

A DISCUSSION ON FORM OF ALLUSIONS AND ITS CONNECTION TO SOCIAL CHANGES IN A SATIRICAL PLAY, *EASTWARD HO*

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Abstract - Since its first performance in 1605, *Eastward Ho* had heightened public interest by giving audience a taste of entertaining, satirical play set around the life of Touchstone, a hard-working and honest goldsmith. The play depicts the conflict between contrasting figures: Touchstone's daughters – the ambitious Gertrude and the obedient Mildred – and his apprentices – the prodigal Quicksilver and the faithful Golding. These strong characters have driven intriguing plots into an ending where each side receives what he or she deserves. This story describes the characters of urban masculinity as well as female attitudes towards social status, class, and property. A moralistic view is developed in a conventional, yet entertaining way, where the line between virtue and vice can be distinctly discerned. This is one of the characteristics of the period and predominantly reflects the authors' viewpoints. Created by three prominent playwrights; Ben Jonson, John Marston and George Chapman as a collaborative task, some portions of *Eastward Ho* are alluded to in well known titles, places, characters, proverbs and lines, of previous works near the period. This essay therefore tries to explore the social changes of the play by its various forms of allusions.

Keywords: allusion, play, *Eastward Ho*, social change

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Joseph Pucci (1998), the key to grasping the meaning of an allusive text is in the hands of the 'full-knowing reader'; the reader who is actively engaged and aware of the story's historical context within the extend of the author. Allusion, in some ways, is needed in satire to invite people's attention to what has been familiar to them. Satire often works outside our consciousness. It is also influenced by the integration of cognition, experience and memory. People might realize they are being satirized, or they might not. If authors plan to satirize a particular audience, they will create the obvious line between good and bad until the audience arrives at one ultimate idea, that there is no permanent good and bad – everything is in between. In other words, satire 'establishes oppositions between good and evil, text and reader, reader and society, even between the reader and herself' (Connery and Combe, 1995).

Ziva Ben-Porat in her *Poetics of Literary Allusion* argues that allusion is like a sign, signifying something larger than itself, while the literary allusion is a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts' (Pucci, 1998). Allusive function, furthermore, 'is the connection of two texts resulted in 'intertextual patterns' – whose natures varied, depending on the perspective of the reader and on the position of the reader within the intertextual system' (Pucci, 1998). The allusions appear if the readers are aware of the historical context and seemingly pay attention to the background of the story, author and particular changes that may occur after the literary work is published or performed. Allusion is somehow created by the author – intentionally or accidentally, but can only be understood by a reader or audience who interacts personally within the given theme.

II. METHODS

This study provides an analysis toward one of the literary devices, in this case allusions, to look for the relation between the past and the present in a literary work at a certain period of time. It explores the form of allusions appeared in *Eastward Ho*, a satirical play by Ben Jonson, Thomas Marston and George Chapman. In collecting the data, the writer used two kinds of references; primary text (the original play script of *Eastward Ho*) and secondary sources. First, the writer did a deep dive into the theory of allusions from Pucci's book *The Full-Knowing Reader* and highlighted the types of literary allusions found in the text. Next, the writer examined the form of allusions appeared in the primary text to categorize them based on Pucci's theory. At last, the writer looked for the connection between the form of allusions and the social phenomenon happened around that era. *Eastward Ho* was famous in early Jacobean era, which was the second part of English Renaissance period, the era of modernization when the artists and the playwrights were at the peak of success and their roles were roughly influential in human history. According to Donley (2013, p. 26), *Eastward Ho* emphasizes the theater's role to affect social change. As a result, there are four forms of allusions found here which represent the social changes in the period; title allusion, lines and proverbial allusion, character allusion, and place allusion.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Allusion;
Estward Ho;
Social
change

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The first form of allusion is the title itself, *Eastward Ho*, which is famously associated with the previous play by Thomas Dekker and John Webster; *Westward Ho*. As Fossen (1979) states, '*Eastward Ho* is a reply (and a foil) to Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho*, almost certainly produced in the late autumn or early winter of 1604' (Chapman, et al 1979). *Westward Ho* is another comedy play about contemporary London life and loyalty in a relationship. It further tells the story of a man's investigation into a possible affair between his wife and a gallant which is proven wrong at the end, leaving all his assumptions as mere suspicion. However, Garwood (2009) asserts 'while *Eastward Ho* maintains moral attitudes explicitly, *Westward Ho* is more affectionate and reflective than bitterly satirical' (Garwood, 2008). Based on the title, which is the continuation of direction 'West' to the 'East', assigns the desire of a group to voyage together in the search of an adventurous experience. They eagerly want to find out what lies on the other side of the world. By going in the opposite direction, the characters believe themselves to be among few who have succeeded in acknowledging new resources in the land less untouched. Some relate it to marriage, as stated by Seagull,

'A whole country of English is there, man, bred of those that were left there in '79. They have married with the Indians, and make 'em bring forth as beautiful faces as any we have in England; and therefore the Indians are so in love with 'em, that all the treasure they have, they lay at their feet' (Chapman, et al 1605, 3.3, 18)

Marriage, at this point, is directed from the perspective of gaining profit and racial improvement. This notion of 'proper gender relation' is actually to combine 'white' and 'black'. The difference in colour once became the reason behind a voyage – not to mention the desire for sex, which is probably close to the truth. However, as time rolls on, 'race was then (as it is now), a social construct that is fundamentally more about power and culture than about biological difference' (Hall, 1995). Sailing to a new place is the opportunity to navigate new attractions and more interesting figures. It can either be the solution of the problems or the source of all troubles. Sir Petronel Flash was an example of a ridiculously greedy character when he committed to a matrimony. He promised Gertrude to let her see his *castle in the air* which in fact never existed. Instead, he was almost solely concerned with the dowry from his wife's family without considering the new stage of life as a married couple. He

proudly pointed it out in the statement, ‘A man in the course of this world should be like a surgeon’s instrument, work in the wounds of others, and feel nothing himself. The sharper and subtler, the better’ (Chapman, et al 1605, 3.2, 216). After marriage, he turned away and decided to cruise with another woman. As a husband, he failed to adjust his sail to follow the right direction of a proper marriage.

When Sir Petronel Flash was encouraged to travel to Virginia with his fellow crews, we arrived at another allusion of place, which was Virginia as the New World. This was inspired by Richard Hakluyt (1553 – 1616) in the *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffic and Discoveries of The English Nations Volume 13* (Vossen, 1979, p.13). Travel writers, who share about their experiences commonly believe that reading their piece of writing is equal to the journey they have made. In other words, one of the reasons behind a travel experience is to have them written. There was this conflicting view between the author who wrote from his journey experiences and the author who learned it from books or other persons. William Wood was one of the voyagers who traveled to Massachusetts Bay and transferred his experience to *New England Prospect* (1635) (Carey and Jowitt, 2016). Hakluyt, on the other hand, despite of the fact that he was the initiator of English colonial expansion in the late Tudor and early Stuart period, had only been as far as Paris throughout his entire life. *Eastward Ho* puts its satire against what is called *the armchair travelers*, highlighting the message with the phrase ‘by reading a play about travel is a way of avoiding travel’ (Carey and Jowitt, 2016). In other words, people did not need to travel far if they could explore the places without leaving their cozy places. Besides, who knows what would happen in the middle of the journey? Especially of those with zero experience, the voyage would inevitably be somewhat challenging. The play is intended to satirize the failing travelers that eagerly wanted to go to Virginia. Following Hakluyt’s passion to take part in the colonial action to Virginia but never successfully making it, *Eastward Ho* has the rising action where the travelers cannot get to their final destination and instead become shipwrecked on the Isle of Dogs in Cuckold’s Haven, which is sadly located down the river Thames.

There is a reasonable connection between Virginia and gold. The richness of the so called New World (Virginia) was the basis of colonialization in early modern England. Seagull adds, ‘I tell thee, gold is more plentiful there than copper is with

us; and for as much red copper as I can brin, I'll have thrice the weight in gold. Why, man, all their dripping pans and their chamber pots are pure gold; and all the chains, with which they chain up their streets, are massy gold' (Chapman, et al 1605, 3.3, 26). The purity of gold as the symbol of wealth, points out clearly that a voyage to Virginia, in this case travelling east in *Eastward Ho*, is one of human's endeavours to seek for a better future. Virginia, at one point was the goal of urban chaps. Having a voyage was the act of bravery and passion fulfillment. One of the factors could be the dissatisfaction of living in their current city or boredom at their long settlement. The eagerness to see different things and trace the new culture was intriguing. There is nothing wrong with seeking out adventures; however, greed and lust sometimes interfered with this intention. That was why colonization often brought disadvantages to the local inhabitants.

Some past travelers believed that the New World was also a place that offered freedom to its natives. 'And then you shall live freely there, without sergeants, or courtiers, or lawyers, or intelligencers,' (Chapman, et al 1605, 3.3, 42). Their perception that the absence of laws, local authorities or law makers can be the source of a good life is disagreeing. To survive without public laws is somehow problematic. Humans are in fact not restricted by law or any rules, yet by their own freedom. If people are not tied by rules, then they will start to make their own canon that may not be compatible with those of others. As a result, the incompatible rules will gradually beat the tolerance within society. Living without tolerance means living without acceptance, if there is no acceptance then appreciation will slowly fade away which causes the loss of recognition. The law is needed to grow recognition of humans' existence. In this play, Touchstone used to follow the rules and maintained a favourable manner that brought him to be a wise goldsmith. He decided to introduce his obedient daughter with his devoted apprentice which brought them to a fulfilling marriage. For him, a good man is for a good woman and a happy marriage is the treasure more worthy than any gold.

The most immediately apparent of allusions are those from Shakespeare's works, particularly associated with *Hamlet*. The next allusion comes from two characters – Gertrude (Touchstone's daughter) and Hamlet (the coachman), who have their names derived from two leading characters in *Hamlet*. This inevitably

implies the popularity of *Hamlet* among the Londoners at that time. As de Grazia (2007) argues, ‘*Eastward Ho*’s footman and Shakespeare’s Prince share more than just a name’, She then continues, ‘Like his tragic twin, footman Hamlet cannot keep still either: it is Hamlet’s own frenetic footmanship – chasing after ghosts and leaping around graveyards – that this footman mimics and which thus defines both characters alike’ (Davis, 2008). The persistence of Hamlet in pursuing the truth about his father’s death is similar with the perseverance of the coachman to provide safety and comfort for his master. Hamlet the coachman is the embodiment of a hard- worker who fulfills his duty and willingly takes responsibility, despite of the fact that this action can put him under certain assortment. His role in society, at one extreme, is essential for maintaining movement of the aristocrats.

The character resemblance also appears in Gertrude, Touchstone’s eldest daughter who got married with Sir Petronel Flash – the knight with his *castle in the air* (refers to an imaginary castle, which he uses to attract Gertrude). As a daughter of a goldsmith, Gertrude was the figure of a social city climber, treating marriage as a solution to achieve higher status in society. She is conspicuously comparable to Queen Gertrude – Hamlet’s mother, who, though not proved guilty for her husband’s death, notably accepted to commit incest with the culprit. Passion and sexuality are considered as major similarities between these women characters. According to Horwich, ‘In *Hamlet*, hunger for food is a common metaphor for social desire’, then he adds, ‘while in *Eastward Ho*, Gertrude herself makes the equation of food with sex’ (Horwich, 1971). By using this allusion, *Eastward Ho* is about preventing society, especially women from growing materialistic and getting overwhelmingly dependent on men’s wealth. When Hamlet tries to preserve his social function as a coachman, Gertrude, demands to carry on with her luxurious life style as a lady’s knight and improves her social status. In this case, the ideas of social mobility contrast with each other.

The next form is proverbial allusion, which has potentially significant effects on the interpretations of a work. However, the origin of the proverbs may be obscured by less sufficient materials. Some proverbial allusions were spoken out by Touchstone when he knew that Quicksilver was about to escape from his duty to join his other slackened fellows. As the key figure in moral delivery, Touchstone had

worked hard to set up his own living. To have a spenthrift working in his shop is a misfortune. He delivered his advice with, 'Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee', 'Light gains makes heavy purses', and, 'Tis good to be merry and wise' (Chapman, et al 1605, 1.1, 58). These lines describe the life of a hardworking and honest goldsmith who believes himself to have a firm grip on his stand. This expression, to some extent, requires people to maintain quality of workmanship. Especially for men, to hold on to one specific job that suits his passion and skills is not always an easy task. Pressure from either self or family and motivational degradation sometimes create tendency to constantly shift from one job to another (which offers a better profit). Financial problems are considered a major issue in most households. By owning a shop and developing skill in one particular area, Touchstone represents independence and consistency to manage resources, which are two of the qualities needed for success.

Another line proverbial allusion is the 'tears of the crocodile', which was said by Touchstone responding to the pleading of his wife, his daughters (Gertrude and Mildred), Winifred (Security's wife) and the officer, Wolf. Quicksilver, Sir Petronel Flash, Security, and the innocent Golding were taken to jail for their conspiracy to steal Touchstone's money and he refused to set them free. Touchstone said, 'I am deaf still, I say, I will neither yield to the song of the siren, nor the voice of my hyena, the tears of the crocodile, nor the howling o' the wolf. Avoid my habitation, monsters!' (Chapman, et al, 1605, 5, 4, 32). 'The tears of the crocodile' is understood as the cry of a false remorse. This expression is commonly said by the protagonist to show doubtfulness and disappointment. For this play, the protagonist did not stay angry long as Quicksilver expressed his repentance in a poignant song. In this connection, for Touchstone, it is noteworthy to consider forgiveness – the noble attitude of someone who is able to manage emotions properly. Quicksilver's attempt to admit mistakes and apologize is finally crowned. He and other guilty men were set free because of Touchstone's discretion. Touchstone was conventionally pious, capable of drawing his own consciousness and convincing himself of their righteousness. However, the fact that he forgave Quicksilver just because of a repentant song seemed unrealistic and too virtuous to be true. This merciful

announcement showed contradiction to the ‘tears of the crocodile’ previously spoken.

As noted, the popularity of Shakespeare’s plays predominantly has influenced *Eastward Ho* in some ways. There is also a line allusion which was taken from Shakespeare’s *King Henry IV Part II*. The line is ‘let the welkin roar, and Erebus also’ (Chapman et al, 1605, 1.1, 126). It was said by Quicksilver when he talked to Golding debating about how gentlemen were supposed to behave. Quicksilver, as the main character experiencing moral transformation, played a significant role in intensely affecting the emotion and engagement of the plots. Humour, anger, sadness, enthusiasm, and passion are accumulated – following the nature of the urban citizen. From their conversation, there is a clear distinction on their point of views. Quicksilver stated that one way of escaping financial problem was to escape labour while Golding maintained that it was hard work and devotion. Quicksilver added of having a journey to the east and looked for an adventure instead of just staying in one place. However, this attitude brought the potential for Quicksilver to be the hero of the play, as this question asked, ‘Does Quicksilver’s ability to perform a ‘conversion’ so convincingly that he is forgiven by his master establish him as the play’s real hero and someone close to the ‘emotional, rhetorical and moral action to the center?’’ (Kay, 2012). The constant kindness of Golding and Touchstone are challenged with attitude metamorphoses of Quicksilver.

If Touchstone is a figure of a honest work-fighter, then Quicksilver is considerably an ardent risk-taker. Another view agrees that Quicksilver in some sense follows Touchstones’ characteristic. They somehow share similar traits – openness in business, the ability to plan and negotiate, flexibility and dynamic movement – all strong characteristics of a tradesman. Richard Halpern (1991) in *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and The Genealogy of Capital* asserts that ‘*Eastward Ho* presents the process of social change through Quicksilver’s modified imitation of Touchstone’s model. As the apprentice learns and performs the language of his master, he alters its meaning for both himself and the play’s audience’ (Donley, 2013).

This may be contrasted with Sir Petronel Flash who asked forgiveness from his father in law after the tragic wreck that happened to both his ship and his marriage.

His previous selfishness, ignorance, and stupidity were gradually washed away by the mercy of his wife, the descendant of Touchstone. It happened that Gertrude also learned her lesson. She realized that her false obsession with wealth and social status failed to bring her happiness. She also apologized to her dear father. Sir Petronel Flash came back to Gertrude and intended to be a good husband for her. The same thing happened to the rest of the characters. All was reconciled and the antagonists finally learned from their mischief.

There might be more allusions worth exploring. Besides, the interpretation of allusions have the potential to develop into more varied understanding as allusions, again, depend on the audience interacting personally within the given theme. The highlighted four types of allusions; title, place, character, proverbial and lines, imply that *Eastward Ho* contains a lot of references without losing its originality.

IV. CONCLUSION

Readers need to be aware that by looking at literary allusions, the glimpse of history appears for them waiting to be remembered. History is the accumulation of events – the kaleidoscope of memories. Meanwhile, human's life is a dynamic social process. *Eastward Ho* is a part of history in early modern England that represents the ongoing social phenomenon both at the time it was written and in the present time. If *Eastward Ho* was the yell of watermen in the boats crossing the River Thames, consider reading this play as a voyage to the New World– the voyage of metamorphoses. Similar to the purity of gold, the intention of the journey is best purified. Similar with other adventures, this journey should offer freedom with responsibility. Similar to committing a marriage, the crews should build happiness from their sincere hearts. Similar with other shop owners, let the captain be a role model, to remain consistently wise and strong. Similar with other plays with all the conflicts, the mistakes of the guilt should be forgiven. Similar with other memorable journey, this experience needs to be written and shared. Following other journeys, this voyage should keep moving forward while sometimes adjusting the sail to the opposite direction, not again to the west, but to the east, or to some less traveled directions.

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