

TRAGEDY AND TRAGIC HERO IN IBSEN'S *ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE*

TRAGEDI DAN TRAGIC HERO PADA DRAMA IBSEN BERJUDUL *ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE*

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Abstract

This research aims to reveal elements of modern tragedy and the traits of tragic hero presented in Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*. The data of this research were primarily taken from Henrik Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* published by Dover Publications in 1999. This is a qualitative research with deductive content analysis. In conducting this research, the researcher used the combination of structuralist criticism, theory of drama, and theory of tragedy. The findings show that (1) the elements of modern tragedy including Tragic Plot as well as Tragic Form and Language are found with some transformations regarding the demand of realism in modern era, (2) the traits of tragic hero found are divided into three categories based on the background of the protagonist coming from common man, source of the tragic action including internal and external force, and act committed by the tragic hero consisting hamartia, hubris, anagnorisis, and peripeteia.

Keywords: Henrik Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People*, tragedy, tragic hero

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap elemen-elemen modern tragedi dan karakteristik tragic hero pada drama Ibsen berjudul "An Enemy of the People". Data dalam penelitian ini diambil dari naskah drama karya Ibsen berjudul "An Enemy of the People" yang diterbitkan oleh Dover Publications pada tahun 1999. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis konten. Dalam melaksanakan penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan kombinasi dari teori strukturalisme, drama, dan tragedi. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa (1) elemen-elemen modern tragedi termasuk Tragic Plot dan Tragic Form and Language ditemukan dengan beberapa transformasi atas dasar tuntutan realisme pada era modern, (2) karakteristik tragic hero yang ditemukan terbagi dalam tiga kategori yang dikelompokkan berdasarkan latar belakang protagonist yang berasal dari orang biasa, sumber tindakan tragis yang terdiri dari dorongan internal dan eksternal, serta tindakan yang dilakukan oleh tragic hero yang meliputi hamartia, hubris, anagnorisis, dan peripeteia.

Kata kunci: Henrik Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People*, tragedi, tragic hero

INTRODUCTIONS

The word 'drama' is derived from the Greek word "draein" which means "to do" or "to act", thus it refers to a story performed or represented by actors. It is one of literary genres in English Literature that is originated from the religious predisposition of human being, as it is stated by Mario Klarer (2004: 43) that "Drama has its roots in cultic ritual

practice." By this, the feature of religious belief has influenced the very first drama, which is the classical Greek drama of the fifth century BC. As the time evolves, the feature of very first drama has been developed and its structure has been modified until this modern era. The form of Greek drama was very rigid and the function was only to worship the god, while, as it comes to millennial era, the form

gets simpler yet the meaning gets broader, and it possesses higher functions; drama is not only used to worship, but it is also used to present critique and portrayal of reality. Moreover, drama is not only enjoyed as a performance, but it can also be enjoyed as a text – drama script can be read independently by the reader, and the message still can be inquired through its written elements.

Drama as a text consists of dialogue lines between characters and stage direction. Hence, drama does not have the very prominent element possessed by prose – the narrative explaining many aspects of the story and the whole plot. In consequence, to understand the story and hidden insight of the drama scrip, the reader should understand the background story and should read it carefully to uncover the plot, the theme, the issues, the moral value, the structure of the characters, and the genre.

Genre has been very important in categorizing literary work. In drama, it has been strongly associated as comedy or tragedy because both of them are the most durable and the oldest of literary genres rooting from drama. Comedy and tragedy tell about something deep and real within human being. Even though they are characteristically opposite to each other, each of them closely exposes the complex experience of living in this world. Comedy, in drama, may be broadly defined as whatever makes people laugh. While tragedy in drama means a drama that portrays a serious conflict between

human beings and some superior, overwhelming force – whether it is internal or external force. The drama of tragedy mostly ends sorrowfully and disastrously as it involves the fate of the characters. Tragedy and comedy as a literary genre can be uncovered as the characters experienced some events during the plot development.

In tragedy, the force of the tragic influence can be seen through the development of the plot, the characters' characterization and their thought. Even though the concept of tragedy has evolved until this modern era, the message and the end of tragedy in literature are always the same; the protagonist suffers terribly, pitifully, but there is abundant wisdom to be gained from that suffering. Character who possesses tragic traits in the story is often called as tragic hero or hero undergone tragedy. Tragic hero originated from ancient Greek theater, and its transformation can still be seen in contemporary tragedies.

The transformation of tragedy and tragic hero can be seen through some works of the founding father of modern drama – Henrik Ibsen. One of his works that deals with tragedy and tragic hero is a contemporary drama entitled *An Enemy of The People*. Therefore, the researcher would like to renders the tragedy and tragic hero employed in this drama, in order to uncover how the transformation of tragedy and tragic hero is portrayed in modern drama. In conducting this research, the theories of

drama, tragedy, and structuralist criticism were employed as the theoretical framework.

RESEARCH METHOD

Types of Study

This research is a qualitative research with deductive content analysis. In this research, the researcher played as the central participant in conducting the research and in analyzing the content of the text according to existing theory.

Time and Place of the Study

The present study was written from March 2018 to August 2018 in Jogjakarta.

Subject of the Study

The subject of the study was a drama script written by Henrik Ibsen entitled *An Enemy of the People*.

Data, Instrument, and Data Collection Techniques

The data taken from the text were in the form of expressions from the dialogues of all the characters within the drama that support the findings of the research.

The main instrument in the study was the researcher herself supported by the data sheets. They were designed in order to put the quotations of the data based on dialogue or expressions, explanations, act, and page in a form of table list. The table was categorized into two category, Table 1 grouped the elements of tragedy presented in the drama. Those are; tragic plot (coded into TP) consisting exposition, complicating action, climax, falling action, and catastrophe; and

tragic form and language (coded into TFL). Table 2 grouped the tragic hero traits presented in the work that was categorized into three divisions – Background of the protagonist (noble man or common man), source of the tragic force (internal or external), and tragic act committed by the tragic hero (hamartia, hubris, peripeteia, anagnorisis). The form of the tables are displayed below:

Table 1: Tragedy in Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*

No .	Code	Category	Expression	Act/ Page	Meaning
1	TP	Falling Action	<p>Mrs. Stockmann. Don't give in, Thomas. I will tell the boys to go with you.</p> <p>Dr. Stockmann. That is a splendid idea!</p> <p>Mrs. Stockmann. Morten will be delighted; and Ejlif will do whatever he does.</p> <p>Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and Petra!—and you too, Katherine!</p>	VI/ 49	Dr. Stockmann may lost his supporter from the "People's Messenger", but his wife who at first does not support him, finally supports him completely to continue what he has struggled for.

Table 2: Tragic Hero in Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*

No	Category			Expression	Act	Meaning
	Back ground	Source	Act			
1		V		<p><i>Dr. Stockmann.</i> Never, Mr. Aslaksen! It is the majority in our community that denies me my freedom and seeks to prevent my speaking the truth.</p> <p><i>Hovstad.</i> The majority always has right on its side.</p>	IV/59	Majority of the town becomes the external force that leads Dr. Stockmann in committing tragic act.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by following structuralism, drama and tragedy theories. In analyzing this research, there were few steps needed to be done. The first step that the researcher did was doing close reading. After that, the researcher tried to scrutinize and identify the text according to the chosen theory hence the appropriate data was collected. Next, the collected data was coded into some category in order to help the researcher in analyzing the data. Then, the coded data was validated and the researcher researcher to explain the complexity of the meaning and the finding of the data.started to analyze them. Finally, the descriptive-qualitative method would help the researcher

to explain the complexity of the meaning and the finding of the data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the study discussed the data from the table list, they were discussed below:

Elements of Modern Tragedy in Ibsen’s *Enemy of the People*

The elements of modern tragedy in *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen including Tragic Plot as well as Tragic Form and Language are found with some transformations regarding the demand of realism in modern era.

1. Tragic Plot

All of the Tragic Plot elements (exposition, complicating action, climax, falling action, and denouement) are found in the drama. However, each of them has some transformation regarding of its tragic causality.

a. Exposition

The exposition has depicted the initial condition that may leads the tragic event in the preceding act. Moreover, it is found that there is an anagnorisis in the exposition. Thus, this employment of anagnorisis in the exposition marks the variance of tragic plot in modern tragedy that differ with the classical tragedy.

As it is become the main concerns of the town’s development, Dr. Thomas Stockmann thinks that the excellence of the Bath’s sanitary condition should be observed

as its condition will affect the visitor's. He has wrote an assumption article about the Bath's sanitary condition since winter without the acknowledgement of the Mayor of the town, yet it has not been released due to the further needs of proof. Here is the datum that shows this initial condition:

Hovstad : **Well, the doctor's article will come in very suitably.**

Peter Stockmann: Has he been writing something just lately?

Hovstad : **This is something he wrote in the winter; a recommendation of the Baths...**

(Act I, page 3).

Another initial condition introduced in the exposition is that the article about the Bath written by Dr. Stockmann without the acknowledgement of the Mayor is actually his long examined discovery. As it is represented in his statemen, "**A discovery of mine**" (Act I, page 3). Then, after Dr. Stockmann has received a letter from the laboratory check of the sanitary condition of the Bath, it becomes a proof that assure him about his assumption that the Bath has been polluted. This letter also functions as the discovery or of the Bath's sanitary condition. This discovery marks that the **anagnorisis** is found in the Exposition of the plot.

b. Compicating Action

The complicating action of the tragic plot in this drama confirms the response or further action committed by the protagonist to face the initial condition. It also shows that it is different with the common tragic classic plot that the anagnorisis happens in the

complicating action as this modern tragic drama shows that there is a change in the presence of the anagnorisis in which the complicating action is introduced by anagnorisis, not introducing anagnorisis.

According to the findings of the complicating action, the point that marks the complicating action is when Dr. Stockmann finally send his report about the sanitary condition of the Bath to the Mayor of the Town who is his own brother. This is shown in this datum:

Dr. Stockmann: ... **I have prepared a report for the Baths Committee;...Look at that! Four closely written sheets!—and the letter shall go with them. Give me a bit of paper, Katherine—something to wrap them up in. That will do! Now give it to-to-(stamps his foot)—what the deuce is her name?—give it to the maid, and tell her to take it at once to the Mayor.**

(Act I, page 14)

As a doctor, Dr. Stockmann must have further consideration before the building of the Bath. He first opposes the plan about the Bath, however the authority does not listen to him. Now, as he has got the proof about his discovery, he will send the report about the dangerous condition of the Bath's sanitary to the Mayor.

c. Climax

The climax depicts the protagonist's reversal of fortune or peripeteia. Modern tragic plot element in this point is still in line with the classical tragic climax depicting the reversal of fortune of the protagonist.

According to the findings of this research, the climax starts when Peter Stockmann – the Mayor of the Town, visits the office of the People’s Messenger. He conveys that Dr. Stockmann has sent him report about the Bath and he has count its effect. Turns out, what the doctor has done does not meet with what the press desires because it results on the expense that should be paid by the tradesman and all of the townspeople if the Bath is rebuilt. This is shown in the datum that Peter Stockmann says “**The Medical Officer of the Baths is responsible for what happened today**” (Act III, page 41). Thus, this makes the people behind the press surprised and turns against him as the doctor does not consult them before.

a. Falling Action

The falling action in this drama is similar with common plot that shows the further story after the climax and preceding the denouement. However, as modern dramatis has a freedom to writes his work, Henrik Ibsen shows that he employs another **anagnorisis** in the falling action of the modern tragic plot in this drama.

Falling action becomes the starting point of the tragic conclusion. After some issues which is formed since the exposition until the climax, in falling action, those issues begin to be solved. According to the findings of this research, Dr. Stockmann’s intention in delivering his discovery to the public mass directly becomes the instrument in soothing the climax. Because as he insist on delivering

his discovery after loses all of this allies, his wife supports him to keep moving. This is shown when Katherine say “**Don’t give in, Thomas. I will tell the boys to go with you**” (Act III, page 49).

During the falling action, Dr. Stockmann who at first aims to deliver his discovery about the poisonous Baths, abandon his intention to tell that right in front of the public mass. However, he comes with another discovery; after he gets his reversal of fortune and being left by the compact liberal majority that once is going to help him, he concludes that the poisonous one is not only the Baths, but the compact majority, as it is shown by these datum:

Dr. Stockmann: You may depend upon it—I shall name them! That is precisely **the great discovery I made yesterday**. (Raises his voice.) **The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact Liberal majority—that is it! Now you know!**
(Act IV, page 58)

a. Denouement

The denouement has shown the catastrophe of the protagonist – Dr. Stockmann. By this, the ending of this drama, especially the fifth act, is in accordance with the classical tragic plot that it presents catastrophe of the tragic hero. However, there is one distinction happening in this modern tragedy. That one distinct elements occurring in the ending is the another discovery or anagnorisis made by Dr. Stockmann during

his catastrophe. This is shown in the datum below:

Dr. Stockmann: Yes. (Gathers them round him, and says confidentially:)
It is this, let me tell you—that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.

(Act V, page 82)

This, then, has marked the **catastrophe** of the tragic hero that Dr. Stockmann, who previously works as a Medical Officer of the Bath, now becomes no one and living an outcasted life. Moreover, this catastrophe is also becomes his final **anagnorisis** that marks his tragic ending. The doctor finally concludes that outcast man is strong because he can face all the tragedy until the catastrophe.

As tragic drama mostly ends in a catastrophe, the denouement of *An Enemy of the People* has shown the catastrophe of the protagonist – Dr. Stockmann. Catastrophe is usually presented as the death of the protagonist or simply the despair of the protagonist. The protagonist surely ends in a terrible condition; he comes into ruin. In this drama, Dr. Stockmann ends in a terrible condition even though he has accept his condition and tried to live his current life by doing what he want to do. Even though he claims that he is the strongest man in the world because he can live alone, he still lives in a destruction that he has made.

2. Tragic Form and Language

Whereas, the Tragic Form and Language found in the drama are only the

convention of tragic language that also has some transformation and unity of time and place that is not pretty significant because of the time transformation, while chorus is not found in this research.

a. Convention of Language

The convention of tragic language employed in this drama comes in a form of narrative rather than verse, but it still also maintains some figurative languages between the common languages in the dialogue. However, the tragic form and language of tragedy in this modern drama have been transformed and suited to the demand of realism, but they are actually still has similar effect and key concept with the traditional one.

One of the most appearing figurative language in this drama is the employment of simile that is shown in this datum:

Billing : Doesn't know! What do you mean by that? **A community is like a ship;** everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.

(Act I, page 9)

The employment of simile is shown in the sentence “**A community is like a ship;**” (Act I, page 9). The use of simile in this dialogue aims to visualize the community that works as if it sails like a ship. When the community is compared with ship, if something happens to the community the audience regards it as if something happens to the ship. Thus, it can further create tragic effect during the plot development. However, other kinds of figurative language also presented in this

drama, such as the employment of metaphor and paradox.

b. Unity of Time, Place, and Action

The unity of time place and action confirms that modern tragedy does not rely on three unities as the playwright is free to do whatever they like. They can compress the story with a new time and place but still maintaining the tragic effect as the time and place become more realist than the time and place of the traditional tragedy. The drama only takes place in one unity of location which is a coastal town in southern Norway as it is shown in this datum **“The action takes place in a coastal town in southern Norway”** (Ibsen, 1999: vii). However, the time spans more than 24 hours and the story plot occurs for more than one day.

c. Chorus

While, the chorus is not appeared in this modern tragic drama as Henrik Ibsen is well-known for his exclusion of chorus.

Peter Stockmann: So I imagined. **I hear my brother has become a prolific contributor to the “People’s Messenger.”** Hovstad. Yes, he is good enough to write in the “People’s Messenger” when he has any home truths to tell.
(Act I, page 2)

Dr. Stockmann is the brother of the Mayor of the town – Peter Stockmann. He also becomes one of the contributor of a newspaper called “People’s Messenger.” Moreover, according to the Mayor he also works as the medical officer of the Bath, as it

is proven by this datum, **“Well remember, he is the Medical Officer to the Baths”** (Act I, page 3). By this, it can be inferred that he is a common man.

2. Source of the Tragic Action

The source of the tragic action committed by the protagonist comes from both internal force and external force.

a. Internal Force

The internal force is in a form of the protagonist’s flaws or negative nature and personality including impetuosity, impulsiveness, narrow-mindedness, ill-judgment, impatience, being a dupe, arrogance, combativeness, ignorance, stubbornness, selfishness, over-confidence, and unforgiving nature.

The internal force motivating the protagonist’s bad decision in committing tragic act comes in a form of impetuosity, impulsiveness, narrow-mindedness, ill-judgment, impatience, and being a dupe. The impetuosity of the protagonist is shown in this datum

Dr. Stockmann : Yes. **Do you see any other way out of it? I don’t.**

Peter Stockmann: I made a pretext this morning to go and see the town engineer, and, as if only half seriously, broached the subject of these proposals as a thing **we might perhaps have to take under consideration some time later on.**
(Act II, page 25)

Meanwhile, the internal force motivating the protagonist’s pride or hubris

comes in a form of arrogance, combativeness, ignorance, stubbornness, selfishness, overconfidence, and unforgiving nature. The most dominant internal force influencing the protagonist's pride or hubris is his own arrogance. Dr. Stockmann is a super arrogant person, this is shown in this datum:

Dr. Stockmann: Well, to your grandfather, then. **The old boy will have something to be astonished at!** I know he thinks I am cracked—and there are lots of other people who think so too, I have noticed. **But now these good folks shall see—they shall just see!** (Walks about, rubbing his hands.) There **will be a nice upset in the town,** Katherine; you can't imagine what it will be. All the conduit-pipes will have to be relaid

(Act II, page 25)

This datum shows that Dr. Stockmann's is prideful and arrogant that people will be astonished by him because of his discovery. Thus, his pride and arrogance becomes his **internal force** of tragic act as it can influence his decision and action formed by his hubris. Then, the combativeness of the protagonist also becomes an **internal force** of his tragic act.

b. External Force

Meanwhile, the external force comes in a form of family pressure, society pressure, and group pressure.

The family pressure comes from Dr. Stockmann's father in law that forces him to stand against the authority as well as

townspeople and his wife that asks him to cooperate with the authority for the sake of their family wellbeing. The force from his father in law is shown from this datum,

Morten Kiil : No, I must be off now. **You keep up this game for all it is worth; you won't repent it, I'm damned if you will!**

(Act I, page 18)

Then, the form of community pressure comes from the press people from a newspaper called "People's Messenger" and the head of Housholder Association. The people from "People's Messenger" asks Dr. Stockmann to not only publish the article about his discovery about the Bath, but also uses it as the weapon to fight against the authority. This is shown from this datum,

Hovstad : From your point of view, as a doctor and a man of science, this affair of the water supply is an isolated matter. **I mean, you do not realise that it involves a great many other things.**

...

Dr. Stockmann : What the deuce are you driving at, Hovstad?

Hovstad : **The whole of the town's interests have, little by little, got into the hands of a pack of officials.**

(Act I, page 19)

Moreover, the form of external force that comes from society pressure is very dominant. It comes from his own brother that becomes the Mayor of the Town and the

ideology of the authority that is mostly followed by the society.

The Mayor asks Dr. Stockmann to obey the authority by not spreading his discovery about the Bath. This is shown from this datum, "*Peter Stockmann*. In your official capacity, no. As a private person, it is quite another matter. But **as a subordinate member of the staff of the Baths, you have no right to express any opinion which runs contrary to that of your superiors**" (Act II, page 29).

1. Tragic Act Committed by the Protagonist

All of the tragic act committed by the tragic hero are found in this modern drama including hamartia, hubris, anagnorisis, and peripeteia. However, all of them have transformed into the need of modern tragedy that tends to fulfil the demand of realism. The data showing all of the tragic actions committed by the protagonist are presented below:

a. Hamartia

Hamartia is mistake of flaws possessed by the protagonist. One of the the protagonist's hamartia is becoming easily duped. As it is shown from this datum in which Mrs. Stockmann says "It is just what you do. **I know quite well you have more brains than anyone in the town, but you are extremely easily duped, Thomas**" (Act III, page 46).

b. Hubris

Hubris is the excessive pride of the tragic hero that make him deceived by his own judgment. Dr. Stockmann is overconfident about his discovery, he has excessive pride about that, and it makes him brags about his truthful discovery. It is shown from the datum, "*Dr. Stockmann*. Very well; but in that case I shall use my pen against you. **I stick to what I have said; I will show that I am right and that you are wrong.** And what will you do then?" (Act II, page 30).

c. Anagnorisis

Anagnorisis is the discovery or recognition of truth. The anagnorisis of the tragic hero in this modern tragic drama exists in three times. The first one occurs in the exposition as Dr. Stockmann discovers something about the Bath. This is shown in this datum, "**A discovery of mine**" (Act I, page 17). The second one occurs in the falling action as Dr. Stockmann discovers that the compact majority is the enemy of truth. This is depicted in this datum:

Dr. Stockmann: You may depend upon it—I shall name them! That is precisely **the great discovery I made yesterday**. (Raises his voice.) **The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact Liberal majority—that is it! Now you know!**
(Act IV, page 58)

The third discovery occurs in the denouement in which he has finally realized

that the outcast man is the strongest one as it is portrayed in this datum:

Dr. Stockmann: Yes. (Gathers them round him, and says confidentially:) **It is this, let me tell you-that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.**

(Act V, page 82)

b. Peripeteia

Peripeteia is a fall or reversal of fortune of the tragic hero. The Peripeteia is illustrated as after knowing the consequences and the expense they shall pay if they do what they have planned before, the people behind "People's Messenger" turns against Dr. Stockmann's side and becomes the supporter of the authority. Hence, this makes the doctor loses the power behind him. This condition is shown in this datum:

Hovstad : **You have represented your case in a false light, Doctor, and therefore I am unable to give you my support.**

Hovstad : **I am not going to print it. I cannot and will not and dare not print it.**

(Act III, page 47-48)

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study as follow: First, the elements of modern tragedy in *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen including Tragic Plot as well as Tragic Form and Language are found with some transformations regarding the demand of realism in modern era. The Tragic Plot contains more than one anagnorisis during its development, but it still has peripeteia as its

climax and catastrophe as its end. The Tragic Form and Language is presented in narrative; it does not possess chorus and perfect three unities; it still employs some figurative language even though the use of common language is dominant. Second, traits of tragic hero found in Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* are divided into three categories based on the background of the protagonist, source of the tragic action, and act committed by the tragic hero. The protagonist comes from common man; his tragic action is influenced by internal force and external force; he commits hamartia, hubris, anagnorisis, and peripeteia.

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