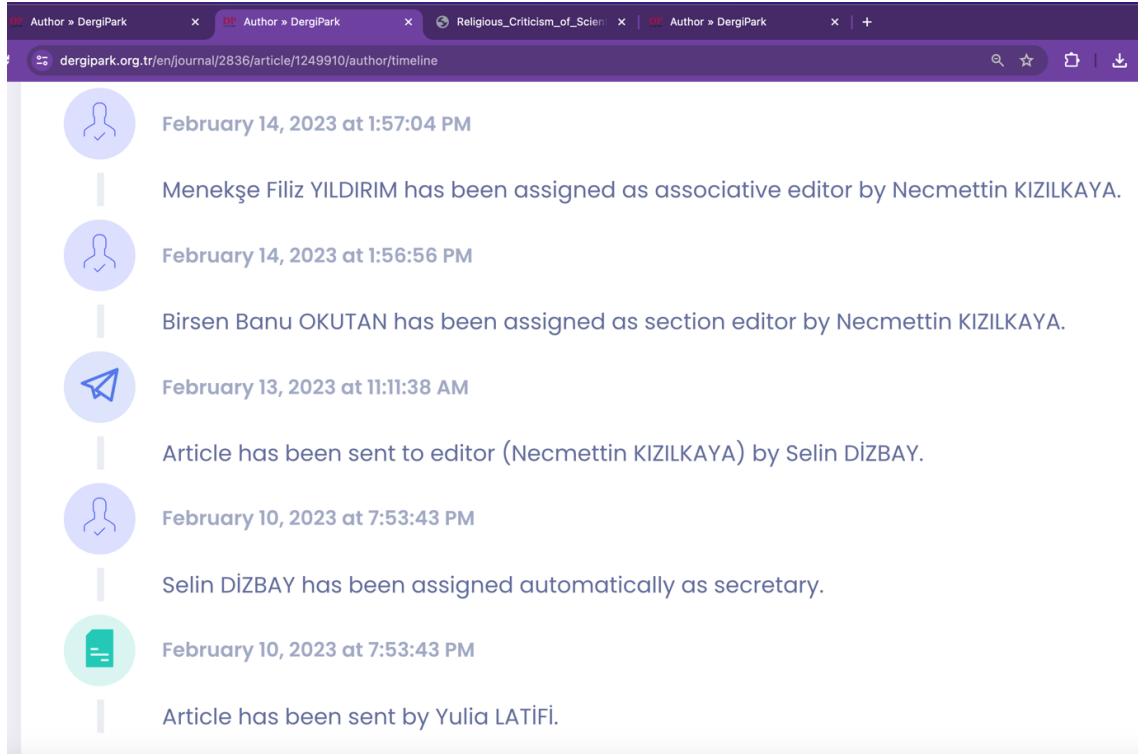


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**Religious Criticism of Scientism:  
The Subjectivity of Taufiq al-Ḥakīm in the Short Story “Fī Sanah Milyūn”**

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***Abstract***

This paper studied the Egyptian modern short story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm. The story told us about the advancement of science and technology which was at its peak in 1000 CE, where people are made immortal and in turn 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 then revealed that scientism had deprived humanity of human beings and generated a lack that 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 his fulfillment, the Subject kept moving to approximate The Real, namely a scientific order that has a transcendental-religious paradigm containing ordered values and honor the humanity of human beings.

Key words: arabic literature, Žižek’s subjectivity, science, transendental paradigm, humanity.

**Extended Summary**

The dynamics of science and religion discourse are getting stronger and more global. Since the impact caused by science and technology is so broad and complex, and the values it produces are difficult to predict, this changing era has become increasingly frightening for those who have a deep concern about the direction of human history and its final destination, especially the ever-threatened lives of religions.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm depicts the conflict between science and religion in Arabic literature. Born in Egypt, in 1898, he became a well-known author whose fictional works have been translated into various languages. One of them is the anthology *Arinī Allāh* (Show Me [What] Allah [Looks Like]), which contains a short story entitled “Fī Sanah Milyūn” (In the Year a Thousand AD). Originally published in 1953, the story represented al-Ḥakīm's thoughts on the relationship between religion and science in a different, unique, and interesting way.

The story was set in the fictional year 1000 AD when scientific progress had reached its pinnacle and had drastically altered the fundamentals of human life, as well as the cultural and natural order. Humans lived eternally and did not know death like God. They only had reason to think and no longer had a heart. There was no more compassion. So, they thought it was their nature and nothing beyond it. A geologist then emerged by showing a scientific finding of a human skull, which meant humans were mortal. He then tried to share this finding and developed a religious concept in which there was a God who created life and could make men die. By doing so, he was then considered a threat to the common belief in scientism and eventually executed by the government and most scientists. Nonetheless, even at the cost of his life, his teaching and belief survived and spread.

Thus, al-Ḥakīm's radical criticism and actions through this short story are consistent with the theory of subjectivity introduced by Žižek. Žižek has the view that a subject exists, but he is split and empty. To find self-fulfillment, the subject takes radical action by fighting and destroying the oppressive “the symbolic.” There are 3 Lacanian phases developed by Žižek in this theory of subjectivity: The Real, The Symbolic, and The Imaginary. The Real is the pre-symbolic phase where the subject always longs and becomes a basis for his fantasy. The Symbolic is the oppressive order and structure that the subject is against. The Imaginary is an illusion, the phase when The Symbolic starts to become tyrannical. We have used the hermeneutic method in the analysis of this research. The findings are as follows:

### **Scientism is *The Oppressing Symbolic***

The short story describes the peak of scientific and technological progress without an axiological basis so that the impact is dire for the survival of all living things. The severe nuclear and chemical war has occurred and changed the entire face of the earth. The positivistic understanding of scientism is its philosophical basis, so that human life is atheistic, nihilistic, and non-humanist. According to the short story, the human side of humanity was lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans ultimately did not know history, the past, or the future. Men became like the sea, planets, mountains. They resembled unchanging nature. They also lacked love, heart, and feelings. They did not recognize marriage systems anymore, since laboratories had taken over the role of marriage in producing offspring.

### **The Subject's Radical Action**

The condition soon changed with the emergence of a geologist (the radical subject) who then rejected scientism. In 1000 AD, the geologist found a human skull buried for thousands of years beneath the earth's surface. After long contemplation, he concluded that the skull was undeniable evidence that humans could die. This belief then led him to a new thought that when humans died one day, reason ensures that there was a higher Essence that would not die. The Essence is God. In Žižek's theory, a radical subject emerges from a series of oppressions caused by a certain ideology and forces that legitimize it. Since The Symbolic contains this tyrannical ideology, the subject then appears through a radical action to fight against this deficient Symbolic.

In *Fī Sanah Milyūn*, the geologist then preached his new religious-metaphysically-based knowledge. But the government and scientists refused and then sentenced him to death. After that, several meteors fell on the earth and hit the residents' houses, causing people to lose their lives. This eventually led to a commotion among the rest of the people. For the first time in history, actual people were losing their lives. This catastrophe was followed by a riot, since it proved the geologist's belief to be true. Humans can die and will die, no matter how great science is to fortify their bodies against death.

### **Subject's Fantasy**

Before the geologist was executed, he gave rise to fantasies about the spiritual world and spirituality in the form of love, art, and feelings. His fantasy was also related to a metaphysical idea of transcendental consciousness. In other words, 'God exists'. This simple statement was to be made a metaphysical basis for the development of theistic science which was very much needed by modern-contemporary humans now and in the future. Fantasy is The Real which he longs for as the goal of all his movements as a radical subject. The fantasy of the radical subject is to build completeness of meaning and become the estuary of values. It is very important to rely on the transcendental value system (God) as the estuary of all values. All value systems created by humans on earth should be based on the owner of the value system itself, namely God. This is the key for humans and including scientists and governments in developing and directing the pace of science so that it is based on humanist-transcendental values and also has a global-ecological perspective.

The short story voices religious criticism of scientism which shackles humanity tyrannically. The way to reject and criticize short stories against scientism voiced by religion

is by bringing up radical subjects that damage and disrupt The Symbolic in the form of oppressive scientism. The movement of the subject seeks to approach The Real, namely his fantasy about human mortality and God's immortality. This is the belief that exists in religion, and this is a humanist and realistic perspective that frees human beings from the oppression of science and the shackles of scientism. A literary work is a radicalization of the author's actions for his emancipatory goals. As an empty and dialectical subject, the author will continue to move to find his fulfillment, which is divided due to various traumas. Through the radical actions of the narrative characters, the author seeks to subvert the old, oppressive structure and replace it with a new structure that is more humane and liberates human beings.

### Introduction

The dynamics of scientific and religious discourse are getting stronger, even globalized. Not only theologians, but scientists also appeared to have the same concern that they keep seeking pattern relations between science and religion. The current advancement of science and technology has made radical and incredible changes which 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 values<sup>1</sup>.

The impact of the change is worldwide and complex. The values it will result from are difficult to predict. Thus, it scares those who are in deep concern 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 lives<sup>2</sup>. 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*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sudiarja, *Agama di Zaman Yang Berubah*, Yogyakarta: kanisius, 2006, v-vi.

<sup>2</sup> A. Sudiarja, *Agamah di Zaman Yang Berubah*, 39.

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

Science, with all of its advancement, then appeared to be about to replace religion. Science had made itself the only valid and correct interpreter of the world, and this is what scientism is<sup>4</sup>. 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 the episteme building which is the fundamental to the growth of science itself<sup>5</sup>.

With objectivity and universality claims, scientific findings experience an escalation that Lyotard called grand-narrative<sup>6</sup>. In Foucault's view, the grand narrative is the power that exterminates small narratives and marginalizes anything viewed as unobjective and irrational from a positivistic point of view<sup>7</sup>.

As we can see, one of scientism's radical rejections of religion 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 came after. They then 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)<sup>8</sup>.

However, though had failed, their critical thoughts were important in maturing religion itself. Those atheistic understandings had given challenges to religions so that they may prevail, improve themselves, and have critical reflections on facts in theism which indeed need criticism. Because of those atheistic views, religions had been helped to keep learning critically, being able to pure themselves, and fighting for seizing their core messages back<sup>9</sup>.

Within the struggle between science and religion, in the context of modern Christianity, Ian G. Barbour is announced as one of the founders of the discourse of science and religion in the West. This physicist-theologian mapped four relations between religion and science. They are conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. According to Barbour, integration is the

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<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains, dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik*, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020, 76.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things; An Archeology of Human Sciences*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994, xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition, A Report and Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 37; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains, dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik*, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, in Alan Sheridan (transltr), New York: Peregrine, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006, 64-98.

<sup>9</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan*, 100-101.

only relevant model now<sup>10</sup>. In line with this, Haught also offered four kinds of relations between science and religion. They are conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation. He concluded that confirmation is the only model relevant to our era<sup>11</sup>.

In Islamic context, the discourse of science and religion became popular from 1970 to 1990's. Among the founders, there are 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*<sup>12</sup>.

Amid the struggle between the discourse of science and religion, in the contemporary Islamic world, Taufiq al-Hakim then emerged. He was born in Alexandria<sup>13</sup>, Egypt, in 1898. He studied law at Sorbonne University, Paris. He also spent 4 years in the city to study literature, art, culture, and classical as well as modern intellectuality. In 1928 he returned to Egypt and worked as a member of the Board. Then he moved to The Department of Education and Social Department. Many of his fiction had been translated into various languages in the world.

Al-Hakim was different from the other writers, scientists, or theologians in presenting his thoughts on the relationship between science and religion. In his short story "Fī Sanah Milyūn" (In 1000 CE) he imagined that the advancement of science had reached its peak.

It is told that in 1000 CE all wars had come to an end and all diseases had been cured. Marriage as means to produce offspring had been replaced by laboratories and human beings lived in a universal and friendly bonding. Animals or plants were no more. Human's meals were made from gasses mined from the Earth. The advancement of science had made human beings immortal so that they have the ability of The Immortal One. But they lost their fundamental aspects of humanity accordingly. Then the hero emerged. He was a geologist who, according to his scientific research findings, concluded that men should die and God exists; an old paradigm that had been lost in the history of mankind and unknown for hundreds of

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<sup>10</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> John F. Haught, *Science & Religion from Conflict to Conversation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995

<sup>12</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Syauqī Ḍaiyf, *Al-Adab al 'Arabīy al Mu'asir fī Mīsrā*, Mīsrā: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1957/1961, 288-298.



thousands of years. This radical subject was then sentenced to death by the government and scientism fanatics. However, the idea then spread widely.

The idea of the problematic relationship between religion and science sounded in “Fī Sanah Milyūn” is interesting to study, since it described the prediction of science advancement nowadays. The short story is contained in the anthology *Arinī Allāh (Show Me What Allah Looks Like)* by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm firstly published in Egypt in 1953. Through his creative world of imagination, the author offered a different way of reading in picturing the pattern of relation between science and religion in the future, when mankind had reached the peak in unimaginable scientific advancement.

The strength of the author’s imagination in picturing such advancement of science is his freedom and autonomy as an author who has done radicalization of action. In the story, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm illustrated the peak of scientific glory on an amazing and radical level. But, at the same time, the author was also criticizing it radically because it did not have 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 one of the media that can deliver knowledge uniquely and differently because of its wide area and 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.

Daiches<sup>14</sup> saw literature as a form of work that can deliver the type of knowledge which can’t be delivered in other way. Meanwhile, Teeuw<sup>15</sup> stated that the process of interpreting a literary work exists in a multiple-layer dynamics, since there is a tension between language norms and the poet’s freedom, the literature system and individual work, literature norms and

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<sup>14</sup> See Melani Budianta *et al.*, *Membaca Sastra (Pengantar Memahami Sastra untuk Perguruan Tinggi)*, Magelang: Indonesiatara, 2002, 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi *et al.*, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I*, Yogyakarta: Pokja Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> A. Teeuw, *Khazanah Sastra Indonesia*, Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1993, 19-25; Yulia Nasrul Latifi *et al.*, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I*, Yogyakarta: Pokja Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 4-5

cultural norms (affirmation, restoration, negation), the author's intention and the interpretation, literature work and reader's capability, and so on.

In the study of Arabic literature, Egypt is well known as one of the pioneer countries in introducing the ideas of development, modernization, and issues of human liberation. Audah<sup>16</sup> showed the advance of Egyptian modern literature development along with its influencing emancipatory ideas. Ahmed<sup>17</sup> pointed the importance of Egypt as the main container of the transformational processes and struggle between ideologies in the updates of the Islamic world since the 19th century. This is because Egypt is the first country to experience modernization in culture and intellectuality as the impact of European expansion. Taufiq al-Hakim emerged amid these struggles and transformations.

Taufiq al-Hakim's radical criticism and action as the author in his rejection of scientism as his attempt to establish complementary and dialogical relations between science and religion above 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 then acted radically to fight against and destroy the symbolic, which in this case is the tyrannical scientism.

In the context of subject and subjectivity, Mansfield<sup>18</sup> explained that the subject is an important term used to describe the interior life of human beings and selfhood which is related to politics, language, gender, culture, and so on. Subjectivity<sup>19</sup> is an abstract concept that helps explain why selfhood is involved with the other-self, either as an object of need, desire, and interest or as a need to various common experiences.

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

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<sup>16</sup> Ali Audah, "Sastra Arab Mutakhir (Contemporary Arabic Literature)", *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an* No.2 VII/1996.

<sup>17</sup> Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, (Yale University Press New Haven & London, 1992, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity Theories of The Self from Freud to Haraway*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000, 185

<sup>19</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 3.

psychoanalysis, then gave it its axiological fundamentals from Marxist tradition<sup>20</sup>. For Žižek<sup>21</sup>, the subject never dies and he will always exist in his own unique and radical way.

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 longing 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 existence<sup>22</sup>.

For Žižek, the subject is split since he experienced trauma caused by the tyrannical and oppressive Symbolic<sup>23</sup>. The language and symbolic order that has been in 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 narration<sup>24</sup>. In the 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 emptiness, since all his life he always passes a never-ending dialogical process. The subject is diluted into various determinations of particular predicate<sup>25</sup>. It is in this split and emptiness the subject will always move to seek his fulfillment and fullness by doing a radical action as a form of struggle against the Symbolic that had confined him. For Žižek, the subject can become the Vanishing Mediator, namely 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 conveys the subject as mad, madness, there for as for Žižek a prerequisite for sanity, that is for the normalcy of a civilized subject*"<sup>26</sup>.

The subject's radical act is his authentic freedom toward the truth and self-liberation. Using Lacan's thesis on suicide, Žižek gave an example of his interpretation of Italian films

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<sup>20</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, London: Routledge, 2003, 11; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik untuk Indonesia dari Pemikiran Plato, Edmund Husserl, Charles Taylor, sampai dengan Slavoj Žižek*, Tkp: Pustaka Mas, 2011, 98.

<sup>22</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 182.

<sup>23</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 204.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 44-45; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik*, 115.

<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with The Negative: Kant, Hegel, and The Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 37; Ramayda Akmal, "Subjektivitas Pramoedya Ananta Toer dalam Novel Perburuan: Pendekatan Psikoanalisis Historis Slavoj Žižek", Thesis, The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 2012, 27.

that showed the dialectics of symbolical identification which brings the subject's position to its authenticity and genuine in his radical actions<sup>27</sup>.

As emphasized by Russell Grigg, the Žižekian radical action has three characteristics. First, the action must radically change the actor. Second, the subject must eliminate himself symbolically so that he may reborn. Third, the authentic action is always violating the established law so that it is considered destructive and negative from the Symbolic's point of view<sup>28</sup>.

As a Marxist, Žižek stated that the subject's radical action is an emancipatory action to liberate human beings from the shackling of oppressing systems. The symbolic always has an oppressive ideology in its order. Unfortunately, the majority do not realize it. Even it is experienced as common and natural to them because of its subtlety. For Marx<sup>29</sup>, as cited by Žižek, an ideology is a fake consciousness because what appears in the 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 the 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 structure<sup>30</sup>.

Lacan called it "transversing the fantasy"; the subject suspends the fantasy frame of unwritten laws which makes him free to choose<sup>31</sup>. The fantasy is important so that it became a narration of primordial loss since the subject rejected the laws in the symbolic. The fantasy then provides a rationalization for the inherent "deadlock" of the drive<sup>32</sup>. In the context of this research, the fantasy is a transcendental-religious-philosophical view.

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<sup>27</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik Subjek Radikal dan Politik Emansipasi di Era Kapitalisme: Global Menurut Slavoj Žižek*, Tangerang: Marjin Kiri, 2010, 110-113; Yulia Nasrul 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), Dissertation, The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 118-120; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London. New York: Verso, 2008, 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, "Women's Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawal al-Sa'dawi's Fantasy in Zinah), *Jurnal Poetika*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague*, 39; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Women's Liberty, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague*, p. 43; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Women's Liberty, 2021.

## Scientism as the Oppressive Symbolic

The setting of the story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” is 1000 CE. It is about human beings’ new world shaped by science. In that period, the advancement of science had reached its peak after hundreds of thousands of years of accumulation. Nuclear and chemical wars happened a lot, they destroyed museums and libraries, animals, and plants. Eventually, human lives were changed drastically. The shape and physical structure of human beings are also changed. Humans no longer had digestive systems, mouths, and teeth. Their legs and arms became small and weak, as they never used them anymore. Yet, through the advancement of medical science, all diseases had been cured and men were made immortal.

Furthermore, in 1000 CE humans did not have a value system anymore. The positivistic paradigm which was the result of scientism had rejected the transcendental-religious-philosophical paradigm. It implied that human lives became horrible since their humanity was deprived of them. Humans did not know God, and did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore. This is implied by the following passages in the story<sup>33</sup>:

*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 world<sup>34</sup>.*

*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 God, unborn and did not give birth... did not know death and knew only immortality and did not know yesterday or tomorrow<sup>35</sup>.*

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<sup>33</sup> All of the short stories’ translation here is mine.

<sup>34</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn” Fī Qaṣaṣ Falsafiyah Arinī Allāh, Miṣr: Dār Miṣr al-Tabā’ah, 1953, 82. The original text says:

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

<sup>35</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn”, 89. The original 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 وطاقروسمك... 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 وبحر وكوكب... إنه مثلها خالد... بل إنه الآن شبه إله... لا يلد ولا يولد... مجهل الموت ويعرف الأبد ولا يدرك الأمس ولا الغد...

The passages above describe the peaks of scientific and technological advancements without axiological backup so that its impact is horrible to any form of life. The colossal nuclear and chemical wars had happened and reshaped the Earth's face radically and almost unimaginable. The radicality of Earth's change shows how strong the positivistic scientism influenced human philosophy of life and they made it the only 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 in the "peak of scientific advancement" is the author's reading on the future of human beings that 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 that they will never compete God.

Apart from his sharp criticism of the theological problems, the story also criticizes the horrible ecological problem, because animals and plants were massively eradicated by science through the colossal nuclear and chemical wars. In our daily life now, the ecological and environmental problems are serious and massive. The damage in our ecosystems becomes more and more severe, and it threatens all forms of life on Earth. Therefore<sup>36</sup>, religions concern more on this problem. The Muslims, the Catholics, the Protestants, the Jews, the Buddhists, the Hinduists, and the Confucianists attempt to give solutions to this ecological crisis based on their respective religious ethics.

There is a historical reason for the existence of a scientific view which gives 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 sharpen the boundary between the meaningful as the region of the observable science and the meaningless as the region of nonsense since it contains propositions that cannot

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<sup>36</sup> In Harold Coward and Daniel C. Maguire (ed.), *Visions of A New Earth Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*, USA: State University of New York Press, 2000.

be proven empirically through verification principles. The meaningless includes religion, metaphysics, morals, and aesthetics.

It is that paradigm of positivistic knowledge which is called scientism. Kuhn called it “incommensurable”, which is the paradigm that keep competing in science and tends to negate their competitors<sup>37</sup>. They interpret the science positively as a task that produces useful technical knowledge. But they do not generate wider philosophical and theological conclusions<sup>38</sup>.

In Žižek’s theory of subjectivity, the scientism view which appears from the positivism paradigm that does not value-based or philosophical-axiological-based as implied in the story is the oppressive Symbolic. It does not matter how strong the penetration that has been 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 Žižek<sup>39</sup>: “*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*”.

An intervention from an authoritarian government which does not want to accept change and a humanistic view of life has become the greatest barrier for a society in their course to find their humanity, namely their source of happiness and peace of soul. It is depicted in the story, that the humane aspects of men had lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans eventually did not know history, the past, and the future. They became like the sea, planets, and mountain, like the unchanging nature. Humans did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore since marriage systems no longer existed. The laboratory had replaced their role in producing offspring. 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...*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1970. 150; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Ian G Barbour, *Isu dalam Sains dan Agama*, in Damayanti and Ridwan (tansl), Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 170.

<sup>39</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi & Wening Udasmoro, *The Big Other Gender, Patriarki, dan Wacana Agama, Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam*, Vol. 19 No. 1, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fi Sanah Milyūn”, 97. The original text says:

*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...<sup>41</sup>*

*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”...<sup>42</sup>*

The colossal nuclear and chemical wars impact which then reshaped the dimension of nature and humanity was the fact that in essence human civilization had been destroyed. Through the advancement of science and technology, the face of Eartha had been changed radically. It also had changed and annihilated the function and essence of human beings as the highest creation that had various specialties. Men did not have a dimension of spirituality and a noble sense of art and morality anymore. Men were then not different from the sea, mountain, and the sun.

Seen through Žižek’s perspective, such shackling view is the Symbolic that becomes more tyrannic because of The Big Other in the form of political penetration and authoritarian power<sup>43</sup>. The Big Other appeared clearly since the story stated that the authoritarianism of the government had become a barrier to the achievement of people’s “dreams of divinity”.

In the reality, there will always shortage in the Symbolic so that it contains the Lack in the Big Other. This is precisely what causes The Symbolic an open structure that can be criticized continually by the subject<sup>44</sup>. From the Lack contained in the Symbolic, a space for the subject to act radically emerged.

### **Radical Action of the Subject**

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إلى 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...

<sup>41</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fi Sanah Milyun”, 80-81. The original text says:

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

<sup>42</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fi Sanah Milyun”, 91-92. The original text says:

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

<sup>43</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 2008

<sup>44</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi & Wening Udasmoro, *The Big Other Gender*, 2020.



The story was continued by describing that the history course of the non-value based and non-axiological based scientism was 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, the scientific discovery then 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 the 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)<sup>45</sup>. All of the scientists did not agree with that theory*

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<sup>45</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 81-85. The original text says:  
في صيف ذلك العام - المليون بعد الميلاد - دخل عالم من علماء طبقات الأرض على عالم من علماء الكيمياء وقال له: يخيل إليّ أنّي سأثر نحو اكتشاف خطير، حيث يدهش الناس جميعاً... لقد عثرت على عمق بعيد في جوف الأرض على هذا الأثر... انظر... وأخرج بحرص من حقيبته الصغيرة جمجمة آدمية... (81)

*(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 failure<sup>46</sup>.*

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 in 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 then showed that such advancement was inconsistent with his scientific discovery.

In reality, 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.

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 the ideology is in the fact that many people do not know what they are doing. They have a fake representation of their social

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ووقف الرجال مشاوهين أمام الجمجمة، فهذا شئ جديد لا يوجد له نظير في متاحفهم... وقال عالم الجيولوجيا: لا 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)  
ربما كان علم طبقات الأرض أمارسه يدفعني إلى البحث في الماضي، وهذا البحث في الماضي يحملني على التنقيب في المستقبل ما مستقبلنا؟<sup>83</sup>  
وهمش كالمخاطب نفسه: مادام هناك وجود فلا بد أن يكون هناك عدم وجود... (84)  
لقد تعبت من نفسي الآن... إنه إلهام، إنى مؤمن أنه يوجد شيء فلنسمه "الموت"... لا بد أن نصل إليه يوما... اصدقوني القول أيها العلماء... ألم يشعر أحدكم مرة بإغفاءة طائرة عابرة كخفقة الجفن، أحس خلالها لذة وراحة من نوع غريب؟ (٨٥)

<sup>46</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 87. The original text says:  
وافقت هيئة العلماء على هذه النظرية بالإجماع، وحذروا عالم الجيولوجيا من الاسترسال في أمثال هذه الترهات، خوفا على بسطاء العقول في المجتمع ممن يستهويهم جوارح الخرافات... وانصرف العلماء عن زميلهم الجيولوجي وتركوه غارقا في خزيه وخيبته (٨٧)

reality<sup>47</sup>. 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 had 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 pragmatical way of thinking that enables one to effectively function in the world. It accurately matches the external reality. *Logos* sees forward, keeps looking for new ways to control the environment, improving the old insights, and creating 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, human needs "*mythos*" or "myth"<sup>48</sup>.

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 his society from this tyrannical Symbolic.

Although the radical subject was then antagonized and negatively judged, the story then told that the geologist's new thoughts were getting widely spread in secret. In the beginning, he was rejected by his fellow scientists, he then met a gentle friend who was called "a woman" in the past. She was then the first human who believed in the geologist. They then experienced a strange feeling that was unknown in that era, namely a feeling of trust in and love towards

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<sup>47</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Karen Amstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan; Sanggahan terhadap Fundamentalisme dan Ateisme*, in Yuliani Liputo (translstr), Bandung: Mizan, 2011, 12.

each other<sup>49</sup>. After that, as a prophet, the geologist then got a challenge of performing a miracle that justify 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 battle<sup>50</sup>.*

The passages above 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 science and technology human had developed, their mind has definite limitations.

The fall of the meteors is a miracle that proved that humans must eventually and can die, no matter how far science can shield human body so that they may live forever. The form of prophets' miracles always matched the contexts and challenges of their era. The advancement of dark arts during Pharaoh's era caused the miracle of Moses to occur in the form of a magical staff which could turn into a huge snake. The miracle of Jesus took the form of curing blindness because of the advancement of medical science at that time. 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. As described in the story, The Prophet's (the geologist's) miracle was the fall of some meteors down to Earth to prove the mortality of human beings as against the advancement of science and technology which enabled men to be immortal.

Although the miracle had been performed and justified the geologist's thoughts, the government's scientists did want to believe it. After the meteor incident, a riot broke out and after dozens of thousands of years of peace, chaos happened in human history. The government

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<sup>49</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 87-93.

<sup>50</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 96. The original text says:

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

and scientists then arrested and sentenced him to death for his rebellion and misleading men. The geologist's brain was then muted by electrocuting so it became paralyzed forever. 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 there<sup>51</sup>.*

The geologist's action was considered radical and negative from the Symbolic's (namely the government's) point of view. But for him, it is the government who oppressed 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 which always had space to be criticized by the radical subject.

The appearance of the subject is logical. This is in line with Russell Grigg's statement that Žižekian 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 Symbolic's point of view<sup>52</sup>. 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 stated clearly the limitations of senses. Therefore, it is mentioned in many verses that a scientist from a Qur'anic point of view is those who use his heart to think besides their ratio for formal logical thoughts. They are called "ulul albab." It is

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<sup>51</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 96. The original text says:

اما النبي فاعتقلوه وقدموه إلى المحاكمة فشهد عليه زملاؤه العلماء بأنه مخبول وأن خياله خطير... فحكم عليه بما يحكم على المجرمين والمفسدين وهي عقوبة تعادل إبطاء الرأس في الأزمان القديمة، فقادوه إلى معمل كهربائي... وسلطوا على خلايا تفكيره أشعة خاصة، فأحطوا محلها تفكيراً آخر هادناً دماً بسيطاً... لاشخصية فيه ولا عنف ولا إرادة... وهكذا اختفت شخصية النبي وإن لم يختف جسمه... ولكن رسالته ظلت باقية (٩٦)

<sup>52</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 118-120; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, *Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi*, 2020.

this combination of ratio, heart, and senses that characterizes the ideal epistemology according to al-Qur'an. The science developed in this way would 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 helps 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 on those realities. The physical world, like the other worlds, gained its existence from God. They will always be related to Him<sup>53</sup>. An enlightened religion uses the same method as one used in scientific research. Science also involves assumptions and moral commitment as they are in religion<sup>54</sup>.

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 creation<sup>55</sup>.

Meanwhile, Barbour made difference between "natural theology" and "theology of nature" as two ways of bridging science and religion. The first is 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) could depart from a certain religious tradition and see many of their beliefs were in line with science, although some of their beliefs must be reformulated in the light of scientific theories<sup>56</sup>.

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, cannot be accepted. Popper created

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<sup>53</sup> Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-esai tentang Sejarah dan Filsafat Sains Islam*, in Yuliani Liputo (translstr), Bandung; Pustaka Hidayah, 1994, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Ian G Barbour, *Isu dalam Sains dan Agama*, in Damayanti and Ridwan (translstr), Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 174.

<sup>55</sup> John F. Haugt, *Science & Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 91.

<sup>56</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Menemukan Tuhan dalam Sains Kontemporer dan Agama*, Bandung: Mizan, 2005, 33; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 92.

a new demarcation with “the falsification principle”. He concluded that religion is still valid since although many of its propositions cannot be proven scientifically (for example, the existence of The Almighty God) they are meaningful propositions. 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 it<sup>57</sup>.

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 other<sup>58</sup>.

As a subject, the geologist or the Prophet was a reality that had been inherent in the Symbolic’s 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 the 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 the oppressive scientism.

The geologist’s radical action as a radical subject was able to make a radical event that can turn the course of the history and civilization of mankind. The radical event was the fall of the meteors onto the Earth. The riot then broke up, a fight between the authoritarian government on the scientism side and the followers of the radical subject. They massively revolted and destroyed laboratories as well as centers of industries. The chaos escalated, causing shortages in food and nutrition supplies, diseases, and eventually mass death.

In Žižek’s perspective, the geologist is the subject who can become a “vanishing mediator”, namely a being that can make the subject a “psychotic subject”. He is a subject who

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<sup>57</sup> Karl R. Popper, *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1965; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 79-80.

<sup>58</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with The Negative: Kant, Hegel, and The Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 21.

can make himself distant from the Symbolic and can choose freely. After all, his radical action appeared from disability to choose freely in the Symbolic's order. If the subject rejected the order then he is automatically considered an enemy, wrong, and negative<sup>59</sup>.

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 regained their humanity back. This was marked by spirituality and the beauty of morality. Religions 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 then 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 the 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 then 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 an unlimited love. By the 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 ideology<sup>60</sup>.

Literature is a radicalization of its author's action as a subject. Taufiq al-Hakim criticized positivistic scientism radically because these hundreds of years view which emerged along with Western humanism had opposed the medieval thoughts. The Western medieval era was well-known for its theological glory. The emergence of the modern era had opposed theology and proclaimed that reason is the only light on human's way of life and that theology is 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 was then developed in the West and had wide influence to the Eastern world until this day.

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<sup>59</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 186.

<sup>60</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 115; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi, 2020.



Here the author's rationality can be seen since he openly and objectively acknowledged the fact of scientific development with all of 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 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...<sup>61</sup>*

The passages above 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 human's old world in scientific advancement that gave birth to tyrannical scientism. The first knowledge he got as a part of new insights he had gained was "death". Since humans did not die for thousands of years, "death" was an epic event that had been longed for as a form of happiness and peace-giving liberation.

Then, the subject created a fantasy of a spiritual world filled with love, art, and conscience. His fantasy was also 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 badly needed by the contemporary-modern human being

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<sup>61</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 93-94. The original text says:  
يا صديقي اللطيف... هناك سر مغلق علينا... هناك سعادة منتظرة خلف باب موصد... هناك لذة غريبة وراحة عجيبة في حجرة ممنوعة لم تطأها قدم... تلك الحجرة ممنوعة علينا... تلك الحجرة التي تجثم فيها راحة من نوع مجهول لدينا... أسميها أنا "الموت". لفظها العالم في شبه همس كأنه يحلم... وكأنه يستعين بالهامه الخفي، ويستنير 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، وأومن أنا بك...

now and after. Scientists, philosophers, and religious people need 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.”<sup>62</sup>*

The passages above 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 the 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 also of global-ecological perspective.

The geologists created his fantasy in 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 effective if one merely “believes” in Him. *Mythos*, or religion, basically is 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 it<sup>63</sup>.

According to Bergson, God is a dynamical and creative power, an *elan vital* to life and movement. In the philosophy of religion, he rejects static theism and puts dynamic theism forward. It is said by Thiselton: *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. Bergson calls into question ‘static’ theism, but offers a way of*

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<sup>62</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fi Sanah Milyūn”, 98-99. The original text says:  
وظهر “الحب”. وبظهوره ظهر “الفن” و “الشعر”. وهكذا حكمت الطبيعة بالهها الأكبر الأرض مرة أخرى... وعادت الأديان السماوية... وعاد الشعراء ينشدون ويقولون: “أيتها الخالق الأزلي... لك أنت وحدك الخلود والجبروت... أما نحن فلانريد 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...”

<sup>63</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan; Sanggahan terhadap Fundamentalisme dan Ateisme*, in Yuliani Liputo (translstr), Bandung: Mizan, 2011, 13

*understanding God in dynamic terms compatible with evolutionary theory. God and humanity act with a creative, purposive, freedom that transcends the model of the machine*<sup>64</sup>.

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 mainly related to our minds, but our actions instead. Religion is a practical discipline that enables us to find the new abilities of mind, heart, and ethical deeds<sup>65</sup>.

The criticism of scientism in the story has strong relevance to the problem of scientific and technological advancement in our era. The modern science developed by the 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 of ideas in the West continually speak about alternative models for science and technology<sup>66</sup>.

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 the new one. What had been justified as right in the old paradigm had problems to be criticized and replaced by the new paradigms with new standards of truth, and so on<sup>67</sup>.

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 owner of truth. The scientific method cannot monopolize the truth since there is much meaningful knowledge in life that is on in form of science. The authority of science in the modern era is not because of its rational arguments, but it is more of propaganda through industry, technology, and scientific institutions. For Fayerabend, the word "objective in science" is not more authoritarian than

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<sup>64</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*, England: Oneworld Oxford, 2002 37.

<sup>65</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan*, 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-esai tentang Sejarah dan Filsafat Sains Islam*, in Yuliani Liputo (transl), Bandung; Pustaka Hidayah, 1994, 214.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: Peran Paradigma dalam Revolusi Sains*, in Tjun Surjaman (transl), Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012.

“the truth of faith in religion”. Both have equal rights to interpreting the world in the free society<sup>68</sup>.

Moreover, Rorty’s view emphasized that science and scientific language is not a reflection of the nature, it is “a justified true belief” established through conversation<sup>69</sup>. Science is just one of the human activities to deal with their 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 fractures<sup>70</sup>.

Through the subject’s fantasy in the poem recited by the 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 be decreasing. 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 had 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 whole<sup>71</sup>. A symptom is a way the subject chose to “avoid madness” and to “replace the nothing”<sup>72</sup>. The function of fantasy is to fulfill the opening contained in “the other” since it contains the Lack to hide the Other’s inconsistency<sup>73</sup>.

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.

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<sup>68</sup> Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, London, NLB Verso Edition, 1975; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 81.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979

<sup>70</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 82.

<sup>71</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 2008, 78.

<sup>72</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 81; Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London. New York: Verso, 2000, 265.

<sup>73</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 138.

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

The short story sounded a religious criticism of scientism which shackled human beings in a tyrannic way. The author's way of doing so is by creating a radical subject that destroys and disrupts scientism, which in Žižek's theory of subjectivity is called the Symbolic. The subject attempted to approach the Real which is his fantasy of human mortality and the immortality and the eternity of God. This is the belief in the religion, and this is the humanistic and realistic point of view that liberates human beings from oppression to them imposed by tyrannical scientism. A literary work is its author's radical action for his emancipatory objectives. As an empty and dialectic subject, he will always move to seek his fulfillment from the split caused by various trauma. Through the radical action of his hero, the author attempted to overthrow the old structure and replace it with a new, more humanistic, and liberating one.

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Bukti Konfirmasi Revisi dari Editor  
02 Maret 2023

...org.tr/en/journal/2836/article/1249910/author/email

DergiPark  
AKADEMİK

English Yulia Latifi

**From:** Necmettin KIZILKAYA  
**To:** Yulia LATIFI  
**Subject:** darulfunun ilahiyat - The decision has been made for the article  
**Date:** March 2, 2023 at 8:21:08 AM

Dear Author,

The decision has been marked by Necmettin KIZILKAYA for the article titled 1249910 - "Religious Criticism of Scientism: The Subjectivity of Taufiq al-Itakim in the Short Story "Fit Sanah Milyun".

Dear Yulia LATIFI,

**Decision:** Major Revision

**Reviewer Reviews**

**Reviewer-1**

1. Değerlendirme Tarihi:  
- 01-03-2023

2. Editöre İletmek İstedığınız Notlar:  
- Makaleyi tekrar görmeme gerek yoktur. Düzeltilerin takibini size bırakıyorum. İyi çalışmalar dilerim.

Comments and Suggestions for Author: Öncelikle tebrik ederim. Belirtilen düzeltileri yapmanızı tavsiye ederim.

**Recommendation:** Major Revision

**Reviewer-2**

1. Değerlendirme Tarihi:  
- 28-02-2023

2. Editöre İletmek İsteddiğiniz Notlar:  
-

Comments and Suggestions for Author: Çalışmanızın akademik alana katkı sunacağı kanaatindeyim, sonraki çalışmalarınızda başarılar diliyorum

**Recommendation:** Accepted

The article is in the status "Revision Requested". You can access the process page from the <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/journal/2836/article/1249910/author/decision> link.

darulfunun ilahiyat

Sarıyla işaretlenenler açıklayıcı olumlu kısımlar... Kırmızı ile işaretlenenler hatalar... Değerlendirme ve değişiklik talebi açıklama eklenerek belirtilmiştir. Makalenin hacmiyle ilgili azaltmaya giderken sarı işaretlenen kısımlar fikir verebilir, korunabilir...

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

### *Abstract*

This paper studied the Egyptian modern short story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm. The story told us about the advancement of science and technology which was at its peak in 1000 CE, where people are made immortal and in turn 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 then revealed that scientism had deprived humanity of human beings and generated a lack that 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 his fulfillment, the Subject kept moving to approximate The Real, namely a scientific order that has a transcendental-religious paradigm containing ordered values and honor the humanity of human beings.

Key words: arabic literature, Žižek’s subjectivity, science, transendental paradigm, humanity.

### **Introduction**

The dynamics of scientific and religious discourse are getting stronger, even globalized. Not only theologians, but scientists also appeared to have the same concern that they keep seeking pattern relations between science and religion. The current advancement of science and technology has made radical and incredible changes which 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 values<sup>1</sup>.

The impact of the change is worldwide and complex. The values it will result from are difficult to predict. Thus, it scares those who are in deep concern 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 lives<sup>2</sup>. 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*<sup>3</sup>.

Science, with all of its advancement, then appeared to be about to replace religion. Science had made itself the only valid and correct interpreter of the world, and this is what scientism is<sup>4</sup>. 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 the episteme building which is the fundamental to the growth of science itself<sup>5</sup>.

With objectivity and universality claims, scientific findings experience an escalation that Lyotard called grand-narrative<sup>6</sup>. In Foucault's view, the grand narrative is the power that exterminates small narratives and marginalizes anything viewed as unobjective and irrational from a positivistic point of view<sup>7</sup>.

As we can see, one of scientism's radical rejections of religion 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 came after. They then 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),

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sudiarja, *Agama di Zaman Yang Berubah*, Yogyakarta: kanisius, 2006, v-vi.

<sup>2</sup> A. Sudiarja, *Agamah di Zaman Yang Berubah*, 39.

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

<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains, dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik*, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020, 76.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things; An Archeology of Human Sciences*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994, xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition, A Report and Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 37; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains, dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik*, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, in Alan Sheridan (transltr), New York: Peregrine, 1979.

Sigmund Freud (religion is a neurotic and infancy escape from reality), and Jean-Paul Sartre (religion is human's fear of his freedom)<sup>8</sup>.

However, though had failed, their critical thoughts were important in maturing religion itself. Those atheistic understandings had given challenges to religions so that they may prevail, improve themselves, and have critical reflections on facts in theism which indeed need criticism. Because of those atheistic views, religions had been helped to keep learning critically, being able to pure themselves, and fighting for seizing their core messages back<sup>9</sup>.

Within the struggle between science and religion, in the context of modern Christianity, Ian G. Barbour is announced as one of the founders of the discourse of science and religion in the West. This physicist-theologian mapped four relations between religion and science. They are conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. According to Barbour, integration is the only relevant model now<sup>10</sup>. In line with this, Haught also offered four kinds of relations between science and religion. They are conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation. He concluded that confirmation is the only model relevant to our era<sup>11</sup>.

In Islamic context, the discourse of science and religion became popular from 1970 to 1990's. Among the founders, there are 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*<sup>12</sup>.

Amid the struggle between the discourse of science and religion, in the contemporary Islamic world, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm then emerged. He was born in Alexandria<sup>13</sup>, Egypt, in 1898. He studied law at Sorbonne University, Paris. He also spent 4 years in the city to study literature, art, culture, and classical as well as modern intellectuality. In 1928 he returned to Egypt and worked as a member of the Board. Then he moved to The Department of Education

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<sup>8</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006, 64-98.

<sup>9</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan*, 100-101.

<sup>10</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> John F. Haught, *Science & Religion from Conflict to Conversation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995

<sup>12</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Syaūqī Ḍaiyf, *Al-Adab al 'Arabīy al Mu'asir fī Misra*, Misra: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1957/1961, 288-298.

and Social Department. Many of his fiction had been translated into various languages in the world.

Al-Ḥakīm was different from the other writers, scientists, or theologians in presenting his thoughts on the relationship between science and religion. In his short story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” (In 1000 CE) he imagined that the advancement of science had reached its peak.

It is told that in 1000 CE all wars had come to an end and all diseases had been cured. Marriage as means to produce offspring had been replaced by laboratories and human beings lived in a universal and friendly bonding. Animals or plants were no more. Human’s meals were made from gasses mined from the Earth. The advancement of science had made human beings immortal so that they have the ability of The Immortal One. But they lost their fundamental aspects of humanity accordingly. Then the hero emerged. He was a geologist who, according to his scientific research findings, concluded that men should die and God exists; an old paradigm that had been lost in the history of mankind and unknown for hundreds of thousands of years. This radical subject was then sentenced to death by the government and scientism fanatics. However, the idea then spread widely.

The idea of the problematic relationship between religion and science sounded in “Fī Sanah Milyūn” is interesting to study, since it described the prediction of science advancement nowadays. The short story is contained in the anthology *Arinī Allāh (Show Me What Allah Looks Like)* by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm firstly published in Egypt in 1953. Through his creative world of imagination, the author offered a different way of reading in picturing the pattern of relation between science and religion in the future, when mankind had reached the peak in unimaginable scientific advancement.

The strength of the author’s imagination in picturing such advancement of science is his freedom and autonomy as an author who has done radicalization of action. In the story, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm illustrated the peak of scientific glory on an amazing and radical level. But, at the same time, the author was also criticizing it radically because it did not have 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 one of the media that can deliver knowledge uniquely and differently because of its wide area and 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.

Daiches<sup>14</sup> saw literature as a form of work that can deliver the type of knowledge which can't be delivered in other way. Meanwhile, Teeuw<sup>15</sup> stated that the process of interpreting a literary work exists in a multiple-layer dynamics, since there is a tension between language norms and the poet's freedom, the literature system and individual work, literature norms and cultural norms (affirmation, restoration, negation), the author's intention and the interpretation, literature work and reader's capability, and so on.

In the study of Arabic literature, Egypt is well known as one of the pioneer countries in introducing the ideas of development, modernization, and issues of human liberation. Audah<sup>16</sup> showed the advance of Egyptian modern literature development along with its influencing emancipatory ideas. Ahmed<sup>17</sup> pointed the importance of Egypt as the main container of the transformational processes and struggle between ideologies in the updates of the Islamic world since the 19th century. This is because Egypt is the first country to experience modernization in culture and intellectuality as the impact of European expansion. Taufiq al-Ḥakīm emerged amid these struggles and transformations.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm's radical criticism and action as the author in his rejection of scientism as his attempt to establish complementary and dialogical relations between science and religion above 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 then acted radically to fight against and destroy the symbolic, which in this case is the tyrannical scientism.

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<sup>14</sup> See Melani Budianta *et al.*, *Membaca Sastra (Pengantar Memahami Sastra untuk Perguruan Tinggi)*, Magelang: Indonesiatara, 2002, 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi *et al.*, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I*, Yogyakarta: Pokja Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> A. Teeuw, *Khazanah Sastra Indonesia*, Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1993, 19-25; Yulia Nasrul Latifi *et al.*, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I*, Yogyakarta: Pokja Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 4-5

<sup>16</sup> Ali Audah, "Sastra Arab Mutakhir (Contemporary Arabic Literature)", *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an* No.2 VII/1996.

<sup>17</sup> Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, (Yale University Press New Haven & London, 1992, 6.

In the context of subject and subjectivity, Mansfield<sup>18</sup> explained that the subject is an important term used to describe the interior life of human beings and selfhood which is related to politics, language, gender, culture, and so on. Subjectivity<sup>19</sup> is an abstract concept that helps explain why selfhood is involved with the other-self, either as an object of need, desire, and interest or as a need to various common experiences.

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 tradition<sup>20</sup>. For Žižek<sup>21</sup>, the subject never dies and he will always exist in his own unique and radical way.

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 longing 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 existence<sup>22</sup>.

For Žižek, the subject is split since he experienced trauma caused by the tyrannical and oppressive Symbolic<sup>23</sup>. The language and symbolic order that has been in 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 narration<sup>24</sup>. In the 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 emptiness, since all his life he always passes a never-ending dialogical process. The subject is diluted into various determinations of particular predicate<sup>25</sup>. It is in this split and emptiness the subject will always move to seek his fulfillment and fullness by doing a radical action as a form of struggle against the Symbolic that had confined him. For Žižek, the subject can become the Vanishing

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<sup>18</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity Theories of The Self from Freud to Haraway*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000, 185

<sup>19</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, London: Routledge, 2003, 11; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik untuk Indonesia dari Pemikiran Plato, Edmund Husserl, Charles Taylor, sampai dengan Slavoj Žižek*, Tkp: Pustaka Mas, 2011, 98.

<sup>22</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 182.

<sup>23</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 204.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 44-45; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik*, 115.

<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with The Negative: Kant, Hegel, and The Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 21.

Mediator, namely 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 **conveys** the subject as mad, madness, there for as for Žižek a prerequisite for sanity, that is for the normalcy of a civilized subject"<sup>26</sup>.

The subject's radical act is his authentic freedom toward the truth and self-liberation. Using Lacan's thesis on suicide, Žižek gave an example of his interpretation of Italian films that showed the dialectics of symbolical identification which brings the subject's position to its authenticity and genuine in his radical actions<sup>27</sup>.

As emphasized by Russell Grigg, the Žižekian radical action has three characteristics. First, the action must radically change the actor. Second, the subject must eliminate himself symbolically so that he may reborn. Third, the authentic action is always violating the established law so that it is considered destructive and negative from the Symbolic's point of view<sup>28</sup>.

As a **Marxist, Žižek** stated that the **subject's radical action** is an emancipatory action to **liberate human beings from the shackling of oppressing systems**. The symbolic always has an oppressive ideology in its order. Unfortunately, the majority do not realize it. Even it is experienced as common and natural to them because of its subtlety. For Marx<sup>29</sup>, as cited by Žižek, **an ideology is a fake consciousness** because what appears in the 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 the fantasy is to be the mediator between "*res cogitans*" and "*res extensa*", between the

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<sup>26</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 37; Ramayda Akmal, "Subjektivitas Pramoedya Ananta Toer dalam Novel Perburuan: Pendekatan Psikoanalisis Historis Slavoj Žižek", Thesis, The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 2012, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik Subjek Radikal dan Politik Emansipasi di Era Kapitalisme: Global Menurut Slavoj Žižek*, Tangerang: Marjin Kiri, 2010, 110-113; Yulia Nasrul 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), Dissertation, The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 118-120; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 24.



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 structure<sup>30</sup>.

Lacan called it “transversing the fantasy”; the subject suspends the fantasy frame of unwritten laws which makes him free to choose<sup>31</sup>. The fantasy is important so that it became a narration of primordial loss since the subject rejected the laws in the symbolic. The fantasy then provides a rationalization for the inherent “deadlock” of the drive<sup>32</sup>. 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’ new world shaped by science. In that period, the advancement of science had reached its peak after hundreds of thousands of years of accumulation. Nuclear and chemical wars happened a lot, they destroyed museums and libraries, animals, and plants. Eventually, human lives were changed drastically. The shape and physical structure of human beings are also changed. Humans no longer had digestive systems, mouths, and teeth. Their legs and arms became small and weak, as they never used them anymore. Yet, through the advancement of medical science, all diseases had been cured and men were made immortal.

Furthermore, in 1000 CE humans did not have a value system anymore. The positivistic paradigm which was the result of scientism had rejected the transcendental-religious-philosophical paradigm. It implied that human lives became horrible since their humanity was deprived of them. Humans did not know God, and did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore. This is implied by the following passages in the story<sup>33</sup>:

*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 world<sup>34</sup>.*

*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,*

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<sup>30</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London. New York: Verso, 2008, 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, “Women’s Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawal al-Sa’dawi’s Fantasy in Zinah), *Jurnal Poetika*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague*, 39; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, *Women’s Liberty*, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague*, p. 43; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, *Women’s Liberty*, 2021.

<sup>33</sup> All of the short stories’ translation here is mine.

<sup>34</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fī Sanah Milyūn” *Fī Qaṣaṣ Falsafiyah Arinī Allāh*, Miṣr: Dār Miṣr al-Tabā’ah, 1953, 82. The original text says:

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

*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 God, unborn and did not give birth...** did not know death and knew only immortality and did not know yesterday or tomorrow<sup>35</sup>.*

The passages above describe the peaks of scientific and technological advancements without axiological backup so that its impact is horrible to any form of life. The colossal nuclear and chemical wars had happened and reshaped the Earth's face radically and almost unimaginable. The radicality of Earth's change shows how strong the positivistic scientism influenced human philosophy of life and they made it the only 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 in the “**peak of scientific advancement**” is **the author's reading on the future of human beings** that 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 that they will never compete God**.

Apart from his **sharp criticism of the theological problems**, the story also criticizes the **horrible ecological problem**, because animals and plants were massively eradicated by science through the colossal nuclear and chemical wars. In our daily life now, the ecological and environmental problems are serious and massive. The damage in our ecosystems becomes more and more severe, and it threatens all forms of life on Earth. Therefore<sup>36</sup>, religions concern more on this problem. The Muslims, the Catholics, the Protestants, the Jews, the Buddhists, the

<sup>35</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fi Sanah Milyun”, 89. The original 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 وطاقروسمك... 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 وقمه وأسنانه... فاذا هو رأس يفكر وأنف يستنشق به غذاءة من الهواء، وطعامه من الغازات، ويدان ضعيفتان وساقان هزيلتان لقلّة 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...

<sup>36</sup> In Harold Coward and Daniel C. Maguire (ed.), *Visions of A New Earth Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*, USA: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Hinduists, and the Confucianists attempt to give solutions to this ecological crisis based on their respective religious ethics.

There is a historical reason for the existence of a scientific view which gives 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 sharpen the boundary between the meaningful as the region of the 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, metaphysics, morals, and aesthetics.

It is that paradigm of positivistic knowledge which is called scientism. Kuhn called it "incommensurable", which is the paradigm that keep competing in science and tends to negate their competitors<sup>37</sup>. They interpret the science positively as a task that produces useful technical knowledge. But they do not generate wider philosophical and theological conclusions<sup>38</sup>.

In Žižek's theory of subjectivity, the scientism view which appears from the positivism paradigm that does not value-based or philosophical-axiological-based as implied in the story is the oppressive Symbolic. It does not matter how strong the penetration that has been 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 Žižek<sup>39</sup>: "*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*".

An intervention from an authoritarian government which does not want to accept change and a humanistic view of life has become the greatest barrier for a society in their course to find their humanity, namely their source of happiness and peace of soul. It is depicted in the story, that the humane aspects of men had lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1970. 150; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Ian G Barbour, *Isu dalam Sains dan Agama*, in Damayanti and Ridwan (tansl), Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 170.

<sup>39</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi & Wening Udasmoro, *The Big Other Gender, Patriarki, dan Wacana Agama*, *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam*, Vol. 19 No. 1, 2020.

eventually did not know history, the past, and the future. They became like the sea, planets, and mountain, like the unchanging nature. Humans did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore since marriage systems no longer existed. The laboratory had replaced their role in producing offspring. 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...<sup>40</sup>*

*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...<sup>41</sup>*

*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"...<sup>42</sup>*

The colossal nuclear and chemical wars impact which then reshaped the dimension of nature and humanity was the fact that in essence human civilization had been destroyed. Through the advancement of science and technology, the face of **Eartha** had been changed radically. It also had changed and annihilated the function and essence of human beings as the highest creation that had various specialties. Men did not have a dimension of spirituality and a noble sense of art and morality anymore. Men were then not different from the sea, mountain, and the sun.

Seen through Žižek's perspective, such shackling view is the Symbolic that becomes more tyrannic because of The Big Other in the form of political penetration and authoritarian

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<sup>40</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 97. The original text says:

إلى 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...

<sup>41</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 80-81. The original text says:

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

<sup>42</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 91-92. The original text says:

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

power<sup>43</sup>. The Big Other appeared clearly since the story stated that the authoritarianism of the government had become a barrier to the achievement of people's "dreams of divinity".

In the 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 that can be criticized continually by the subject<sup>44</sup>. From the Lack contained in the Symbolic, a space for the subject to act radically emerged.

### **Radical Action of the Subject**

The story was continued by describing that the history course of the non-value based and non-axiological based scientism was 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, the scientific discovery then 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 the 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*

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<sup>43</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 2008

<sup>44</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi & Wening Udasmoro, *The Big Other Gender*, 2020.

*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)<sup>45</sup>. 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 failure<sup>46</sup>.*

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 in 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 then showed that such advancement was inconsistent with his scientific discovery.

In reality, 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

<sup>45</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 81-85. The original text says:

في صيف ذلك العام - المليون بعد الميلاد - دخل عالم من علماء طبقات الأرض على عالم من علماء الكيمياء وقال له: بخيل إليّ أنى سائر نحو اكتشاف خضير، حيث يدهش الناس جميعاً... لقد عثرت على عمق بعيد في جوف الأرض على هذا الأثر... انظر... وأخرج بحرص من حقيبته الصغيرة جمجمة آدمية... (81)

ووقف الرجلان مشاؤون أمام الجمجمة، فهذا شئ جديد لا يوجد له نظير في متاحفهم... وقال عالم الجيولوجيا: لا 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)

ربما كان علم طبقات الأرض أمارسه يدفعني إلى البحث في الماضي، وهذا البحث في الماضي يحملني على التنقيب في المستقبل ما مستقبلنا؟ 83 وهمش كالمخاطب نفسه: مادام هناك وجود فلا بد أن يكون هناك عدم وجود... (84)

لقد تعبت من نفسى الآن... إنه إلهام، إنى مؤمن أنه يوجد شئء فلسفه "الموت"... لا بد أن نصل إليه يوماً... اصدقونى القول أيها العلماء... ألم يشعر أحدكم مرة بإغفاءة طارئة عابرة كخفقة الجفن، أحس خلالها لذة وراحة من نوع غريب؟ (85)

<sup>46</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 87. The original text says:

وافقت هيئة العلماء على هذه النظرية بالإجماع، وحذروا عالم الجيولوجيا من الاسترسال في أمثال هذه الترهات، خوفاً على بسطاء العقول في المجتمع ممن يستهويهم جو الخرافات... وانصرف العلماء عن زميلهم الجيولوجي وتركوه غارقاً في خزيه وخيبته (87)

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.

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 the ideology is in the fact that many people do not know what they are doing. They have a fake representation of their social reality<sup>47</sup>. 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 had 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 pragmatical way of thinking that enables one to effectively function in the world. It accurately matches the external reality. *Logos* sees forward, keeps looking for new ways to control the environment, improving the old insights, and creating 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, human needs “mythos” or “myth”<sup>48</sup>.

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*

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<sup>47</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan; Sanggahan terhadap Fundamentalisme dan Ateisme*, in Yuliani Liputo (translr), Bandung: Mizan, 2011, 12. [Kayma olmuş dipnotta....](#)

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 his society from this tyrannical Symbolic.

Although the radical subject was then antagonized and negatively judged, the story then told that the geologist's new thoughts were getting widely spread in secret. In the beginning, he was rejected by his fellow scientists, he then met a gentle friend who was called "a woman" in the past. She was then the first human who believed in the geologist. They then experienced a strange feeling that was unknown in that era, namely a feeling of trust in and love towards each other<sup>49</sup>. After that, as a prophet, the geologist then got a challenge of performing a miracle that justify 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 battle<sup>50</sup>.*

The passages above 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 science and technology human had developed, their mind has definite limitations.

**The fall of the meteors** is a miracle that proved that **humans must eventually and can die**, no matter how far science can shield human body so that they may live forever. The form of prophets' miracles always matched the contexts and challenges of their era. The advancement of dark arts during Pharaoh's era caused the miracle of Moses to occur in the form of a magical staff which could turn into a huge snake. **The miracle of Jesus** took the form of **curing blindness** because of **the advancement of medical science** at that time. And the miracle

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<sup>49</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 87-93.

<sup>50</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 96. The original text says:

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



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. As described in the story, The Prophet's (the geologist's) miracle was the fall of some meteors down to Earth to prove the mortality of human beings as against the advancement of science and technology which enabled men to be immortal.

Although the miracle had been performed and justified the geologist's thoughts, the government's scientists did want to believe it. After the meteor incident, a riot broke out and after dozens of thousands of years of peace, chaos happened in human history. The government and scientists then arrested and sentenced him to death for his rebellion and misleading men. The geologist's brain was then muted by electrocuting so it became paralyzed forever. 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 there<sup>51</sup>.*

The geologist's action was considered radical and negative from the Symbolic's (namely the government's) point of view. But for him, it is the government who oppressed 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 which always had space to be criticized by the radical subject.

**The appearance of the subject is logical.** This is in line with Russell Grigg's statement that Žižekian 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

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<sup>51</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 96. The original text says:  
اما النبي فاعتقلوه وقدموه إلى المحاكمة فشهد عليه زملاؤه العلماء بأنه مخبول وأن خياله خطير... فحكم عليه بما يحكم على المجرمين والمفسدين وهي عقوبة تعادل إطاحة الرأس في الأزمان القديمة، فقادوه إلى معمل كهربائي... وسلطوا على خلايا تفكيره أشعة خاصة، فأحلقوا محلها تفكيراً آخر هادناً دماً بسيطاً... لاشخصية فيه ولا عنف ولا إرادة... وهكذا اختفت شخصية النبي وإن لم يختف جسمه... ولكن رسالته ظلت باقية (96)

negative from the Symbolic's point of view<sup>52</sup>. 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 stated clearly the limitations of senses. Therefore, it is mentioned in many verses that a scientist from a Qur'anic point of view is those who use his heart to think besides 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. The science developed in this way would 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 helps 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 on those realities. The physical world, like the other worlds, gained its existence from God. They will always be related to Him<sup>53</sup>. An enlightened religion uses the same method as one used in scientific research. Science also involves assumptions and moral commitment as they are in religion<sup>54</sup>.

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 creation<sup>55</sup>.

Meanwhile, Barbour made difference between "natural theology" and "theology of nature" as two ways of bridging science and religion. The first is the way a scientist can walk

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<sup>52</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 118-120; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, *Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi*, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-esai tentang Sejarah dan Filsafat Sains Islam*, in Yuliani Liputo (transltr), Badung; Pustaka Hidayah, 1994, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Ian G Barbour, *Isu dalam Sains dan Agama*, in Damayanti and Ridwan (transltr), Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 174.

<sup>55</sup> John F. Haugt, *Science & Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 91.

through. In natural theology the scientist would expect to find evidence for the existence of God. While theologians (and believers) could depart from a certain religious tradition and see many of their beliefs were in line with science, although some of their beliefs must be reformulated in the light of scientific theories<sup>56</sup>.

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, cannot be accepted. Popper created a new demarcation with "the falsification principle". He concluded that religion is still valid since although many of its propositions cannot be proven scientifically (for example, the existence of The Almighty God) they are meaningful propositions. 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 it<sup>57</sup>.

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 other<sup>58</sup>.

As a subject, the geologist or the Prophet was a reality that had been inherent in the Symbolic's 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 the 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

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<sup>56</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Menemukan Tuhan dalam Sains Kontemporer dan Agama*, Bandung: Mizan, 2005, 33; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 92.

<sup>57</sup> Karl R. Popper, *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1965; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 79-80.

<sup>58</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with The Negative: Kant, Hegel, and The Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 21.

sentence bestowed upon him by the Symbolic to welcome The Real which he longed for, namely the liberation of mankind from the oppressive scientism.

The geologist's radical action as a radical subject was able to make a radical event that can turn the course of the history and civilization of mankind. **The radical event was the fall of the meteors onto the Earth.** The riot then broke up, a fight between the authoritarian government on the scientism side and the followers of the radical subject. They massively revolted and destroyed laboratories as well as centers of industries. The chaos escalated, causing shortages in food and nutrition supplies, diseases, and eventually mass death.

In **Žižek's perspective**, the geologist is the subject who can become a "**vanishing mediator**", namely a being that can make the subject a "psychotic subject". He is a subject who can make himself distant from the Symbolic and can choose freely. After all, his radical action appeared from disability to choose freely in the Symbolic's order. If the subject rejected the order then he is automatically considered an enemy, wrong, and negative<sup>59</sup>.

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 regained their humanity back.** This was marked by spirituality and the beauty of morality. Religions 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 then 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 the 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 then 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 an unlimited love. By the radical action, the subject submitted himself to breaking the

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<sup>59</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 186.

extreme boundary which implied the gain of absolute freedom by creating the momentum of delay in every interpretation of the ideology<sup>60</sup>.

Literature is a radicalization of its author's action as a subject. **Taufiq al-Hakim criticized positivistic scientism** radically because these hundreds of years view which emerged along with Western humanism had opposed the medieval thoughts. **The Western medieval era** was well-known for its **theological glory**. The emergence of **the modern era** had opposed theology and proclaimed that **reason is the only light** on human's way of life and that theology is 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 was then developed in the West and had wide influence to the Eastern world until this day.

**Here the author's rationality can be seen** since he openly and objectively acknowledged the fact of scientific development with all of 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 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...<sup>61</sup>*

<sup>60</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 115; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi, 2020.

<sup>61</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 93-94. The original text says:

يا صديقي اللطيف... هناك سر مغلق علينا... هناك سعادة منتظرة خلف باب موصد... هناك لذة غريبة وراحة عجيبة في حجرة ممنوعة لم تطأها قدم... تلك الحجرة ممنوعة علينا... تلك الحجرة التي تجثم فيها راحة من نوع مجهول لدينا... أسميها أنا "الموت". لفظها العالم في شبه همس كأنه يحلم... وكأنه يستعين بالهامه الخفي، ويستنير بإشراقه الداخلي ليلمح على ضوءه 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، وأومن أنا بك...

The passages above 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 human's old world in scientific advancement that gave birth to tyrannical scientism. The first knowledge he got as a part of new insights he had gained was "death". Since humans did not die for thousands of years, "death" was an epic event that had been longed for as a form of happiness and peace-giving liberation.

Then, **the subject created a fantasy of a spiritual world filled with love, art, and conscience**. His fantasy was also 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 badly needed by the contemporary-modern human being now and after. Scientists, philosophers, and religious people need 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."*<sup>62</sup>

The passages above 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 the 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 also of **global-ecological perspective**.

The geologists created his fantasy in 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 effective if one merely "believes" in Him. *Mythos*, or religion,

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<sup>62</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 98-99. The original text says:

وظهر "الحب". وبظهوره ظهر "الفن" و "الشعر". وهكذا حكمت الطبيعة بالهها الأكبر الأرض مرة أخرى... وعادت الأديان السماوية... وعاد الشعراء ينشدون ويقولون: "أيتها الخالق الأزلي... لك أنت وحدك الخلود والجبروت... أما نحن فلانريد 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...

basically is 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 it<sup>63</sup>.

According to Bergson, God is a dynamical and creative power, an *elan vital* to life and movement. In the philosophy of religion, he rejects static theism and puts dynamic theism forward. It is said by Thiselton: *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. 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 machine*<sup>64</sup>.

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 mainly related to our minds, but our actions instead. Religion is a practical discipline that enables us to find the new abilities of mind, heart, and ethical deeds<sup>65</sup>.

The criticism of scientism in the story has strong relevance to the problem of scientific and technological advancement in our era. The modern science developed by the 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 of ideas in the West continually speak about alternative models for science and technology<sup>66</sup>.

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.

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<sup>63</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan; Sanggahan terhadap Fundamentalisme dan Ateisme*, in Yuliani Liputo (translr), Bandung; Mizan, 2011, 13

<sup>64</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*, England: Oneworld Oxford, 2002 37.

<sup>65</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan*, 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-esai tentang Sejarah dan Filsafat Sains Islam*, in Yuliani Liputo (translt), Badung; Pustaka Hidayah, 1994, 214.

Science is developed through a series of revolutions by disassembling the old paradigm and replacing it with the new one. What had been justified as right in the old paradigm had problems to be criticized and replaced by the new paradigms with new standards of truth, and so on<sup>67</sup>.

The criticism of the story is also in line with Feyerabend's idea. According to him, science is very close to myth so science cannot claim that it is the only owner of truth. The scientific method cannot monopolize the truth since there is much meaningful knowledge in life that is on in form of science. The authority of science in the modern era is not because of its rational arguments, but it is more of 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 the free society<sup>68</sup>.

Moreover, Rorty's view emphasized that science and scientific language is not a reflection of the nature, it is "a justified true belief" established through conversation<sup>69</sup>. Science is just one of the human activities to deal with their 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 fractures<sup>70</sup>.

Through the subject's fantasy in the poem recited by the 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 be decreasing. 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 had 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

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<sup>67</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: Peran Paradigma dalam Revolusi Sains*, in Tjun Surjaman (translter), Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, London, NLB Verso Edition, 1975; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 81.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979

<sup>70</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 82.



whole<sup>71</sup>. A symptom is a way the subject chose to “avoid madness” and to “replace the nothing”<sup>72</sup>. The function of fantasy is to fulfill the opening contained in “the other” since it contains the Lack to hide the Other’s inconsistency<sup>73</sup>.

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

The short story sounded a religious criticism of scientism which shackled human beings in a tyrannic way. The author’s way of doing so is by creating a radical subject that destroys and disrupts scientism, which in Žižek’s theory of subjectivity is called the Symbolic. The subject attempted to approach the Real which is his fantasy of human mortality and the immortality and the eternity of God. This is the belief in the religion, and this is the humanistic and realistic point of view that liberates human beings from oppression to them imposed by tyrannical scientism. A literary work is its author’s radical action for his emancipatory objectives. As an empty and dialectic subject, he will always move to seek his fulfillment from the split caused by various trauma. Through the radical action of his hero, the author attempted to overthrow the old structure and replace it with a new, more humanistic, and liberating one.

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<sup>71</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 2008, 78.

<sup>72</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 81; Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London. New York: Verso, 2000, 265.

<sup>73</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 138.

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

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***Abstract***

This paper studied the Egyptian modern short story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm. The story told us about the advancement of science and technology which was at its peak in 1000 CE, where people are made immortal and in turn 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 then revealed that scientism had deprived humanity of human beings and generated a lack that 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 his fulfillment, the Subject kept moving to approximate The Real, namely a scientific order that has a transcendental-religious paradigm containing ordered values and honor the humanity of human beings.

Key words: arabic literature, Žižek’s subjectivity, science, transendental paradigm, humanity.

**Extended Summary**

The dynamics of science and religion discourse are getting stronger and more global. Since the impact caused by science and technology is so broad and complex, and the values it produces are difficult to predict, this changing era has become increasingly frightening for those who have a deep concern about the direction of human history and its final destination, especially the ever-threatened lives of religions.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm depicts the conflict between science and religion in Arabic literature. Born in Egypt, in 1898, he became a well-known author whose fictional works have been translated into various languages. One of them is the anthology *Arinī Allāh* (Show Me [What] Allah [Looks Like]), which contains a short story entitled “Fī Sanah Milyūn” (In the Year a Thousand AD). Originally published in 1953, the story represented al-Ḥakīm's thoughts on the relationship between religion and science in a different, unique, and interesting way.

The story was set in the fictional year 1000 AD when scientific progress had reached its pinnacle and had drastically altered the fundamentals of human life, as well as the cultural and natural order. Humans lived eternally and did not know death like God. They only had reason to think and no longer had a heart. There was no more compassion. So, they thought it was their nature and nothing beyond it. A geologist then emerged by showing a scientific finding of a human skull, which meant humans were mortal. He then tried to share this finding and developed a religious concept in which there was a God who created life and could make men die. By doing so, he was then considered a threat to the common belief in scientism and eventually executed by the government and most scientists. Nonetheless, even at the cost of his life, his teaching and belief survived and spread.

Thus, al-Ḥakīm's radical criticism and actions through this short story are consistent with the theory of subjectivity introduced by Žižek. Žižek has the view that a subject exists, but he is split and empty. To find self-fulfillment, the subject takes radical action by fighting and destroying the oppressive “the symbolic.” There are 3 Lacanian phases developed by Žižek in this theory of subjectivity: The Real, The Symbolic, and The Imaginary. The Real is the pre-symbolic phase where the subject always longs and becomes a basis for his fantasy. The Symbolic is the oppressive order and structure that the subject is against. The Imaginary is an illusion, the phase when The Symbolic starts to become tyrannical. We have used the hermeneutic method in the analysis of this research. The findings are as follows:

### **Scientism is *The Oppressing Symbolic***

The short story describes the peak of scientific and technological progress without an axiological basis so that the impact is dire for the survival of all living things. The severe nuclear and chemical war has occurred and changed the entire face of the earth. The positivistic understanding of scientism is its philosophical basis, so that human life is atheistic, nihilistic, and non-humanist. According to the short story, the human side of humanity was lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans ultimately did not know history, the past, or the future. Men became like the sea, planets, mountains. They resembled unchanging nature. They also lacked love, heart, and feelings. They did not recognize marriage systems anymore, since laboratories had taken over the role of marriage in producing offspring.

### **The Subject's Radical Action**

The condition soon changed with the emergence of a geologist (the radical subject) who then rejected scientism. In 1000 AD, the geologist found a human skull buried for thousands of years beneath the earth's surface. After long contemplation, he concluded that the skull was undeniable evidence that humans could die. This belief then led him to a new thought that when humans died one day, reason ensures that there was a higher Essence that would not die. The essence is God. In Žižek's theory, a radical subject emerges from a series of oppressions caused by a certain ideology and forces that legitimize it. Since The Symbolic contains this tyrannical ideology, the subject then appears through a radical action to fight against this deficient Symbolic.

In *Fī Sanah Milyūn*, the geologist then preached his new religious-metaphysically-based knowledge. But the government and scientists refused and then sentenced him to death. After that, several meteors fell on the earth and hit the residents' houses, causing people to lose their lives. This eventually led to a commotion among the rest of the people. For the first time in history, actual people were losing their lives. This catastrophe was followed by a riot, since it proved the geologist's belief to be true. Humans can die and will die, no matter how great science is to fortify their bodies against death.

### **Subject's Fantasy**

Before the geologist was executed, he gave rise to fantasies about the spiritual world and spirituality in the form of love, art, and feelings. His fantasy was also related to a metaphysical idea of transcendental consciousness. In other words, 'God exists'. This simple statement was to be made a metaphysical basis for the development of theistic science which was very much needed by modern-contemporary humans now and in the future. Fantasy is The Real which he longs for as the goal of all his movements as a radical subject. The fantasy of the radical subject is to build completeness of meaning and become the estuary of values. It is very important to rely on the transcendental value system (God) as the estuary of all values. All value systems created by humans on earth should be based on the owner of the value system itself, namely God. This is the key for humans and including scientists and governments in developing and directing the pace of science so that it is based on humanist-transcendental values and also has a global-ecological perspective.

The short story voices religious criticism of scientism which shackles humanity tyrannically. The way to reject and criticize short stories against scientism voiced by religion



is by bringing up radical subjects that damage and disrupt The Symbolic in the form of oppressive scientism. The movement of the subject seeks to approach The Real, namely his fantasy about human mortality and God's immortality. This is the belief that exists in religion, and this is a humanist and realistic perspective that frees human beings from the oppression of science and the shackles of scientism. A literary work is a radicalization of the author's actions for his emancipatory goals. As an empty and dialectical subject, the author will continue to move to find his fulfillment, which is divided due to various traumas. Through the radical actions of the narrative characters, the author seeks to subvert the old, oppressive structure and replace it with a new structure that is more humane and liberates human beings.

### Introduction

The dynamics of scientific and religious discourse are getting stronger, even globalized. Not only theologians, but scientists also appeared to have the same concern that they keep seeking pattern relations between science and religion. The current advancement of science and technology has made radical and incredible changes which 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 values<sup>1</sup>.

The impact of the change is worldwide and complex. The values it will result from are difficult to predict. Thus, it scares those who are in deep concern 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 lives<sup>2</sup>. Religion, in its various definition and meaning, is defined as *an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, based on a nation of the transcendent, and how to live accordingly; it normally contains the four Cs: creed, code, cult, and community-structure*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sudiarja, *Agama di Zaman Yang Berubah*, Yogyakarta: kanisius, 2006, v-vi.

<sup>2</sup> A. Sudiarja, *Agamah di Zaman Yang Berubah*, 39.

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

Science, with all of its advancement, then appeared to be about to replace religion. Science had made itself the only valid and correct interpreter of the world, and this is what scientism is<sup>4</sup>. 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 the episteme building which is the fundamental to the growth of science itself<sup>5</sup>.

With objectivity and universality claims, scientific findings experience an escalation that Lyotard called grand-narrative<sup>6</sup>. In Foucault's view, the grand narrative is the power that exterminates small narratives and marginalizes anything viewed as unobjective and irrational from a positivistic point of view<sup>7</sup>.

As we can see, one of scientism's radical rejections of religion 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 came after. They then 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)<sup>8</sup>.

However, though had failed, their critical thoughts were important in maturing religion itself. Those atheistic understandings had given challenges to religions so that they may prevail, improve themselves, and have critical reflections on facts in theism which indeed need criticism. Because of those atheistic views, religions had been helped to keep learning critically, being able to pure themselves, and fighting for seizing their core messages back<sup>9</sup>.

Within the struggle between science and religion, in the context of modern Christianity, Ian G. Barbour is announced as one of the founders of the discourse of science and religion in the West. This physicist-theologian mapped four relations between religion and science. They are conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. According to Barbour, integration is the

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<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains, dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik*, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020, 76.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things; An Archeology of Human Sciences*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994, xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition, A Report and Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, 37; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains, dari Isu Integrasi Keilmuan Menuju Lahirnya Sains Teistik*, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2020, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, in Alan Sheridan (transltr), New York: Peregrine, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006, 64-98.

<sup>9</sup> Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan*, 100-101.

only relevant model now<sup>10</sup>. In line with this, Haught also offered four kinds of relations between science and religion. They are conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation. He concluded that confirmation is the only model relevant to our era<sup>11</sup>.

In Islamic context, the discourse of science and religion became popular from 1970 to 1990's. Among the founders, there are 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*<sup>12</sup>.

Amid the struggle between the discourse of science and religion, in the contemporary Islamic world, Taufiq al-Hakim then emerged. He was born in Alexandria<sup>13</sup>, Egypt, in 1898. He studied law at Sorbonne University, Paris. He also spent 4 years in the city to study literature, art, culture, and classical as well as modern intellectuality. In 1928 he returned to Egypt and worked as a member of the Board. Then he moved to The Department of Education and Social Department. Many of his fiction had been translated into various languages in the world.

Al-Hakim was different from the other writers, scientists, or theologians in presenting his thoughts on the relationship between science and religion. In his short story "Fī Sanah Milyūn" (In 1000 CE) he imagined that the advancement of science had reached its peak.

It is told that in 1000 CE all wars had come to an end and all diseases had been cured. Marriage as means to produce offspring had been replaced by laboratories and human beings lived in a universal and friendly bonding. Animals or plants were no more. Human's meals were made from gasses mined from the Earth. The advancement of science had made human beings immortal so that they have the ability of The Immortal One. But they lost their fundamental aspects of humanity accordingly. Then the hero emerged. He was a geologist who, according to his scientific research findings, concluded that men should die and God exists; an old paradigm that had been lost in the history of mankind and unknown for hundreds of

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<sup>10</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> John F. Haught, *Science & Religion from Conflict to Conversation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995

<sup>12</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Syaughī Ḍaiyf, *Al-Adab al 'Arabīy al Mu'asir fī Misra*, Misra: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1957/1961, 288-298.

thousands of years. This radical subject was then sentenced to death by the government and scientism fanatics. However, the idea then spread widely.

The idea of the problematic relationship between religion and science sounded in “Fī Sanah Milyūn” is interesting to study, since it described the prediction of science advancement nowadays. The short story is contained in the anthology *Arinī Allāh (Show Me What Allah Looks Like)* by Taufīq al-Ḥakīm firstly published in Egypt in 1953. Through his creative world of imagination, the author offered a different way of reading in picturing the pattern of relation between science and religion in the future, when mankind had reached the peak in unimaginable scientific advancement.

The strength of the author’s imagination in picturing such advancement of science is his freedom and autonomy as an author who has done radicalization of action. In the story, Taufīq al-Ḥakīm illustrated the peak of scientific glory on an amazing and radical level. But, at the same time, the author was also criticizing it radically because it did not have 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 one of the media that can deliver knowledge uniquely and differently because of its wide area and 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.

Daiches<sup>14</sup> saw literature as a form of work that can deliver the type of knowledge which can’t be delivered in other way. Meanwhile, Teeuw<sup>15</sup> stated that the process of interpreting a literary work exists in a multiple-layer dynamics, since there is a tension between language norms and the poet’s freedom, the literature system and individual work, literature norms and

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<sup>14</sup> See Melani Budianta *et al.*, *Membaca Sastra (Pengantar Memahami Sastra untuk Perguruan Tinggi)*, Magelang: Indonesiatara, 2002, 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi *et al.*, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I*, Yogyakarta: Pokja Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> A. Teeuw, *Khazanah Sastra Indonesia*, Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1993, 19-25; Yulia Nasrul Latifi *et al.*, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I*, Yogyakarta: Pokja Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 4-5

cultural norms (affirmation, restoration, negation), the author's intention and the interpretation, literature work and reader's capability, and so on.

In the study of Arabic literature, Egypt is well known as one of the pioneer countries in introducing the ideas of development, modernization, and issues of human liberation. Audah<sup>16</sup> showed the advance of Egyptian modern literature development along with its influencing emancipatory ideas. Ahmed<sup>17</sup> pointed the importance of Egypt as the main container of the transformational processes and struggle between ideologies in the updates of the Islamic world since the 19th century. This is because Egypt is the first country to experience modernization in culture and intellectuality as the impact of European expansion. Taufiq al-Ḥakīm emerged amid these struggles and transformations.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm's radical criticism and action as the author in his rejection of scientism as his attempt to establish complementary and dialogical relations between science and religion above 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 then acted radically to fight against and destroy the symbolic, which in this case is the tyrannical scientism.

In the context of subject and subjectivity, Mansfield<sup>18</sup> explained that the subject is an important term used to describe the interior life of human beings and selfhood which is related to politics, language, gender, culture, and so on. Subjectivity<sup>19</sup> is an abstract concept that helps explain why selfhood is involved with the other-self, either as an object of need, desire, and interest or as a need to various common experiences.

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

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<sup>16</sup> Ali Audah, "Sastra Arab Mutakhir (Contemporary Arabic Literature)", *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an* No.2 VII/1996.

<sup>17</sup> Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, (Yale University Press New Haven & London, 1992, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity Theories of The Self from Freud to Haraway*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000, 185

<sup>19</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 3.

psychoanalysis, then gave it its axiological fundamentals from Marxist tradition<sup>20</sup>. For Žižek<sup>21</sup>, the subject never dies and he will always exist in his own unique and radical way.

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 longing 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 existence<sup>22</sup>.

For Žižek, the subject is split since he experienced trauma caused by the tyrannical and oppressive Symbolic<sup>23</sup>. The language and symbolic order that has been in 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 narration<sup>24</sup>. In the 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 emptiness, since all his life he always passes a never-ending dialogical process. The subject is diluted into various determinations of particular predicate<sup>25</sup>. It is in this split and emptiness the subject will always move to seek his fulfillment and fullness by doing a radical action as a form of struggle against the Symbolic that had confined him. For Žižek, the subject can become the Vanishing Mediator, namely 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 conveys the subject as mad, madness, there for as for Žižek a prerequisite for sanity, that is for the normalcy of a civilized subject*"<sup>26</sup>.

The subject's radical act is his authentic freedom toward the truth and self-liberation. Using Lacan's thesis on suicide, Žižek gave an example of his interpretation of Italian films

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<sup>20</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, London: Routledge, 2003, 11; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik untuk Indonesia dari Pemikiran Plato, Edmund Husserl, Charles Taylor, sampai dengan Slavoj Žižek*, Tkp: Pustaka Mas, 2011, 98.

<sup>22</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 182.

<sup>23</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 204.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 44-45; Reza Wattimena, *Filsafat Politik*, 115.

<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with The Negative: Kant, Hegel, and The Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, 37; Ramayda Akmal, "Subjektivitas Pramoedya Ananta Toer dalam Novel Perburuan: Pendekatan Psikoanalisis Historis Slavoj Žižek", Thesis, The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 2012, 27.

that showed the dialectics of symbolical identification which brings the subject's position to its authenticity and genuine in his radical actions<sup>27</sup>.

As emphasized by Russell Grigg, the Žižekian radical action has three characteristics. First, the action must radically change the actor. Second, the subject must eliminate himself symbolically so that he may reborn. Third, the authentic action is always violating the established law so that it is considered destructive and negative from the Symbolic's point of view<sup>28</sup>.

As a Marxist, Žižek stated that the subject's radical action is an emancipatory action to liberate human beings from the shackling of oppressing systems. The symbolic always has an oppressive ideology in its order. Unfortunately, the majority do not realize it. Even it is experienced as common and natural to them because of its subtlety. For Marx<sup>29</sup>, as cited by Žižek, an ideology is a fake consciousness because what appears in the 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 the 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 structure<sup>30</sup>.

Lacan called it "transversing the fantasy"; the subject suspends the fantasy frame of unwritten laws which makes him free to choose<sup>31</sup>. The fantasy is important so that it became a narration of primordial loss since the subject rejected the laws in the symbolic. The fantasy then provides a rationalization for the inherent "deadlock" of the drive<sup>32</sup>. In the context of this research, the fantasy is a transcendental-religious-philosophical view.

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<sup>27</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik Subjek Radikal dan Politik Emansipasi di Era Kapitalisme: Global Menurut Slavoj Žižek*, Tangerang: Marjin Kiri, 2010, 110-113; Yulia Nasrul 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), Dissertation, The Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 118-120; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London. New York: Verso, 2008, 7; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, "Women's Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawal al-Sa'dawi's Fantasy in Zinah), *Jurnal Poetika*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague*, 39; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Women's Liberty, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague*, p. 43; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Women's Liberty, 2021.

## Scientism as the Oppressive Symbolic

The setting of the story “Fī Sanah Milyūn” is 1000 CE. It is about human beings’ new world shaped by science. In that period, the advancement of science had reached its peak after hundreds of thousands of years of accumulation. Nuclear and chemical wars happened a lot, they destroyed museums and libraries, animals, and plants. Eventually, human lives were changed drastically. The shape and physical structure of human beings are also changed. Humans no longer had digestive systems, mouths, and teeth. Their legs and arms became small and weak, as they never used them anymore. Yet, through the advancement of medical science, all diseases had been cured and men were made immortal.

Furthermore, in 1000 CE humans did not have a value system anymore. The positivistic paradigm which was the result of scientism had rejected the transcendental-religious-philosophical paradigm. It implied that human lives became horrible since their humanity was deprived of them. Humans did not know God, and did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore. This is implied by the following passages in the story<sup>33</sup>:

*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 world<sup>34</sup>.*

*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 God, unborn and did not give birth... did not know death and knew only immortality and did not know yesterday or tomorrow<sup>35</sup>.*

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<sup>33</sup> All of the short stories’translation here is mine.

<sup>34</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn” Fī Qaṣaṣ Falsafiyah Arinī Allāh, Miṣr: Dār Miṣr al-Tabā’ah, 1953,

82. The original text says:

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

<sup>35</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn”, 89. The original 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 غسلًا من كل حيوان ونبات وطائر وسمك... 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 جهازه الهضمي وفمه وأسنانه... فاذا هو رأس يفكر وأنف يستنشق به غداة من الهواء، وطعامه من الغازات، ويدان ضعيفتان وساقان هزيلتان لقلة الاستعمال... لم يعد هناك فرق بين إنسان و بحر وكوكب... إنه مثلها خالد... بل إنه الآن شبه إله... لا يلد ولا يولد... يجهل الموت ويعرف الأبد ولا يدرك الأمل ولا الغد...



The passages above describe the peaks of scientific and technological advancements without axiological backup so that its impact is horrible to any form of life. The colossal nuclear and chemical wars had happened and reshaped the Earth's face radically and almost unimaginable. The radicality of Earth's change shows how strong the positivistic scientism influenced human philosophy of life and they made it the only 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 in the "peak of scientific advancement" is the author's reading on the future of human beings that 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 that they will never compete God.

Apart from his sharp criticism of the theological problems, the story also criticizes the horrible ecological problem, because animals and plants were massively eradicated by science through the colossal nuclear and chemical wars. In our daily life now, the ecological and environmental problems are serious and massive. The damage in our ecosystems becomes more and more severe, and it threatens all forms of life on Earth. Therefore<sup>36</sup>, religions concern more on this problem. The Muslims, the Catholics, the Protestants, the Jews, the Buddhists, the Hinduists, and the Confucianists attempt to give solutions to this ecological crisis based on their respective religious ethics.

There is a historical reason for the existence of a scientific view which gives 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 sharpen the boundary between the meaningful as the region of the observable science and the meaningless as the region of nonsense since it contains propositions that cannot

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<sup>36</sup> In Harold Coward and Daniel C. Maguire (ed.), *Visions of A New Earth Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*, USA: State University of New York Press, 2000.

be proven empirically through verification principles. The meaningless includes religion, metaphysics, morals, and aesthetics.

It is that paradigm of positivistic knowledge which is called scientism. Kuhn called it “incommensurable”, which is the paradigm that keep competing in science and tends to negate their competitors<sup>37</sup>. They interpret the science positively as a task that produces useful technical knowledge. But they do not generate wider philosophical and theological conclusions<sup>38</sup>.

In Žižek’s theory of subjectivity, the scientism view which appears from the positivism paradigm that does not value-based or philosophical-axiological-based as implied in the story is the oppressive Symbolic. It does not matter how strong the penetration that has been 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 Žižek<sup>39</sup>: “*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*”.

An intervention from an authoritarian government which does not want to accept change and a humanistic view of life has become the greatest barrier for a society in their course to find their humanity, namely their source of happiness and peace of soul. It is depicted in the story, that the humane aspects of men had lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans eventually did not know history, the past, and the future. They became like the sea, planets, and mountain, like the unchanging nature. Humans did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore since marriage systems no longer existed. The laboratory had replaced their role in producing offspring. 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...*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1970. 150; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Ian G Barbour, *Isu dalam Sains dan Agama*, in Damayanti and Ridwan (tansl), Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 170.

<sup>39</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi & Wening Udasmoro, *The Big Other Gender, Patriarki, dan Wacana Agama*, *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam*, Vol. 19 No. 1, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn”, 97. The original text says:

*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...<sup>41</sup>*

*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"...<sup>42</sup>*

The colossal nuclear and chemical wars impact which then reshaped the dimension of nature and humanity was the fact that in essence human civilization had been destroyed. Through the advancement of science and technology, the face of Eartha had been changed radically. It also had changed and annihilated the function and essence of human beings as the highest creation that had various specialties. Men did not have a dimension of spirituality and a noble sense of art and morality anymore. Men were then not different from the sea, mountain, and the sun.

Seen through Žižek's perspective, such shackling view is the Symbolic that becomes more tyrannic because of The Big Other in the form of political penetration and authoritarian power<sup>43</sup>. The Big Other appeared clearly since the story stated that the authoritarianism of the government had become a barrier to the achievement of people's "dreams of divinity".

In the reality, there will always shortage in the Symbolic so that it contains the Lack in the Big Other. This is precisely what causes The Symbolic an open structure that can be criticized continually by the subject<sup>44</sup>. From the Lack contained in the Symbolic, a space for the subject to act radically emerged.

## Radical Action of the Subject

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إلى 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...

<sup>41</sup> Taufiq al-Hakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 80-81. The original text says:

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

<sup>42</sup> Taufiq al-Hakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 91-92. The original text says:

إن كلمة "الحب" كانت هي الأخرى قد انقرضت منذ مئات الآلاف من الأعوام... انقرضت بانقراض الميل الغريزي بين الذكور والأنثى... بعد أن تولت المعامل إفراخ النسل... وبزوال الحب زال الشعور والفن... لقد زال اتصال "القلوب" وحل محله اتصال "الأفكار"...

<sup>43</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 2008

<sup>44</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi & Wening Udasmoro, *The Big Other Gender*, 2020.

The story was continued by describing that the history course of the non-value based and non-axiological based scientism was 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, the scientific discovery then 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 the 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)<sup>45</sup>. All of the scientists did not agree with that theory*

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<sup>45</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun", 81-85. The original text says:

في صيف ذلك العام - المليون بعد الميلاد - دخل عالم من علماء طبقات الأرض على عالم من علماء الكيمياء وقال له: يخيل إليّ أني سأتر نحو اكتشاف خطير، حيث يدهش الناس جميعاً... لقد عثرت على عمق بعيد في جوف الأرض على هذا الأثر... انظر... وأخرج بحرص من حقيبته الصغيرة جمجمة آدمية... (81)

*(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 failure<sup>46</sup>.*

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 in 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 then showed that such advancement was inconsistent with his scientific discovery.

In reality, 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.

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 the ideology is in the fact that many people do not know what they are doing. They have a fake representation of their social

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ووقف الرجلان مشدوهين أمام الجمجمة، فهذا شئ جديد لا يوجد له نظير في متاحفهم... وقال عالم الجيولوجيا: لا 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)  
ربما كان علم طبقات الأرض أمارسه يدفعني إلى البحث في الماضي، وهذا البحث في الماضي يحملني على التفتيش في المستقبل ما مستقبلنا؟ 83  
وهمش كالمخاطب نفسه: مادام هناك وجود فلا بد أن يكون هناك عدم وجود... (84)  
لقد تعبت من نفسي الآن... إنه إلهام، إنى مؤمن أنه يوجد شيء فلسفة الموت... لا بد أن نصل إليه يوما... اصدقوني القول أيها العلماء... ألم يشعر أحدكم مرة بإغفاءة طارئة عابرة كخفقة الجفن، أحس خلالها لذة وراحة من نوع غريب؟ (85)

<sup>46</sup> Taufiq al-Hakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 87. The original text says:

وافقت هيئة العلماء على هذه النظرية بالإجماع، وحنروا عالم الجيولوجيا من الاسترسال في أمثال هذه الترهات، خوفا على بسطاء العقول في المجتمع ممن يستهويهم جوارح الخرافات... وانصرف العلماء عن زميلهم الجيولوجي وتركوه غارقا في خزيه وخيبته (87)

reality<sup>47</sup>. 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 had 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 pragmatical way of thinking that enables one to effectively function in the world. It accurately matches the external reality. *Logos* sees forward, keeps looking for new ways to control the environment, improving the old insights, and creating 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, human needs "*mythos*" or "myth"<sup>48</sup>.

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 his society from this tyrannical Symbolic.

Although the radical subject was then antagonized and negatively judged, the story then told that the geologist's new thoughts were getting widely spread in secret. In the beginning, he was rejected by his fellow scientists, he then met a gentle friend who was called "a woman" in the past. She was then the first human who believed in the geologist. They then experienced a strange feeling that was unknown in that era, namely a feeling of trust in and love towards

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<sup>47</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Karen Amstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan; Sanggahan terhadap Fundamentalisme dan Ateisme*, in Yuliani Liputo (transltr), Bandung; Mizan, 2011, 12.

each other<sup>49</sup>. After that, as a prophet, the geologist then got a challenge of performing a miracle that justify 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 battle<sup>50</sup>.*

The passages above 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 science and technology human had developed, their mind has definite limitations.

The fall of the meteors is a miracle that proved that humans must eventually and can die, no matter how far science can shield human body so that they may live forever. The form of prophets' miracles always matched the contexts and challenges of their era. The advancement of dark arts during Pharaoh's era caused the miracle of Moses to occur in the form of a magical staff which could turn into a huge snake. The miracle of Jesus took the form of curing blindness because of the advancement of medical science at that time. 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. As described in the story, The Prophet's (the geologist's) miracle was the fall of some meteors down to Earth to prove the mortality of human beings as against the advancement of science and technology which enabled men to be immortal.

Although the miracle had been performed and justified the geologist's thoughts, the government's scientists did want to believe it. After the meteor incident, a riot broke out and after dozens of thousands of years of peace, chaos happened in human history. The government

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<sup>49</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 87-93.

<sup>50</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 96. The original text says:

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

and scientists then arrested and sentenced him to death for his rebellion and misleading men. The geologist's brain was then muted by electrocuting so it became paralyzed forever. 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 there<sup>51</sup>.*

The geologist's action was considered radical and negative from the Symbolic's (namely the government's) point of view. But for him, it is the government who oppressed 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 which always had space to be criticized by the radical subject.

The appearance of the subject is logical. This is in line with Russell Grigg's statement that Žižekian 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 Symbolic's point of view<sup>52</sup>. 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 stated clearly the limitations of senses. Therefore, it is mentioned in many verses that a scientist from a Qur'anic point of view is those who use his heart to think besides their ratio for formal logical thoughts. They are called "ulul albab." It is

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<sup>51</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 96. The original text says:

أما النبي فاعتقلوه وقدموه إلى المحاكمة فشهد عليه زملاؤه العلماء بأنه مخبول وأن خياله خطير... فحكم عليه بما يحكم على المجرمين والمفسدين وهي عقوبة تعادل إطاحة الرأس في الأزمان القديمة، فقاده إلى معمل كهربائي... وسلطوا على خلايا تفكيره أشعة خاصة، فأحلوا محلها تفكيراً آخر هادئاً دماً بسيطاً... لاشخصية فيه ولا عنف ولا إرادة... وهكذا اختفت شخصية النبي وإن لم يخنق جسمه... ولكن رسالته ظلت باقية (٩٦)

<sup>52</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 118-120; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, *Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi*, 2020.



this combination of ratio, heart, and senses that characterizes the ideal epistemology according to al-Qur'an. The science developed in this way would 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 helps 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 on those realities. The physical world, like the other worlds, gained its existence from God. They will always be related to Him<sup>53</sup>. An enlightened religion uses the same method as one used in scientific research. Science also involves assumptions and moral commitment as they are in religion<sup>54</sup>.

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 creation<sup>55</sup>.

Meanwhile, Barbour made difference between "natural theology" and "theology of nature" as two ways of bridging science and religion. The first is 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) could depart from a certain religious tradition and see many of their beliefs were in line with science, although some of their beliefs must be reformulated in the light of scientific theories<sup>56</sup>.

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, cannot be accepted. Popper created

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<sup>53</sup> Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-esai tentang Sejarah dan Filsafat Sains Islam*, in Yuliani Liputo (transltr), Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1994, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Ian G Barbour, *Isu dalam Sains dan Agama*, in Damayanti and Ridwan (transltr), Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006, 174.

<sup>55</sup> John F. Haught, *Science & Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 91.

<sup>56</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Menemukan Tuhan dalam Sains Kontemporer dan Agama*, Bandung: Mizan, 2005, 33; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 92.

a new demarcation with “the falsification principle”. He concluded that religion is still valid since although many of its propositions cannot be proven scientifically (for example, the existence of The Almighty God) they are meaningful propositions. 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 it<sup>57</sup>.

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 other<sup>58</sup>.

As a subject, the geologist or the Prophet was a reality that had been inherent in the Symbolic’s 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 the 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 the oppressive scientism.

The geologist’s radical action as a radical subject was able to make a radical event that can turn the course of the history and civilization of mankind. The radical event was the fall of the meteors onto the Earth. The riot then broke up, a fight between the authoritarian government on the scientism side and the followers of the radical subject. They massively revolted and destroyed laboratories as well as centers of industries. The chaos escalated, causing shortages in food and nutrition supplies, diseases, and eventually mass death.

In Žižek’s perspective, the geologist is the subject who can become a “vanishing mediator”, namely a being that can make the subject a “psychotic subject”. He is a subject who

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<sup>57</sup> Karl R. Popper, *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1965; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 79-80.

<sup>58</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with The Negative: Kant, Hegel, and The Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 21.

can make himself distant from the Symbolic and can choose freely. After all, his radical action appeared from disability to choose freely in the Symbolic's order. If the subject rejected the order then he is automatically considered an enemy, wrong, and negative<sup>59</sup>.

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 regained their humanity back. This was marked by spirituality and the beauty of morality. Religions 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 then 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 the 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 then 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 an unlimited love. By the 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 ideology<sup>60</sup>.

Literature is a radicalization of its author's action as a subject. Taufiq al-Hakim criticized positivistic scientism radically because these hundreds of years view which emerged along with Western humanism had opposed the medieval thoughts. The Western medieval era was well-known for its theological glory. The emergence of the modern era had opposed theology and proclaimed that reason is the only light on human's way of life and that theology is 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 was then developed in the West and had wide influence to the Eastern world until this day.

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<sup>59</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 186.

<sup>60</sup> Robertus Robet, *Manusia Politik*, 115; Yulia Nasrul Latifi, *Kritik Nawal al-Sa'dawi*, 2020.

Here the author's rationality can be seen since he openly and objectively acknowledged the fact of scientific development with all of 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 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...<sup>61</sup>*

The passages above 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 human's old world in scientific advancement that gave birth to tyrannical scientism. The first knowledge he got as a part of new insights he had gained was "death". Since humans did not die for thousands of years, "death" was an epic event that had been longed for as a form of happiness and peace-giving liberation.

Then, the subject created a fantasy of a spiritual world filled with love, art, and conscience. His fantasy was also 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 badly needed by the contemporary-modern human being

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<sup>61</sup> Taufiq al-Ḥakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn", 93-94. The original text says:

يا 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، ويستنير 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...

now and after. Scientists, philosophers, and religious people need 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.”<sup>62</sup>*

The passages above 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 the 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 also of global-ecological perspective.

In Islam, the Holy Qur'an (29: 88; 3: 185; 21: 35; 29: 57)<sup>63</sup> has also emphasized the importance of such scientific knowledge as was believed by the poet in the short story. The poem recited by the poet in the short story above implied the faith and acknowledgement of God, the Immortal One, while humans in all their forms are mortal. No matter how great the human mind and its scientific and technological endeavors are, they cannot violate the law of nature dictated by God that all men must die or their bodies will disintegrate. At the end of the day, human beings are merely part of the nature. They cannot transcend it.

Because of that, the poem asserts that the specialty of human beings is in their capability of keeping the balance between the three natures they have, namely: mind, body, and conscience, based on their respective portions and functions. In developing civilization, the

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<sup>62</sup> Taufiq al-Hakim, “Fī Sanah Milyūn”, 98-99. The original text says:  
وظهر “الحب”. وبظهوره ظهر “الفن” و “الشعر”. وهكذا حكمت الطبيعة بالهها الأكبر الأرض مرة أخرى... وعادت الأديان السماوية... 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.../أيها الطبيعة الرحيمة.. لك أنت وحدك عمر الأبد.../أما نحن فلا نريد غير عمر الندى.../تهبط من السماء عند الفجر.../وتصعد إلى السماء عند الضحى...//

<sup>63</sup> Al-Qur’an al-Karim

work of mind must also be accompanied by the work of conscience. The Holy Qur'an (7: 179; 16: 78; 22: 9)<sup>64</sup> also regularly asserts the importance of thinking with righteous judgement (not rational thinking alone) so the civilization developed will be dignified. With conscience, a compassionate civilization can be built. The mortality of the human body is logical, and the immortality of a purified soul is the truth of myth or religion. The only being immortal is the Almighty God, as it is believed in myths or religions (Q.S 29: 88)<sup>65</sup>.

The geologists created his fantasy in 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 effective if one merely "believes" in Him. *Mythos*, or religion, basically is 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 it<sup>66</sup>.

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

*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. 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 machine<sup>67</sup>.*

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 mainly related to our minds, but our actions instead. Religion is a practical discipline that enables us to find the new abilities of mind, heart, and ethical deeds<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> *Al-Qur'an al-Karim*

<sup>65</sup> *Al-Qur'an al-Karim*

<sup>66</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan; Sanggahan terhadap Fundamentalisme dan Ateisme*, in Yuliani Liputo (translir), Bandung; Mizan, 2011, 13

<sup>67</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*, England: Oneworld Oxford, 2002 37.

<sup>68</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan*, 14-15.

The criticism of scientism in the story has strong relevance to the problem of scientific and technological advancement in our era. The modern science developed by the 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 of ideas in the West continually speak about alternative models for science and technology<sup>69</sup>.

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 the new one. What had been justified as right in the old paradigm had problems to be criticized and replaced by the new paradigms with new standards of truth, and so on<sup>70</sup>.

The criticism of the story is also in line with Feyerabend's idea. According to him, science is very close to myth so science cannot claim that it is the only owner of truth. The scientific method cannot monopolize the truth since there is much meaningful knowledge in life that is not in form of science. The authority of science in the modern era is not because of its rational arguments, but it is more of 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 the free society<sup>71</sup>.

Moreover, Rorty's view emphasized that science and scientific language is not a reflection of the nature, it is "a justified true belief" established through conversation<sup>72</sup>. Science is just one of the human activities to deal with their 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

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<sup>69</sup> Osman Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-esai tentang Sejarah dan Filsafat Sains Islam*, in Yuliani Liputo (transl), Badung; Pustaka Hidayah, 1994, 214.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: Peran Paradigma dalam Revolusi Sains*, in Tjun Surjaman (transl), Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, London, NLB Verso Edition, 1975; Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 81.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979

science is not a search for metahistorical truth, but merely a “language game exchange” which is just paradigmatic fractures<sup>73</sup>.

Through the subject’s fantasy in the poem recited by the 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 be decreasing. 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 had 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 whole<sup>74</sup>. A symptom is a way the subject chose to “avoid madness” and to “replace the nothing”<sup>75</sup>. The function of fantasy is to fulfill the opening contained in “the other” since it contains the Lack to hide the Other’s inconsistency<sup>76</sup>.

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

The short story sounded a religious criticism of scientism which shackled human beings in a tyrannic way. The author’s way of doing so is by creating a radical subject that destroys and disrupts scientism, which in Žižek’s theory of subjectivity is called the Symbolic. The subject attempted to approach the Real which is his fantasy of human mortality and the

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<sup>73</sup> Mohammad Muslih, *Falsafah Sains*, 82.

<sup>74</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 2008, 78.

<sup>75</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 81; Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London. New York: Verso, 2000, 265.

<sup>76</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object*, 138.



immortality and the eternity of God. This is the belief in the religion, and this is the humanistic and realistic point of view that liberates human beings from oppression to them imposed by tyrannical scientism. A literary work is its author's radical action for his emancipatory objectives. As an empty and dialectic subject, he will always move to seek his fulfillment from the split caused by various trauma. Through the radical action of his hero, the author attempted to overthrow the old structure and replace it with a new, more humanistic, and liberating one.

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# Bukti Konfirmasi Review Kedua

## 03 April 2023

dergipark.org.tr/en/journal/2836/article/1249910/author/email

**DergiPark**  
AKADEMIK

English Yulia Latifi

**From:** Necmettin KIZILKAYA  
**To:** Yulia LATIFI  
**Subject:** darulfunun ilahiyat - The decision has been made for the article  
**Date:** April 3, 2023 at 3:16:09 PM

Dear Dr. Latifi,

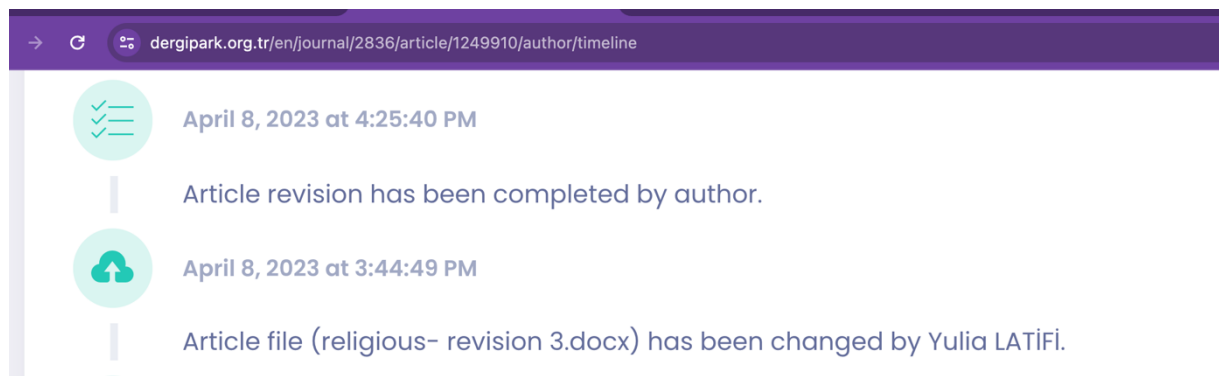
The decision has been marked by Necmettin KIZILKAYA for the article titled 1249910 - "Religious Criticism of Scientism: The Subjectivity of Taufiq al-Hakim in the Short Story "Fi Sanah Milyun".

Dear Yulia LATIFI,  
**Decision:** Minor Revision

The article is in the status "Revision Requested". You can access the process page from the <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/journal/2836/article/1249910/author/decision> link.

darulfunun ilahiyat

## Bukti Respon dan Submit Artikel Revised Kedua



### Religious Criticism of Scientism:

#### The Subjectivity of Taufiq al-Ḥakīm in the Short Story “*Fī Sanah Milyūn*”

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### **Abstract**

This paper studied the Egyptian modern short story “*Fī Sanah Milyūn*” by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm. The story told us about the advancement of science and technology which was at its peak in 1000 CE, where people are made immortal and in turn 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 then revealed that scientism had deprived humanity of human beings and generated a lack that 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 his fulfillment, the Subject kept moving to approximate The Real, namely a scientific order that has a transcendental-religious paradigm containing ordered values and honor the humanity of human beings.

**Key words:**

Aarabic Literature, Žižek's Subjectivity, Science, Transendental Paradigm, Humanity.

## Extended Summary

The dynamics of science and religion discourse are getting stronger and more global. Since the impact caused by science and technology is so broad and complex, and the values it produces are difficult to predict, this changing era has become increasingly frightening for those who have a deep concern about the direction of human history and its final destination, especially the ever-threatened lives of religions.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm depicts the conflict between science and religion in Arabic literature. Born in Egypt, in 1898, he became a well-known author whose fictional works have been translated into various languages. One of them is the anthology *Arinī Allāh* (Show Me [What] Allah [Looks Like]), which contains a short story entitled "*Fī Sanah Milyūn*" (In the Year a Thousand AD). Originally published in 1953, the story represented al-Ḥakīm's thoughts on the relationship between religion and science in a different, unique, and interesting way.

The story was set in the fictional year 1000 AD when scientific progress had reached its pinnacle and had drastically altered the fundamentals of human life, as well as the cultural and natural order. Humans lived eternally and did not know death like God. They only had reason to think and no longer had a heart. There was no more compassion. So, they thought it was their nature and nothing beyond it. A geologist then emerged by showing a scientific finding of a human skull, which meant humans were mortal. He then tried to share this finding and developed a religious concept in which there was a God who created life and could make men die. By doing so, he was then considered a threat to the common belief in scientism and eventually executed by the government and most scientists. Nonetheless, even at the cost of his life, his teaching and belief survived and spread.

Thus, al-Ḥakīm's radical criticism and actions through this short story are consistent with the theory of subjectivity introduced by Žižek. Žižek has the view that a subject exists, but he is split and empty. To find self-fulfillment, the subject takes radical action by fighting and destroying the oppressive "the symbolic." There are 3 Lacanian phases developed by Žižek in this theory of subjectivity: The Real, The Symbolic, and The Imaginary. The Real is the pre-symbolic phase where the subject always longs and becomes a basis for his fantasy. The Symbolic is the oppressive order and structure that the subject is against. The Imaginary is an illusion, the phase when The Symbolic starts to become tyrannical. We have used the hermeneutic method in the analysis of this research. The findings are as follows:

### **Scientism is *The Oppressing Symbolic***

The short story describes the peak of scientific and technological progress without an axiological basis so that the impact is dire for the survival of all living things. The severe nuclear and chemical war has occurred and changed the entire face of the earth. The positivistic understanding of scientism is its philosophical basis, so that human life is atheistic, nihilistic, and non-humanist. According to the short story, the human side of humanity was lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans ultimately did not know history, the past, or

the future. Men became like the sea, planets, mountains. They resembled unchanging nature. They also lacked love, heart, and feelings. They did not recognize marriage systems anymore, since laboratories had taken over the role of marriage in producing offspring.

### **The Subject's Radical Action**

The condition soon changed with the emergence of a geologist (the radical subject) who then rejected scientism. In 1000 AD, the geologist found a human skull buried for thousands of years beneath the earth's surface. After long contemplation, he concluded that the skull was undeniable evidence that humans could die. This belief then led him to a new thought that when humans died one day, reason ensures that there was a higher Essence that would not die. The essence is God. In Žižek's theory, a radical subject emerges from a series of oppressions caused by a certain ideology and forces that legitimize it. Since The Symbolic contains this tyrannical ideology, the subject then appears through a radical action to fight against this deficient Symbolic.

In *Fī Sanah Milyūn*, the geologist then preached his new religious-metaphysically-based knowledge. But the government and scientists refused and then sentenced him to death. After that, several meteors fell on the earth and hit the residents' houses, causing people to lose their lives. This eventually led to a commotion among the rest of the people. For the first time in history, actual people were losing their lives. This catastrophe was followed by a riot, since it proved the geologist's belief to be true. Humans can die and will die, no matter how great science is to fortify their bodies against death.

### **Subject's Fantasy**

Before the geologist was executed, he gave rise to fantasies about the spiritual world and spirituality in the form of love, art, and feelings. His fantasy was also related to a metaphysical idea of transcendental consciousness. In other words, 'God exists'. This simple statement was to be made a metaphysical basis for the development of theistic science which was very much needed by modern-contemporary humans now and in the future. Fantasy is The Real which he longs for as the goal of all his movements as a radical subject. The fantasy of the radical subject is to build completeness of meaning and become the estuary of values. It is very important to rely on the transcendental value system (God) as the estuary of all values. All value systems created by humans on earth should be based on the owner of the value system itself, namely God. This is the key for humans and including scientists and governments in developing and directing the pace of science so that it is based on humanist-transcendental values and also has a global-ecological perspective.

The short story voices religious criticism of scientism which shackles humanity tyrannically. The way to reject and criticize short stories against scientism voiced by religion is by bringing up radical subjects that damage and disrupt The Symbolic in the form of oppressive scientism. The movement of the subject seeks to approach The Real, namely his fantasy about human mortality and God's immortality. This is the belief that exists in religion, and this is a humanist and realistic perspective that frees human beings from the



oppression of science and the shackles of scientism. A literary work is a radicalization of the author's actions for his emancipatory goals. As an empty and dialectical subject, the author will continue to move to find his fulfillment, which is divided due to various traumas. Through the radical actions of the narrative characters, the author seeks to subvert the old, oppressive structure and replace it with a new structure that is more humane and liberates human beings.

## Introduction

The dynamics of scientific and religious discourse are getting stronger, even globalized. Not only theologians, but scientists also appeared to have the same concern that they keep seeking pattern relations between science and religion. The current advancement of science and technology has made radical and incredible changes which 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 values<sup>1</sup>.

The impact of the change is worldwide and complex. The values it will result from are difficult to predict. Thus, it scares those who are in deep concern 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 lives<sup>2</sup>. 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*<sup>3</sup>.

Science, with all of its advancement, then appeared to be about to replace religion. Science had made itself the only valid and correct interpreter of the world, and this is what scientism is<sup>4</sup>. 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 the episteme building which is the fundamental to the growth of science itself<sup>5</sup>.

With objectivity and universality claims, scientific findings experience an escalation that Lyotard called grand-narrative<sup>6</sup>. In Foucault's view, the grand narrative is the power that exterminates small narratives and marginalizes anything viewed as unobjective and irrational from a positivistic point of view<sup>7</sup>.

As we can see, one of scientism's radical rejections of religion 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

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

<sup>2</sup> Sudiarja, 39.

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

<sup>4</sup> Mohammad 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.

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

<sup>6</sup> J Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report and Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 77.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Peregrine, 1979).

influenced those who came after. They then 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)<sup>8</sup>.

However, though had failed, their critical thoughts were important in maturing religion itself. Those atheistic understandings had given challenges to religions so that they may prevail, improve themselves, and have critical reflections on facts in theism which indeed need criticism. Because of those atheistic views, religions had been helped to keep learning critically, being able to pure themselves, and fighting for seizing their core messages back<sup>9</sup>.

Within the struggle between science and religion, in the context of modern Christianity, Ian G. Barbour is announced as one of the founders of the discourse of science and religion in the West. This physicist-theologian mapped four relations between religion and science. They are conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. According to Barbour, integration is the only relevant model now<sup>10</sup>. In line with this, Haught also offered four kinds of relations between science and religion. They are conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation. He concluded that confirmation is the only model relevant to our era<sup>11</sup>.

In Islamic context, the discourse of science and religion became popular from 1970 to 1990's. Among the founders, there are 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*<sup>12</sup>.

Amid the struggle between the discourse of science and religion, in the contemporary Islamic world, Taufiq al-Hakim then emerged. He was born in Alexandria<sup>13</sup>, Egypt, in 1898. He studied law at Sorbonne University, Paris. He also spent 4 years in the city to study literature, art, culture, and classical as well as modern intellectuality. In 1928 he returned to Egypt and worked as a member of the Board. Then he moved to The Department of Education and Social Department. Many of his fiction had been translated into various languages in the world.

Al-Hakim was different from the other writers, scientists, or theologians in presenting his thoughts on the relationship between science and religion. In his short story "Fī Sanah Milyūn" (In 1000 CE) he imagined that the advancement of science had reached its peak.

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<sup>8</sup> Franz Magnis Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan [Rationalizing God]*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 64–98.

<sup>9</sup> Suseno, 100–101.

<sup>10</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* (New York: Harper, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Muslih, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Syaūqī Daiyf, *Al-Adab al 'Arabī al Mu'Asir Fī Misra* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1957), 288–98.

It is told that in 1000 CE all wars had come to an end and all diseases had been cured. Marriage as means to produce offspring had been replaced by laboratories and human beings lived in a universal and friendly bonding. Animals or plants were no more. Human's meals were made from gasses mined from the Earth. The advancement of science had made human beings immortal so that they have the ability of The Immortal One. But they lost their fundamental aspects of humanity accordingly. Then the hero emerged. He was a geologist who, according to his scientific research findings, concluded that men should die and God exists; an old paradigm that had been lost in the history of mankind and unknown for hundreds of thousands of years. This radical subject was then sentenced to death by the government and scientism fanatics. However, the idea then spread widely.

The idea of the problematic relationship between religion and science sounded in "Fī Sanah Milyūn" is interesting to study, since it described the prediction of science advancement nowadays. The short story is contained in the anthology *Arinī Allāh (Show Me What Allah Looks Like)* by Taufiq al-Ḥakīm firstly published in Egypt in 1953. Through his creative world of imagination, the author offered a different way of reading in picturing the pattern of relation between science and religion in the future, when mankind had reached the peak in unimaginable scientific advancement.

The strength of the author's imagination in picturing such advancement of science is his freedom and autonomy as an author who has done radicalization of action. In the story, Taufiq al-Ḥakīm illustrated the peak of scientific glory on an amazing and radical level. But, at the same time, the author was also criticizing it radically because it did not have 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 one of the media that can deliver knowledge uniquely and differently because of its wide area and 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.

Daiches<sup>14</sup> saw literature as a form of work that can deliver the type of knowledge which can't be delivered in other way. Meanwhile, Teeuw<sup>15</sup> stated that the process of interpreting a literary work exists in a multiple-layer dynamics, since there is a tension between language norms and the poet's freedom, the literature system and individual work, literature norms and cultural norms (affirmation, restoration, negation), the author's intention and the interpretation, literature work and reader's capability, and so on.

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<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> A Teeuw, *Khazanah Sastra Indonesia [A Treasure of Indonesian Literature]* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1993), 19–25; Latifi and et.al, *Metode Penelitian Sastra I [Method of Literature Research I]*, 4–5.

In the study of Arabic literature, Egypt is well known as one of the pioneer countries in introducing the ideas of development, modernization, and issues of human liberation. Audah<sup>16</sup> showed the advance of Egyptian modern literature development along with its influencing emancipatory ideas. Ahmed<sup>17</sup> pointed the importance of Egypt as the main container of the transformational processes and struggle between ideologies in the updates of the Islamic world since the 19th century. This is because Egypt is the first country to experience modernization in culture and intellectuality as the impact of European expansion. Taufiq al-Ḥakīm emerged amid these struggles and transformations.

Taufiq al-Ḥakīm's radical criticism and action as the author in his rejection of scientism as his attempt to establish complementary and dialogical relations between science and religion above 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 then acted radically to fight against and destroy the symbolic, which in this case is the tyrannical scientism.

In the context of subject and subjectivity, Mansfield<sup>18</sup> explained that the subject is an important term used to describe the interior life of human beings and selfhood which is related to politics, language, gender, culture, and so on. Subjectivity<sup>19</sup> is an abstract concept that helps explain why selfhood is involved with the other-self, either as an object of need, desire, and interest or as a need to various common experiences.

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 tradition<sup>20</sup>. For Žižek<sup>21</sup>, the subject never dies and he will always exist in his own unique and radical way.

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 longing 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 existence<sup>22</sup>.

For Žižek, the subject is split since he experienced trauma caused by the tyrannical and oppressive Symbolic<sup>23</sup>. The language and symbolic order that has been in 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 narration<sup>24</sup>. In the context

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<sup>16</sup> Ali Audah, "Sastra Arab Mutakhir [Contemporary Arabic Literature]," *Ulumul Qur'an*, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Leila 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>.

<sup>18</sup> Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity Theories of The Self from Freud to Haraway* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 185.

<sup>19</sup> Mansfield, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Tony Myers, *Slavoj Žižek* (London: Routledge, 2003), 98.

<sup>22</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 182.

<sup>23</sup> Žižek, 204.

<sup>24</sup> 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.

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 emptiness, since all his life he always passes a never-ending dialogical process. The subject is diluted into various determinations of particular predicate<sup>25</sup>. It is in this split and emptiness the subject will always move to seek his fulfillment and fullness by doing a radical action as a form of struggle against the Symbolic that had confined him. For Žižek, the subject can become the Vanishing Mediator, namely 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 conveys the subject as mad, madness, there for as for Žižek a prerequisite for sanity, that is for the normalcy of a civilized subject”<sup>26</sup>.

The subject’s radical act is his authentic freedom toward the truth and self-liberation. Using Lacan’s thesis on suicide, Žižek gave an example of his interpretation of Italian films that showed the dialectics of symbolical identification which brings the subject’s position to its authenticity and genuine in his radical actions<sup>27</sup>.

As emphasized by Russell Grigg, the Žižekian radical action has three characteristics. First, the action must radically change the actor. Second, the subject must eliminate himself symbolically so that he may reborn. Third, the authentic action is always violating the established law so that it is considered destructive and negative from the Symbolic’s point of view<sup>28</sup>.

As a Marxist, Žižek stated that the subject’s radical action is an emancipatory action to liberate human beings from the shackling of oppressing systems. The symbolic always has an oppressive ideology in its order. Unfortunately, the majority do not realize it. Even it is experienced as common and natural to them because of its subtlety. For Marx<sup>29</sup>, as cited by Žižek, an ideology is a fake consciousness because what

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<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 21.

<sup>26</sup> 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>.

<sup>27</sup> Robertus 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]* (Tangerang: Marjin Kiri, 2010), 110–13; Yulia Nasrul 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” (Disertation, Yogyakarta, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2020).

<sup>28</sup> 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, “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.”

<sup>29</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 24.

appears in the 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 the 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 structure<sup>30</sup>.

Lacan called it “transversing the fantasy”; the subject suspends the fantasy frame of unwritten laws which makes him free to choose<sup>31</sup>. The fantasy is important so that it became a narration of primordial loss since the subject rejected the laws in the symbolic. The fantasy then provides a rationalization for the inherent “deadlock” of the drive<sup>32</sup>. 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’ new world shaped by science. In that period, the advancement of science had reached its peak after hundreds of thousands of years of accumulation. Nuclear and chemical wars happened a lot, they destroyed museums and libraries, animals, and plants. Eventually, human lives were changed drastically. The shape and physical structure of human beings are also changed. Humans no longer had digestive systems, mouths, and teeth. Their legs and arms became small and weak, as they never used them anymore. Yet, through the advancement of medical science, all diseases had been cured and men were made immortal.

Furthermore, in 1000 CE humans did not have a value system anymore. The positivistic paradigm which was the result of scientism had rejected the transcendental-religious-philosophical paradigm. It implied that human lives became horrible since their humanity was deprived of them. Humans did not know God, and did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore. This is implied by the following passages in the story<sup>33</sup>:

*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 world*<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> 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>.

<sup>31</sup> Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 39; Latifi, “Women’s Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawāl Al-Sa’dāwī’s Fantasy in Zīnah).”

<sup>32</sup> Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 43; Latifi, “Women’s Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawāl Al-Sa’dāwī’s Fantasy in Zīnah).”

<sup>33</sup> All of the short stories’ translation here is mine.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

*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 God, unborn and did not give birth... did not know death and knew only immortality and did not know yesterday or tomorrow<sup>35</sup>.*

The passages above describe the peaks of scientific and technological advancements without axiological backup so that its impact is horrible to any form of life. The colossal nuclear and chemical wars had happened and reshaped the Earth's face radically and almost unimaginable. The radicality of Earth's change shows how strong the positivistic scientism influenced human philosophy of life and they made it the only 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 in the "peak of scientific advancement" is the author's reading on the future of human beings that 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 that they will never compete God.

Apart from his sharp criticism of the theological problems, the story also criticizes the horrible ecological problem, because animals and plants were massively eradicated by science through the colossal nuclear and chemical wars. In our daily life now, the ecological and environmental problems are serious and massive. The damage in our ecosystems becomes more and more severe, and it threatens all forms of life on Earth. Therefore<sup>36</sup>, religions concern more on this problem. The Muslims, the Catholics, the Protestants, the Jews, the Buddhists, the Hinduists, and the Confucianists attempt to give solutions to this ecological crisis based on their respective religious ethics.

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<sup>35</sup> 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 وطاقروسمك... 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 غذاءه 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....

<sup>36</sup> 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).



There is a historical reason for the existence of a scientific view which gives 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 sharpen the boundary between the meaningful as the region of the 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, metaphysics, morals, and aesthetics.

It is that paradigm of positivistic knowledge which is called scientism. Kuhn called it "incommensurable", which is the paradigm that keep competing in science and tends to negate their competitors<sup>37</sup>. They interpret the science positively as a task that produces useful technical knowledge. But they do not generate wider philosophical and theological conclusions<sup>38</sup>.

In Žižek's theory of subjectivity, the scientism view which appears from the positivism paradigm that does not value-based or philosophical-axiological-based as implied in the story is the oppressive Symbolic. It does not matter how strong the penetration that has been 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 Žižek<sup>39</sup>: "*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*".

An intervention from an authoritarian government which does not want to accept change and a humanistic view of life has become the greatest barrier for a society in their course to find their humanity, namely their source of happiness and peace of soul. It is depicted in the story, that the humane aspects of men had lost hundreds of thousands of years ago. Humans eventually did not know history, the past, and the future. They became like the sea, planets, and mountain, like the unchanging nature. Humans did not have love, heart, and conscience anymore since marriage systems no longer existed. The laboratory had replaced their role in producing offspring. 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*

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<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Isu Dalam Sains Dan Agama [Issues in Science and Religion]*, trans. Damayanti and Ridwan (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2006), 170.

<sup>39</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi and Wening 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]," *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 19, no. 1 (September 28, 2020): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2020.191.1-20>.

*help of science that had made human bodies immortal and covered humane aspects of human beings from spirituality and the beauty of morals...<sup>40</sup>*

*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...<sup>41</sup>*

*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” ...<sup>42</sup>*

The colossal nuclear and chemical wars impact which then reshaped the dimension of nature and humanity was the fact that in essence human civilization had been destroyed. Through the advancement of science and technology, the face of Eartha had been changed radically. It also had changed and annihilated the function and essence of human beings as the highest creation that had various specialties. Men did not have a dimension of spirituality and a noble sense of art and morality anymore. Men were then not different from the sea, mountain, and the sun. In another work of Arabic literature, the tyrannic Symbolic is in form of a patriarchal interpretation of religion that has been around for thousands of years. The interpretation oppresses women from theological, legal, as well as eschatological (paradise and hell) aspects. To overthrow these is precisely the radical subject's goal<sup>43</sup>.

Seen through Žižek's perspective, such shackling view is the Symbolic that becomes more tyrannic because of The Big Other in the form of political penetration and authoritarian power<sup>44</sup>. The Big Other appeared clearly since the story stated that the authoritarianism of the government had become a barrier to the achievement of people's “dreams of divinity”.

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<sup>40</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000),” 97. The original text says:

إلى 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...

<sup>41</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, 80–81. The original text says:

لقد 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 الذي يجهز بكتريا النسل الأدمى في معاملة... ولقد ظل الأمر يجري على هذا النهج ألوفاً من الأعوام... لقد أصبح البشر الموجودون شأنهم شأن عناصر الطبيعة الخالدة التي لا تتغير، إنهم باقون دائماً كتلك الشمس الباقية وذلك القمر و ذلك البحر وذلك الجبل... كلمة الشيخوخة لم يعد لها مدلول في لغة ذلك العصر... ولا كلمة الشباب...

<sup>42</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, 91–92. The original text says:

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

<sup>43</sup> Yulia Nasrul Latifi, “The Destruction of the Symbolic of Patriarchal Construction of Discourse on Religion in the Novel Suquth Al-Imam By Nawal al-Sa’dawi,” in *Globalization & Humanities Making Sense of Islamic Culture in the Contemporary World* (International Proceeding: the 2nd Adab International Conference on Information and Cultural Science 2020, Yogyakarta: Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2020), 19–31, <http://aiconics.uin-suka.ac.id/id/page/prodi/1226-AICONICS-Proceedings>.

<sup>44</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*.

In the reality, there will always shortage in the Symbolic so that it contains the Lack in the Big Other. This is precisely what causes The Symbolic an open structure that can be criticized continually by the subject<sup>45</sup>. From the Lack contained in the Symbolic, a space for the subject to act radically emerged.

### **Radical Action of the Subject**

The story was continued by describing that the history course of the non-value based and non-axiological based scientism was 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, the scientific discovery then 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 the 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*

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<sup>45</sup> 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]."

*excitement?” (85)<sup>46</sup>. 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 failure<sup>47</sup>.*

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 in 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 then showed that such advancement was inconsistent with his scientific discovery.

In reality, 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.

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 the ideology is in the fact that many people do not know what they are doing. They have a fake representation of their social reality<sup>48</sup>. 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

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<sup>46</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000),” 81–85 The original text says:

في صيف ذلك العام - المليون بعد الميلاد - دخل عالم من علماء طبقات الأرض على عالم من علماء الكيمياء وقال له: يخيل إليّ أني سأنر نحو اكتشاف خطير، حيث يدهش الناس جميعا... لقد عثرت على عمق بعيد في جوف الأرض على هذا الأثر... انظر... وأخرج بحرص من حقيبته الصغيرة جمجمة آدمية... (٨١)

ووقف الرجلان مشدوهين أمام الجمجمة، فهذا شيء جديد لا يوجد له نظير في متاحفهم... وقال عالم الجيولوجيا: لا 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... (٨٢)

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

٨٣

وهمش كالمخاطب نفسه: مادام هناك وجود فلا بد أن يكون هناك عدم وجود... (٨٤)

لقد تعبت من نفسي الآن... إنه إلهام، إنني مؤمن أنه يوجد شيء فلنسمه “الموت”... لا بد أن نصل إليه يوما... اصدقوني القول أيها العلماء... ألم يشعر أحدكم مرة بإغفاءة طارئة عابرة كخفقة الجفن، أحس خلالها لذة وراحة من نوع غريب؟ (٨٥).

<sup>47</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, 87. The original text says:

واقفت هيئة العلماء على هذه النظرية بالإجماع، وحذروا عالم الجيولوجيا من الاسترسال في أمثال هذه الترهات، خوفا على بسطاء العقول في المجتمع ممن يستهويهم جوالخرافات... وانصرف العلماء عن زميلهم الجيولوجي وتركوه غارقا في خزيه وخيبته. (87)

<sup>48</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 27.

because of various trauma he had 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 pragmatical way of thinking that enables one to effectively function in the world. It accurately matches the external reality. *Logos* sees forward, keeps looking for new ways to control the environment, improving the old insights, and creating 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, human needs “*mythos*” or “myth”<sup>49</sup>.

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 his society from this tyrannical Symbolic.

Although the radical subject was then antagonized and negatively judged, the story then told that the geologist’s new thoughts were getting widely spread in secret. In the beginning, he was rejected by his fellow scientists, he then met a gentle friend who was called “a woman” in the past. She was then the first human who believed in the geologist. They then experienced a strange feeling that was unknown in that era, namely a feeling of trust in and love towards each other<sup>50</sup>. After that, as a prophet, the geologist then got a challenge of performing a miracle that justify 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 battle<sup>51</sup>.*

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<sup>49</sup> 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.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, “Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000),” 87–93.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, 96. The original text says:

The passages above 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 science and technology human had developed, their mind has definite limitations.

The fall of the meteors is a miracle that proved that humans must eventually and can die, no matter how far science can shield human body so that they may live forever. The form of prophets' miracles always matched the contexts and challenges of their era. The advancement of dark arts during Pharaoh's era caused the miracle of Moses to occur in the form of a magical staff which could turn into a huge snake. The miracle of Jesus took the form of curing blindness because of the advancement of medical science at that time. 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. As described in the story, The Prophet's (the geologist's) miracle was the fall of some meteors down to Earth to prove the mortality of human beings as against the advancement of science and technology which enabled men to be immortal.

Although the miracle had been performed and justified the geologist's thoughts, the government's scientists did want to believe it. After the meteor incident, a riot broke out and after dozens of thousands of years of peace, chaos happened in human history. The government and scientists then arrested and sentenced him to death for his rebellion and misleading men. The geologist's brain was then muted by electrocuting so it became paralyzed forever. 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 there<sup>52</sup>.*

The geologist's action was considered radical and negative from the Symbolic's (namely the government's) point of view. But for him, it is the government who oppressed people using their positivistic scientism. The oppressing Symbolic was worsened by the Big Other so that it became more tyrannical. The

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ذاع خبر العالم الجيولوجي. وشاعت فكرته، واستفحل أمره، انضحم إليه كثير من المتشيعين له. وكان هذا أول نبي ظهر منذ مئات الآلاف من الأعوام. ولكن 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... وإذا بنيزك ضخم من نيازك السماء يضرب وجه الأرض ويغور فيها فيسحق رأس إنسان فوق سطح بيته بجوف الأرض، وأصرت الحكومة، فوقعت الفتنة، وحدث شغب هو الأول منذ عشرات الآلاف من السنين... وانتصر الحكومة.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Hakīm, 96. The original text says:

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

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 which always had space to be criticized by the radical subject.

The appearance of the subject is logical. This is in line with Russell Grigg's statement that Žižekian 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 Symbolic's point of view<sup>53</sup>. 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 stated clearly the limitations of senses. Therefore, it is mentioned in many verses that a scientist from a Qur'anic point of view is those who use his heart to think besides 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. The science developed in this way would 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 helps 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 on those realities. The physical world, like the other worlds, gained its existence from God. They will always be related to Him<sup>54</sup>. An enlightened religion uses the same method as one used in scientific research. Science also involves assumptions and moral commitment as they are in religion<sup>55</sup>.

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 creation<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> 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, "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."

<sup>54</sup> 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.

<sup>55</sup> Barbour, *Isu Dalam Sains Dan Agama [Issues in Science and Religion]*, 174.

<sup>56</sup> 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.

Meanwhile, Barbour made difference between “natural theology” and “theology of nature” as two ways of bridging science and religion. The first is 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) could depart from a certain religious tradition and see many of their beliefs were in line with science, although some of their beliefs must be reformulated in the light of scientific theories<sup>57</sup>.

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, cannot be accepted. Popper created a new demarcation with “the falsification principle”. He concluded that religion is still valid since although many of its propositions cannot be proven scientifically (for example, the existence of The Almighty God) they are meaningful propositions. 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 it<sup>58</sup>.

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 other<sup>59</sup>.

As a subject, the geologist or the Prophet was a reality that had been inherent in the Symbolic’s 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 the 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 the oppressive scientism.

The geologist’s radical action as a radical subject was able to make a radical event that can turn the course of the history and civilization of mankind. The radical event was the fall of the meteors onto the Earth. The riot then broke up, a fight between the authoritarian government on the scientism side and the followers of the radical subject. They massively revolted and destroyed laboratories as well as centers of industries. The chaos escalated, causing shortages in food and nutrition supplies, diseases, and eventually mass death. The

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<sup>57</sup> 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.

<sup>58</sup> 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.

<sup>59</sup> Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, 21.



radical subject that courageously fought the Symbolic also appeared in the fictional works of Nawal al-Sa'dawi. To destroy the patriarchy in religious discourse, the hero Fathiyyah killed her father. Her fellow mothers killed their children and eventually committed suicide<sup>60</sup>.

In Žižek's perspective, the geologist is the subject who can become a "vanishing mediator", namely a being that can make the subject a "psychotic subject". He is a subject who can make himself distant from the Symbolic and can choose freely. After all, his radical action appeared from disability to choose freely in the Symbolic's order. If the subject rejected the order then he is automatically considered an enemy, wrong, and negative<sup>61</sup>.

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 regained their humanity back. This was marked by spirituality and the beauty of morality. Religions 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 then 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 the 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 then 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 an unlimited love. By the 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 ideology<sup>62</sup>.

Literature is a radicalization of its author's action as a subject. Taufiq al-Hakim criticized positivistic scientism radically because these hundreds of years view which emerged along with Western humanism had opposed the medieval thoughts. The Western medieval era was well-known for its theological glory. The emergence of the modern era had opposed theology and proclaimed that reason is the only light on human's way of life and that theology is 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,

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<sup>60</sup> Yulia Nasrul Latifi, Wening Udasmoro, and Juliasih J, "The Subjectivity of Nawāl Al-Sa'dāwī: Critique on Gender Relations in Religious Construction in Adab Am Qillah Adab Work," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 57, no. 2 (December 24, 2019): 257–86, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2019.572.257-286>.

<sup>61</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 186.

<sup>62</sup> 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."

and action. Humans became alpha and omega. This positivistic human secularism was then developed in the West and had wide influence to the Eastern world until this day.

Here the author's rationality can be seen since he openly and objectively acknowledged the fact of scientific development with all of 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 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...<sup>63</sup>*

The passages above 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 human's old world in scientific advancement that gave birth to tyrannical scientism. The first knowledge he got as a part of new insights he had gained was "death". Since humans did not die for thousands of years, "death" was an epic event that had been longed for as a form of happiness and peace-giving liberation.

Then, the subject created a fantasy of a spiritual world filled with love, art, and conscience. His fantasy was also 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 badly needed by the contemporary-modern human being now and after. Scientists, philosophers, and religious people need 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:*

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<sup>63</sup> Al-Ḥakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000)," 93–94. The original text says:  
يا صديقي اللطيف... هناك سر مغلق علينا... هناك سعادة منتظرة خلف باب موصد... 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... أسمىها أنا "الموت". لفظها العالم في شبه همس كأنه يحلم... وكأنه يستعين بإلهامه الخفى، ويستنير بإشراقه الداخلي ليلمح على ضوءه شبح ما يتخيل... إنه لعسير على الخالدين أن يتخيلوا "الموت". هذه الراحة... هذه اللذة... هذه السعادة... هذا الذى تسميه "الموت"... لا يد أن تصل إليه معاً، ما دمت تؤمن به، وأومن أنا بك...

*“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.”<sup>64</sup>*

The passages above 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 the 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 also of global-ecological perspective.

In Islam, the Holy Qur'an (29: 88; 3: 185; 21: 35; 29: 57)<sup>65</sup> has also emphasized the importance of such scientific knowledge as was believed by the poet in the short story. The poem recited by the poet in the short story above implied the faith and acknowledgement of God, the Immortal One, while humans in all their forms are mortal. No matter how great the human mind and its scientific and technological endeavors are, they cannot violate the law of nature dictated by God that all men must die or their bodies will disintegrate. At the end of the day, human beings are merely part of the nature. They cannot transcend it.

Because of that, the poem asserts that the specialty of human beings is in their capability of keeping the balance between the three natures they have, namely: mind, body, and conscience, based on their respective portions and functions. In developing civilization, the work of mind must also be accompanied by the work of conscience. The Holy Qur'an (7: 179; 16: 78; 22: 9)<sup>66</sup> also regularly asserts the importance of thinking with righteous judgement (not rational thinking alone) so the civilization developed will be dignified. With conscience, a compassionate civilization can be built. The mortality of the human body is logical, and the

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<sup>64</sup> 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 السماوية... وعاد الشعراء ينشدون ويقولون: “أيها الخالق الأزلي... لك أنت وحدك الخلود والجبروت...//أما نحن فلانريد أن نكون سوى بشر...//لنا جسم موتر، وقلب منقذ، وعقل متند...//أيها الطبيعة الرحيمة...لك أنت وحدك عمر الأبد...//أما نحن فلا نريد غير عمر الندى...//تهبط من السماء عند الفجر...//وتصعد إلى السماء عند الضحى. //...//

<sup>65</sup> *Al-Qur'an al-Karim*, n.d.

<sup>66</sup> *Al-Qur'an al-Karim*.

immortality of a purified soul is the truth of myth or religion. The only being immortal is the Almighty God, as it is believed in myths or religions (Q.S 29: 88)<sup>67</sup>.

The geologists created his fantasy in 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 effective if one merely "believes" in Him. *Mythos*, or religion, basically is 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 it<sup>68</sup>.

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

*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. 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 machine*<sup>69</sup>.

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 mainly related to our minds, but our actions instead. Religion is a practical discipline that enables us to find the new abilities of mind, heart, and ethical deeds<sup>70</sup>.

The criticism of scientism in the story has strong relevance to the problem of scientific and technological advancement in our era. The modern science developed by the 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 of ideas in the West continually speak about alternative models for science and technology<sup>71</sup>.

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 the new one. What had been justified

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<sup>67</sup> *Al-Qur'an al-Karim*.

<sup>68</sup> Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan: Sanggahan Terhadap Fundamentalisme Dan Ateisme [The Future of God: The Reclaiming of Spirituality's Mystical Roots]*, 13.

<sup>69</sup> A. C Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publication, 2002), 37.

<sup>70</sup> Armstrong, *Masa Depan Tuhan: Sanggahan Terhadap Fundamentalisme Dan Ateisme [The Future of God: The Reclaiming of Spirituality's Mystical Roots]*, 14–15.

<sup>71</sup> Bakar, *Tauhid & Sains, Esai-Esai Tentang Sejarah Dan Filsafat Sains Islam [Tauhid and Science, Essays on the Islamic History and Philosophy of Science]*, 214.

as right in the old paradigm had problems to be criticized and replaced by the new paradigms with new standards of truth, and so on<sup>72</sup>.

The criticism of the story is also in line with Feyerabend's idea. According to him, science is very close to myth so science cannot claim that it is the only owner of truth. The scientific method cannot monopolize the truth since there is much meaningful knowledge in life that is not in form of science. The authority of science in the modern era is not because of its rational arguments, but it is more of 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 the free society<sup>73</sup>.

Moreover, Rorty's view emphasized that science and scientific language is not a reflection of the nature, it is "a justified true belief" established through conversation<sup>74</sup>. Science is just one of the human activities to deal with their 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 fractures<sup>75</sup>.

Through the subject's fantasy in the poem recited by the 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 be decreasing. 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. When the fantasy is related to the religious discourse that is humanistic to women, Nawal al-Sa'dawi came up with another hero. In her last novel, *Zinah*, the hero of the same name was presented as an autonomous Arabic woman; she was free from the shackles of the patriarchal interpretation of religion, and she created a new structure that liberated all mankind from other human oppression and political, economic, as well as, cultural dominances<sup>76</sup>.

The geologist had 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 whole<sup>77</sup>. A symptom is a way the subject chose to "avoid madness" and to "replace the nothing"<sup>78</sup>. The function of fantasy is to fulfill the opening contained in "the other" since it contains the Lack to hide the Other's inconsistency<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Chicago.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: NLB Verso Edition, 1975), 81.

<sup>74</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979).

<sup>75</sup> 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.

<sup>76</sup> Latifi, "Women's Liberty in Religious Discourse (Nawāl Al-Sa'dāwī's Fantasy in *Zinah*)," 11–22.

<sup>77</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 78.

<sup>78</sup> Žižek, 81; Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London, New York: Verso, 2000), 265.

<sup>79</sup> 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

The short story sounded a religious criticism of scientism which shackled human beings in a tyrannic way. The author's way of doing so is by creating a radical subject that destroys and disrupts scientism, which in Žižek's theory of subjectivity is called the Symbolic. The subject attempted to approach the Real which is his fantasy of human mortality and the immortality and the eternity of God. This is the belief in the religion, and this is the humanistic and realistic point of view that liberates human beings from oppression to them imposed by tyrannical scientism. A literary work is its author's radical action for his emancipatory objectives. As an empty and dialectic subject, he will always move to seek his fulfillment from the split caused by various trauma. Through the radical action of his hero, the author attempted to overthrow the old structure and replace it with a new, more humanistic, and liberating one.

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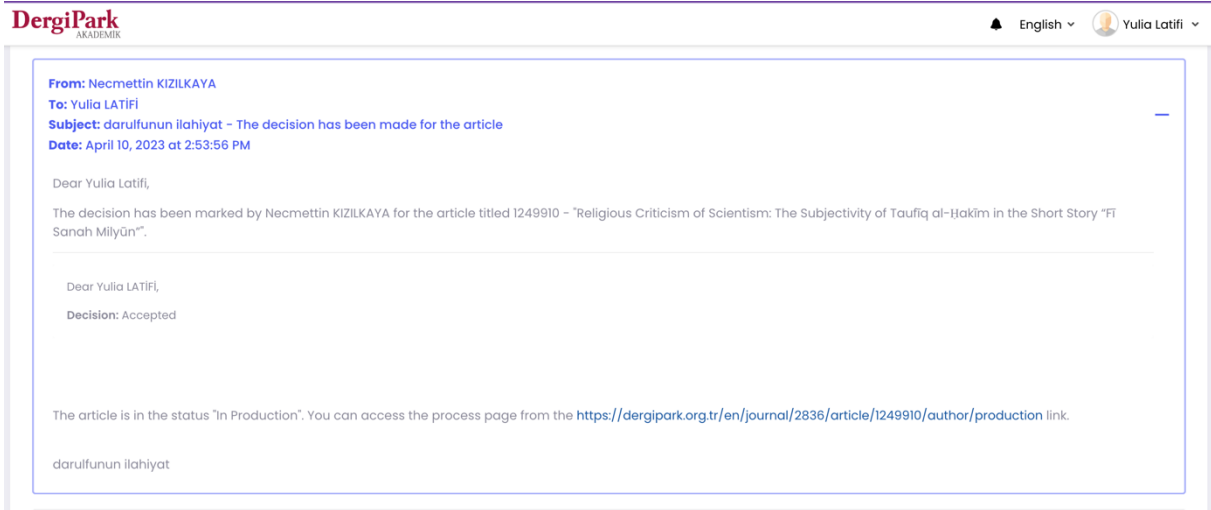
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Religious Criticism of Scientism:  
The Subjectivity of Taufiq al-Hakim in the Short Story “*Fi Sanah Milyun*”

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

Yulia Nasrul Latifi<sup>\*</sup> , Mohammad Muslih<sup>\*\*</sup> 

### 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 values<sup>1</sup>.

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 lives<sup>2</sup>. 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*<sup>3</sup>.

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 is<sup>4</sup>. 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 itself<sup>5</sup>.

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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 Mohammad 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)<sup>6</sup>.

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 message<sup>7</sup>.

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 now<sup>8</sup>. 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 era<sup>9</sup>.

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*<sup>10</sup>.

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6 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 1898<sup>11</sup>. 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. Daiches<sup>12</sup> 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. Audah<sup>13</sup> showed the advance of Egyptian modern literature development

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11 Syaouqī Ḍaiyf, *Al-Adab al ‘Arabī 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. Ahmed<sup>14</sup> 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 tradition<sup>15</sup>. For Žižek<sup>16</sup>, the Subject never dies, and will always exist in his own unique and radical way.

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 existence<sup>17</sup>.

For Žižek, the Subject is split since he experienced trauma caused by the tyrannical and oppressive Symbolic<sup>18</sup>. 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 narration<sup>19</sup>. In the

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

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

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

18 Žižek, 204.

19 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 predicate<sup>20</sup>. 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”<sup>21</sup>.

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 Marx<sup>22</sup>, 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 structure<sup>23</sup>.

Lacan called it “transversing the fantasy”; the Subject suspends on the fantasy frame of unwritten laws which makes him free to choose<sup>24</sup>. 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 drive<sup>25</sup>. 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 story<sup>26</sup>:

*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 world<sup>27</sup>.*

*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 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 Falsafiyah 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 الحرروب 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*<sup>28</sup>.

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. Therefore<sup>29</sup>, 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-Hakīm, 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 وطائر وسمك... 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... فإذا هو رأس يفكر وأنف يستنشق به غذاء من الهواء، وطعامه من الغازات، ويدان ضعيفتان وساقان هزيلتان لقلّة الاستعمال... لم يعد هناك فرق بين إنسان و بحروكوكب... إنه مثلها خالد... بل إنه الآن شبه إله... لا بلد ولا يولد... يجهل الموت ويعرف الأبد ولا يدرك الأمس ولا الغد....

29 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 competitors<sup>30</sup>. They interpreted science as a task that produces useful technical knowledge. But they did not generate wider philosophical and theological conclusions<sup>31</sup>.

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 Žižek<sup>32</sup>: "*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...*<sup>33</sup>

30 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 Lahirmnya Sains Teistik [the Philosophy of Science: From the Integration of Knowledge Issues Toward the Birth of Theistic Science]*, 79.

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

32 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 137; Yulia Nasrul Latifi and Wening 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]," *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 19, no. 1 (September 28, 2020): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2020.19.1.1-20>.

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

إلى أن أتى يوم أدرك فيه الاتباع أن النظام القائم وحده هو الحائل دون تحقيق ذلك اللحم 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...<sup>34</sup>*

*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" ...<sup>35</sup>*

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 power<sup>36</sup>. 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 Subject<sup>37</sup>. 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:

لقد تغلب العلم على الموت منذ مئات الآلاف من السنين... لم يعد هناك قوم يموتون.. ولم يعد هناك قوم يولدون أيضا... فالزواج للنسل انقضى كذلك منذ هذه الأحقاب، فالعلم هو الذى يجهز بكتريا النسل الأدمى في معاملته... ولقد ظل الأمر يجري على هذا النهج ألوفا من الأعوام... لقد أصبح البشر الموجودون شأنهم شأن عناصر الطبيعة الخالدة التى لا تتغير، إنهم باقون دائما كذلك 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 انقضت منذ مئات الآلاف من الأعوام... انقضت بانقراض الميل الغريزى بين الذكور 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)<sup>38</sup>. 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 failure<sup>39</sup>.*

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.

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-Hakīm, "Fi Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000)," 81–85 The original text says:

فى صيف ذلك العام - المليون بعد الميلاد - دخل عالم من علماء طبقات الأرض على عالم من علماء الكيمياء وقال له: يخيل إليّ أنى سائر نحو اكتشاف خطير، حيث يدهش الناس جميعاً... لقد عثرت على عمق بعيد فى جوف الأرض على هذا الأثر... انظر... وأخرج بحرص من حقيبته الصغيرة جمجمة آدمية... (81)

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

ربما كان علم طبقات الأرض أمارسه يدفعنى إلى البحث فى الماضى، وهذا البحث فى الماضى يحملنى على التفتيق فى المستقبل ما مستقبلاًنا؟ 83

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

لقد نعتت من نفسى الآن... إنه الإهام، إنى مؤمن أنه يوجد شئ فلنسمه "الموت"... لا بد أن نصل إليه يوماً... اصدقونى القول أيها العلماء... ألم يشعر أحدكم مرة بإغفاءة طارئة عابرة كخفقة الجفن، أحس خلالها لذة وراحة من نوع غريب؟ [85].

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

وافقت هيئة العلماء على هذه النظرية بالإجماع، وحذروا عالم الجيولوجيا من الاسترسال فى أمثال هذه الترهات، خوفاً على بسطاء العقول فى المجتمع ممن يستهويهم جو الخرافات... وانصرف العلماء عن زميلهم الجيولوجى وتركوه غارقاً فى خزيه وخيبته (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 reality<sup>40</sup>. 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"<sup>41</sup>.

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

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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 other<sup>42</sup>. 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 battle<sup>43</sup>.*

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-Hakīm, "Fī Sanah Milyūn (In Year 1000)," 87–93.

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

ذاع خبر العالم الجيولوجي. وشاعت فكرته، واستفحل أمره، انضم إليه كثير من المتشيعين له. وكان هذا أول نبي ظهر منذ مئات الآلاف من الأعوام. ولكن كانت أمامه عقبة، هي "المعجزة" التي يطالبه بها كفاره والجاحدون لأفكاره... وهم ماكانوا يرضون منه بغير معجزة واحدة: أن يميت لهم الحي!... وتجلت هذه "القدرة" كما تجلت لبعض الأنبياء من قبل، لأنها أرادت أن يكون هنالك تحول في مجرى الإنسانية في ذلك العصر... وإذا بنيزك ضخم من نيازك السماء يضرب وجه الأرض ويغور فيها فيسحق رأس إنسان فوق سطح بيته بجوف الأرض، وأصررت الحكومة، فوقعت الفتنة، وحدثت شغب هو الأول منذ عشرات الآلاف 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 there<sup>44</sup>.*

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 view<sup>45</sup>. 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 فاعتقلوه وقدموه إلى المحاكمة فشهد عليه زملاؤه العلماء بأنه مخبول وأن خياله خطير... فحكم عليه بما يحكم على المجرمين والمفسدين وهي عقوبة تعادل إبطاء 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 يختف جسمه... ولكن رسالته ظلت باقية (96).

45 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, "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."

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 Him<sup>46</sup>. 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 religion<sup>47</sup>.

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 creation<sup>48</sup>.

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 theories<sup>49</sup>.

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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 it<sup>50</sup>.

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 other<sup>51</sup>.

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 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 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 negative<sup>52</sup>.

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 ideology<sup>53</sup>.

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

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52 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...<sup>54</sup>*

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-Hakim, "Fi Sanah Milyun (In Year 1000)," 93–94. The original text says:

يا صديقي اللطيف... هناك سر مغلق علينا... هناك سعادة منتظرة خلف باب موصد... هناك لذة غريبة وراحة عجيبة في حجرة ممنوعة لم تطأها قدم... تلك الحجرة الممنوعة علينا... تلك الحجرة التي تجتم فيها راحة من نوع مجهول لدينا... أسميها أنا "الموت". لفظها العالم في شبه همس كأنه يحلم... وكأنه يستعين بإلهامه الخفي، ويستنير بإشراقه الداخلي ليلمح على ضوئه شبح ما يتخيل... إنه لتفسير 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.”<sup>55</sup>*

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 it<sup>56</sup>.

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

وظهر “الحب”. ويظهوره ظهر “الفن” و “الشعر”. وهكذا حكمت الطبيعة بالهها الأكبر الأرض مرة أخرى... وعادت الأديان السماوية... وعاد الشعراء ينشدون ويقولون: “//أيها الخالق الأزلي... لك أنت وحدك الخلود والجبروت...//أما نحن فلانريد 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 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:

*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. 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 machine<sup>57</sup>.*

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 deeds<sup>58</sup>.

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 technology<sup>59</sup>.

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 on<sup>60</sup>.

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

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

58 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 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 society<sup>61</sup>.

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 conversation<sup>62</sup>. 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 fractures<sup>63</sup>.

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 whole<sup>64</sup>. A symptom is a way the Subject chose to “avoid madness” and to “replace the nothing”<sup>65</sup>. The function of fantasy is to fulfill the opening contained in “the other” since it contains the Lack to hide the Other’s inconsistency<sup>66</sup>.

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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.

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