.

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