



Abusing the Supremacy in Five Poems by Csezwlaw Milosz

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Abstract

This study is aimed to expose the issue about abusing supremacy which is done by the communist government toward the citizens and to know the contribution of poetic elements; irony, imagery, and symbol in revealing the issue of abusing supremacy. This analysis is related to the concept of power by Michel Foucault. The result of this analysis shows that abusing supremacy is done in two strategies; enforcing laws and using state's apparatus.

Key words: The communist government, strategies, abuse, citizens

A. INTRODUCTION

Government is an essential part of a country. It is considered as the institutionalized process through the public order. The government is understood to encompass the whole executive apparatus of the state including the political leadership, the public service, and all other government instrumentalities. It means the concept of government is purposed to make public policy and to control over the society by means of ordered rule. However, it is found that in some countries the government is used as a tool to gain power. Many groups of people with different intention try to raise their power in a legitimate way by leading a government. The government can be maintained by very kinds of regimes. Indonesia, during the role of The New Order regime under Soeharto is one of the examples of a regime who was successful for 32 years in maintaining their power through the ruling government. Communist regime (Soviet Union) is another example of the regime which was able to hold their power through the government.

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The government plays a fundamental role in every aspect in a country. In communist countries, the government makes decision on their behalf. The system is believed as the perfect system which brings the equal for all of people, but in practical, the system is used in wrong ways under the legal authority. The government spreads the fear around the country by using violence for citizens who critic and complain toward the government. The policies allow the government forcing and doing terror which creates massive fear to prevent them to do any revolt toward the communist government.

Czeslaw Milosz has written a literary work-poetry-which is related to the issue of Abusing Supremacy. His five poems which are related to this topic are *A Song on the End of the World* (1944), *How It Was* (1968), *Artificier* (1931), *Sentences* (1965), *Ars Poetica* (1968). Through his works, Czeslaw Milosz tries to expose the true nature of the communist government, particularly in USSR (Soviet Union). He did it because for him, many people who live under the communist regime absolutely lose their human right to do everything. The system is made for the communist's benefits in order to have total control in the country. Milosz says that the situation and condition which the citizens have to face under the government is unimaginable. Through his works, he exposes of the citizens' misery and pain under the communist regime.

Five poems by Czeslaw Milosz show the issue of abusing supremacy. Abusing supremacy in this analysis refers to the ways the communist government uses their power in wrong ways. They use the system in order to control the citizens. Ironically, the communist government's system is claimed as the perfect system which brings the equal for all of the citizens, but in practical, the system is used for only the government's benefits. However, some people who are represented by the speaker of each poem realize that the government has done something wrong. Unfortunately, the citizens cannot do much since they have no power to against the government. The system makes the citizens cannot do complain toward the government. Here it can be seen how the government uses the system to maintaining power in the country. In this analysis abusing supremacy is done by enforcing laws and using state's apparatus.

The first is enforcing laws. This topic is analyzed by using irony and symbol. The laws is used to eliminate the citizens' liberties and the informational system is restructured in order to control the citizens. The way the government eliminates the citizens liberties is done in three ways. The government uses the law to control the citizens's activities, then the law is used to control the freedom of speech. The last, the citizens is forced to has no religion. enforcing laws is also seen in how the government restructures the information. The certain book is restricted to keep citizens in line and the system is used to indoctrinate te citizens to follow the communist ideology. These issue are exposes by poem 1 (*A Song on the End of the World*), poem 2 (*How It Was*), and poem 5 (*Ars Poetica*)

The second is using state's apparatus. The poetic elements which are used in this topic are irony, simbol, and imagery. Abusing supremacy can be seen from how

the communist government uses state's apparatus as a tool to gain more power. It is done by using the military as the weapon to suppress and block the separatist movement. They use the officer to arrest and accuse the people who oppose the communist government; people are sent to jail or get death penalty for against the government. These acts are exposed by poem 3 (*Artificier*) and poem 4 (*Sentences*).

The study about Abusing Supremacy in five poems by Czeslaw Milosz has not been found yet. However, there are two articles that have to give contribution and inspiration in analyzing these poems. The first is study by Barbora Vidasicova entitled *Immigrant Experience in West Indian British Poetry* (2015). The second study is by Ria Resky Hardianti entitled *Racism Reflected in Maya Angelou's Poem* (2016).

The first, study by Richard Lee Pieree entitled *The noise of Silence: Censorship in Anna Akhmatova's Requiem* (2010). He analyzed the Requiem poem written by Anna Akhmatova. The analysis is about using censorship as a mechanism in a society of total control. This study deals with the concept of totalitarianism by Hannah Arendt. Through the poetic device catalog, the result of the analysis in this study shows the expression of agony from people who live under communist government especially for the poet who unable to have freedom of speech.

The second, study of Hillary R. Smith entitled *Representation of Grief in Akhmatova's Requiem and Pushkin's the Bronze Horseman* (2008). Hillary uses two poems written by Anna Akhmatova (*Requiem*), and Alexander Pushkin (*The Bronze Horseman*). She involves the elements of poetry as irony and metaphorical to analyze the poems. The result of the study is, both of the works have the similarities to shows people's grief under totalitarian in Russia. The poems provide a voice for all people who miserable, misfortune, and suffering

Both of the studies above give contribution and inspiration in analyzing the issue of Abusing Supremacy. Unlike the previous study above, this analysis focuses on the way the communist government keeps the supremacy in the wrong ways in the country. It exposes how the president does many ways even acts of violence toward the people who fight against the government. Abusing supremacy is done in two ways, enforcing laws and doing terror.

The analysis about abusing supremacy relates to the concept of power by Michel Foucault. According to Foucault in his book *POWER/KNOWLEDGE* he says that power is defined as a sets of relation between individuals. Foucault points out the relation between power and knowledge in his book *Discipline and Punish*, he states that the knowledge is a form of power and through observer the knowledge is produced. Power becomes more efficient through the mechanism of surveillance.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysis of five poems by Czeslaw milosz entitled *A Song on the End of the World* (1944), *How It Was* (1968), *Artificier* (1931), *Sentences* (1965), and *Ars Poetica* (1968). is done through text and context-based interpretation. In context-based interpretation, it deals with the concept of power by Foucault. These poems are analyzed by combining the elements of poetry; irony, imagery, and symbol. Each of that element contributes to reveal abusing supremacy. Irony shows what exactly people faced in their life under the government. Imagery is used to reveal the condition and atmosphere in the poems. Imagery is used to reveal the condition and the atmosphere in the poems. Symbol is used to express the real message behind literal message.

C. DISCUSSION

This section reveals *Abusing Supremacy* by using the elements of poetry; irony, imagery, and symbol. Abusing supremacy in this study is done by enforcing laws and using state's apparatus.

1. Enforcing Laws

Enforcing laws is one of the communist government's strategies to have total control both of citizens and society. It can be seen from how the laws eliminating the citizen's liberties. The eliminating of liberties in legal authority is the safest way for the communist government to make the citizens live in their way. The government uses the laws to control citizens' activities. It can be seen from the following quotation:

*On the day the world ends
A bee circles a clover,
A fisherman mends a glimmering net.
Happy porpoises jump in the sea,
By the rainspout young sparrows are playing
And the snake is gold-skinned as it should always be.*
(ASTETW, stanza 1)

Irony in this stanza strongly appears to reflect the real life which is faced by the citizens in the country. It can be revealed that the condition and situation in their country are hardly difficult. Through irony, the whole stanza indicates the sarcasm message toward the government. It can be seen from the contradiction words in line 1 to another. The phrase in line 1 *On the end of the worlds/* refers to what citizens want in their country. The phrase is referred to the communist government which has total control to the society in the country. The phrase *the world ends* is usually used for something unhappy, or feeling pain but it is used in different meaning in this poem. By the end of the world,

people finally can freely breathe to continue their life without the feeling of afraid toward the government. The words from the first stanza describe the peaceful country where citizens live. The citizens of the country feel safe and secure and can enjoy the environment where they live. It is different from reality. The peace and harmony of the country are disrupted by the communist government through the law. The law is used to steal the freedom of citizens' lives. They must do everything under the system. The system makes citizens live under pressure. They are unable to do what they really want to make their happy life.

Other quotation also shows how the law eliminates the freedom of speech of people:

*No one implored, everyone picked up a nodule of agate or
diorite to whisper in loneliness: I cannot live any longer
(HIW, stanza 10)*

Through irony, it can be revealed how people lost their voice before the law. The law makes people cannot give any complaint and critic to the government's actions in society. People only can hold what they want to say in their mind. The innocent people who straight forward to the government is considered as disloyalty to the country. The communist threat inside the country has been exalted far beyond reality. It said the ideology of communist will bring equality for people and it affects the establishment of the society. From the stanza above, it indicates there is no equality between the government and people where the freedom of speech is well protected under the government. The words */I cannot live any longer/* indicates how the laws destroy the way of their life. While the laws are used to restrict the voice and expression, it resulted in how the people who speak up toward government are labeled as a kind of disturbing social order which end with the sanction for people. It is supported by the sentence in line 4 */Vegetable peddlers shout in the street/* in ASTETW stanza 2. The sentence shows the laws affect the fear of citizens who want to speak up toward the government. The fear of saying something that may turn out to be prohibited causes the people to preserve silent about the issues in their country.

The communist government takes total control of citizens' lives. They make sure of what citizens must do and must not only base on the ideology of the communist government. It can be seen in how they abolish the religion of the citizens. It is supported in the quotation below:

*I saw absence the mighty power of counter-fulfillment; the
penalty of a promise lost forever.
(HIW, stanza 3)*

Symbol gives the contribution to reveals that the law is used to eradicate the religion from the whole of the country. The words *mighty power* reflects the great power of God in Christian which is destroyed by the government. In order to keep the ideology, communist does not end with economic and politic reform. It further demands the abolition of both religion and the absolute

morality founded upon religion. The words */the penalty of promise lost forever/* in HIW, stanza 3 indicates that the religion in the country is completely destroyed by the government. It is supported from the quotation below:

*God the Father didn't walk about any longer tending the shoots
of a cedar, no longer did man hear his rushing spirit
(HIW, stanza 7)*

By using symbol, it can be revealed that not only the government uses the laws to force the citizens to leave their beliefs, but also using the legal way to destroy the Church. The way the government removes the building where people go to pray is purposed to annihilate the religion completely. The sentence in line 1 */God the Father didn't walk about any longer tending the new shoots of a cedar/* reveals any activities which relate to the Christian's activities in the Church is disbanded by the communist government. The word *Father* reflects Jesus in the Christian religion, while the word *cedar* represents the strength of Christian in the Bible. The Christian believes the church as the symbol of the religion. It is a holy place where God and the Father will walk to spread the spirit among the Christian. The government destroys all of the church to deprive the religion power itself. The argument is strengthened by the phrase in line 2 */no longer did man hear his rushing spirit/* in HIW stanza 7. Through the symbol, the phrase reflects the activity in the church. The citizens cannot do the rites to get the spirit from God. This act affects the Christian lost any hope for their belief under the communist government.

The government restructures the informational system in order to keep the citizens in the line. The concept of restructuring has shaped the efforts to the society to promote communist ideology. It can be seen from the quotation below:

*There was a time when only wise books were read,
Helping us to bear our pain and misery.
This, after all is not quite the same
As leafing a through works fresh from psychiatric clinics
(AR, stanza 5)*

Through irony, it can be revealed how the law takes a role play in changing the informational system all around the country. The government by using their power to restrict the information which effects for the citizen's point of view of life. The sentence in line 1 and 2 */There was a time when only wise books were read/ helping us to bear our pain and misery/* indicates the censorship of unsuitable information in the country. It refers to any information from outside which influences the citizens. Furthermore, book censorship is widespread around the country in order to minimize the opinion toward the government system. Still, through irony, it can be revealed how the government indoctrinates the citizens to be faithful with the ideology of communist. They only share the books which lead the citizens to think as the same as them.

2. Using state's Apparatus

The last topic in this study is using state's apparatus. This is one of the strategies which is taken by the government to keep their power in the country. Using state's apparatus is an effective strategy to control the citizens and suppress the separatist movement who oppose the communist government. It can be seen from the government uses the military as the weapon to defend the country and gives punishment toward the citizens. Using the military as a weapon can be seen from the quotation below:

*Soldier from expedition sent to punish nations would go
disguised and masked to take part in forbidden rites , not
looking for any hope.*

(HIW, stanza 12)

The stanza above clearly shows that the government uses the military service to suppress the citizens. Through irony, the whole stanza reflects how the military is used under the legal system for the government's benefits. It can be seen the way military members have the right to privacy of people. The phrase */Soldier from expedition sent to punish nations would go disguised and masked to take part in forbidden rites/* shows how strong the military power to take inspection toward citizens life. They can search with or without a warrant from the government. They can harass the citizen who is suspected as a disloyal person for the government. Still irony takes a part in this analysis. The words */not looking for any hope/* indicates the citizens cannot hide anything. All the activities are monitored by the military service as the institute which plays as the security guard of the country.

Another way to maintain the communist's power from the officer. It can be seen from how the government gives punishment to people who oppose them.. Through the institution, the communist government represses and block the movement of separatist movement by increasing the fear among the citizens. It is exposed by the following quotation:

*What constitutes the training of the hand?
I shall tell what constitutes the training of the hand
One suspects something is wrong with transcribing signs
But the hand transcribes only the signs it has learned
Then it is sent to the school of blots and scrawls
Till it forgets what is graceful. For even the sign of a butterfly
Is a well with coiled poisonous smoke inside.*

(SS, stanza 1)

Through symbol, it can be revealed how the institution is used in the wrong ways by the government. The institute is purposed to help to finds the justice for citizens closes the eyes toward them. The institute is settled to support the government in order to exert all of the policies to the society. The sentence in line 1 */what constitutes the training of the hand?/* from SS, stanza 1 refers to the institute under the government authority. The word *hand* is a symbol of

people who have the authority. They are seen as good people who will bring justice around the country. In fact, they do the scheme under authority. It is supported by the sentence in line 3/ *One suspects something is wrong with transcribing signs*/. This line indicates the the government's trick in order to make scapegoat to people. Under the law, people who oppose the government is suspected as the person who does a crime toward the country. This analysis is proven by the sentence in line 3 *But the hands transcribe only the signs it has learned*/. Through the symbol, it can reveal the institutes are the place for the people who only work for the communist government. They only can do everything according to what they have to be. They only follow the thing what they have been instructed. They use their authority to arrest the innocent people who cannot accept the government's system and throw them in jail. It is supported by the quotation below:

*Perhaps we should have represented him otherwise
Than in the form of dove. As a fire, yes, but that is beyond us.
For even then it consumes logs on a hearth
We search in it for eyes and hands. Let him then be green.*
(SS, stanza 2)

By using irony, the stanza exposes there is absolutely no justice for the citizens. It reveals the misery which they have to face toward the institution. The institution should look for what is the right thing and lend their hand to help the people. The sentence in line 4 *We search in it for eyes and hands*/ shows how the constitutes completely close the eyes toward the injustice for innocent people who suffer from the accusation from the government as the disloyal for the country. The phrase in line 4 *Let him them be green*/ in SS, stanza 2 reveals what the institution should be. Still using the symbol, the word *him* refers to the institute, while the word *green* is a symbol of life and renewal the strength. That phrase indicates as long as the institute is under the communist government, there is no way the justice can exist for citizens.

The last evidence that shows the government uses punishment to control the citizens is:

*He cuts the glowing, yellow buildings in two , breaks the
walls into motkey halves;
Pensive, he looks at the honey seeping from those huge
honeycombs:
Throbs of pianos, children's cries, the thud of a head baging
against the floor
This is the only landscape able to make him feel*
(AR, stanza 6)

The stanza above shows the way of the government spread fear among the citizens. Through imagery, it can be seen the government's action toward the citizens who demand change in the county is very cruel. The treatment from

the government for the citizens who oppose the communist government is so barbaric. Without any hesitate, the government attacks the citizens that it claims to defend the country, but instead it murders and threatens the citizens. The stanza above clearly shows how much the citizens suffer under the communist government. The citizens must feel helpless to fight against. Not only the government destroys the place where they live but, also executes the life of citizens. The government acts brutally to torture the citizens. The sentence in line 4 /*This is the only landscape able to make him feel*/ indicates there is nothing wrong to do the crime toward the citizens as long as to defend the country. The legal authority makes the government violates the citizens so easily. They do not have to worry about being the criminal who destroys the citizens' life.

Clearly, the poetic elements which occur are symbol, imagery, and irony. Symbol is important to expose the alliance the government with the institution to do the scheme toward the citizens. Imagery describes the cruel punishment which is done by the military service, and irony reveals the situation of the citizens where they have no access to get information from the outside.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Five poems by Czeslaw Milosz entitled *A Song on the End of the World* (1944), *How It Was* (1968), *Artificier* (1931), *Sentences* (1965), and *Ars Poetica* (1968) reflect the issue of abusing. Abusing supremacy in this analysis is done by the communist government toward the citizens. These poems are analyzed by using the concept of Power by Michel Foucault. It also uses poetic elements such as irony, imagery, and symbol to reveal the meaning behind the five poems. In this analysis abusing supremacy is done by enforcing laws and using state' apparatus. The only reason behind this act is because the communist government wants to have total control in the country. Here, it can be seen that the government uses the authority in wrong ways in order to keep control the citizens.

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