

**CHALLENGING THE FAITH: TS ELIOT'S "THE HOLLOW MEN"
AND THE ABOLITION OF RELIGION**

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ABSTRACT

The title of this graduating paper is *Challenging the Faith: TS Eliot's "The Hollow Men" and the Abolition of Religion*. The writer chooses the religion theme because of some reasons. First, religion is more popular in modern time but most of people are not aware about the intervention of Capitalism inside its tenets. The condition stirs into the second reason that the criticism of religion is very important. Third, it is important too to show that even Islamic religion commands its followers for using their mind in considering religious tenets. The method of this research is a qualitative method that is done by applying descriptive analysis. The objectives of this study are to describe the ways of depicting religion and/or Christianity and religious followers in "The Hollow Men" poem and to show the contact between the depiction and the Islamic perspective. The theory used in this research is Marxist theory proposed by Karl Marx. Based on the theory, religion is part of superstructure that is used by Capitalism for legalizing their position as the high class in society. The analysis shows that there are five steps of depicting religion found in the poem. The result of this research concludes that the religion is shown as the thing that proposes the illusory happiness in people's mind and the only solution for it is denying religion and God. On the contrary, Islamic perspective gives a different solution that is accepting the religion after cleaning it from the intervention of Capitalism.

Keywords: religion, The Hollow Men, Marxist theory

ABSTRAK

Judul skripsi ini adalah *Challenging the Faith: TS Eliot's "The Hollow Men" and the Abolition of Religion*. Penulis memilih tema agama disebabkan oleh beberapa alasan. Pertama, agama di masa modern semakin populer akan tetapi banyak orang yang tidak menyadari mengenai campur tangan kapitalisme dalam ajarannya. Kondisi demikian menyaran pada alasan kedua yaitu bahwa kritik atas agama itu sangat penting. Ketiga, adalah penting juga untuk menunjukkan bahwa bahkan agama Islam pun mengajarkan pengikutnya untuk menggunakan akal dalam mempertimbangkan ajaran agama. Metode penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Kegunaan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan cara-cara penggambaran agama dan pengikut agama dalam puisi "The Hollow Men". Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori Marxis yang dikemukakan oleh Karl Marx. Berdasarkan teori tersebut, agama adalah bagian dari superstruktur yang digunakan oleh kapitalisme untuk melegalkan posisinya sebagai kelas elit dalam masyarakat. Analisis kemudian menunjukkan adanya lima tahap penggambaran agama dalam puisi tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini memberikan kesimpulan bahwa agama digambarkan sebagai sesuatu yang menawarkan ilusi kebahagiaan dalam pikiran manusia dan satu-satunya solusi untuk hal itu adalah menolak agama dan Tuhan. Sebaliknya, agama Islam memberikan solusi yang berbeda yaitu menerima agama setelah membersihkannya dari campur tangan kapitalisme.

Kata Kunci: agama, The Hollow Men, teori Marxis

MOTTO

TWO WIVES ARE ENOUGH: LITERATURE AND LIONESS

DEDICATION

This Graduating Paper is dedicated to:
MY PARENT, MY LECTURER, AND MY LOVE

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Alhamdulillah *ahirabbil'aalamiin*, all praise be to Allah SWT, the Mighty, who always gives me the chance for mixing the imaginary and the real world. Peace be upon my beloved Prophet Muhammad SAW for bringing us into the complete history of Islamic faith. After several months of working on this research, I can finally finish this final project. Here I would like to thank many people who have helped and encouraged me to finish this research. They are:

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Yogyakarta, 25 May 2014

The writer

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

One and a half century has passed after Marx proposed his statement that religion is the opium of the people and one century has passed after Weber published his thesis about the relation between protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism. Nevertheless, the discussion about the function of religion in life is a never-ending theme.

The term *religion* is derived from *religare* means *to tie back, tie up, tie fast* (Gove, 1981: 1918). The use of this term refers to a concept which encompasses varied sets of traditions, practices, and ideas (Crystal, 2000: 721). Some organized religions can be found in the world with their special characteristics like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism.

In his essay, McKinnon (2006: 11) states that what Marx means by his statement about the religion as opium literally is that religion, the same as opium, kills pain, distorts reality, and is an artificial source of solace to which some poor souls can become addicted. So, religion creates a new imaginary world in the mind of religious followers. The new imaginary world here is the illusory happiness relating to the concept about the hereafter.

According to Marx, class division based on the rich and poor will appear when the relations of production involved a complex distribution of work (Giddens, 2003: 36). The rich people, then, will dominate the poor ones. This

domination is the important element of Capitalism, so the rich as the ones who control Capitalism, make a serious effort to keep this relation. There the religion has its own role as the creator of a new imaginary world.

Then, Marx also states that religion is a part of superstructure which is determined by a base that is socioeconomic elements of society (Leitch, 2001: 14). The determination obsesses into religion tenets, like the mass. The mass as a ritual becomes a stage on which its players can be divided generally into two sides: poor and rich people.

These two kinds of followers have their own role on the stage. The poor people play as the happy players because they feel the religion make them the same as the rich people: they sing together, they sit in the same room with no class signer; they drink Jesus wine from the same cup. This happy feeling is similar with the statement of Marx that religion makes the people becomes the passive persons because they focus on the “passive glorification of the future” (Marx, 1972: 14) instead of the real present life. The religion sings a lullaby to them.

On the contrary, the rich people play as the good-hearted players. They look noble because they do not feel ashamed to come together in a place with the poor people. They smile to anyone without differentiating between the poor people and the rich ones like them.

This Mass happens once in a week. The stage, a place where the poor people and the rich people meet in pseudo-togetherness is just held in a short time if it is compared with the real life where the rich people hold the poor ones. The

rich do not smile and the poor do not feel happy any more. The kind of pseudo-togetherness in a ritual held by religion becomes the thing called “hypocrisy”, derived from Latin, *hypocrisis*, means “an acting on the stage” (Klein, 1965: 760).

This kind of illusory happiness, according to Marx, must be removed through something called as the “abolition of religion”. He states that “the call to abandon illusions about their condition is the call to abandon a condition which requires illusions” (Marx, 2009: 131). It means that the abolition of religion is something that must be done relating to the role of religion in proposing the illusory happiness.

The theory about religion that is proposed by Marx is an extreme theory that stirs into the abolition of religion. Nevertheless, this theory ever becomes the influential theory toward some Indonesian leaders and one of them is Sukarno (Cribb, 2004: 413). Sukarno is a Muslim but in the same time he is a Marxist too whereas as it can be seen from Marx’s theory about religion, he proposes the theory of abolishing religion. Because of that, it is interesting too to discuss also about the possibility relation between Marx’s opinion about religion and Islamic perspective.

Besides being discussed in philosophical writing like in Marx’s writing, the function of religion as the facilitator of stage and the solution must be taken for removing it is reflected too in TS Eliot’s poem “The Hollow Men”. Because of that, it is interesting to analyze its way of depiction that may contain some special characteristics of literary vehicles used in the poem in presenting an important issue about religion.

A poem itself is one kind of three major kinds of literary works besides prose and drama. Wordsworth says in his famous writing, *Preface to Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and other Poems* that there is no contradistinction between prose and poetry, that “the language of prose may yet be well adapted to poetry” and that “a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good prose” (1962: 168), nevertheless, the prose has its own lack of value than the poem because its form is used too in science, a kind of writing that is assumed by Wordsworth as a logical opposite of poetry. So it can be said that all of poems are literary works, but not all of prose are like that, some of them are science.

Besides, the term *prose* sometimes is used to mean *sing*, the aspect that can be found in a poem. In the Church, for example, this term is used to mean a "rhythm" sung after the epistle, and so called because not in any regular meter (Howard, 1975: vii). So, a poem can be assumed as the earliest kind of literary works from which prose—and also drama as it can be explained later—are derived, and as the sixth line of *Alfiyyah Ibnu Malik* says, “وهو بسبق حائز” **تفضيلا**, the earlier can get the superiority because at least the later can use it as the source of inspiration or even imitation (Al-Khudhari, 2003: 17).

After the added-value of poetry than prose is found, the same fact can be found too one time poetry is compared to the drama. All of dramas, the same as poetry, can be categorized as literary works, but a drama is derived from poetry. The early dramas—which are called as poetic dramas—are written in verse as it can be seen from the etymology of two genres of dramas which are mentioned by

Aristotle in *Poetics*, tragedy and comedy. According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, *tragedy* is derived from Greek language, *tragos* means *he-goat* and *oidia* (from *aeidein*) means *to sing* (Gove, 1981: 2423), whereas *comedy* is derived from the same language, *komos* means *revel, village festival, festal procession, ode sung in this procession*, and *oidia* (from *aeidein*) mean *to sing* (Gove, 1981: 454).

“The Hollow Men” is a poem written by TS Eliot, a poet whose name is often associated with modern verses as Joyce with modern prose and Picasso with modern art (Ellmann, 1982: 4). He was born in 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri, and died in 1965. He was educated at Harvard, the Sorbonne and Merton College, Oxford. Then, he became a British citizen in 1927 (Raine, 2006: 185).

TS Eliot is commemorated by a memorial stone in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. His first work “Prufrock and Other Observations” was published in 1917 while his last poem anthology entitled *Collected Poems 1909–1962* was published in 1963 (Stewart, 2007: 121).

In 1948 TS Eliot was awarded the rare honor of the order of Merit by King George VI and also gained the Nobel Prize in literature (Abrams, 1979: 2258). It shows the importance of his position in the literary world. Then, in the context of Indonesianness, TS Eliot is closer than the other foreign poets to and influences the modern generation of Indonesian poets. Chairil Anwar, for example, has translated two of his poems into Indonesian. His sentences in his essay *Philip Massinger: immature poets imitate, mature poets steal* is often quoted as a justification for “plagiarism” in Indonesian literary poems, for example in Chairil

Anwar's. His statements relating to literary criticism can be found in Indonesian literary criticism, for example in Subagio Sastrowardoyo, Sapardi Djoko Damono, Goenawan Mohamad, Budi Darma, and Saut Situmorang's writings.

"The Hollow Men" is a short poem that is assumed as the extract of the long poem which is popular as TS Eliot's masterpiece published three years before in 1922, "The Waste Land". Nevertheless, although "The Hollow Men" is not a masterpiece, this poem has its own added value that is frequently quoted in some fields. The lines of this poem, for example, are quoted in a movie adopted from Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* entitled *Apocalypse Now* (1979), while the quotation of *The Waste Land*'s title only can be found in the biographic film of TS Eliot and Vivian's love story entitled *Tom & Viv* (1994). Besides, in the context of Indonesianness, the lines of this poem are quoted too by Seno Gumira Ajidarma in one of his short stories, "Hidup Terasa Panjang".

TS Eliot, as it is stated by Abrams (2009: 216), has his role in supporting the appearance of a theory in literary criticism called as New Criticism through his writings. This kind of theory insists that the proper concern of literary criticism is "with a detailed consideration of the work itself as an independent entity". Because of that, it can be said that TS Eliot proposes the objective approach in analyzing a literary work.

On the contrary, all of the short discussions about "The Hollow Men" are usually connected with the life of TS Eliot as the writer, for example the discussion about it in some books like Batra's *TS Eliot: A Critical Study of His Poetry* (2001), Scofield's *TS Eliot: The Poems* (first edition 1988), Atkins's

Reading TS Eliot (2012), and even there is one book that discusses about the connection between all of TS Eliot's works with his life entitled *TS Eliot: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (2007). Three deep analyses about "The Hollow Men" that are used as part of literature review of this research also use the expressive approach.

There is no reason for saying that analyzing "The Hollow Men" by using the expressive approach is wrong. Nevertheless, that is the kind of irony since TS Eliot himself is a critic who usually uses an objective approach for analyzing literary works. So, this research tries to give a new interpretation about the contents of "The Hollow Men" by using an objective approach appropriated with the kind of literary criticism proposed by TS Eliot. .

This research is limited to the analysis of the content of "The Hollow Men" in reference to the depiction of religion that is intervened by Capitalism. The vehicles of the poem that are primarily analyzed are its versification, its diction, and its imagery. The other vehicles like metaphors and ambiguity sometimes are analyzed too when those are relevant to the topic. After the analysis about the depiction of the religion is done, the result of the analysis can be discussed further relating to the Islamic perspective.

1.2. Problem Statements

The writer formulates the problem based on the background and the scope of the study as follows:

1. How are the religion and/or Christianity and religious followers depicted in “The Hollow Men”?
2. How can the depiction of religion and/or Christianity and religious followers in “The Hollow Men” be connected with Islamic perspective?

1.3. Objectives of Study

In accordance with the problem statements before, the objectives of this research are:

1. to describe the way of depicting religion and/or Christianity and religious followers in “The Hollow Men”.
2. To describe the way of connecting depiction of religion and/or Christianity and religious followers in “The Hollow Men”.

1.4. Significance of Study

The age after the fall of Berlin wall is the age of religion. As Goenawan Mohamad states, God and religion are becoming increasingly important (2002: 73). The calling to come back to religion which is often assumed as the source of all solution rises. It is so important to research the purity of the calling. This research gives an interpretation about the function of religion in contemporary world that is intervened by capitalism.

Moreover, although some of the religious symbols used in the poem can be connected with Christianity, but the conclusion can be applied too for other religions like Islam and Judaism, because there are the similarity between

Christianity tenets and the others', like the concept of God, hereafter world, and the public worship.

1.5. Literature Review

After trying to search the study of another author which has the same topic with this research, the writer finds one paper, *Ideas and Literary Devices in T.S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men"*, written by R. Anang Dharmawan (2008), from English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University. The paper analyzes "The Hollow Men" in relation to TS Eliot's personal life.

Then, the writer also finds a thesis entitled "Magic, Mysticism, and the Supernatural in Modern Poetry" written by Dustin Walbom (2012) as the thesis presented for gaining the degree of Master of English in the Department of English in University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg. This thesis analyzes the content of modern poetry including "The Hollow Men", "The Cap and Bells", and "The Stolen Child". There is no explanation about the method and the theory used by the author, but from the way of discussing the theme it can be seen that the author uses the objective approach toward some vehicles like imagery and diction to analyze the magic, mysticism, and supernatural aspects contained in the poem.

Besides, there are two articles written by Joseph Jonghyun Jeon in 2007 entitled "Eliot's Shadows: Autography and Style in 'The Hollow Men'" and by Muhammad Khan Sangi, Abdul Fattah Somro, and Abdul Sattar Gopang in 2012 entitled "T.S. Eliot's Indigenous Critical Concepts and 'The Hollow Men'". The first article contains the interpretation of "The Hollow Men" as the image of

psychological conflicts between the political and artistic view in TS Eliot himself. Jeon uses some quotations from TS Eliot's essays to support his interpretation. The second article contains the interpretation of "The Hollow Men" that is focused on similes and metaphors of the poem by using the expressive approach.

This research is different from Dharmawan's, Jeon's, and Sangi's in one aspect that is the position of TS Eliot as the author of "The Hollow Men". The writer separates the text from its author, so the text is analyzed as the text itself, and applies Marxist theory whereas Dharmawan and Sangi use expressive approach and Jeon uses structuralism theory.

Then, the research is also different from Walbom's research in the object of the research. While this research focuses in the depiction of religion, Walbom focuses in magic, mysticism, and supernatural concept proposed in the poem. Even if the research uses similar approach that is the objective approach, the theory used in the research is Marxist theory while Walbom's research does not use any special theory.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

A theory means a set of concepts used to define and/or explain some phenomena (Silverman, 2000: 77). This research, as it has explained before, discusses the depiction of religion and/or Christianity and religious followers in TS Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men" and how it can be connected with Islamic perspective. So, it can be said that this research discusses the phenomena of the

depiction of religion and/or Christianity in TS Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men" and how it can be connected with Islamic perspective.

To gain that end, the writer uses Marxist Theory by Karl Marx. Talking about social reality, Marx claims that social relation determines consciousness. The cornerstone of his view is the base and superstructure model. This model shows that the socioeconomic elements of society constitute its base (or foundation), while its cultural spheres, specifically its politics, law, religion, philosophy; and arts compose its superstructure (Leitch, 2001: 14). The writer emphasizes in the part how religion as superstructure plays its role in its poor adherent circle.

1.7. Methods of Study

According to *Webster Third New International Dictionary* (Gove, 1981: 1422), *a method* is a procedure or process for attaining an object as a systematic procedure, technique, or set of rules employed in philosophical inquiry. So this sub-chapter describes the procedure, technique, and some philosophical inquiry related to the research.

1.7.1. Type of Research

The research uses a qualitative method with its sub type library research because it takes a text as the subject of study and uses books and other writings to get supporting materials of the subject matter of the research. The research is done by using an objective approach. It means that this research assumes the object of the research as "something which stands free from what is often called an

“extrinsic” relationship to the poet, or to the audience, or to the environing world” (Abrams, 2009: 63).

1.7.2. Data Sources

In this research the main and the supporting data are used. The source of main data is TS Eliot’s poem “The Hollow Men” which is contained in an anthology of his poem entitled *T.S. Eliot Collected Poems 1909-1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. : 1963).

The supporting data are taken from written sources including books related to religion, especially Christianity and Islam. It is used to support the writer’s analysis of providing the role of religion in stabilizing relation between the rich and the poor.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

At first, TS Eliot’s poem “The Hollow Men” is read repeatedly to understand the main data relating to the depiction of religion and its relation with Islamic perspective. Then all of supporting data are read too to get the whole image of the supporting data which are used in the next step that is analyzing the primary data.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

This research uses descriptive analysis. It means that all of the main data are analyzed and interpreted to get the conclusion. In the process of analyzing data,

the supporting data are used to support the analysis about the depiction of religion and its relation with Islamic perspective in the main data which is ended by the conclusion.

1.8. Paper Organization

This research consists of four chapters and each of them is subdivided in some divisions.

Chapter one presents the introduction which consists of Background of Study, Problem Statements, Objectives of Study, Significance of Study, Literature Review, Methods of Study, Theoretical Approach, and Paper Organization.

Chapter two presents the Analysis of “The Hollow Men” content in reference to the depiction of religion and/or Christianity and its followers. Chapter three presents the discussion about the meaning of the poem and Islamic perspective. Chapter four provides Conclusion of the research and Suggestion for further approach.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion

After analyzing “The Hollow Men” by using Marxism Theory about religion, the writer concludes that the religion and religious followers are depicted in the poem in negative tendency in some steps. In the first part, the religion is depicted as the ideology that gives the illusory happiness into people. The religious followers are described as the hollow men: the people who do not use their mind. In the second part, the religious promises are questioned. This stirs into the question about God’s existence. In the third part, the religious promises is described as the contradictory illusion of the real world suffering. In the fourth part, the denying of God is proposed. In the fifth part, refusing religious tenets is proposed and then the consequence of the world that is filled with the hollow men is revealed.

The negative tendency of religion’s depiction in “The Hollow Men” is done by using diction, versification, and imagery. The use of diction in creating the negative tendency can be seen for example in the use of diction “dry” in line 8 and 10 that relates to the suffering condition of people in the real world as the cause of people’s belief toward religion. The use of versification can be seen for example in the use of an anaphora in line 68 until 71 that describes the tediousness of the routinized prayers. Then, the use of imagery “we go round the prickly pear” in line 68 describes the useless prayers that is done by the hollow men.

Besides, the Christian religion especially often becomes the example of false tenets and some of its characteristics also become the source of the speaker's mocking, such as using the imagery of Jesus and the concept about doomsday in the Bible. Even the social principle of Christianity is also mocked in appropriateness with the concept of religion proposed by Karl Marx.

There is the similarity between the concept proposed by the speaker in the poem and the concept proposed by Islam about the necessity of using mind in the religious field. Nevertheless, the output of using mind between them is different. While the speaker states about denying religion and God, Islam states about being "people of understanding" that have deeper understanding about religious tenets because of the role of the mind.

4.2. Suggestion for Future Researchers

This research is analyzing "The Hollow Men" based on Marxist theory relating to religion concept. The writer suggests for the future researchers in the same subject for analyzing it by using other theories, like Post Colonial theory or Comparative literature. The research can be done by comparing the connection between "The Hollow Men" and some imageries used by Chairil Anwar in his poems. That will be interesting since Chairil also has translated a part of TS Eliot's poem entitled "Gerontion".

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APPENDIX

a. The Complete Text of *The Hollow Men*

THE HOLLOW MEN

Mistah Kurtz — he dead.

A penny for the Old Guy

I

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
or rats' feet over broken glass
in our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us — if at all — not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom
These do not appear:
There, the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column
There, is a tree swinging
And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer
In death's dream kingdom
Let me also wear
Such deliberate disguises
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves
In a field
Behaving as the wind behaves
No nearer —

Not that final meeting
in the twilight kingdom

III

This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand

Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this
In death's other kingdom
Waking alone
At the hour when we are
Trembling with tenderness
Lips that would kiss
Form prayers to broken stone.

IV

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places
We grope together
And avoid speech
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom
The hope only
Of empty men.

V

*Here we go round the prickly pear
 Prickly pear prickly pear
 Here we go round the prickly pear
 At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea
 And the reality
 Between the motion
 And the act
 Falls the shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
 And the creation
 Between the emotion
 And the response
 Falls the Shadow

Life is very long

Between the desire
 And the spasm
 Between the potency
 And the existence
 Between the essence
 And the descent
 Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is
 Life is
 For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends
 This is the way the world ends*

*This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

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