

Maxwell Anderson and his Ideology in Trilogy

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ABSTRACT

Anne of the Thousand Days, being the first in the Tudor Verse trilogy, shows a distinct rise in literary quality. It describes the conflict of political power and sexual passion in the lives of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn until her execution on a charge of adultery. Mary of Scotland is a chronicle play comprising three acts entirely conventional. Elizabeth the Queen uses an exceedingly loose blank verse intermixed with some prose. The general effect is distinctly modern. The drama has, however, all the necessary color and atmosphere of a period of work.

This article entails the conceptual framework of ideology in Trilogy of Maxwell Anderson.

Keywords: *Idiology, Stylized, Consumerate, Feminist, Prefigured, Valiantly, Embodiment.*

INTRODUCTION

Maxwell Anderson, a great American literator, was born in Atlantic Pennypylvania in December 1888 and died in Stenford of a stroke on February 1959 at the age of seventy. He was educated in various parts of the Middle West got B.A. degree from the University of North Dakota in 1911 and Master's degree at Stanford in 1914. He had been in teaching profession also. During the First World War he maintained "rigidity pacifistic stand, which got him into considerable difficulty before the war was over".¹ He was dismissed from the teaching position. He started journalism and got name and fame as a journalist for his rigidity, norms and decorum. All during his life, there was deep influence of religion and spiritualism in which he had been brought up. He faced struggle during his life periods which made him strong of his will. He was a man of such a great caliver that he refused to normalize his ideas even in the face of hostile public opinion. He wrote his ideas and experiences in the different disciplines of English Literature and became famous as an American play writer, author, poet, journalist and lyricist.

IDEOLOGY IN TRILOGY

Anne of the Thousand Days, Mary of Scotland and Elizabeth the Queen are the outstanding creations of Anderson that actually form a group to be known as Tudor Trilogy not only in their use of sixteenth-century English history but also in their unity of theme which is the lust for power in conflict with sexual passion. It is a great theme which is greatly dramatized by Anderson. The form of **Anne of the Thousand Days** is different and it scarcely suits the theme. However, it is known for his other artistic excellence. It is, in fact, a memory play. Thus, it cannot have the impact of the immediacy required for the tragic effect. Besides, the technique of stylized action may be a brilliant device for satirical effect but it is unsuited to tragedy. It appeals more exclusively to intellect rather than emotions. One feels no anxiety about Henry's guilt or Anne's fate as they appear in photographic pose in their separate spotlights, commenting reflectively upon their separate conditions. Even in the trial scene one is not held in the grip of contending passion.

Mary of Scotland has everything which a play needs. It is entirely conventional.

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There is not a single new device in it. But the conventions are used with consummate skill. The whole play is prefigured in the opening scene. We watch with delight the queen's conquest of surely old subject who has come to blast her good hopes and good intentions with such ugly phrases as- "the whore of Babylon - the leprous and cankerous evangel of the Beast"!² He believes to have had the knowledge of her character and can risk the encounter: "I came myself to see this while face they speak of, and these taking graces".³ It was a mistake. He is no more immune to the taking graces than others. After her first words to him he is obliged to remind himself: "Aye, they told me you spoke honey".⁴ He has tasted the honey now and knows its sweetness. He struggles valiantly: "woman, I remember whose daughter and whose voice you are".⁵ But he is no match for the winning appeal: "If I were your daughter, Master Knox....."⁶ He clings doggedly to his original intention: "I have said what I came to say".⁷ But his address, in their brief exchange has progressed from.

In **Elizabeth the Queen**, Anderson would have us view that ability to rule is not a divine right but a tragic flaw. The situation in the two plays is the same. It is the same lust for power in conflict with love. The queen is unable to share her throne because she knows that her lover will take over.

Essex, like Mary, falls easily into the trap set for him. Essex believes that boldness and firmness are prerequisites for a man to rule. The question of whether the man or the woman is the better ruler is central to the conflict in **Elizabeth the Queen**. Action is contrived in the sense that all plays are contrived. Elizabeth is no mere feminist, asserting woman's equality with man.

What is true of Elizabeth the Queen is equally true of Mary of Scotland. None actually creates a new tragic pattern or reveals in the story it tells a tragic meaning hitherto unperceived".⁸

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is not true that the story it tells reveals no new meaning and it fairly disagrees to what Krutch says. Anderson puts new wine into old bottle which is aesthetically sound. The play has been written in a grand romantic manner and the style is glorious. Maxwell Anderson's embodiment of contemporary attitudes in the well-known, well-loved form of the past does not deserve to be despised: "To find our modern distrust of power a heroic concept capable of wearing the purple was a spiritual boon, far more valuable than any mere novelty of form could possibly have provided".⁹

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