

The Problem of Religion and Terrorism: A Sociological Critique of Katekisas (Spit for God) by Farid Latif (A Sociological Critique Study)

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Abstract

This research is qualitative as it involves the collection of descriptive data and information regarding the interaction process with the subject under investigation. This research seeks to delineate the issues surrounding religion and terrorism, while also appraising the merits and shortcomings of the theatrical script. The data in this study were acquired via reading and note-taking methodologies. This study employed data analysis methodologies including meticulous examination of the theater script, data description, interpretation, evaluation, and conclusion formulation as the ultimate outcome of the research. The research findings on the play manuscript KATEKISAS (Spit for God) by Farid Latif indicate that it addresses the social issues prevalent in community life. The primary societal concern addressed in this article is the relationship between religion and terrorism. In this manuscript, the author critiques several individuals who exploit God's name for personal gain. The book exhibits the following faults and merits: 1. Insufficient story coherence, 2. Inappropriate conversation writing style. The strengths include: The author has effectively resonated with readers by candidly addressing societal issues.

Keywords: *Katekisas (Spit for God); Sociological Criticism*



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INTRODUCTION

Literary works, integral to societal existence and reflective of human experience, serve as social documents that encapsulate narratives pertinent to their era. As Endraswara (2011:77) asserts, the emergence of literature does not transpire in a social vacuum. Social life will serve as the catalyst for the creation of creative works, which are typically expressed through poems, short tales, or theatrical plays. To refine the works of these authors, it is essential to undertake study to assess the qualities and demerits of the literary pieces and their artistic value. Consequently, social criticism is essential in this context. Sociological criticism entails the condemnation, response, description, and assessment of the merits and shortcomings of an artistic work, considering the societal elements that the author has integrated into their creation, be it a novel, short story, poem, or theatrical script.

The extensive history of theatrical art is thought to have originated with human interaction. This interaction concurrently transpires with conceptions of the universe. The meanings of theater closely relate to the interactions and interpretations between humans and the universe. The history of theatrical art is thought to stem from the hunting activities of primordial humans aimed at survival. During this pursuit, they emulate the actions of their quarry. Upon completing their hunt, they conducted rites or ceremonies to express their "gratitude" and "respect" for the Creator of the universe. Some assert that the origins of theater trace back to Egypt about 4000 BC, associated with festivities venerating the god Dionysus. The protocols for this ceremony were then formalized and transformed into a festival at a designated venue for performance and attendance by others (Eko Santosa et al., 2008:16).

In the context of theater scripts, a young writer from Maluku named Farid Latif is noteworthy. This individual, born in Ambon on February 17, 1990, has authored numerous theatrical scripts and screenplays. His works have been performed across several stages, including the plays *Lautan Lupa*, *Pattimura*, *Pledoi*, *Alina*, and notably, the play *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God), which captured the author's attention. In addition to theater, he has produced poetry and short tales. Farid furthermore holds the position of director of the *Merah Saga* literary community in Maluku.

Farid's theatrical work addressing the issues of religion and terrorism in society is titled *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God). It narrates the story of a young man, Farok, whose Facebook status features severe criticism of individuals who perceive themselves as more intelligent than the Almighty, prompting them to act without restraint and to pass judgment on others without reverence for God, the creator of the universe. Consequently, Farok was ultimately sentenced to death for purportedly blaspheming against God. "By the multitude of corpses adrift in pools of gunpowder residue, by the deceased who continue to draw breath." Comparable to a dark sky unleashing rain upon the earth, Farok expressed on his Facebook account, "THIS IS SPIT FOR YOU, GOD," as a critique of individuals who invoke God's name to rationalize their actions, thereby distorting public perception and fostering societal divisions among diverse groups. The deity in question is significantly removed from the authentic nature of divinity. The suicide bombings conducted in the name of God during 2007 were subsequently referenced by Farid as he condemned the escalating social issues that became increasingly alarming with the creation of the play *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God). He articulated his concerns in the dialogue: "I inquire what sort of God instructs us to invade forests, mutilate them until half the mountain appears denuded, and then unleash torrents of water that violently obliterate all civilization!" What type of deity assures gratification to those who instigate distress among His followers?

The term "tuhan" (god) is intentionally rendered in lowercase, as the author contends that capitalizing it would lead readers to infer that the manuscript critiques "Tuhan" (the true God); however, the author's usage of "tuhan" diverges significantly from the authentic essence of divinity. However, numerous deficiencies persist in this article. The *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God) text addresses societal challenges, with religious conflicts and terrorism serving as the impetus for its development. Even now, the matters of religion and terrorism persist as a daunting shadow for society. The author composed this text in response to societal events; yet, a thorough analysis reveals numerous deficiencies that must be acknowledged for the pursuit of its refinement. Consequently, the author will analyze and evaluate the merits and flaws of the play screenplay *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God) in greater depth.

The author aims to examine the issues of religion and terrorism through a sociological critique in Farid Latif's play *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God). The research question in this study is: What are the issues of religion and terrorism: a sociological criticism of Farid Latif's play *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God)? This research aims to delineate the issues surrounding religion and terrorism, while critically evaluating the strengths and faults of Farid Latif's play *KATEKISAS* (Spit for God).

This research may yield a theoretical framework for sociological criticism inside the realm of literature. The findings of this research are advantageous for: (1) Enhancing readers' writing experience, particularly in the realm of sociological

criticism; (2) Augmenting resources on sociological criticism for students, educators, and lecturers; (3) It is anticipated that the exploration of sociological criticism will elevate readers' comprehension and appreciation of theatrical scripts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term theater originates from the Greek word "theatron," signifying a venue or structure designated for performances. In a larger context, the term "theater" is defined as any performance presented before a substantial audience. Consequently, in a succinct definition, theatre constitutes a performance, encompassing forms such as ketoprak, ludruk, wayang, wayang wong, sintren, janger, mamanda, dagelan, magic, and acrobatics, among others. Theater can be regarded as an expression of instinctual behaviors, exemplified by youngsters engaging in role-playing as parents or participating in war games. Furthermore, theater exemplifies the development of human social hierarchies associated with ritualistic matters. Both traditional and state ceremonies possess theatrical components and philosophical importance. The presentation suggests the potential for an expanded notion of theater. Nonetheless, the constraints of theater can be interpreted as follows: "there is no theatre without actors, whether they are actual human beings or puppets, presented on screen or in live performances before an audience, and the actions within it constitute a fictional reality," (Harymawan, 1993) in his book (Eko Santosa et al., 2008:01). Consequently, theater is a performance executed on a stage and observed by an audience. The term "criticism" in a literary context derives from the Greek word "krites," signifying "judge." The term "Krites" derives from "krinein," which means "to judge"; "kriterion," signifying "basis of judgment"; and "kritikos," denoting "literary judge" (Baribin, 1993; Siti Aida Azis, 2014).

According to Suroso et al. (2009:125), someone who performs literary criticism well must go through systematic and operational stages or steps, namely: (1) Description Stage; (2) Interpretation Stage; (3) Elaboration/Analysis Stage; (4) Evaluation Stage.

Sociology is an objective and scientific study of persons and social processes. Sociology, according to Semi (1984:52), is the study of how society grows and develops. According to (Suwignyo, 2013: 167), sociological criticism of literary works can be done using several approaches, namely: (1) An approach that considers literary works as socio-cultural documents reflecting the times; (2) An approach that examines the suffering of society in literary works; (3) An approach that examines the influence of socio-culture on the creator. Sociological criticism will teach readers that every literary work is a reflection of socio-cultural life. Sociological criticism is also valuable in increasing our knowledge by explaining, for example, why certain deficiencies become characteristic of a specific period.

DISCUSSION

1. Religious Issues

Religion, according to KBBI (2005:21), is a system of beliefs, principles, and practices relating to worship and obligations that are associated with that religion. Religion is a direction for behavior. The goal of religion is quite similar to art, namely to enable us live creatively, peacefully, and even happily with realities that are not simply explained and difficulties that we cannot solve (Armstrong, 2009:165).

This is similar to what happens in Farid Latif's play KATEKISAS (Spit for God), where Farok (the main character in the play) is sentenced to death for posting writings on his social media has deviated from religious teachings, and for considering themselves (humans) smarter than God, the creator of the earth and everything in it. More plainly, in the following dialogue:

1. *"Poetic license, I asked, what kind of God do we worship, sir?"*

The character opens the discourse with the phrase "licentia poetica," which is a law of poetry indicating that poetry has its own freedom compared to other literary works since poetry has a meaning that is tightly related to the poet's understanding. In keeping with this, Farok (the main character) shared his writing on his Facebook social media account. His writing immediately received condemnation from the general public, especially the citizens of the village where he (Farok) lived. Farok was instantly detained at his home and paraded to the village hall, where the village chief and his staff were already waiting. The deeds of the people were very regrettable to Farok, thus he (Farok) opened his discussion with the words "poetic license." Farok attacked the locals' one-sided perspective, which observed things without completing prior

investigation. Even without reading the poem's content, just by looking at the title, the villagers already took a one-sided understanding. The expression "licentia poetica" is a severe condemnation of those who interpret something unilaterally, which is not always true, and defend something that is not necessarily real.

In front of all the villagers, including the village head (one of the characters in the script), Farok continued his speech. Farok asked what kind of God they were truly worshiping, with the following clear dialogue: "I'm asking what kind of God we worship, sir..."

In this statement, the author, through the character of Farok, challenges the societal habit of learning a belief denoted by the word "God," which is questioned by the author. At the time this document was written, people always did things in the name of God, even though sometimes these religious teachings diverged from the genuine teachings.

2. What kind of god is it that brought me into the world blind, then gave me sight when those who gave their love for my birth were gone, a god that condemned them with a vague order of jihad?

In this statement, the author once again questions the existence of the divinity believed in by society. Is the God mentioned the genuine God, or a god manufactured only to smooth out the thinking of some people? A god stripped down by a few of individuals to orphan a child, kill their parents, and defend such actions? The author discloses this in the words, "I was born after the person who gave me the love of my birth was gone." Indeed, there will be no end to studying the concept of divinity, but the deity mentioned in this work is human individuals who declare themselves gods. In the next verse, "the god who decreed them with a vague jihad," this sentence is intended for those who carry out acts of violence and destruction using the name "jihad." However, the word "jihad" as established in the teachings of Islam precludes fighting against people who do not fight us at all. Therefore, it is apparent that the understanding of the word "jihad" that underlies terrorism throughout the year is a distortion of divine or god's (vague) instructions.

The word "jihad" denotes 'sincere effort'. This implies Muslims are encouraged to struggle truthfully and powerfully in the path of God. Unfortunately, this notion has been connected with terrorism and conflict, so it can come anytime, anyplace with the call of "jihad." This mistaken perspective is what the author mentions through the main character (Farok) in his dialogue extract, "the ambiguous jihad decree." Through this document, the author also wants to convey to the public that what they have believed all these time is not necessarily true. What society considers right could actually be incorrect in the eyes of the creator.

3. "A god that grows from someone who doesn't know what God is like."

The criticism in this remark is addressed at people who trust in the heavenly teachings provided by someone who actually has different objectives. God is merely employed as a means to clear the way for those who wish to create disaster, which is much detested by God. But in reality, this incitement using the name and teachings of God is still believed by certain individuals, and therefore these people are willing to embrace the twisted divine doctrine and impart it to many others. In the line "people who don't know what God is like," the message communicated by the main store is designed to make the public aware that understanding God is not simply about the individual who transmits the message. Knowing God also demands comprehending and experiencing His teachings, such as studying His holy book, thereby avoiding deceptive messages that claim God's name.

4 "A god born from a human womb who doesn't understand the meaning of the word G, O, D."

Continuing from the preceding explanation, this line confirms the critique of the previous sentence, claiming that society now reacts rapidly to anything without first considering its veracity. The expression "a god born from the womb of man" is a veiled critique that the deity conceived in the teachings that have become dogma by those who preach hatred and unrest is a god conceived by that person themselves, not the actual concept of divinity. This is what the author then alludes to as "a god born from the womb of man who does not understand the meaning of the word G, O, D." In the line, the author spells out the letters G, O, D, letter by letter to accentuate the sarcasm against the concept of God and misunderstood beliefs.

5. The god who is now praised by the people who are hated by God. This is spit for you, God!

Through this remark, the author attacks the general populace who believe in those who pretend to be God and indoctrinate others. The author once again closes the phrase by adding, "This is spit for you, God," as a scathing critique and an awareness that the God whose name is claimed to perform evil is not God. Furthermore, the author adds that those who use religious doctrine as a means to murder have no knowledge

of the concept of God, because no religious teaching advises its adherents to conduct evil, even to the point of killing hundreds of people. If there is such a teaching, it is not a religious doctrine, but a deceptive one. Especially if the instruction borrows the sanctity of God from a well-known heavenly religion with a significant following in the globe, it is clearly a very evident mistake, but in fact, it is still followed by many people.

6. *"Indeed, I see God smiling powerfully at the gods through His verses..."*

This line is both a critique and a reflection for everyone, whether they are people who exploit religion for their personal gain, or those who believe in brainwashing in the name of religion yet do things that are absolutely opposed to what any religion teaches. No matter how much effort is put into indoctrination, God remains God. Even through the passages revealed in the holy scriptures of all religions, God will never be brought down by human wrongdoing. Through His scriptures, God will disclose the truth that is happening. Therefore, to grasp the reality of a concept, religious adherents should study deeper into their religious teachings through the sacred writings provided by the prophets. If the brainwashing is piggybacking on the big name of the religion, then its validity can be examined through the holy book, which the author refers to as verses.

7. *"I read the sharp glare of his power piercing into the weakness of the gods."*

In the closing line of the poem, the author emphasizes their conviction while criticizing people easily influenced by blatantly deviant religious doctrines. With their conviction, the author explains the situations in the letter or holy book they read. They then see the gods worshipped by those who perpetrate violence in the name of God, vanquished by the lessons of truth provided by God through his holy book. No matter how forceful the brainwashing supplied by those who spread discontent in the name of God, the author, through the conversation of the main character, feels it will never be powerful. Those gods are feeble because they are employed for human objectives.

2. The Problem of Terrorism

Terrorism, according to Walter Reich in his book (Hendropriyono, 2009:26), is a technique of violence meant to promote desired outcomes by generating terror among the general public. Terrorism is a crime that targets people with weak logic and knowledge, who are then influenced by deviant ideologies such as anarchism, which is a crime committed in the name of a particular religion, aiming to uphold its teachings, but using anarchic methods such as burning, beating, torturing, and other brutal acts. Terrorism is the highest level of crime, including killing anyone considered infidels, oppressors, or idols, or those regarded anti-Islamic. It is these aberrant deeds that the author poured into one of his works, especially KATEKISAS (Spit for God), like in the following dialogue:

1. In the dialogue

"I asked what kind of God would tell us to break through the forests, wound them until half the mountain looked bald, and then thousands of water droplets roared down, sweeping away all civilizations!"

The author identifies the sentence with metaphorical language, where the author compares belief to dense trees. These trees (beliefs) are then deforested or left barren by some people, or in the literal sense, the beliefs held by society are exploited (harmed) by some irresponsible individuals, causing many to feel as if they have no beliefs, even though they profess to have beliefs. However, these notions are sown with the encouragement of certain persons, to do something that hurts others.

"Then thousands of water droplets roared fiercely, sweeping away all civilizations!"

This sentence is a continuation of the sentence above, stating that the roaring water, which swept away human civilization, was a result of the bare forest, or that the floods, landslides, and all other negative impacts were caused by the damage to nature imposed by mankind. But that's not all the author intended; in other words, it was the outcome of the abnormal views of the people that led to the catastrophe. This aligns with the acts of terrorism that occurred in August 2012, a few months before this manuscript was published.

2. In the dialogue

"What kind of god promises ease for those who create anxiety among their people"

This sentence is also a critique of the villagers and the greater community, pushing them to reflect again. It's a community that seems to have been indoctrinated to commit violence in the name of faith. People become trusting and prepared to do anything if they are influenced with a theological foundation termed an

ideology. This philosophy has been adapted by some persons to manipulate the masses.

3. In the poetry

"For the thousands of corpses floating in pools of gunpowder ash, for the dead who still breathe like the sky that rains down upon the earth, I spit upon you, God."

This is still related to the previous explanations about the false beliefs held by groups that claim to be divine, in order to destroy and terrorize society. The author once again delivers sharp criticism, using wordplay but not diminishing the harshness of the critique. In this sentence, the author even translates the word "spit" as if it were raindrops falling from the sky and uncountable. In the sentence "for the sake of thousands of corpses floating in pools of gunpowder ash," the author emphasizes that his anger (spit) comes from people who died from being shot and bombed. He uses the word "gunpowder ash" to signify the residue of powder used for bombs or bullets. The author also expresses his anger on behalf of those who are disabled for life, even though they are still alive but cannot do anything, as if they were dead, as written in the sentence

"for the sake of the dead who are still breathing"

Even if we calculate the casualty reports from terrorism incidents using the divine doctrine from 2003 to 2012, there were 246 deaths and 555 people injured.

4. *"Is it true that God confirms actions that are forbidden by God? What kind of God is that?"*

That question is a criticism of the general public who believe that the doctrines presented by people using violence are truly teachings of a certain religion, when in essence, religion is a belief that brings about an orderly or non-chaotic life.

3. Assessment/Evaluation

After studying all the explanations above, the author considers that there are many intriguing features to this text. The topics that arise in society, such as religion and terrorism, have been incorporated by the author into their manuscript. However, there are still some confusing points in this document regarding the critique the author is directing. This asks that the reader be more discriminating; to grasp this book, the reader is required not only to read the text but also to see it performed live. But compared to other works, the CATECHISM still has several faults, including:

1. The mood the author establishes in the article is still not well-defined. The author develops the mood in the novel by presenting a fierce fight early on, which can make the reader question what drove Farok (the main character) to write the essay considered offensive to "God."
2. The reader will conjecture whether the criticism the author pours into this work is directed at the characters within the book or at society beyond the text.
3. The major character (Farok) in this book does not have a complete function, because when Farok dies, he is sentenced to death by the people in the story, and the conflict started by the main character in the text is not resolved. Thus, the end of the story in this version feels stiff. The character Farok dies before expressing or conveying all his pent-up feelings. He (Farok) only leaves behind a piece of paper with his critical writings on society. So the message Farok wishes to transmit to the reader seems unfinished; the author appears perplexed about how to finish the story in this manuscript, and thus the manuscript's story ends with a question mark.
4. The manuscript writing procedure is still not entirely correct. The author only focused on the content of the manuscript, without carefully considering the writing style, which resulted in the manuscript appearing disorganized and with excessive punctuation, such as overuse of question marks, periods, commas, exclamation marks, and incorrect dialogue formatting.

The play script KATEKISAS does have some shortcomings, but behind those weaknesses are some strengths that warrant high respect for the creator. These advantages include: (1) From a social perspective, this work is surely very moving for its readership. The author boldly critiques the problems that occur in society, which have long been a terrible shadow. Although these problems arise distant from the author's surroundings; (2) Through this text, it seems the author has touched the hearts and minds of readers by imparting an important lesson: that what we know and believe is not necessarily true or in conformity with existing norms. It could be that these things are the activities of people who seek to smooth out their interests; (3) KATEKISAS is the first theatrical manuscript authored by the author when they were just entering the field of writing. At that time, it was the author's first time creating a theatrical script, and this work was instantly placed into the prestigious Indonesian theatrical Federation competition. Although relatively

recent, the document is no less amazing than works by established authors.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research completed on the play KATEKISAS (Spit for God) by Farid Latif utilizing a sociological critique, it can be determined that this script tells about social difficulties that occur in community life. The most prevalent societal topic in this work is the issue of religion and terrorism. Through this document, the author attacks a handful of persons who use God's name to pursue their personal goals. For the sake of that, those people are willing to do anything, including kill, to accomplish that dream. It seems the author witnessed the violence happening in society, and all of that was portrayed in the theater drama KATEKISAS (Spit for God). The acts of terror that transpired throughout the year, claiming so many lives, were collated by the author and poured into their work. Despite the author's brilliance in crafting words in the KATEKISAS (Spit for God) manuscript, there are several shortcomings in this work, such as: 1. a lack of clear plot structure, 2. incorrect manuscript writing style, 3. the main character's (Farok) role in the manuscript is incomplete, and 4. Readers are slightly confused about determining the criticism the author is directing. Is the critique the author means addressed at society within the work, or outside of it?

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Despite the shortcomings of the play KATEKISAS (Spit for God), there are strengths that deserve our appreciation, namely: (1) The play KATEKISAS (Spit for God) has touched the hearts of its audience. The author openly criticizes the problems occurring in society, even though these issues are far from the author's immediate surroundings; (2) This manuscript has provided valuable lessons to readers, that everything we know and believe must first be investigated for its truth.

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