



**EXISTENTIALISM IN THE CHARACTER STUDY:
CARTER AND COLE IN *THE BUCKET LIST* MOVIE**

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Existentialism in the Character Study: Carter and Cole in “The Bucket List” Movie

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Existensialisme memiliki kata dasar *exist* yang berasal dari kata Latin *ex* yang berarti keluar dan *sistere* yang berarti berdiri. Jadi, eksistensi adalah berdiri dengan keluar dari diri sendiri. Inti dari bereksistensi adalah bebas memilih tanpa adanya hukum yang mengikat atau segala sesuatu yang menghalangi pada diri seseorang. Dalam paper ini penulis menggunakan film *The Bucket List* sebagai media untuk menganalisis. Maka dari itu penulis bermaksud untuk menganalisis existensialisme yang melekat pada tokoh Carter dan Cole dalam film *The Bucket List*, kehidupan mereka juga menggambarkan bagaimana orang Amerika menjalani kehidupan sehari-harinya. Penulis akan menganalisis keputusan yang mereka ambil dan bagaimana Carter dan Cole menjalaninya, hal ini menunjukkan sisi dalam bereksistensi pada diri mereka. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam bereksistensi tidaklah semudah membalik telapak tangan, butuh kebulatan tekad dan konsistensi dalam menjalaninya. Kedua tokoh utama dalam film ini pun tidak semata-mata bebas memilih dan memutuskan segala sesuatunya.

Kata Kunci : *Carter dan Cole*- Studi Karakter – Eksistensialisme

1. Introduction

Existentialism derives from *exist*, which comes from *ex*: out and *sistere*: stand. Thus, existence means standing by out from oneself. Existentialism is a philosophy that emphasizes existence. The observers never questioned essence from everything that exists, because it already exists and uncontested. Chair is chair, tiger is tiger, human is human. However, they questioned how to be exists and what is for. Therefore, they busied themselves with existence theory, by find out how to be exists, and essence will also be affected. On philosophy, *essence* and *existence* are different. By essence, every shape gets the form. Essence makes pencil being pencil, tree being tree, and cat being cat. But, only by essence everything does not always exist, and here is the role of existence. Existence makes everything have the form clearly, visibly, and obviously exist. Without existence, everything disappears, have no shape or form. That is why existence is necessary. Existentialism is a philosophy which emphasizes existence, in the frame of mind. According to the existentialists, our life is opened. The highest value of our life is

independence. With that independence our life can be responded well. Everything that hampered has to be fought. For Kierkegaard, existence means decisions that determine its life, its consequences are if we do not dare to do, then we do not exist in the true sense (Maksum, 2008:150).

Effort is a most important part to reach something or achievement in our lives, because effort is a proof of our existence in social life. According to Soren Aabye Kierkegaard, existentialism is existence of human being is not static but always to be dynamic, the human is always move from possible to be true or real, from willing to be real life at present (Febri, <http://www.scribd.com/article/3/eksistensialisme>, 3:par.1, 2010). Kierkegaard emphasizes that belief is essentially irrational, strong desire, free choice, and not a belief that can be proved. So it needs big determination to dare to face it or to achieve something that we dream it toward life which we live. For many people, willing is only word or hope. According to Kierkegaard, based on

Pengantar Filsafat (2008:151), human existence has three phases: Aesthetical, ethical, and religious. *First*, aesthetical phase, human life orientation directed to gets happiness. Humans are controlled by sexual instinct (libido), pleasure principle that hedonistic and according to mood. Aesthetic human lives their life without spirit, his/her willingness is committed to public as his/her guide of life. Although they have no passion in their lives, they just have to know and try. *Second* phase is Ethical Existentialism. On this phase, human will think about faith, there is something like “repent” on their life. In this context, an individual start to accept moral kinds and committed with it. The pleasure principle is discarded and accept universal humanity values. He/she has passion to live his/her life based on humanity value. *Third* phase is religious, the authentic of human as subject will be achieved in god reality. This phase does not use rational considerations or scientific reason; he/she only needs subjective belief based on faith. Other differences are located on subjectivity value and objectivity value. In this case, existentialism will proven through film which entitled *Bucket List*. *Bucket List* is a story about Carter and Cole who cannot live much longer. Carter and Cole reach their dream by finding joy of their rest lives. Carter and Cole are only old man who are waiting for the death comes to both of them, but they do not want to just wait like that, they are trying to find out what is true happiness. Their lives is full of diversity, Carter is just mechanic, but Cole is businessman, he is a rich man. But they have difference on their lives, and they want to find out what true happiness is. Based on characters in *Bucket List*, who want to know existentialism by live their lives, the writer interested to pick up the title *Existentialism in the Character Study: Carter and Cole in “The Bucket List” Movie*. The writer interested with this topic because the writer wants to find out how two characters on *Bucket List* live their life by making themselves free to live on their rest of life.

2. Synopsis

This movie tells the story about two old man, they are Carter and Cole, who have cancer and cannot live much longer said by their doctor. They meet for the first time in Cole’s hospital; they are in the same room. Until Carter writes something about his wishes, his dreams, and his desire. He wrote it on a piece of paper and he calls it “bucket list”. Cole thinks that his wishes list is weak. For Carter, it is pointless now, but for Cole it will be meaningful. Cole knows it and he wants to do it, then Cole adds some of his desire to Carter’s bucket list. Their list are contains skydiving, racing car, make a tattoo, goes to Himalaya and diner at french restaurant. Then they decide to spend their rest of lives for live free and travels round the world. They are sharing about their lives each other, which is the fact that Carter is a mechanic, insightful man, has a faith, and loves his family. Cole is a rich man, atheist, sarcastic, and loves his daughter. Their journey is not only about having fun, but also find out means their life. Carter pass away first, and then Cole, their ashes are put in a can which is buried in Everest mountain.

3. Discussion on Kierkegaard’s Existentialism in *The Bucket List* movie

Kierkegaard’s existentialism was born because of critics about few of intellectual people. First, Kierkegaard complains to Hegel. He knows Hegel when he studied Theology in Copenhagen University. Kierkegaard was interested to Hegel’s philosophy which was popular for intellectual people in Europe, and then he critized it. The background of socio-cultural Copenhagen society was too influenced by Hegel’s philosophy, made Kierkegaard gives complain about Hegel’s philosophy. His primary problems were because Hegel underestimated the concrete existence. Hegel used appropriate idea that was more certain. Kierkegaard said that human never life as “I am certain” but “I am individual” that was

unique and cannot describe to something else. On definition about new awareness Christian, Kierkegaard gave spectacular definition than existentialists certainly. He said that existence cannot separate by freedom. Based on Kierkegaard's book *The Concept of Irony* (1841), Kierkegaard criticized Hegel's philosophy that eliminates humans personal. Kierkegaard found important role within himself/herself that existence with his analysis about awareness religious aspects such as faith, desperation choice, and fear to refuse Hegel's point of view that human does not have knowledge about their world. Kierkegaard also refuse Hegel's assumption about absolute objectivity human's knowledge for their world. For Kierkegaard, human has knowledge itself for their world, and all of knowledge itself is subjectivity basically.

For conclusion, the point of view about Kierkegaard's philosophy besides on individual also emphasizes the way of life to Christian that separated by big irony and insulting from soft faith on Christian society.

Thus, Kierkegaard introduce "existence" in a sense that has a major role in the 20th century. "Only humans are capable existence, and I do not run my existence once and for all the time, but at every moment of my existence into objects of new elections" (Tafsir, 2012:222). According to Kierkegaard, existentialism have three phases on our life. There are aesthetic existentialism, ethical existentialism and religious.

3.1 Aesthetic Existentialism

On this phase, human life orientation was directed to get happiness. Humans were controlled by sexual instinct (libido), pleasure principle that hedonistic and according to mood. Aesthetic human live their lives without spirit, his/her willingness is committed to public as his/her guide of life. He/she has no passion, only can knowing and trying.

The first phase showed when Carter and Cole live their lives before they are treated in

hospital. Carter worked as a mechanic for his family to feed them, fulfill their daily needs, and for his children education, (pic 1, disc 1, 00:01:54). Even when Carter arrived at his home and have dinner with his family, he still feels his pleasure principal (pic 2, disc 2, 00:30:47). Carter's happiness is his family, and Cole as a business man, who has a hospital. He is rich man, but he is little bit rude. Cole's happiness is his personal life, not about people around him. His love about luwak coffee and anything that looks luxurious that could describe himself (pic 3, disc 1, 00:03:45). Their lives before have been treated in hospital is about their happiness. Character is one of the basic elements in an imaginative literature work. Therefore, a major concern is to analyze the character in a literary work. This is stated by Potter (1967:1), "Characters are basic in much imaginative literature, and therefore they merit the considerable attention paid to them."

3.2 Ethical Existentialism

Second phase is Ethical Existentialism. On this phase, human will think about faith, there is something like repent on their life. In this context, an individual starts to accept moral kinds and committed with it. Pleasure principle was discarded and start to accept universal humanity value. He/she has passion to live his/her life based on humanity value. Second phase showed when Carter ask questions to Cole about faith of Egypt, the questions are "have you find your happiness?" and "do your life useful for people?" To answer the questions, Cole tells about his daughter, she hates him because he treat her husband badly. He regrets about that, at least he feels that he has already protected her daughter by his way. He hopes he can turn back the time and forgive him (pic 4, disc 2, 00:13:36).

3.3 Religious

The authentic of human as subject will be achieved in god reality. This phase does not use rational considerations or scientific reason, he/she only needs subjective belief based on faith. Other differences are located on subjectivity value and objectivity value.

This phase showed when Carter and Cole start to talk about faith on a plane when the plane through North Pole. Carter consider how beautiful something that has been created by god in the North Pole. Carter is more religious than Cole. Cole do not believe about god, his faith is about his effort. For Cole, he is resist all believe (pic 5, disc 2, 00:02:45). Furthermore, Carter and Cole talk about the way human die, Carter want his body cremated and put it in a can. But Cole still do not know what to do with his body when he dies (pic 6, disc 2, 00:19:01).

4. Conclusion

From beginning of the story entitled *Bucket List*, readers are served by the story of two old men live their lives on their rest of life. This movie contains about how to be exist as human, Carter and Cole show us how to be exist before they died. They are free to choice what they want in their rest of lives, and being static.

Based on the explanation in previous part of this paper, it can be drawn that existentialism is an important part in our life. On etiquette, because life is opened, the existentialists consider freedom as norm. For existentialists, human could optimize their lives. To finish project of life, freedom is absolute necessary. Based on norms and freedom, they will do anything that support to finish project of life. *The Bucket List* is a movie which has point of view about existentialism itself.

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