

## Jack Frost: Eksistensialisme Kierkegaard dalam Film *Rise of The Guardians*

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**Abstract:** *Movie as a part of literary works is worth to be analyzed because it has audio-visual element that makes it more complex than others. "Rise of the Guardians" movie is chosen as the object of this study. The movie tells the journey and struggle of Jack Frost in obeying God's command to be a new guardian for children. Objective approach is used by applying Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism theory. The writers focus on Soren's existentialism concept in analyzing the stage of life from Jack. After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that Jack passes three stages of life of Soren's existentialism. They are aesthetic stage, ethical stage, and religious stage. To make a decision in passing the each stage, a dread or anxiety is needed for making a 'leap of faith'. Jack passes all of those stages, but his aesthetic stage is little bit different because sometimes he is not only good-mannered person but also lack mannered person. His ethical stage is also different because he follows his ego to find his memory box. Finally, he can reach the religious stage after he does 'leap of faith' encouraged by his dread or anxiety.*

**Keywords:** *Dread/Anxiety, Aesthetic, Ethical, Religious.*

**Abstrak:** Film sebagai bagian dari karya sastra layak diteliti karena memiliki elemen audio-visual yang kompleks dibandingkan dengan yang lain. Film *Rise of the Guardians* dipilih sebagai objek di studi ini. Film tersebut menceritakan tentang perjalanan dan perjuangan Jack Frost dalam mematuhi perintah Tuhan untuk menjadi penjaga yang baru bagi anak kecil. Pendekatan objektif digunakan di dalam penelitian ini dengan mengaplikasikan teori eksistensialisme Soren Kierkegaard. Penulis fokus pada konsep eksistensialisme Soren dalam menganalisa tingkatan kehidupan Jack Frost. Setelah menganalisis data, bisa disimpulkan bahwa Jack melewati tiga tingkatan hidup menurut eksistensialisme Soren. Yang pertama ialah estetis, lalu etis, dan terakhir religius. Untuk membuat keputusan dalam melewati tiap tingkatan kehidupan tersebut, dibutuhkan ketakutan atau kegelisahan untuk membuat 'lompatan keimanan'. Jack melewati ketiga tingkatan kehidupan tersebut, tapi pada tingkatan estetis terjadi sedikit perbedaan karena dia bisa menjadi orang yang jahil dan sekaligus baik. Di tingkatan etis juga berbeda karena dia meuruti egonya untuk mendapatkan kotak ingatannya. Akhirnya, ia bisa mencapai tingkatan religius setelah melakukan 'lompatan keimanan' yang didorong oleh ketakutan dan kegelisahannya.

**Kata kunci:** Ketakutan/Kegelisahan, Estetis, Etis, Religius.

### 1. BACKGROUND

Literature as a result from imaginative writing is also used in other writings. In addition, it also reflects on society itself. According to Abrams (2009: 177-178) literature has been commonly used since the eighteenth century, to designate fictional and imaginative writings—poetry, prose fiction, and drama. In an expanded use, it designates also any other writings (including philosophy, history, and even scientific works addressed to a general audience) that are especially distinguished in form, expression, and emotional power. Thus, whenever a society lives, there is a literary work that is created because it can be based on imagination source or from society aspect itself such as social, politics, economy, philosophy, psychology, or spiritual.

Movie is one of literary works that constitutes to popular culture. According to Barsam and Monahan (2013:15), movie is too popular, too influential, too much a part of our lives nowadays. It always exists whether on cinema, television, or even personal computer. Movie does not only have a visual element but also have an audio element. It is the reason why a movie is more complete than a book. Reading a book makes the readers imagine all of the content based on readers' imagination freely. Otherwise, when the audiences watch a movie, they can only see what the filmmaker creates in the movie. With audio effect, a movie uses a music illustration that can make the story more dramatic and more emotional than a book can.

The writers in this study are very interested to analyze *Rise of the Guardians 2012* movie that is categorized as animation fantasy which can be enjoyed by all ages. According to Chris Baldick (2001: 95) fantasy is a general term for any kind of fictional work that is not primarily devoted to realistic representation of the known world. This is chosen by the writers because it tells Jack as a winter spirit that has a power to make children happy. In his original mythology as a winter spirit, Jack is also often described as villain, but in this movie, he becomes a hero.

Furthermore, the movie is not only about Jack Frost's mythology that is introduced as a new guardian but also about combining other mythical characters such as Santa Clause, Easter Bunny, Sandman, Tooth Fairy that effort to keep and to protect children's happiness in the whole world from Pitch (Boogeyman), the spirit of nightmare. Santa and Easter are Christmas mythologies that also constitute of tenet of its religion believed by Christendom which is served in a best way by making them as heroes to protect children. Thus, it amazes the children and makes them believe the story.

Jack Frost as the main character is very important to be analyzed because his character represents particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities from his acts in a dramatic or narrative work. According to Abrams (2009: 42) Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities. He still struggled and never gave up fighting against his fear about his past. He was chosen to be a guardian because he died when he saved her little sister that would fall down in a pond.

This movie is a religious movie. It is proved by Santa and Bunnymund that have duties to protect children's belief about Christmas and Easter day. From the story above, Jack is described in which he faces his big dread or anxiety to decide his life along his journey to find who he really is and what he will be. It has a relation with Soren's existentialism. He considers that human's life is full of sin, so to redeem that sin every human has to obey and believe in God unless they want to exist as a full human being. In another word, life is full of many choices. Furthermore, life itself has a different stage each other. However, the best stage of life as the self-manifestation, the religious is the best one. For the reason, in this phase every human will save from anxiety or dread and despair.

The way Jack chooses something that determines his life is an exceptional thing that nowadays people are unaware. They are unconscious about that symptom; if they always have experienced their dread or an anxious feeling when they choose their way of life to become an individual or to find who they really are. In fact, people always face dread or anxiety in every moment. It includes when they try to work hard to find what they have to choose and what they will do in their lives. They always choose something in many life choices to decide a best one of their lives to reach a best stage of life. Most of people pass through this phase in their life especially in their spiritual life, but they do not recognize it anymore.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In this part explained about the method of the study. Based on Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009), qualitative research is a research that produces narrative or textual descriptions of the phenomenon under study and the source of the data of this research comes from the *Rise of the Guardians* movie as the primary and for the supporting data, the writers use books, website, reviews, article and journals which related to this study. The forms of the data are the description and script that related to Jacks behaviour in choosing his way of life.

The writers use some steps in collecting the data, First, the writers watch the movie of the *Rise of the Guardians* intensively until get the understanding of the intrinsic element of the study such as: plot, character and characterization, theme and setting. After that the writers select the data which related to the Soren's three stages of life. Then in the final step, the writers collect all the data from the movie and the script.

In analyzing the data, the writers use descriptive analysis because it suitable with the topic which exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Based on the Creswell (2009), the process of research in the descriptive qualitative research involves the writers' interpretations of meaning of the data. In this analysis phase, the writers use two steps: first, the writers classify the data that found in the Soren's stage of life and also his dread that influence the stage. Second, from the classification reveals the relation of each stage of life that Jack Frost has. After that the data are analyzed based on the theory that has been chosen by writers which is Soren's existentialism.

## 3. DISCUSSION

The focus of this discussion is to analyze Jack Frost's path of life to give essence which way he wants to be. The writers use Sore Kierkegaard Existentialism theory. According to Flynn in his book preface, existentialism is a philosophy about the concrete individual both from the bright or dark side. There are two types of existentialism, theistic and atheist existentialism. The philosopher in the theistic side is Soren Aabye Kierkegaard (father of existentialism), Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel while atheistic existentialists are Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus. (Sartre:20). Theistic existentialism leads to earthly existence and denies metaphysical world such as Christian afterlife while theistic existentialism leads to infinity dimension beyond physic world. (Franke:371)

According to Soren's existentialism theory, there are three stages of life when a man wants to be a meaningful life. The first stage is the lowest stage called aesthetic stage. This stage is usually called as sensual sphere. The aesthetic stage is the sphere of immediacy and full of dread or anxiety feeling. It is based on Soren, the tale of the unrepentant womanizer 'Don Juan' whose story as a tireless seducer of women is an example. He pursues his joy through his sensual satisfaction. Yet in this time, it is not only about a sensuality but also means an aesthete. According to Jeff Masson, those are people with spirit and intellect, who live for themselves, make life imitate art, judging it by the aesthetic criteria of beauty, interest and novelty (<https://philosophynow.org>). Commitment here is when people trying to live by obeying society's rules. This stage, according to Kierkegaard, begins and ends with despair.

Based on Flynn's book, *Existentialism A Very Short Introduction*, aesthetic stage can be concluded that people who only live for the sake of their personal enjoyment. It can be from sensual and mouth sensation (hedonism). It is also strengthened by a book entitled *Kierkegaard* if there are three characteristics in this stage which can be owned one or more of those in each person. Motto of "Living in desirability" is the first, as example is Caligula

Caesar and Nero. They live for the sake of their pretension and their personal amusement. Even they will kill someone if it is needed to fulfil it. The second is "Have a good time", it means hedonism. Soren describes people who like eating everything here, they pursuit the pleasure from the mouth sensation to full their pretension in this stage. The last is "Freedom" especially in a religion. All of them aims are to give priority to enjoyment. According to Soren, from the explanation above the important point is people who refuse God. It is the big sin in this stage (Via Vardy, 2001:54).

The second is ethical stage. This stage is better than aesthetic stage. It is only a transition stage and therefore its highest expression is repentance from a negative action. This is where people have decided what they will do and what they will be. According to Vardy, in this stage people start to do their obligation each other (2001:62). Repentance, obligation, and commitment are properly ethical categories and they come into play after a 'leap' or 'conversion' experience that is an exercise of free choice and thus an individuating act. In this stage is they brave to make a commitment that appropriate with universal moral value in the society. The role model of this stage are Socrates and the Roman consul Brutus (who did not except his son from the death penalty for treason, though they could use their power to do so), without being aware of Biblical directives. In fact, Socrates obeyed the laws of Athens even when they condemned him unfairly. In the Jeff Mason's article, the ethical person lives to serve others. The self is bound by morality to act rightly, but living an ethical life does not prevent anxiety about death or about the ultimate goodness of someone's motive. The key is choice to make 'leap of faith' into religious stage (Flynn, 2006).

The third is religious stage. Soren's notion, the 'leap' of faith constitutes entrance into the religious sphere and the highest form of individuation (Via Flynn, 2006:34). It is where the people reach self-awareness. It comes after the dread or anxiety from work hard for society. In this stage they accept the command from God. The model is Abraham, who was in the story from Genesis. He was ready to sacrifice his only son in obedience to God's command.

Jack Frost as the main character in *Rise of the Guardians* undergoes the three stages of Soren's existentialism. The beginning of his aesthetic stage is when he denies God's that is represented by Man in the Moon's command to be the new guardian for the children. He chooses to play around a boy and makes his tongue stuck when that boy tries to drink water with his power in freezing everything. Because he is an invisible soul, he can do everything to fulfil his pleasure by bothering others by making the street wet so people can be lapsed on the street and makes the paper works of a man flew away from his second floor. It is suitable with the motto of "Living in desirability", this is when Jack lives for the sake of their pretension or their personal amusement ignoring moral or social values in society; without thinking it is bad or good thing.

Although Jack is ill mannered and lives for the sake of his personal amusement to fill his loneliness, sometimes he can be well mannered. He makes the children happy when enjoying their childhoods together although he does not know who he really is as an example. However, Man in the Moon has a reason why he chooses Jack to be a winter and an immortal spirit. Hence, he also has a saint side and has a power that only can be owned by selected person. Those are the other sides of Jack Frost while he having fun with kids.

The first kid that is influenced by Jack is a boy named Jamie Bennett with his magical power using snowballs. He hits Jamie to make him stimulus other kids in playing snowball together, but there is an accident when they do that. When Cupcake gets hit by Pippa using snowball accidentally, she gets angry quickly because she is a temperamental girl. She does not ever mingle with other children because they are afraid of her, so she always plays with herself. Seeing that horror situation, Jack hits that girl with his magical snowball to change it.

Suddenly, she changes to be friendly because of his power. His magical power is the beautiful blue lustre on the eyes then she starts to laugh and play together with other kids.

Jack also saves Jamie from an accident when they have fun by playing some dare-devil games on the street using Jamie's sledge. Jack uses his ability to create the icy path for Jamie's sledge so that the sledge can move as fast as it could. Although their actions make the street becomes chaos, yet both are having fun. In this aesthetic stage Jack Frost is not merely ill mannered, part of him also has well-mannered with others. Thus, in this stage, although he lives in "Living in desirability", he is a little bit different with the motto because he sometimes care with other's safety.

Passing his pleasure life, Jack feels a big dread or anxiety about himself such as when Jack tries to tell Jamie that he is the person who makes fun with them by playing dare-devil game and snowball time, but the children believe Tooth Fairy that makes them happy at that time. He is anxiety because he is invisible. No one can see or reach him anymore. He has a power to control others but he does not believe in himself that he exists and acknowledged by others.

Besides he lives in desirability, the main point in Jack case is the third characteristic "Freedom". It occurs in the religion too. The aim is to give priority to enjoyment; ill manners to other people in his case. It is because he has a dread about himself that impacts to his attitudes. According to Soren, the important point that can be implied from his theory is people who refuse God. It is the big sin in this stage.

In his problem is he does not want to be a new guardian as Man in the Moon commanded. As the writer estimates, the command is from God. The word "guardian" is also can be assumed as an angel that accepts command from God. It is also strengthened by an article which is written by Tarabali;" The moon, a silent God of sorts who directs the guardians, has given Jack no information, save his name"(http://oraclelight.com/). Besides the other guardians constitute a belief from mythical story in Christian religion especially for their childhood; they are Santa Claus, Tooth Fairy, Sand Man, and Easter Bunny.

Santa Claus (North) always gives gifts for children over the world at the Christmas night. Tooth Fairy has a duty to give gifts when the children lose their tooth. Sand Man always gives them nice dreams at the night. The last is Eater Bunny (Bunnymund) who always gives the children eggs on Easter Day. They are also believed by the children and do the same job to protect the children's hopes in this movie except Jack Frost who is only known as a story and even they only say that Jack is only an expression to avoid the children get fever on snow day. Hence, when he is pointed as a new guardian, he refuses it. After Jack Frost kidnapped by Yeti (the servant of Santa Claus or North) and Bunnymund to celebrate and inaugurate Jack as a new guardian but, he rejects it with slams his magical staff down and makes a bad situation with saying that he does not want to be a guardian. He is still afraid to make a decision about what will he do next. He thinks that he is afraid to be a new guardian because he is ill mannered and unworthy to be in that position.

The second is ethical stage. This stage is better than aesthetic stage. It is only a transition stage and therefore its highest expression is repentance from a negative action. This is where people have decided what they will do and what they will be. Repentance, obligation, and commitment are properly ethical categories and they come into play after a 'leap' or 'conversion' experience that is an exercise of free choice and thus an individuating act. In this stage, they are brave to make a commitment that is appropriate with universal moral value in the society. People try to obey the social's rules although they can break it using their power in this ethical stage. Jack tries to commitment with other guardians. After the Tooth Fairy's palace incident, Jack tries to make a decision. It happens because he knows that there is a

memory on his tooth box when he is not to be a spirit of snow called 'Jack Frost'. He tries to find out what is wrong with him previously.

Jack is asked by North to gather all the teeth at the night time and as a repayment, he will be given his memory box. Finally, Jack decides to get involved with other guardians to find out his childhood memory that is stolen by Pitch and help Tooth Fairy gathering children's teeth. He accepts North's offer because he tries to fight his dread and anxiety about his memory that he forgets which encourages him to make a decision. This is also the scene when he starts to serve others by joining Tooth Fairy to make children believe her again. When they try to collect the teeth from children, accidentally Sandman get killed by the villain Pitch Black. Jack feels sorry because it occurs from his carelessness. He shows his repentance and kindness to redeem his faults. He starts to help other guardian and feels obligated; Bunymund to decorate Easter Eggs and makes a girl astray in the Bunymund's tunnel happy. However, in this stage he also a little bit different with the theory. It is because he breaches the commitment itself when he follows his ego to find his memory box by himself. At the last, he is trapped by Pitch Black to get his memory box back by destroying all the Easter preparation and makes the incident seems like Jack does it. It makes Bunymund weak because children do not believe Bunymund again.

The last stage is religious stage. According to Soren's notion, the 'leap' of faith constitutes entrance into the religious sphere and the highest form of individuation (Flynn, 2006:34). It is where the people reach self-aware. It comes after the dread or anxiety from hard work for society in serving them in a good behavior. In this stage, they accept the command from God. When Jack has found his memory after he gets it from Pitch that tries to influence Jack to come and join Pitch in purpose to be believed by children whole over the world. However, Jack rejects it and chooses to save a little baby tooth from Pitch's grip as a threat. Finally, he knows the reason why Man in the Moon chooses him as a guardian. He decides to accept that destiny fully without hesitancy.

The script and the explanation as follows:

JACK

It -- it was me! I had a family! I had a sister! I saved her! [He looks up at the opening above. The MOON peeks out from behind the clouds.]

That's why you chose me. (TO HIMSELF)

I'm, I'm a Guardian. (*Rise of the Guardians*, 01:06:57-01:07:10)

From the script above, it can be seen that he is a good brother that saves his little sister's life. When they play ice skating, he saves her that will fall into a broken frozen pond. As the replacement, Jack falls into that brokenfrozen pond and becomes "Jack Frost" the invisible winter spirit. Besides it can be assumed why when he played around the people he had a tendency to boys or men because in his past he saved his little sister from her death, so that is why he never plays around a little girl.

After all of his decision, sacrifice, and effort to make his life better, Jack decides to obey God's command as a guardian for children. He takes an oath to North as a new guardian that always protects the children in whole world. This is the last stage of Soren's existentialism. Jack passes each stage and makes a choice to leap of faith reaching the highest stage 'religious stage'. This is the peace stage without any dread or anxiety.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Jack Frost as the main character in *Rise of the Guardians* movies undergoes the three stages of Soren's Existentialism. However, in his first 'aesthetic stage' and second 'ethical

stage are a little bit different with the theory where he still has well mannered and ego in those stages. In the last and the highest stage of life, he becomes a meaningful individual when he decides to be a new guardian as commanded by God represented by Man in the Moon. To make his stage change until religious stage, he is accompanied by his dread and anxiety to make a decision and also a 'leap of faith'.

*Rise of the Guardians* movie is about belief. In this study the writer analyzes Jack as the main character using Soren's existentialism theory. The writers do hope to the next writers will analyze this movie using other theory such as masculinity, representation and so forth or using Soren's existentialism theory in other movie or other literary works such as novel, short story and so forth while improving the theory itself better than this study.

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