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Religious Criticism of Scientism: The Subjectivity of Taufiq al-Ḥakīm in the Short Story “Fī Sanah Milyūn”

Yulia Nasrul Latifi^{*} , Mohammad Muslih^{**} 

Abstract

This paper studied the Egyptian modern short story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm. The story tells us about the advancement of science and technology which was at its peak in 1000 CE, when people were made immortal. Then, they abandoned metaphysics. The radical Subject that destroyed the scientism structure then appeared by giving up his life. The question to be answered in this paper is: how did the Subject destroy tyrannical scientism and why? The analysis revealed that scientism deprived humanity of human beings and it was necessary for the radical Subject to destroy it. Through his scientific findings, the radical Subject created a transcendental paradigm of science as his criticism of positivistic scientism. The Subject built a fantasy about the eternity of God and the mortality of human beings as the replacement for scientism that had thrown God away from the picture and made human beings immortal. The movement of the author is a movement of an empty and split Subject. To seek fulfillment, the Subject kept moving to approximate The Real, namely a scientific order that had a transcendental-religious paradigm containing ordered values and honored the humanity of human beings.

Keywords: Criticism of Scientism, Relation Between Science and Religion, Arabic Literature, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, Žižek’s Subjectivity

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Introduction

The dynamics of scientific and religious discourse are getting stronger, even globalized. Not only theologians, but scientists also appear to have the same concerns and they keep seeking pattern relations between science and religion. The current advancement of science and technology has made radical and incredible changes which has affected the fundamental aspects of life.

We can see that effect mostly in our economic and social lives. Modern technologies have changed the pattern of production from agriculture-based to commercial-industrial-based, changing the function of money from a medium of exchange to a business capital which is then responsible for the growth of capitalistic systems across the world. Furthermore, changes in mental, cultural, and social relations among human beings also emerged. As if it is not complicated enough, the situation is also being complicated further by the advancement of technologies in mass media and communication networks which offer new secular values¹.

The impact of the change is worldwide and complex. The values that will result from it are difficult to predict. Thus, it scares those who are deeply concerned about the direction of human history and its end. This scary and worrying situation is felt in many aspects of life, mostly in our religious lives². Religion, in its various definition and meaning, is defined as *an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, based on a notion of the transcendent, and how to live accordingly; it normally contains the four Cs: creed, code, cult, and community-structure*³.

Science, with all of its advancements appeared to be about to replace religion. Science made itself the only valid and correct interpreter of the world, and this is what scientism is⁴. In scientism, the validity of religion and tradition in interpreting the world is rejected. According to experts and observers' analysis, this scientism view is caused by episteme building which is fundamental to the growth of science itself⁵.

1 A Sudiarja, *Agama Di Zaman Yang Berubah [Religion in the Changing Age]*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), v–vi.

2 Sudiarja, 39.

3 Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes, *The Study of Religion in an Age of Global Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 7.

4 Mohamad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020), 76.

5 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), xxii.

One of scientism's radical rejections of religion, which originated from a positivistic view, is the birth of skepticism towards the divine. In the 19th and 20th centuries, five noted atheist thinkers emerged and influenced those who followed. They failed to prove their teachings as valid theories. They were Ludwig Feuerbach (religion as human's self-projection), Karl Marx (religion is the opiate of the people), Friedrich Nietzsche (God is dead), Sigmund Freud (religion is a neurotic and infancy escape from reality), and Jean-Paul Sartre (religion is human's fear of his freedom)⁶.

Although their theories has been proved wrong, their critical thoughts were important in maturing religion. These atheistic views challenged religion, which indeed needed to look at itself, and this spurred critical reflection on facts in theism, improvements, and finally to prevail. Because of atheistic views, religion was helped to think critically, maintain purity, and fight to keep their core message⁷.

Within the struggle between science and religion, in the context of modern Christianity, Ian G. Barbour was announced as one of the founders of the discourse between science and religion in the West. This physicist-theologian mapped four interactions between religion and science. They are conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. According to Barbour, integration is the only relevant model now⁸. In line with this, Haught also offered four kinds of interactions between science and religion. They are conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation. He concluded that confirmation is the only model relevant in our era⁹.

In Islamic context, the discourse of science and religion became popular from the 1970 to 1990's. The founders were Syed M. Naquib al-Attas, Sayyed Hossein Nasr, Isma'il al-Faruqi, and Ziauddin Sardar. Al-Attas called it "the De-westernization of Science", al-Faruqi called it "the Islamization of Science", and Sardar called it "the Contemporary Islamic Science". Mehdi Golshani also became popular in the 1980s because of his paper *The Holy Quran and Science of Nature* and in 2004 he wrote a similar paper *Issues in Islam and Science*¹⁰.

⁶¹ Franz Magnis Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan [Rationalizing God]*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 64–98.

⁷ Suseno, 100–101.

⁸ Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* (New York: Harper, 2000).

⁹ Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 90.

¹⁰ Muslih, 90.

Amid the struggle between the discourse of science and religion, in the contemporary Islamic world, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm emerged. He was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1898¹¹. Al-Ḥakīm was different from the other writers, scientists, or theologians in presenting his thoughts on the relationship between science and religion. His short story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” (1000 CE) was first published in the anthology *Arinī Allāh (Show Me What Allah Looks Like)* in Egypt in 1953, where he imagined that the advancement of science had reached its peak and its impact, ecologically as well as theologically, on human beings. Men were made immortal due to the advancement of medical science. They no longer recognized God as they themselves were like gods. A hero emerged. He was a geologist who concluded that men should die, and that God existed based on his *scientific findings*.

The strength of the author’s imagination in picturing such advances in science gave him freedom and autonomy as an author who has done radicalization of action. In the story, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm illustrates the peak of scientific glory at an amazing and radical level. At the same time, the author criticized it because it did not have a religious-transcendentally based philosophical core anymore. The story rejected the positivistic paradigm which formed the scientific view, a view that absolutizes the scientific truth and rejected religious-transcendental metaphysical ideas on human lives.

Literature can give various philosophical reflections as well as rich perspectives in interpreting human life and in presenting an idea. Literature is a medium that delivers knowledge uniquely and differently because of its wide ability to be interpreted in various ways. If science is characterized by its empiricism, philosophy by its rationality, and religion by its dogmatism, then literature can transcend all three characters at once. This is understandable because literature is identified as a type of knowledge that can move its reader’s emotions. Daiches¹² saw literature as a form of work that can deliver the type of knowledge which can’t be delivered in any other way.

In the study of Arabic literature, Egypt is well known as one of the pioneer countries to introduce ideas of development, modernization, and issues of human liberation. Audah¹³ showed the advance of Egyptian modern literature development

11 Syauqī Daiyū, *Al-Adab al ‘Arabīy al Mu’Asir Fī Misra* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1957), 288–98.

12 See Melani Budianta et al., *Membaca Sastra (Pengantar Memahami Sastra Untuk Perguruan Tinggi) [Reading Literature: Introduction to Literature Understanding for University Students]* (Magelang: Indonesia Tera, 2002), 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi and et.al, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I [Method of Literature Research I]* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2006), 4–5.

13 Ali Audah, “Sastra Arab Mutakhir [Contemporary Arabic Literature],” *Ulumul Qur’an*, 1996.

along with its influencing emancipatory ideas. Ahmed¹⁴ pointed to the importance of Egypt as the center of the transformational processes and struggle between ideologies in the updates of the Islamic world since the 19th century. This is because Egypt was the first country to experience modernization in culture and intellectuality as an impact of European expansion. Taufiq al-Ḥakīm emerged amid that struggle and transformation.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm’s radical criticism and action, as the author, in his rejection of scientism was his attempt to establish complementary and dialogical relations between science and religion which are related to the concept of subjectivity introduced by Žižek. According to Žižek, the Subject exists but he is split and empty. In his attempt to fulfill himself, the Subject acted radically to fight against and destroy the Symbolic, which in this case is tyrannical scientism.

Žižek is a contemporary philosopher. He was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He established his theory of subjectivity above the German idealism, processed it in Lacanian psychoanalysis, then gave it its axiological fundamentals from Marxist tradition¹⁵. For Žižek¹⁶, the Subject never dies, and will always exist in his own unique and radical way.

7 There are three Lacanian phases that Žižek developed in his theory, namely The Real, The Symbolic, and The Imaginary. The Real is the pre-symbolic phase toward which the Subject longs to go. The Symbolic is the order and structure that control us in perceiving reality. The Imaginary is the illusion, a structural effect that has no existence¹⁷.

For Žižek, the Subject is split since he experienced trauma caused by the tyrannical and oppressive Symbolic¹⁸. The language and symbolic order that has been a part of the community and shaped everyone’s perception is called The Big Other. But there is always a lack in the symbolic order so it can’t have totalization. Because of that, the Subject then becomes a gravitational center of the narration¹⁹. In the

14 32 Zeila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 6, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt32bg61>.

15 46 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008).

16 Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek* (London: Routledge, 2003), 98.

17 38 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 182.

18 Žižek, 204.

19 3 Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 44–45; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik Untuk Indonesia Dari Pemikiran Plato, Edmund Husserl, Charles Taylor, Sampai Dengan Slavoj Žižek [The Philosophy of Politics for Indonesia from Plato, Edmund Husserl, Charles Taylor, to Slavoj Žižek]* (Tkp.: Pustaka Mas, 2011), 115.

context of this research, the hundreds of thousand years of oppressive Symbolic is the “scientism” as it is described in the short story.

Through his reading on Hegel, Žižek concluded that the Subject is empty, since all his life he always passes a never-ending dialogical process. The Subject is diluted into various determinations of a particular predicate²⁰. It is because of this split and emptiness that the Subject always moves to seek fulfillment and fullness by doing a radical action as a form of struggle against the Symbolic that confines him. For Žižek, the Subject becomes the Vanishing Mediator, the one that can disrupt the boundary between The Real and The Symbolic. Myer explained Žižek’s view in his statement: “Žižek reads this vanishing mediator or a passage through madness and by so doing he conceives the subject as mad, madness, there for as for Žižek a prerequisite for sanity, that is for the normalcy of a civilized subject”²¹.

As a Marxist, Žižek stated that the Subject’s radical action is an emancipatory action to liberate human beings from the shackles of oppressing systems. The Symbolic always has an oppressive ideology in its order. Unfortunately, the majority do not realize it. Because of its subtlety, it is experienced as common and natural to them. For Marx²², as cited by Žižek, an ideology is a fake consciousness because what appears in reality is an illusion that deceives the subject, as stated by Marx himself: “They do not know it but they are doing it.”

In his subjectification process, the Subject then creates a fantasy. The fantasy is a layer covering the Lack of The Symbolic that has been worsened by “The Big Other” (an oppressive ideology, order, and system) so it becomes more tyrannical. In Cartesian philosophy, the role of fantasy is to be the mediator between “*res cogitans*” and “*res extensa*”, between the formal symbolical structure and the positivistic object which we find in the reality. The fantasy provides a scheme that fills empty spots opened by the formal symbolical structure²³.

Lacan called it “transversing the fantasy”; the Subject suspends on the fantasy frame of unwritten laws which makes him free to choose²⁴. The fantasy is so important

²⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 21.

²¹ Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 37; Ramayda Akmal, “Subjektivitas Pramoedya Ananta Toer Dengan Novel *Perburuan: Pendekatan Psikoanalisis-Historis Slavoj Žižek*” (Tesis, Yogyakarta, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2012), 27, <http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/penelitian/detail/57271>.

²² Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 24.

²³ Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London, New York: Verso, 2008), 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, “Women’s Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawāl Al-Sa’dāwī’s Fantasy in *Zīnah*),” *Poetika: Jurnal Ilmu Sastra* 9, no. 1 (July 26, 2021): 11–22, <https://doi.org/10.22146/poetika.v9i1.61327>.

²⁴ Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 39; Latifi, “Women’s Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawāl Al-Sa’dāwī’s Fantasy in *Zīnah*).”

that it became a narration of primordial loss since the Subject rejected the laws in the symbolic. The fantasy provides a rationalization for the inherent “deadlock” of the drive²⁵. In the context of this research, the fantasy is a transcendental-religious-philosophical view.

Scientism as the Oppressive Symbolic

The setting of the story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” is 1000 CE. It is about human beings’ in a new world shaped by science. Wars happened a lot, it changed things radically; from the shape of the Earth to the very structure of the human body. In addition, medical science was so advanced that all diseases had been eliminated. Eventually, men were made immortal. They lost their value system. The positivistic paradigm which was the result of scientism rejected the transcendental-religious-philosophical paradigm. Men no longer knew God, love, heart, nor conscience. This is implied by the following passages in the story²⁶:

Various nuclear war that happened since hundreds of years ago had destroyed museums and libraries containing historical values... All that was left were only summaries of scientific experiments which became a cause for mankind’s new world²⁷.

Nuclear and chemical wars had flattened the face of the Earth, sweeping it clean so that animals, plants, birds, and fish were no more... Nothing was left for humans except what was contained in the Earth’s womb, industrial activities, and interactions among humans... Human consumed meals that were made from chemical gasses in their houses, which their the main elements were radioactive materials... Their delicious meals in the past had long gone and they no longer had digestive systems, mouths, and teeth... Humans only a had head to think, a nose to absorb their main dishes from the air and earthly gasses, and also their arms and legs that had become small from rare usage... There were no more differences between human being, the sea and stars that were immortal... Even men now were like

25 Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 43, Latifi, “Women’s Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawāl Al-Sa’dāwī’s Fantasy in Zīnah).”

26 All of the short stories’ translation here is mine.

27 Taufiq Al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000),” in *Qaṣaṣ Falsafīyah Arinī Allāh (Collection of Short Stories Show Me What Allah Looks Like)* (Miṣr: Dār Miṣr al-Tabā’ah, 1953), 82. The origin text says:

فإن الحروب الذرية قامت في الأرض منذ مئات الآلاف من السنين: فقوضت متاحف العهود القديمة ومكتباتها... فلم يصل إلى زمانهم إلا خلاصة التجارب العلمية التي على أسبابها قامت دنياهم الجديدة.

*God, unborn and did not give birth... did not know death and knew only immortality and did not know yesterday or tomorrow*²⁸.

The passages describe how the peaks of scientific and technological advancements without axiological backup influence the human philosophy of life. Positivism is only the base for developing science. Furthermore, men then developed and interpreted life from an atheistic and nihilistic point of view.

This picture of new human life at the “peak of scientific advancement” is the author’s reading on the future of human beings that is very likely to happen because the plot and the objective data are built in a logical structure of imagination. Here, the story becomes interesting, since it illustrates the author’s position and critical thoughts that are based on the transcendental-religious paradigm, that no matter how far human beings have developed science, they will always have limitations because they can never compete with God.

Apart from his sharp criticism of theological problems, the story also criticizes the horrible ecological problem as environmental problems are getting more complex and severe. Therefore²⁹, religions are becoming more concerned about this problem.. The Muslims, the Catholics, the Protestants, the Jews, the Buddhists, the Hinduists, and the Confucianists attempt to provide solutions to this ecological crisis based on their respective religious ethics.

There is a historical reason for the existence of a scientific view which creates a strict boundary between the scientific and the non-scientific. The root of this positivism in science can be traced back to Francis Bacon’s empiricism, which was reflected by August Comte who only accepts sensory experiences as facts. The Vienna Circle, who called themselves neo-positivists, refined the boundary between the meaningful as the region of observable science and the meaningless as the region of nonsense since it contains propositions that cannot be proven empirically through verification principles. The meaningless includes religion,

28 Al-Ḥakīm, 89 The origin text says:

إنهم لا يذكرون وجود الحيوانات على الأرض... فقد انقرضت كلها منذ مئات الآلاف من السنين... أبادتها الحروب الذرية والكيميائية التي مسحت وجه الأرض مسحا، وحلقته حلقا، وغسلته غسلا من كل حيوان ونبات وطائروسمك... فلم يبق للإنسان غير جوف الأرض يعيش فيه بمصانعه وبمعامله... يطعم غذاء من غازات كيميائية تطلق في البيوت، تستمد موادها من عناصر الجو وإشعاعات الأجرام، فضمرت معدته القديمة واختفى جهاز الهضمي وفمه وأسنانه... فاذا هو رأس يفكر وأنف يستنشق به غذاءة من الهواء، وطعامه من الغازات، ويدان ضعيفتان وساقان هزيلتان لقلة الاستعمال... لم يعد هناك فرق بين إنسان و بحروكوكب... إنه مثلها خالد... بل إنه الآن شبه إله... لا يلد ولا يولد... يجهل الموت ويعرف الأبد ولا يدرك الأمس ولا الغد....

29 ¹⁸ in Harold Coward and Daniel C Maguire, eds., *Visions of A New Earth: Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000).

metaphysics, morals, and aesthetics.

It is that paradigm of positivistic knowledge that is called scientism. Kuhn called it “incommensurable”, which is the paradigm that keeps competing in science and tends to negate their competitors³⁰. They interpreted science as a task that produces useful technical knowledge. But they did not generate wider philosophical and theological conclusions³¹.

From the Žižekian point of view, it is this positivistic interpretation that plays the oppressive Symbolic role in *Fī Sanah Milyūn* and is being criticized. It does not matter how strong the penetration that was done by The Symbolic, legitimated by The Big Other, in doing its oppression, there is always a Lack or shortage within the structure. As stated by Žižek³²: *The Lacanian subject is divided, identical to a lack in a signifying chain. The radical dimension of Lacanian theory lies not in recognizing this fact but in realizing the Big Other, the symbolic order itself, is also barre, crossed-out, around a central lack. This lack enables the subject to achieve a kind of de-alienation, it enables him to avoid the total alienation”*.

It is depicted in the story, that the humane aspects of men had lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. But interventions from an authoritarian government which did not want to accept change and a humanistic view of life became the greatest barrier for a society in their course to find their humanity, namely their source of happiness and peace of soul. This can be seen in the following passages:

*Till one day, the followers knew that the governmental system itself was the barrier to their divine dream realization... Science had imprisoned human bodies in an iron cage... with the help of science that had made human bodies immortal and covered humane aspects of human beings from spirituality and the beauty of morals...*³³

19 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Chicago (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 150. Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 79.

15 Ian G. Barbour, *Isu Dalam Sains Dan Agama [Issues in Science and Religion]*, trans. Damayanti and Ridwan (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2006), 170.

2 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 137. Julia Nasrul Latifi and Wening Udasmoro, “The Big Other Gender, Patriarki, Dan Wacana Agama Dalam Karya Sastra Nawāl Al-Sa’dawī [The Big Other of Gender, Patriarchy, and Religious Discourse],” *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 19, no. 1 (September 28, 2020): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2020.191.1-20>.

33 Al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000),” 97. The original text says:

1
بى أن أتى يوم أدرك فيه الأتباع أن النظام القائم وحده هو الحائل دون تحقيق ذلك الحلم الإلهي... فإن يعلم ذلك الحارس الصارم لجسم الإنسان... الذي يحيط بقاءه بسياج من حديد... ويعنى بخلود الجسد هذه العناية قد حجب عن الإنسانية عوالم الروح ومفاتها...

Science had been able to defeat mortality hundreds of thousands of years ago... no man had ever died since then... neither they were born... In that age, no marriage for producing offspring was found since science had provided bacteria that could eventually become human... it had been so since thousands of years ago...³⁴

The word “love” was a strange word that was never be used again since hundreds of thousands of years ago... the word was lost along with the vanishing interest in the opposite sexual mate... after the lab had seized the incubation period of the offspring... with the loss of love, lost also the conscience and art... the bond of hearts was also lost and had been replaced by the bond of “thoughts” ...³⁵

Apart from their huge impact on ecology, non-theological science also changed and annihilated the function and essence of human beings as the highest creation. Men did not have a dimension of spirituality and a noble sense of art and morality anymore, it was as if they were then no longer different from inanimate objects.

Such a shackling view by the Symbolic becomes more tyrannic because of The Big Other in the form of political penetration and authoritarian power³⁶. The Big Other appeared clearly as the authoritarian government that deprived people’s “dreams of divinity”.

In reality, there will always be a shortage in the Symbolic so that it contains the Lack in the Big Other. This is precisely what causes The Symbolic, an open structure, to be criticized continually by the Subject³⁷. From the Lack contained in the Symbolic, a space for the Subject to act radically emerged.

Radical Action of the Subject

The story continued by describing that the history course of the non-value based

34 Al-Ḥakīm, 80–81. The original text says:

تغلب العلم على الموت منذ مئات الآلاف من السنين... لم يعد هناك قوم يموتون.. ولم يعد هناك قوم يولدون أيضا... فالزواج للنسل انقرض كذلك منذ هذه الأحقاب، فالعلم هو الذى يجهز بكتريا النسل الأدمى في معاملة... ولقد ظل الأمر يجري على هذا النهج ألّوفا من الأعوام... لقد أصبح البشر الموجودون شأنهم شأن عناصر الطبيعة الخالدة التى لا تتغير، إنهم باقون دائما كتلك الشمس الباقية وذلك القمر و ذلك البحر وذلك الجبل... كلمة الشيخوخة لم يعد لها مدلول فى لغة ذلك العصر... ولا كلمة الشباب....

35 Al-Ḥakīm, 91–92. The original text says:

إن كلمة “الحب” كانت هي الأخرى قد انقرضت منذ مئات الآلاف من الأعوام... انقرضت بانقرض الميل الغريزى بين الذكر والأنثى... بعد أن تولت المعامل إفراخ النسل... وبزوال الحب زال الشعور والفن... لقد زال اتصال “القلوب” وحل محله اتصال “الأفكار”....

36 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*.

37 Žižek, 137; Latifi and Udasmoro, “The Big Other Gender, Patriarki, Dan Wacana Agama Dalam Karya Sastra Nawāl Al-Sa’ dāwī [The Big Other of Gender, Patriarchy, and Religious Discourse].”

and non-axiological based scientism bent radically through the emerging hero, a radical subject (a geologist) who then rejected it. The geologist found a fossil of a human skull which had been buried for thousands of years in Earth’s womb. After a long reflection, this scientific discovery led him to a new paradigm, that ontologically the essence of being in this universe is spirituality (not materiality). This new paradigm was radically against the common scientific paradigm in society, which had been there for hundreds of thousands of years, namely that the essence of being is materiality.

The geologist then embraced a new belief he got from his intuition, that humans must experience “death”. The skull he found was the evidence. This belief then led him to a new thought, that if a human could die then there must be some kind of Being which does not. That Being is God.

With high confidence, he then preached and tried to explain this finding to his companions in secret, since his current philosophy was radically different from the common one, the one held by the government and scientists. Because of this radical, critical, transcendental, and logical thought, he was then called “The Prophet” by his disciples. Unfortunately, the government and the scientists were then soon against him. The radical subject and his rejection can be seen in the following passages:

In Summer 1000 CE, a geologist came into the office of a chemist and he said, “I have found something crucial that it can make every human being drowned in amazement... I have found an artifact of the past in the depth of Earth’s womb... Behold!” The geologist got the skull out of his small bag (81). Both scientists stood and observed it. This is a discovery that is nowhere to be found in their museum... The geologist said, “There is no doubt that this is a skull of a human being like us... there is a secret... right, there must be a power that can change human movement so that they become solid elements (82). The science of Earth’s layers which I studied deeply had driven me to analyze the past, which then led me to analyze the future. What is our future?” (83). The geologist muttered as if he was speaking to himself, “As long as there is a being that exists then there must be beings that do not.” (84) The geologist believed that he had gotten a revelation, he believed that there is something behind life called “death”. It must be experienced necessarily one day. “Believe in my words, scientists... Is there no one among you that had experienced sleeping, not even for a few minutes by closing both of your eyelids so that you could feel some kind

of strange excitement?” (85)³⁸. All of the scientists did not agree with that theory (which negated the geologist’s argumentations). They warned him not to spread the misleading thoughts because they were worried that the people would be polluted by this misleading belief. They turned their back on the geologist, drowned him in shame and failure³⁹.

The passages above depict a radical subject. Namely, the geologist who had discovered a human skull, and from that, he drew a radical conclusion that men must die. He then tried to spread this new view to his fellow scientists, but even after he gave some long arguments, they rejected him.

The author’s radical action on the Symbolic can also be found when we look at the setting of the story. As stated before, the setting was 1000 CE, when the advancement of science reached its peak while the deprivation of human beings’ humanity had happened long before it (hundreds of thousands of years before). Through the voice of his hero, the author showed that such advancement was inconsistent with his scientific discovery.

43 The drastic advancement of science happens now, while in the story it happened hundreds of thousands of years ago and reached its peak in the year 1000 CE. This shows how strong the author believed in the fragility of positivistic-materialistic scientism that had been acknowledging only scientific findings as truth, being so confident that “men and their power” were the only beings. It also rejected metaphysics and God and negated the spiritual dimension and morality of human beings. And with that, humans then became less humane. They became something else.

38 Al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000),” 81–85 The original text says:

1 في صيف ذلك العام - المليون بعد الميلاد - دخل عالم من علماء طبقات الأرض على عالم من علماء الكيمياء وقال له: يخيل إلي أي شيء نحاكتشاف خطير، حيث يدهش الناس جميعا... لقد عثرت على عمق بعيد في جوف الأرض على هذا الأثر... انظر... راجع بحرص من حقيبتيه الصغيرة جمجمة آدمية... (81)

1 ووقف الرجلان مشدوهين أمام الجمجمة، فهذا شيء جديد لا يوجد له نظير في متاحفهم... وقال عالم الجيولوجيا: من شك أن هذا إنسان مثلنا... هناك السر... نعم لا بد أن تكون هنالك قوة تستطيع أن تحول الحركة في الإنسان إلى هذا النوع من الجمود... (82)

1 ربما كان علم طبقات الأرض أمارسه يدفعني إلى البحث في الماضي، وهذا البحث في الماضي يحملني على التفتيح في المستقبل ما مستقبلنا؟ 83

1 وهمش مخاطب نفسه: مادام هناك وجود فلا بد أن يكون هناك عدم وجود... (84)

1 لقد تعبت من نفسي الآن... إنه إلهام، إنى مؤمن أنه يوجد شيء فلنسمه “الموت”... لا بد أن تصل إليه يوما... اصدقوني القول أيها العلماء... ألم يشعر أحدكم مرة بإغفاءة طارئة عابرة كخفقة الجفن، أحس خلالها لذة وراحة من نوع غريب؟ (85).

39 Al-Ḥakīm, 87. The original text says:

1 وافقت عليه العلماء على هذه النظرية بالإجماع، وحذروا عالم الجيولوجيا من الاسترسال في أمثال هذه الترهات، خوفا على بسطاء العقول في المجتمع ممن يستهويهم جو الخرافات... وانصرف العلماء عن زميلهم الجيولوجي وتركوه غارقا في خزيه وخبيثته (87).

The emergence of the hero shows the radicalization of the author. In Žižek’s theory, the emergence of a radical subject is caused by the oppression of a certain ideology that becomes the power that legitimates it. For Žižek, the position of ideology is in the fact that many people do not know what they are doing. They have a fake representation of their social reality⁴⁰. It is because of this tyrannical Symbolic, that the Subject then emerges and fights against it through a series of radical actions.

Žižek’s subjectivity theory emphasized that human history often presented a certain tyrannical ideology called The Big Other which appeared as The Symbolic which shackled the Subject. The Subject is split because of various trauma he experienced and is also empty, so he did a dialectics along his course of history. He then keeps fighting The Symbolic by doing radical actions. The actions are aimed to seek his self-fulfillment and fullness from split and emptiness.

In many pre-modern cultures, there are two ways to gain acknowledged knowledge. The Greeks called it “*mythos*” and “*logos*”. Both are important and superior; they are not contradicting each other and are even complementary. *Logos* (reason) is a pragmatic way of thinking that enables one to effectively function in the world. It accurately matches external reality. *Logos* looks forward, seeking new ways to control the environment, improve old insights, and create the new. *Logos* is important for the survival of human beings, but it has a limitation; it cannot consolidate humans or find the highest meaning of struggle in our life. Therefore, humans need “*mythos*” or “myth”⁴¹.

In the context of the story, the *logos* was science, and the myth was religion. The radical struggle of the subject was his attempt to restore the myth. The new thought or teaching he had found was his attempt to rebuild it. As an important aspect of thinking, the myth gave hope for a value-based and humanistic history of human beings. But the myth had been killed by *logos* hundreds of thousands of years ago and buried in history. Therefore, the radical subject (the geologists or The Prophet) emerged and soon attempted to liberate society from this tyrannical Symbolic.

Although the radical subject was antagonized and negatively judged, the story told about the geologist’s new thoughts which were getting widely spread in secret. In the beginning, when he was rejected by his fellow scientists, he met a gentle friend who was called “a woman”. She was the first human who believed in

40 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 27.

41 Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan: Sanggahan Terhadap Fundamentalisme Dan Ateisme [The Future of God: The Reclaiming of Spirituality’s Mystical Roots]*, trans. Yuliani Liputo (Bandung: Mizan, 2011), 12.

geologists. They then experienced a strange feeling that was unknown in that era, namely a feeling of trust in and love towards each other⁴². After that, as a prophet, the geologist then got a challenge of performing a miracle that justified his belief in men's mortality. The following passages from the story explain it:

The news about the geologist was then spread, and so his thoughts. Many participants and friends believed in him. He was the first prophet that appeared after hundreds of thousands of years. But the "miracle" his opponents and unbelievers demanded became an obstacle for him. They would not believe in him just like that without evidence, and the only miracle requested was: to make an alive man dead. Miracles were also performed by prophets who came before him for the sake of change in their respective societies towards more humane... At the same time some meteors fell to Earth and hit a house piercing its ceiling and injuring a man's head in that house... the government did not want to succumb, and a disaster happened, after dozens of thousands of years of peace a riot broke out, and it was the government that eventually win the battle⁴³.

These passages explain the occurrence of a miracle that justified the teachings of the radical subject. Some meteors fell to Earth, piercing a man's house and injuring his head is the evidence of science's limitation and the failure of scientism. No matter how advanced the science and technology humans have developed their mind has definite limitations.

The fall of the meteors is a miracle that proved that humans can and must eventually die, despite the immortality offered by science. The form of prophets' miracles always matched the contexts and challenges of their era. Moses encountered the Pharaoh with his wizards, so his miracle was a magical staff that could turn into a huge snake. The miracle of Jesus took the form of curing blindness because of the advancement of medical science of the people he encountered. And the miracle of Prophet Muhammad pbuh. was the poetical Qur'an because Arabic poets were popular and became an intellectual standard at the time. When science had reached its peak, then the prophet was a scientist. The Prophet's (the geologist's) miracle was the fall of some meteors down to Earth to prove that the mortality of human beings was against the immortality offered by science.

Unfortunately, the government's scientists did want to believe it. After the meteor

42 Al-Ḥakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000)," 87–93.

43 Al-Ḥakīm, 96. The original text says:

ذاع خبر العالم الجيولوجي شاعت فكرته، واستفحل أمره، انضحم إليه كثير من المتشيعين له. وكان هذا أول نبي ظهر منذ
 ثبات الألاف من الأعوام. ¹ وكان كانت أمامه عقبة، هي "المعجزة" التي يطالبه بها كفاره والجاحدون لأفكاره... وهم ماكانوا
 يرضون منه بغير معجزة واحدة: أن يميت لهم الحى!... وتجلت هذه "القدرة" كما تجلت لبعض الأنبياء من قبل، لأنها أرادت
 أن يكون هنالك تحول في مجرى الإنسانية في ذلك العصر... ¹ بنيزك ضخم من نيازك السماء يضرب وجه الأرض ويغور
 فيها فيسحق رأس إنسان فوق سطح بيته بجوف الأرض، وصبرت الحكومة، فوقعت الفتنة، وحدث شغف هو الأول منذ
 عشرات الألاف من السنين... وانتصر الحكومة.

incident, a riot broke out and after thousands of years of peace, chaos happened in human history. The government and scientists arrested and sentenced the Prophet to death for *his rebellion and misleading men*. It is shown in the following passages:

They arrested the prophet and the government brought him to the court. His fellow scientists testified against his deviating and dangerous ideas. The court sentenced him to the same punishment they sentenced a criminal and insurgent, a punishment which could destroy brain functions commonly used in the past, namely by electrocute... They electrocuted his brain cells using specific voltages, his mind was filled with other thoughts that made him passive... The Prophet could not recall who he was, had no rebellious thoughts, had no will... His personality was deprived of him, though his body was intact. But his teaching was still there⁴⁴.

The geologist's action was considered radical and negative from the Symbolic's (namely the government's) point of view. But for him, it was the government who oppressed the people using their positivistic scientism. The oppressing Symbolic was worsened by the Big Other so that it became more tyrannical. The eradication of humanity and the radical reshaping of Earth's face by the non-value-based advancement of science and technology is the structure with Lack.

The appearance of the subject is logical. This is in line with Russell Grigg's statement that Žižekian's radical action has three characteristics. First, the subject's action must transform the actor. Second, the subject's action must eliminate himself only to be reborn. Third, the action must become a crime against the existing laws so that it is considered destructive and negative from the Symbolics' point of view⁴⁵. The geologist's thoughts and actions were transformative and considered negative by the government, and his death was for the birth of a new history.

The geologist or the Prophet had emphasized the idea of religion. In Islam (al-Qur'an), the importance of senses as sources of empirical knowledge (epistemology of science) is indeed acknowledged. However, al-Qur'an clearly stated the limitations of senses. Therefore, it is mentioned in many verses that a scientist from a Qur'anic

44 Al-Ḥakīm, 96. The original text says:

اما النبي ¹ تنقلوه وقدموه إلى المحاكمة فشهد عليه زملاؤه العلماء بأنه مخبول وأن خياله خطير... فحكم عليه بما يحكم على المجرمين والمفسدين وهي ربة تعادل إطاحة الرأس في الأزمان القديمة، فقاده إلى معمل كهربائي... وسلطوا على خلايا تفكيره أشعة خاصة، فأحلوا محلها تفكيراً آخر هادئاً دمثاً بسيطاً... لاشخصية فيه ولا عنف ولا إرادة... وهكذا اختفت شخصية النبي وإن لم يخنف جسمه... ولكن رسالته ظلت باقية (96).

45 ²⁴ Robert, *Manusia Politik: Subjek Radikal Dan Politik Emansipasi Di Era Kapitalisme Global Menurut Slavoj Žižek [Political Human: The Radical Subject and Emancipatory Politics in the Global Capitalism Era According to Slavoj Žižek]*, 118–20; Latifi, ⁵ *Kritik Nawal Al-Sa'dawi Terhadap Konstruksi Wacana Agama Tentang Relasi Gender Dalam Suqut al-Imam, Adab Am Qillah Adab, Dan Zinah (Pendekatan Subjektivitas) [Nawal al-Sa'dawi's Criticism of Religious Discourse Construction in Suqut al-Imam, Adab Am Qillah Adab, Dan Zinah: A Subjectivity Approach]*, Dissertation, Faculty of Cultural Sciences.³

point of view is one who uses his heart to think in addition to their ratio for formal logical thoughts. They are called “*ulul albab*”. It is this combination of ratio, heart, and senses that characterizes the ideal epistemology according to al-Qur’an. Science developed in this way could be used to get closer to God (acknowledging transcendental-religious-metaphysics), strengthen the humanity of human beings, and respect values and morality for the balance of ecosystems and the universe.

There are phenomena and reality beyond our physical senses’ grasp, even with the help of the most advanced microscopic and telescopic instruments. The physical reality is the lowest level of reality, while the highest one is God. The religious awareness of a Muslim will influence his scientific studies of these realities. The physical world, like other worlds, gained its existence from God. They will always be related to Him⁴⁶. An enlightened religion uses the same method as the one used in scientific research. Science also involves the assumptions and moral commitment as they are used in religion⁴⁷.

Both the Western Christian world and the Islam world acknowledge that science can be integrated with religion. The idea of integration or confirmation of science and religion sounded by Barbour and Haugt does not negate the role of religious assumptions in the development of science. For Haugt, the meaning of confirmation is to give a metaphysical base to science, among them are assumptions that the universe is a rational order that proves the existence of God, and its evolution proves the purpose of creation⁴⁸.

Meanwhile, Barbour saw the difference between “natural theology” and “theology of nature” as two ways of bridging science and religion. The first was the way a scientist can walk through. In natural theology the scientist would expect to find evidence for the existence of God. While theologians (and believers) can depart from certain religious traditions and see that many of their beliefs were in line with science, while some of their beliefs must be reformulated in the light of scientific theories⁴⁹.

46 Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-Esai Tentang Sejarah Dan Filsafat Sains Islam [Tauhid and Science, Essays on the Islamic History and Philosophy of Science]*, trans. Yuliani Liputo (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1994), 17.

47 Barbour, *Isu Dalam Sains Dan Agama [Issues in Science and Religion]*, 174.

48 John F Haugt, *Science & Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995); Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 91.

49 Ian G. Barbour, *Menemukan Tuhan Dalam Sains Kontemporer Dan Agama [Finding God in Contemporary Science and Religion]* (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 92; Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 92.

Karl L. Popper also saved religion’s position from meaninglessness as accused by positivists. For him, to draw a boundary line between the meaningful and the meaningless based on scientific criteria, as is the case for neo-positivism, could be accepted. Popper created a new demarcation with “the falsification principle”. He concluded that religion was still valid even though many of its propositions cannot be proven scientifically (for example, the existence of The Almighty God) they are meaningful propositions; nevertheless. This is Popper’s criticism of positivism and scientism as well as his defense of religion. Even for him, there is no observation that is free from theory. Because the empirical data in science itself is a result of the meaning construction of the subject that in science, the universe is never independent of human interpretation on it⁵⁰.

A radical Subject is an empty Subject who has two realities. First, is the fatalistic reality, namely the subject’s dialectics which for all of his life recur everything that ever happened. Second, is the substantial reality, that the Subject can move in another way. This “empty gesture” and “empty form” as the essence of the Subject is a part of his existence which did subjectification from his substance in his process of being for other⁵¹.

As a subject, the geologist or the Prophet was a reality that had been inherent in the Symbolics’ structure along the course of history, for thousands of years, so that death was unknown to his body as it was unknown to the others. However, besides this fatalistic reality, he also had a substantial reality that could move and change radically the shackling order of structure through radical action. The Subject’s radical thoughts had overthrown existing thoughts. The Subject’s radical action was his decision not to give up and be desperate no matter how much the Symbolic obstructed and even punished him. In the end, he accepted the death sentence bestowed upon him by the Symbolic to welcome The Real which he longed for, namely the liberation of mankind from oppressive scientism.

The geologist’s radical action as a radical subject was able to make a radical event that could turn the course of history and the civilization of mankind. The radical event was the fall of the meteors to Earth. A riot broke out, a fight between the authoritarian government on the scientism side and the followers of the radical Subject. Mankind massively revolted and destroyed laboratories as well as centers

50 ⁸ Karl R. Popper, *Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1965); Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 79–80.

51 ²⁹ Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, 21.

of industries. The chaos escalated, causing shortages in food supplies, disease, and eventually mass death.

In Žižek's perspective, the geologist is the subject who became a "vanishing mediator", namely a being that made the subject a "psychotic subject". He is a subject who can make himself distant from the Symbolic and choose freely. After all, his radical action appeared from the inability to choose freely in the Symbolic's order. If the Subject rejected the order, then he is automatically considered an enemy, wrong, and negative⁵².

The geologist's radical action which overthrew the old structure was his attempt to establish a new structure. A new direction in the course of the history of mankind was then taken. Humans got their humanity back. This was marked by spirituality and the beauty of morality. Religion re-emerged and the existence of God was re-emphasized by the followers of the Prophet. There was also interest in the opposite sexual mate, and marriage systems were re-established. There was love, and because of that humans knew art and conscience which complemented their humanity.

Although the Subject's personality had been eradicated because of the brain damage he received, his followers spread his teachings in secret. After a thousand years, the light of religion re-shone brightly once more. Religion was eventually supported by intellectuals. They explained the fundamentals of religious teachings in detail and introduced the existence of The Almighty God: the giver of spiritual peace and divine serenity.

The geologist's followers realized that it was the government that disabled them from realizing their dreams to gain peace of humanity. The radical action depicted cruelty but also unlimited love. Through radical action, the subject submitted himself to breaking the extreme boundary which implied the gain of absolute freedom by creating the momentum of delay in every interpretation of the ideology⁵³.

Literature is a radicalization of its author's action as a subject. Taufiq al-Hakim criticized positivistic scientism because the ancient view which emerged along with Western humanism was opposed to medieval thoughts. The Western medieval era

⁶⁸ Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 186.

⁵³ Robert, *Manusia Politik: Subjek Radikal Dan Politik Emansipasi Di Era Kapitalisme Global Menurut Slavoj Žižek [Political Human: The Radical Subject and Emancipatory Politics in the Global Capitalism Era According to Slavoj Žižek]*, 115; Latifi, "Kritik Nawal Al-Sa'dawi Terhadap Konstruksi Wacana Agama Tentang Relasi Gender Dalam Suqut al-Imam, Adab Am Qillah Adab, Dan Zinah (Pendekatan Subjektivitas) [Nawal al-Sa'dawi's Criticism of Religious Discourse Construction in Suqut al-Imam, Adab Am Qillah Adab, Dan Zinah: A Subjectivity Approach]", Dissertation, Faculty of Cultural Sciences."

was well-known for its theological glory. The emergence of the modern era opposed theology and proclaimed that reason was the only light needed for a human's way of life and that theology was of no more use. This was the beginning of secularism, or secular humanism, which placed human beings as the only being and entity, the beginning and end of all knowledge, conscience, and action. Humans became alpha and omega. This positivistic human secularism developed in the West and has had a wide influence on the Eastern world until this day.

Here the author's rationality is seen since he openly and objectively acknowledged the fact of scientific development with all its amazing advancements. But then, he strictly placed religion, God, and revelation as rational and empirical facts in form of spiritual experiences which occurred to a sacred person, or whoever wanted to find their essence by sensing the spiritual world.

The Subject's Fantasy

In his subjectification process, the Subject then created a fantasy. Fantasy is an obituary of meaning in his attempt to fulfill himself from the split and emptiness. The spiritual world, *mythos*, or religion that gave fullness to the Subject is a form of fantasy created by the radical subject, which in this case is the geologists or the Prophet. This is shown in the following passages:

O, my gentle friend... there is a secret locked above us... there is happiness waiting beyond the closed-door... there is a strange pleasure and mesmerizing peace in the forbidden chamber which no one had stepped in... a forbidden chamber for us to live in, which gave us a peace we never experienced before... I call it "death". The Prophet said it in a mumble as if he was dreaming... as if he was being guided by a hidden revelation shining all over his soul because of what he was dreaming...⁵⁴

These passages are dialogues between the geologist and his gentle friend (a woman). In the intuitive knowledge he gained, the radical Subject believed in the existence of a new world that would replace a human's old world in scientific advancement that gave birth to tyrannical scientism. The first knowledge he received as part of the new insights he had gained was "death". Since humans did not die for thousands of years, "death" was an epic event that was longed for as a form of happiness and peace-giving liberation.

54 Al-Ḥakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000)," 93–94. The original text says:

صديقي اللطيف... هناك سر مغلق علينا... هناك سعادة منتظرة خلف باب موحد... هناك لذة غريبة وراحة عجيبة في حجرة ممنوعة لم تطأها قدم... تلك الحجرة الممنوعة علينا... تلك الحجرة التي تجثم فيها راحة من نوع مجهول لدينا... أسميها أنا "الموت". لفظها العالم في شبه همس كأنه يحلم... وكأنه يستعين بإلهامه الخفي، ويستشير بإشراقه الداخلي ليلمح على ضوئه شبح ما يتخيل... إنه لعسير على الخالدين أن يتخيلوا "الموت". هذه الراحة... هذه اللذة... هذه السعادة... هذا الذي تسميه "الموت"... لا بد أن تصل إليه معاً، ما دمت تؤمن به، وأؤمن أنا بك...

Then, the Subject created a fantasy of a spiritual world filled with love, art, and conscience. His fantasy was related to a metaphysical idea in the form of transcendental consciousness. The consciousness was the idea that “God exists”, as a metaphysical backup for the development of theistic science, and badly needed by the contemporary-modern human being now and after. Scientists, philosophers, and religious people needed to cooperate in building a more transcendental-humanistic civilization. The following passages show it:

*And so emerged “love”. With its emergence, so did “art” and “consciousness”. Earth was once again ruled by The Almighty God... The heavenly religions descended back to Earth. The poets recited once again:
 “O the God who had created the world and existed since the beginning...
 You are the only One who is eternal and powerful...
 While we are just humans...
 with mortal bodies, peaceful hearts, and slow-walking reason...
 O the merciful Creator of the universe...
 It is only to you that eternity belonged...
 We only need bless in our lives...
 which descend at dawn...
 and ascend when the sun rises.”⁵⁵*

These passages describe the radical Subject’s fantasy to establish the need for meaning and to become an obituary of meaning. It is crucial to base the value systems on the Transcendental One (God) as the obituary of every value. All value systems created by humans on Earth should be based on the Master of the Value Systems itself, namely God. This is the key for human beings, including scientists and governments in developing and directing the advancement of science so that it is based on transcendental-humanistic values and global-ecological perspective.

The geologist created his fantasy in the form of a transcendental idea (on God) as the obituary of meaning and value system in humans’ life. For him, this transcendental idea of believing in God will not be effective if one merely “believes” in Him. *Mythos*, or religion, is basically a program of action. It can place us in correct spiritual or psychological behavior. The only way to measure the value and truth of a *mythos* or religion is by doing an actual action on it⁵⁶.

55 Al-Hakīm, 98–99. The original text says:

وظهر “الحب”. وبظهوره ظهر “الفن” و “الشعر”. وهكذا حكمت الطبيعة بالهها الأكبر الأرض مرة أخرى... وعادت الأديان السالوية... وعاد الشعراء ينشدون ويقولون: “//أيها الخالق الأزلي... لك أنت وحدك الخلود والجبروت...// أما نحن فلا نريد أن نكون سوى بشر...// لنا جسم موتر، وقلب متقد، وعقل متند...// أيتها الطبيعة الرحيمة... لك أنت وحدك عمر الأبد...// أما نحن فلا نريد غير عمر الندى...// تهبط من السماء عند الفجر...// وتصعد إلى السماء عند الضحى...// .

56 ¹³ Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan: Sanggahan Terhadap Fundamentalisme Dan Ateisme [The Future of God: The Reclaiming of Spirituality’s Mystical Roots]*, 13.

According to Bergson, God is a dynamic and creative power, an *elan vital* to life and movement. In the philosophy of religion, he rejects static theism and puts dynamic theism forward. Thiselton said:

⁶ Bergson's philosophy expounds the primacy of process and changes over against the place of static or solid objects in space. God, he urges, works in and through the process of evolution. God is a creative, dynamic force, a vital impetus (*elan vital*) for livingness and movement. ⁶ Bergson calls into question 'static' theism, but offers a way of understanding God in dynamic terms compatible with evolutionary theory. God and humanity act with a creative, purposive, freedom that transcends the model of the machine⁵⁷.

Stories of historical figures such as Buddha, Jesus, or Muhammad pbuh can fulfill this paradigm so that their followers may make them examples in the same way. When it is practiced, a myth can reveal to us a profound truth about humanity. It shows us how to live an enriched and intense life, how to deal with limitations in our life, and how to survive bodily suffering. Religion is not something that is related to our minds, but our actions instead. Religion is a practical discipline that enables us to find new abilities of mind, heart, and ethical deeds⁵⁸.

The criticism of scientism in the story has strong relevance to the problem of scientific and technological advancement in our era. Modern science developed by philosophers and Western scientists since the 17th century and its technological applications have been acknowledged by many people for being in a critical situation, especially its philosophical bases. Several ideas in the West continually speak about alternative models for science and technology⁵⁹.

The Subject's fantasy is strongly correlated with the philosophy of science which tends to bring science into a search for meaning. Thomas Kuhn showed that the development of science was never linear, homogenous, and accumulative as many people had imagined before. Science is developed through a series of revolutions by disassembling the old paradigm and replacing it with a new one. What had been justified as right in the old paradigm were then criticized and replaced by new paradigms with new standards of truth, and so on⁶⁰.

The criticism of the story is also in line with Fayerabend's idea. According to him, science is very close to myth so science cannot claim that it is the only

⁵⁷ ⁵² A. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publication, 2002), 37.

⁵⁸ ¹³ Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan: Sanggahan Terhadap Fundamentalisme Dan Ateisme [The Future of God: The Reclaiming of Spirituality's Mystical Roots]*, 14–15.

⁵⁹ Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-Esai Tentang Sejarah Dan Filsafat Sains Islam [Tauhid and Science, Essays on the Islamic History and Philosophy of Science]*, 214.

⁶⁰ ⁸ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Chicago.

owner of truth. The scientific method cannot monopolize truth since there is much meaningful knowledge in life that is in the form of science. The authority of science in the modern era is not because of its rational arguments, but it is more because of the propaganda through industry, technology, and scientific institutions. For Feyerabend, the word “objective in science” is not more authoritarian than “the truth of faith in religion”. Both have equal rights to interpreting the world in a free society⁶¹.

Moreover, Rorty’s view emphasized that science and scientific language is not a reflection of nature, but it is “a justified true belief” established through conversation⁶². Science is just one of the human activities to deal with its environment. Science is not a meta-language; it is just one of the language games in the practice of conversation in society. The other language games include religion, politics, culture, and others. The search for meaning in science is not a search for metahistorical truth, but merely a “language game exchange” which is just paradigmatic fractures⁶³.

Through the Subject’s fantasy in the poem recited by poets, the geologist gave his criticism on the domination of ratio on the other two dimensions. The poem also emphasized that the essence of the mind is to walk slowly, the essence of the heart is to gain peace, and for the body it is its nature to decrease. Humans only needed a blessed life (with capabilities to be useful for other humans and nature) since they must ascend back to the sky when the sun ascended, namely when their Creator called them back. This is the subject’s fantasy in this radical action to struggle against The Symbolic.

The geologist used fantasy as the only way for him to organize his pleasure on two levels. First separating “enjoyment” from fantasy. Second, “symptom and fantasy” as a whole⁶⁴. A symptom is a way the Subject chose to “avoid madness” and to “replace the nothing”⁶⁵. The function of fantasy is to fulfill the opening contained in “the other” since it contains the Lack to hide the Other’s inconsistency⁶⁶.

61 Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: NLB Verso Edition, 1975), 81.

62 Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979).

63 Muslih, *Falsafah Sains: Dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik [The Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 82.

64 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 78.

65 Žižek, 81, Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London, New York: Verso, 2000), 265.

66 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 138.

It is this fantasy that becomes the goal to be achieved in the Subject’s radical movement. It becomes the obituary of meaning and interpretations, it becomes the complement for the Lack contained in the Symbolic because the Subject also experiences trauma that shackles him. Fantasy is the emancipatory manifestation of the Subject’s movement, because of the ideology that has become the shackling the Big Other. So, fantasy is an attempt to liberate human beings. In the short story, fantasy is a form of spiritual pleasure and peace. It was gained from the awareness of The Transcendental, which is metaphysical and spiritual within the bond of moral beauty established by humans. When a human dies, he is a limited being. Death can deliver him to find the Unlimited Being, The Eternal One, The Creator, God.

Conclusion

Fī Sanah Milyūn is Al-Ḥakīm’s projection of the current human condition into the future. Humans who fully prioritize science and technology over spiritualistic theology are a direct result of the knowledge that is based purely on data and logic. We see this happening now, in fact, the trend in that direction is getting stronger. This is why this story becomes interesting.

The story reflects the author’s position and his criticism of positivistic science. In Žižekian language, Al-Ḥakīm created a radical subject (the geologist) who saw a Lack in the oppressive Symbolic (positivistic scientism) legitimated by the government. The hero then created a Fantasy (a humanistic and spiritualistic society) and struggled to approach it.

This does not mean that Al-Ḥakīm rejected science itself, but only its underlying positivistic paradigm. As a solution, he then proposed a new, more religious paradigm to uphold science and technology. For example, in the case of the mortality of the human body, no matter how far science has come, man can never surpass God. One can see this in the “skull discovery” and “fallen meteor” scene.

In *Fī Sanah Milyūn* Al-Ḥakīm indeed acknowledges the development of science and technology. However, he also places God, religion, and revelation above them as the guides of human civilization. Otherwise, science will result in the destruction of civilization, environmental damage, and moral degradation. As described in the short story; wars reshaped the Earth’s surface, humans were no different from inanimate objects, and they became arrogant because of their temporary immortality.

We know that this religious paradigm is less popular than the positivistic paradigm. Even so, we must not give up. This paradigm needs to be echoed to save the future of humanity from destruction on a global scale. The struggle of the hero in

holding on to his belief until the end, even though he must bear punishment from government and the surrounding community, is the author's way of showing this.

The need for a new paradigm to inspire science resonates not only in the East but also in the West. Several ideas have recently been voiced in persistent criticism of positivistic science. For example, as proposed by Fayerabend. Science must not have a monopoly on truth because the authority of science in modern times is determined solely based on propaganda, through industry, technology, and scientific institutions. Science and religion have the same rights in interpreting the world in a free society.

21 **Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

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