

## Short Science Fiction Writer's Thinking in The *Dewan Kosmik* Magazine from January to June 2021

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### Abstract

This article discusses the thinking of science fiction short story writers in *Dewan Kosmik* magazine published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka from January to June 2021. Based on the review of previous studies on science fiction, most science fiction studies only look from an external point of view. The internal aspects, especially the author's thinking, have been less studied by previous researchers. Therefore, research needs to be done to see the internal aspects highlighted by science fiction authors. Accordingly, the researcher used qualitative research methods, bibliography, and text analysis. This study also applied the SPB4K theory founded by Mohd. Yusof Hasan as the basis. The results of the study showed that science fiction short stories display the author's thinking about societal life based on science and technology.

**Keywords:** Thinking, Short Stories, Dewan Kosmik, Science, Technology, SPB4K

### Introduction

*Dewan Kosmik* is part of the magazines published by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka apart from *Dewan Sastera*, *Dewan Bahasa*, *Dewan Masyarakat*, *Dewan Budaya*, *Dewan Ekonomi*, *Dewan Pelajar*, *Dewan Siswa*, *Tunas Cipta*, and *Pelita Bahasa*. This magazine was first published in January 1994 and contains 68 printed pages. *Dewan Kosmik* focuses on the current development of science and technology which includes human and environmental research and development, educational technology, telecommunications, electronics, pharmacy, engineering, medicine, religion and science, WWF messenger, and computers that are compatible with the theme; "Science and Technology Magazine". This magazine is suitable as reading material for people interested in the development of science and

technology, whether academics, school and graduate students, or teachers. Among the interesting things in the *Dewan Kosmik* is the Science Fiction Short Story section. This column displays short stories that focus on science and technology issues that occur around community life.

According to Puteh (1995), since the 1920s, newspapers and magazines have been the main platform in the historical growth and development of modern Malay literature. Newspapers and magazines also play a vital role not only in enhancing society's life awareness but also in increasing thinking and accelerating maturity toward civilization. As a form of literature, the short story remains popular not only because of its unique characteristics and form but through the author's expression of feelings and thoughts toward human life and the environment. The author's beautifully organized language as well as precise and insightful thinking and solid questioning depict certain individuals or groups of people solving some problems in human life.

As one of the creative works found in modern Malay literature, science fiction short stories also highlight the thoughts of the writer in depicting the upheaval in society's life from the aspect of using science and technology. According to Hasan (2007), thinking refers to the activities and processes of using the human mind for various purposes in life. Mind is the physical form, while intellect is the process of using the mind or thought. Thought comes from the word "*fikir*" or think. From that word, the words "thinking", "thought", "thinker" and so on come. For Makhsin (2007), thinking is the process of using the mind to find meaning and understanding of something, explore various possible ideas or inventions, make reasonable judgments to make decisions and solve problems, and then make reflections and metacognition on the process experienced. Whereas in the context of this study, thinking refers to the main ideas brought by the short story writer to convey a message, teaching, and showing the reality of the upheaval in society's life towards the acceptance of science and technology, whether it has a positive or negative effect.

### **Research Objectives**

- Classify the thoughts of *Dewan Kosmik* short story writers from January to June 2021
- Analyze the thoughts of *Dewan Kosmik* short story writers from January to June 2021 based on SPB4K theory

### **Literature Review**

Based on the reviews of previous literature, the researcher found several previous studies on the science fiction genre. Among them, a study conducted by Noh (1957) entitled "Children's Science Fiction". The findings showed intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the children's science fiction production such as characters consisting of children, containing one or more scientific facts that are weaved to create conflict, development, and finally conflict resolution, a fantasy setting or based on the real world, happy ending elements, as well as interesting storytelling techniques.

Next, a study by Puteh (1989) entitled "The Development of Teenage Novels in Malaysia: 1950-1953". In this article, Othman only talks about science fiction themes that are starting to get attention from local authors such as Rubaidin Siwar, Ajikik, Salleh Hamzah, and Mohd

Ariffin Siri. Science fiction themes help teenagers think more critically, creatively, and innovatively in life.

Othman (1997) conducted another study entitled "Elements of Science and Fantasy in Teen Novels". This study discusses the history of the development of both genres and the factors making these two genres less popular in Malaysia. Finally, Hizairi suggested that a re-evaluation of these two genres should be done. Furthermore, a study conducted by Miswan (1991) entitled "MANUKLON". This is a book review study that examines the novel Manuklon by Rahmat Haroun. Arabian is also of the opinion that Rahmat Haroun managed to blend the story well without compromising the literary aspect. The plot development is full of suspense elements through various language styles and storytelling techniques.

In addition, Nordin (2010) conducted a study entitled "Science Fiction Films to the Realm of Reality". This study focuses on the technological aspects of Western science fiction films. Among them is the idea of space exploration in the movie Star Trek in 1996 through the character of Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, and the crew of the USS Enterprise spaceship exploring a new planet at a speed exceeding the speed of light. The idea has been commercialized with the use of mobile phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), tablet PCs, and MRI machines for medical diagnosis. Next, the study continues by examining a study conducted by Bayu Pramono and Ansori (2016) entitled "The Phenomenon of Science Hybridization in Literary Works". The findings showed that the studied novels display scientific knowledge, namely biology, chemistry, and scientific terms.

Based on the literature review, two problems arose in science fiction. First, there are previous studies on the science fiction genre. However, past studies have only focused on a few aspects, namely reviews of science fiction novels, technology, auxiliary knowledge, intrinsic and extrinsic elements to produce children's science fiction, and the role of the writer. These studies do not include the aspects of the author's thinking. Second, in terms of study materials. Among the research materials that have attracted the attention of past researchers are films, novels, and children's literature. There has not yet been a study that reviews science fiction short stories. Therefore, based on the research gap left by previous researchers, which is the aspect of thinking and science fiction short stories, this study needs to be done to fill the research gap.

### **Methodology**

This study used the method of literature review and text analysis. Among the research materials that would be used in this study was a collection of science fiction short stories in Dewan Kosmik magazine from January to June 2021. The following were the short stories that would be analyzed

| No | Author                     | Title                             |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | John Chan                  | <i>Impian Sebuah Dunia Utopia</i> |
| 2  | Wadiassofi Jaafar          | <i>Dunia Merentas Zaman</i>       |
| 3  | Adawiah Zainal Abidin      | <i>Strain Aifayumi (bhgn 1)</i>   |
| 4  | Adawiah Zainal Abidin      | <i>Strain Aifayumi (bhgn 2)</i>   |
| 5  | Mohd Hamin Mastor          | <i>Anak-Anak Klon</i>             |
| 6  | Khairul Hafiz Abdul Rahman | <i>Sehari di Bumi</i>             |

In addition, this study also uses the theory of the 4K Integrated Thinking System (SPB4K) by Mohd Yusof Hasan as a basis. SPB4K theory emphasizes four principles which are spiritual thinking, intellectual thinking, scientific thinking, and creative thinking.

Spiritual thinking is thinking based on the divine and faith aspects. This thinking exhibits the relationship between man and God, man and man, as well as man and nature. Intellectual thinking is a form of thinking related to the development of the human brain that leads to cleverness, excellence, brilliance, and glory. According to Zubir and Abdullah (2015), in a literary work, intellectual thinking is used to show brilliant, wise, brave, and great characters. Creative thinking is a form of thinking that is concerned with the construction of new ideas, innovation in product development and marketing systems, problem-solving and decision-making, the study of data from various angles to obtain useful information, and the search for ways to narrow the differences of human opinion. Creative thinking is also concerned with aspects of art, beauty, and style. For example, in literary works, the use of creative thinking can be seen in language style, storytelling techniques, and so on. Meanwhile, Scientific Thinking refers to a form of thinking about science and technology that is concerned with scientific, factual, numerical, precise, objective, written, and concrete aspects. The unity of the SPB4K theory can be seen in the diagram below:

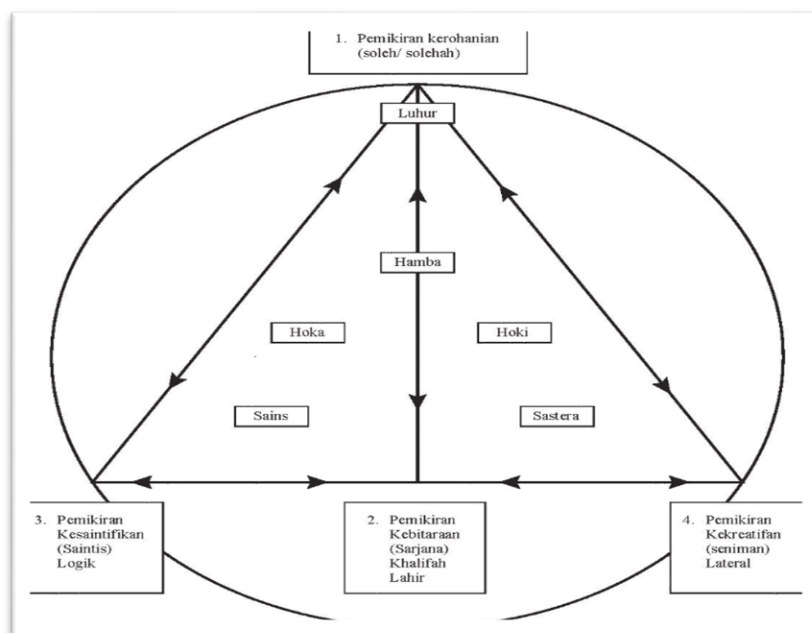


Figure 1: SPB4K Theory

## Analysis and Discussion

### Spiritual Thinking

According to Hasan (2007), spiritual thinking is a form of thinking that is highly dignified, pure, and based on monotheism, piety, and faith. This type of thinking is religious thinking that is related to supernatural and divine elements. In Islam, spiritual thinking can also be linked to the relationship between man and God, the relationship between man and man, and the relationship between man and the environment. These three aspects show man's attachment to God. Therefore, spiritual thinking was highlighted by the science fiction short story writers in the Dewan Kosmik from January to June 2021. Among the spiritual thinking presented by science fiction short story writers in the Dewan Kosmik from January to June 2021 are:

#### (i) Human Relationship with God

In Ad-Deen al-Islam, humans have two roles, namely as servants of God and as caliphs (vicegerent) among humans. This dual role concept is a vertical relationship with God. Therefore, humans need to obey every command and abandon His prohibitions. Humans need to show obedience and piety to Allah by believing that Allah is the best Creator of mankind and the universe. Therefore, no matter how high human knowledge is, they are still unable to claim the power of Allah SWT. This is clearly stated in Chan, J short story, *Impian Sebuah Utopia* (2021), which described the spiritual thinking practiced by a Malay-Muslim scientist character, Iffad. Although Iffad has the knowledge and expertise to create robots, he admits that humans need to realize that Allah is the most perfect creator and that human knowledge cannot compete with Allah SWT's creation.

"But, the final word is in humans. God created humans. So, it is the responsibility of humans that these robots do not completely control all actions. Isn't that right, Miss Yuna?" Iffad asked.

(*Impian Sebuah Dunia Utopia*, 2021:60)

This human relationship with God is also clearly shown in the short story *Anak-Anak Klon* (2021) by Mastor, H, M through the depiction of a Malay Muslim scientist character. In the short story, the short story writer depicted Dr. Ramzan as a scientist who practices ethics in scientific research. This is because he rejects human cloning and always thinks about the consequences of such actions. This clearly shows that Dr. Ramzan is a Malay Muslim scientist who cares deeply about his relationship with God and understands that human cloning is forbidden in Islam. The situation can be seen in the excerpt below:

As a believer in Allah SWT, Dr. Ramzan contemplates the implications of a human being brought into the world through cloning techniques.

(*Anak-Anak Klon*, 2021:45)

Wadiassofi Jaafar, through the short story *Dunia Merentas Zaman* (2021), also highlights the relationship between man and God. This is shown through the character of Ustazah Fatimah who gives a lecture to her students about the religion of Islam which strongly encourages people to study the field of science and technology and be up to date. This shows the Islamic religion is not against progress but must be balanced with the role of humans as servants of God and vicegerent on earth.

Ustazah Fatimah also informed that Islam never forbids its people to be advanced and modern, Islam strongly supports its people to do research and experiment in any field, including science and technology.

(*Dunia Merentas Zaman*, 2021:62)

In the above situation, the characters highlighted innovation, which is when the characters involved have the ability to innovate and come up with new ideas in the field of science and technology to meet the needs and quality of life. However, this innovative thinking is based on a strong identity that is when the characters acknowledge the greatness of science and technology but still adhere to the foundation and belief in Allah SWT and Islam. This coincides with the view of Zubir (2011:3), the resulting innovation is not only dependent on high and broad knowledge but should also be accompanied by a strong identity and the readiness to accept the cultural reality.

### **(ii) The Relationship between Humans**

Additionally, spiritual thinking describes the relationship between human beings. Helping people who are in trouble, for example, is one of the good relationships between humans. This can be explained through the short story, *Aifayumi* (2021) by Adawiah Zainal Abidin. In the short story, the writer depicted Elies and Malik helping to save Aifayumi by bringing her out of Malaysia to her country of origin, Japan. Aifayumi received death threats from her employer because Aifayumi knew of illegal activities taking place where she worked. The situation can be seen through the quote below

"Just listen to me, Malik.

Aifayumi is my best friend. I need to help her. Her life is in danger", explained Elies.

(*Strain Aifayumi*, 2021:61)

**(iii) Human relationship with the nature**

The human relationship with the environment is also part of spiritual thinking. As a vicegerent on earth, humans are responsible for maintaining and not damaging the balance of the ecosystem. The short story *Bumi* (2021) by Khairul Hafiz Abdul Rahman gives the reader the idea that humans often damage the environment, which causes flooding. Zuhman is a spy from Mars who came down to Earth to patrol and see for himself the damage to the environment caused by irresponsible human hands on Earth.

Now, Zuchman understands that before the earth is destroyed, the earth will be hit by a severe flood first.

(*Sehari Di Bumi*, 2021:45)

**Intellectual Thinking**

Intellectual thinking is a form of thinking that is concerned with the development of the human brain, which is from the early stages of human development, from the womb to the toddler age. Islam attaches importance to the family foundation which starts from marriage, intimacy, pregnancy, care during infancy, and education during childhood. Intellectual thinking also emphasizes wisdom, excellence, glory, and the greatness of the human brain in using the mind which is the gift from God towards goodness.

Based on the researcher's observations, intellectual thinking can be detected through the wisdom of the characters in solving the life problems they face as well as using expertise in the field of science and technology for the well-being of all mankind. For example, in the short story *Impian Dunia Sebuah Utopia* (2021) by John Chan, he shows intellectual thinking through the wisdom of Yuna who create robots that benefit humans and contribute to the development of science and technology in the Malay community. Yuna's intellectual thinking can be seen in the quote below

"Yes, yes, don't get me wrong, Mr. Kho. It is not easy to create robots. The process is long because the robot is a sophisticated piece of technical equipment. For example, if you want the robot to lift a chair, various processes are required", said Yuna.

(*Impian Dunia Sebuah Utopia*, 2021:60)

Next, intellectual thinking can also be seen through the wisdom of the characters in solving the problems faced as in the short story (Aifayumi, 2021). In the short story, the writer shows Elies' wisdom in organizing strategies to save Aifayumi's life. She received death threats from the company where she worked. Elies strategizes to send Aifayumi to the Japanese embassy. Aifayumi managed to get out of Malaysia without being tracked by her employer.

"This way. I will arrange for you to go to your country's embassy. You will be safer there. I suggest it is better that you leave this country tonight too. We need to act fast because your life is in danger.

(*Aifayumi*, 2021:64)

Meanwhile, in the short story *Bumi* (2021), the writer, Rahman, A, H,K highlights the intellectual thinking through the character Zuchman who uses his wisdom to save himself from being harmed by humans on earth because he is suspected of trespassing in a forest area. Zuhman electrocutes Earth humans with a handgun until they pass out. With that, Zuhman was able to escape from capture and return to his home planet. The situation can be seen through the quote below

The opportunity was taken by Zuchman who applied an electric shock to the earth human from the gun that was always on his waist.

(*Bumi*, 2021:45)

Through the passages, innovation can be seen through the characters in the short stories. This is shown when the characters used the science and technology they have in creating, solving problems, and avoiding conflicts. Indirectly, this shows the capabilities of the youth in the use of science and technology to enhance knowledge and subsequently improve the quality of life. In this context, the youth are encouraged to use modern technology to improve their knowledge in all fields (Zubir, 2011: 12).

### **Scientific Thinking**

Scientific thinking is a reasoning process that leads to decisions such as ideas, facts, or decisions that are based on clear and concrete evidence. For example, this scientific thinking is highlighted in the short story *Bumi* (2021) by Rahman, A, H,K through the character Zuchman who is depicted as a scientist from another planet coming down to earth to find species of vegetables and fruits to be used as research material on his planet. In the short story, Zuchman found several species of fruits and vegetables that have high nutritional and medicinal value.

"The mission is successful, several dozen species of vegetables and fruits are successfully obtained. Most of them have high medicinal properties and value. Perhaps the laboratory will be able to confirm my findings," Zuchman reported calmly.

(*Bumi*, 2021:45)

The quote shows Zuchman's character in generating scientific thinking through his discoveries that are logical, scientific, leading to truth, accuracy, and facts. The discovery of nutritious plants with medicinal value contributes to the high value of innovation when the laboratory can confirm the discovery. This contribution can indirectly improve the quality of goods and services (Zubir, 2011: 6)

### **Creative Thinking**

According to Hasan (2007), creative thinking is thinking that results from Hoka, and people will be creative, innovative, and imaginative in finding a solution to a problem and making a decision. Creative thinking sparks the mind in the form of ideas and technology.

Creative thinking is highlighted by the writer Chan (2021), through the short story *Impian Sebuah Dunia Utopia* which shows Yuna, a scientist who uses creative thinking to produce a robot. The welcoming robot is equipped with high technology to process the voice and the owner of the voice to identify the individual's identity.

"Oh, that's easy, Mr. Kho. This robot is designed to recognize people's voices. From the response of the person's voice, a beam will enter the robot's ear, and the robot will quickly process the direction of the voice and the owner of the voice", explained Yuna.

(*Impian Sebuah Dunia Utopia*, 2021:60)

The description of the passage above explains the existence of creative thinking in Yuna's character. This is when the character has the ability to create, produce, and develop (Zubir,



2008: 75). In addition, Yuna's ability to innovate by adding special components to her robotic creations shows the existence of innovative elements, by renewing existing technology and to improve the quality of goods (Kuang, 1992: 74). This indirectly corresponds to the idea of creativity when the character is described as thinking outside the box and exploring new angles (Zubir, 2011: 11)

### **Conclusion**

Based on research on the short story writer's thoughts from 6 science fiction short stories in the collection of Dewan Kosmik magazine from January to June 2021, it can be concluded that the stories highlighted by the author show the upheaval in society's life based on science and technology. Among the thinking displayed by the short story writers is spiritual thinking that looks at the relationship between man and God, man and man, as well as man and environment. The second is intellectual thinking which shows the wisdom of the characters to solve problems in life. Whereas, scientific thinking looks at society's thinking development aspects that are concerned with facts, evidence, experiments, and rationality as a tool to solve problems. Creative thinking describes the wisdom of the characters in applying science and technology to produce robots to meet the needs of today's employment sector. Although the six selected short stories do not contain all the SPB4K theory principles by Mohd. Yusof Hasan namely (i) Spiritual Thinking, (ii) Intellectual Thinking, (iii) Scientific Thinking, and (iv) Creative Thinking but the short story successfully highlighted the upheaval in society based on science and technology.

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