



**DEFIANCE IN EVAN OSNOS' NOVEL *AGE OF AMBITION:
CHASING FORTUNE, TRUTH, AND FAITH IN THE NEW CHINA*
(2014)**

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Abstract

This article is about the analysis of novel *Age of Ambition Chasing: Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China* (2014) by Evan Osnos that focuses on how the main character does the resistance toward the government. The problem in this analysis how far the main character in the novel exposes the issue about defiance. The aim of this analysis is to find out how far Evan Osnos' novel *Age of Ambition Chasing: Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China* brings up and reveal the issue of defiance which is done by the main character in this novel. This analysis involved the fictional devices that are plot (conflict) and setting to support the issue of defiance. This analysis deals with the concept of power by Michel Foucault.

Key words: resist, resistance, knowledge, mass media

A. INTRODUCTION

All human being have the desire to achieve goal in their life. No one wants to live without any achievements. This desire is also known as or called aspiration. Those who want to have achievement in life must work hard. In order to achieve aspiration, one needs the support of those who also aim at achieving the same target.

The citizens in China also have aspiration to have a better life. Even after China has changed; the citizens still do not get their aspiration. In the present China, the citizen still had no access to fortune, truth and faith. The party have taken control of freedoms that used to be governed almost entirely by others. China in 21st century lead leads by Xi Jinping. He changed policy about government tenure which was broadening his power and scrapping term limits. In 2012, he created slogan Chinese Dream. China has become more ambitious at the global stage. Beside, this has been followed by a re-juvenescence in patriotic nationalism. The citizens have outpaced the political system that nurtured their rise. The Party feel threatened with the changed of the citizen. The Party made policy about clampdowns on freedoms, from rising online censorship to arrests of dissidents and human rights lawyers. In case

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the citizens do not do something to attack the party. The citizens do not have freedom to do anything because the government limits their access. It makes that the citizens want to have a better life and it makes them to do resistance against the government. They reclaim their rights that are not obtained. They fight for not being under the control of the government with knowledge and effort.

There are some references that can explain the meaning of defiance. According to Merriam Webster (2017), *defiance* refers to the act of showing resistance toward someone or something. Meanwhile, according to Stephen Gibson in his journal *Discourse, Defiance and Rationality: Knowledge work in the Obedience Experiments* (2018), *defiance* refers to a corrective to tendency to over-emphasize obedience and instead might be used to facilitate strategies for challenging unjust authority. In this analysis defiance refers to the acts of citizens to show their resistance or disobedience to the government.

This study analyses defiance which refers the acts of citizens to show their resistance or disobedience to the government. It is done because of the lives of people have been tormented with hypocrisies from the government. The result is China's people do not get their own aspirations. The government do not care with the citizens' struggles. Even the citizens' try hard to get their aspiration. The government keep acts that China is doing fine but it is not.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is qualitative, content analysis that is to analyze the text of novel *Age of Ambition Chasing: Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China* (2014) by Evan Osnos. The data is collected from the quotation in the novel. The data was analyzed by the fictional devices such as character, plot and setting are used to analyse this novel. These devices are related each other. Character is used to reveal the life transformation by analyzing character belief, attitude, and behavior or action. Plot is used to acknowledge the conflicts the character faced. The setting has a function to show the situation, atmosphere, and condition faced by the character in order to reveal how the main character changes her life. In addition, these elements are analyzed based on the concept of power by Michel Foucault.

C. DISCUSSION

This chapter analyzes the issue of defiance in the novel *Age of Ambition Chasing: Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China*. The issue was revealed through the investigation of the character's thoughts and the situation he faces throughout the story. Defiance in this analysis refers to the open resistance from the character or disobedience to prove that the government still possesses an absolute power over their citizens. In this analysis, defiance from the main character can be seen in how the character uses his knowledge for self-empowerment and using mass media to achieve his goal.

1. Using Knowledge for Self-Empowerment

Knowledge which is used by the main character leads him to engage in action to sustain his lives, such as looking for justice and showing the citizens about government's arbitrary power. The main character lived in poverty but he was able to study English in New York with his hard work. He believes that knowledge is important. He tries his best to get education since child such as sold foods which made by himself and worked as cleaning public toilets. In his limitations, he never gives up to reach his education. The main character attempts to prove that knowledge can be used as resistance. It makes that he wants to the citizens mindful that knowledge is important. There are two points to show that knowledge can be used to resistance. First, he minds of gaining knowledge. Second, he uses knowledge as thing that can be used to resist.

The first point is he minds of gaining knowledge. He prepares himself with knowledge. He provides himself with knowledge about politic from community:

“In the years since Ai Weiwei created chandeliers to spoof China's new opulence, and explored the relationship with the West by sending people to Germany, he'd attracted growing recognition as an artist and an architect. His work on public projects put him in contact with politics in a way he had rarely experienced, and he began to see “how it functions, how it works,” he said at the time, adding. “Then you have a lot of criticism about how it works.” As his criticism grew, Ai Weiwei became China's most determined innovator of provocation.” (p.182)

The text above shows the main character who is an artist and an architect, also learn new knowledge about politics. The external conflicts that come from his new knowledge that he uses to resist. To release the conflict, he develops the new knowledge about politics from community. Although politics is not one of his basic knowledge. The utterance “*His work on public projects put him in contact with politics in a way he had rarely experienced*” shows knowledge is not only gained in formal education but also in the community such as work environment to have an experience. Experience can also be a source of knowledge that cannot be obtained from formal education. Knowledge can also be used as a thing that distinguishes between right and wrong. The main character uses knowledge to critic about something that he thinks it was wrong. The knowledge he gained that was the new basis for him to be able to express his criticism. He believes that knowledge can be used as a weapon to fight something that do not work or run properly such as to dismantle things that are wrong or dilapidated.

The second one is he uses knowledge as a thing that can be used to resist. It can be seen in the following quotation that shows knowledge that he got to resist and show his existence:

“At times, he seemed congenitally incapable of cooperation. At one point, he was asked to create a piece

that could fill a prominent site in Copenhagen usually occupied by Edvard Eriksen's statue of the Little Mermaid, which was being loaned to Shanghai. Instead of replacing it with a statue, Ai decided to install a live closed-circuit video of the mermaid in her temporary home in China. The Danes thought the oversize surveillance camera that he designed was unattractive. "That's out real life," he said. "Everybody is under some kind of surveillance camera. It's not beautiful." (p.198)

The text above shows the external conflicts that come from the main character's resistance. To release the conflict, he shows his resistance with art work. The main character makes art works that relate to things that happen in real life. According to him, arts can be used as a medium to fight and criticize the government. The sentence "*Everybody is under some kind of surveillance camera. It's not beautiful*" shows the main character reveals that in real life we have no rights such as privacy and safe. The words *surveillance camera* means the act of carefully watching someone or something in order to prevent or detect. The main character makes something different to express his critic about the government. The art created that has a very deep meaning. He thinks the art is not always about beauty but how art can be interpreted; what the meaning of art itself. The main character struggles with his artwork that he created to make people can see and understand what the meaning of his work.

In summary, the knowledge is used by the main character to resist against the government. It leads the main character to do action to resist. Knowledge that the main character has, is from his hard work. He gains knowledge from the community and get the experience. He knows that knowledge is important and the citizens must have opportunity to gain knowledge too. He makes the expedition to study aboard for free. The variation of conflicts causes different struggle to the main character. He uses the knowledge to resist the government by making art work. He uses art work as a medium to fight and critic the government.

2. Using Mass Media

The main character uses mass media to resist the depravity done by the government. Within using mass media, it is an effective strategy to resist because people can see them from everywhere. Mass media that use by the main character are Twitter, Blog, Weibo, and interview on internet to convey facts that occur. That is using mass media is the right choice. The main character proves that mass media can be used as resistance and inform the people.

The main character has a desire to show the world about what happened in his country. He knows that through mass media to show his resistance. It can be seen in the following quotation:

““Everyone has the thirst for exploring the truth, including me ... We have more freedom of speech than we did. But at the same time, as soon as you get that freedom, you begin

to see that certain people have even more freedom. So then we feel unfree again. It's the comparison that's depressing" Ai Weiwei posted the interview and within minutes the censors struck it down. It didn't matter; it was already circulating widely." (p.212)

The setting refers to the tense situation the main character faces. In this context, the conflict is when the main character wants to show his resistance. He uses interview that can be broadcasted worldwide. People around the world can watch how he describes depravity that happened in China. Within the interview, the main character aims to provide information that the public should get. He shows his intelligence to fight through interview he did. The utterance "*Everyone has the thirst for exploring the truth, including me*" explain how freedom of speech that the citizens do not get. The word *thirst* shows a feeling of needing something. That means the information that is blocked by the government. The main character and the citizens do not have access to the truth happened in their own country. Then, the sentence "*Ai Weiwei posted the interview and within minutes the censors struck it down.*" means the main character already did his resistance. The government feel threatened by the results of the interview. The government block the access to the citizens watch the interview. It also means the government already realize the existence of the main character.

In the next quotation, it can be seen another resistance that is shown by the main character:

"When censors deleted his Weibo account, he published an essay called "Open Letter to a Nameless Censor," "I am fully aware that this letter will cause me nothing but grief," he wrote. "I once had fear, but from now on, I am no longer afraid ... That is the difference between you and me, my dear nameless censor – I believe in the future, while all you have is the present." (p.321)

In this context, the conflict is when the main character is brave to challenge the government openly. Within his open letter, he shows his confident and unbroken with what the government has done to him. The utterance "*I am fully aware that this letter will cause me nothing but grief*" means the main character know the consequences that will be obtained when he resists the government. The word *grief* means anything that will be get by the main character is only agony but he still does what comes from his mind. He should still fight for his rights to get freedom of speech. Then, the next utterance "*I believe in the future, while all you have is the present*" shows that the main character is able to change the future at that time the citizens will get their rights to express the opinion and criticism loudly without censorship. The main character proves that the resistance he did have an impact on the future. It will change about the depravity that is done by the government.

In the next quotation, it can be seen the statement that shows the main character to show his resistance using mass media to the government:

“When some parents demanded information too insistently, they were detained. This galvanized and infuriated Ai in a way that more abstract political issues rarely had. “We started to ask very simple questions: Who’s dead? What are their names?” he told me. In a blog post that was unusually harsh even for him, Ai wrote of the officials in charge of the disaster area, “They hide the facts in the name of maintaining stability. They intimidate, they jail, they persecute parents who demand the truth, and they brazenly stomp on the constitution and the basic right of man.” (p.183)

The text above shows the main character struggle to open up the depravity that happened in his country. The main character uses mass media such as blog to inform the citizens. The utterance “*they hide the facts in the name of maintaining stability. They intimidate, they jail, they persecute parents who demand the truth, and they brazenly stomp on the constitution and the basic right of man*” means how brutally the government hide the truth. The government act like the situation is nothing happened. The government close the disaster area. The government stop the information about the disaster. The truth is the government that are hidden all the facts about everything happened. It brings bad effect to the citizens. The main character uses mass media to speak up about the facts through his blog that the citizens can read. The main character does not stop just because the government threaten because it uncovers the truth. He tries his best to dig deeper about the truth to make the citizens do not panic about what happened especially to the families of the victims from the disaster.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Age of Ambition Chasing: Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China (2014) a novel written by Evan Osnos reveals the issue of defiance. Defiance in this analysis refers to the efforts done by the main character, Ai Weiwei who representative of China’s citizen. He wants to do resistance for achieve better life. It is revealed through text-based and context-based analysis by focusing on fictional devices such as character, plot, and setting. This analysis also deals with the concept of power by Michel Foucault. Defiance can be seen through the main character’s resistance.

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