

# Human Spiritual Journey in Movie Muhammad: The Messenger of God Based on Jean-Paul Sartre's Perspective

Fauziyah Kurniawati  
*Faculty Humaniora*  
 UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim  
 Malang, Indonesia

15310054@student.uin-malang.ac.id

Siti Masithoh  
*Faculty Humaniora*  
 UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim  
 Malang, Indonesia

15310077@student.uin-malang.ac.id

**Abstract**—This research aims to explain the types of human existence and their spiritual journey in the movie *Muhammad: The Messenger of God* based on Jean-Paul Sartre's perspective. Sartre divided the "existence" into two types. They are *l'etre-en-soi* (being-in-itself), means that is inside itself-exist as object and *l'etre-pour-soi* (being-for-itself), means therefor itself that exists as consciousness, the way how to be human. This research is qualitative descriptive research with a literature philosophy approach. The sources are taken from dialogues in the movie *Muhammad: The Messenger of God* released in 2015 and directed by Majid Majidi. Data source collection techniques in this research are watching, scrutinizing, and note-taking. Researchers test the validity of data with triangulation techniques, increased perseverance and discussion with colleagues. Researchers used Miles and Huberman's model analysis techniques to analyze the data. They are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results showed that the human spiritual journey in the movie *Muhammad: The Messenger Of God* based on Jean-Paul Sartre's perspective existentialism theory. It contained two elements of existence: first, *l'etre-en-soi* (being-in-itself) was expressed the existence of each character in the film as religious people, whether they are Muslims, Christians, or Jewish. Second, *l'etre-pour-soi* (being-for-itself) showed that the figures manifested their existence as humans to determine and defend the rightest religion, namely Islam as a mercy for all nature and acknowledging the teachings of the last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad SAW.

**Keywords**—*existentialism, journey, spiritual, jean-paul sartre*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Spiritual is everything that touched humans deeply. It can turn to suffer into lessons, hate becomes cooperation, and indifference becomes love [1]. The word "spiritual" confirmed the root of human nature, such as a creature that is closed to his God fundamentally, at least always try to keep walking towards him and aware of the existence of himself and his God [2]. So it is not a subtlety if spirituality problems always afflict humans in every phase of their lives.

The issue of human spirituality has been discussed by Sufis, writers, even film directors in their creations. The purpose is to unfold the treasures of knowledge about humans. As we know today, human bits of knowledge are appeared to be formed and disproved by unarticulated mental forces, a power which is also possessed by other creatures and also humans themselves[3]. One of them is the movie *Muhammad: The Messenger of God* directed by Majid Majidi and released

in 2015. An Iranian Islamic epic film set in the sixth century. This film tells the story of Prophet Muhammad's childhood and his struggle in preaching Islam. The stories and issues are regarding the spirituality illustrated in the dialogues of the characters in this film.

Sometimes, people ask about the meaning of life, such as the questions about what life is, what life means, how life is, and so on. At that time, the meaning of existence appears in humans [4]. Existence is a factual condition; it is occurring in space and time which showed about "an object is presenting here now". Existence also means that humans are avowed for their life's existence [5].

Since Sartre's death in 1980 many scholars have sought to highlight the contemporary relevance of Sartre's ideas[6]. Jean-Paul Sartre declared that human existence precedes their essence. This means that fate, destiny, the structure of life, and all conceptions of humans are chosen and determined by humans themselves. The human's existence is the result of his freedom. So, the existence of a man who precedes his essence (desired position and situation)[7]. This concept shows the idea that human determined their destiny without help from others at all. As a result, the human always lives in silence, anxiety, fear, and always be filled by never-ending expectation[8]. Therefore, the human will always act and achieve what they want. This theory is called existentialism theory.

Sartre divided the existence into two types, they are *l'etre-en-soi* (being-in-itself) and *l'etre-pour-soi* (being-for-itself). *l'etre-en-soi* is a reclusive manner to exist. He united with himself massively and as if it were finished in himself. Whereas *l'etre-pour-soi* is an opening type of existence and not massive. It is filled with awareness [9].

Sartre proposed the theory of human nature without included in a fact description that human needs to have a cognitive relationship with the world. The doctrine of central existentialists is that human is nothing except with what they will choose to do but also existed with what they choose to know under the aspects they choose in looking at the world [10]. The trivial and the tragic collide within the realm of existential possibility[11].

Sartre's theory of existentialism is not new research. Among the formerly researchers did, they are: 1) Human and Javanese Culture in the Roman Bumi Manusia: Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialism Thought by Puji Retno Hardiningtyas

described the reality of Javanese culture and feudalism also the existence of Javanese figures as manifestations of human existence in the Bumi Manusia. The results of this research proved that the condition of the Javanese people during the 19th century still held tightly the feudalism and existentialism which gave freedom to human determining their desires and actions[12]; 2) The existence of Hiromi in the movie of Nude creation of Yuichi Onuma by Aisyah Dewi Purnamasari. By using the study of literature Philosophy, the researcher explained the process of human existence which reflected on the figure of Hiromi in the movie of Nude directed by Yuichi Onuma through a piece of picture and text dialogue. The results of this research indicated that this film contained the process of existence from Hiromi to realize his desire[13].

In this research, researchers will explain the process of the human spiritual journey which is being experienced by the characters in the movie Muhammad: The Messenger Of God based on the perspective of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism theory. The researchers want to know the kind of human spirituality existence from the movie.

## II. METHODS

This research is a qualitative descriptive which solve problems systematically and factually with the researcher as a basic instrument of research [14].It is called qualitative descriptive because this research described the types of human existence and its spiritual journey based on Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism theory in the movie Muhammad: The Messenger of God. Qualitative research is also an inductive approach purposed to gain a deeper understanding of an individual or group's experience[15]. The primary source of this research is the movie Muhammad: The Messenger Of God and supported by various literacy references related to spirituality and existentialism theory of Jean-Paul Sartre, either from the books and journals as the secondary sources [16].

Based on the primary source above, researchers used the techniques of data collection by watching, scrutinizing, and note-taking. This method proves the suitability of the hypothesis with the existing sources to obtain feasible, accurate, and comprehensive data [17]. Researchers used source triangulation and increased perseverance and discussion with colleagues to examine the validity of data[18]. In data analysis, researchers used analytical techniques based on Miles and Huberman, namely: 1) data reduction included enclosing the data, choosing the data which relevant with the topic and discarding data which is not suitable with the topic, 2) displaying data, included; simplifying data and presenting data with narrative text, and 3) conclusion; included; proofing the error data with valid evidences and summarizing data [19].

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on analyzing the data, researchers present two types of human's existence based on Jean-Paul Sartre's perspective in the movie Muhammad: The Messenger of God in the table below:

TABLE I. SARTRE'S TYPE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Type of Human Existence	Topic
l'etre-en-soi(being-in-itself)	The character existence as religious human and tolerant toward religion and conviction divergence in divinity
l'etre-pour-soi(being-for-itself)	The character existence manifest as humanto determine and defend the truest religion

### A. l'etre-en-soi (being-in-itself)

In the movie Muhammad: The Messenger of God, the researcher found data in the fragments of the dialogue in the movie which was contained with elements l'etre-en-soi (being-in-itself). The data are as follows:

#### 1) Data 1

*Abu Sufyan: Mecca is my eyes and ears under my command.Okay then, I just want good.*

*Hamzah: There is no good atom in you, Abu Sufyan!*

Abu Sufyan showed that he existed as the commander of the Mecca people. He considered himself this way because it was being appeared and developed as he was at that time. Abu Sufyan was known as a leader of Quraysh who was so firm and obedient to God he believed, namely statues and idols. The people of Mecca must trust the entire of their mind and body.

The type of self-existence can also be interpreted as "in-itself". He is always identical with himself; he is not passive or active, not affirmative nor negative, he is really strong. He is accordingly the nature given to him[20].So the existence of Abu Sufyan as the commander of the Mecca people is not based on his awareness.

#### 2) Data 2

*Prisoner: Fire is more merciful than you (Abu Sufyan).*

*Soldier: O father flame, it is your prison, o unjust you helped Abu Thalib. You will take your share of punishment.*

The prisoner believed that the punishment he got was better, more blessed than the arbitrary of Abu Sufyan. He existed with his own beliefs and accepted all forms that God gave to him, even though it might be a punishment and death. This type of existence was not created. It was immanence that couldn't strengthen itself or an affirmation that couldn't be acted[9].

#### 3) Data 3

*Hamzah: My face is covered with dirt. But with my enemies, I speak face to face.*

*Abu Sufyan:Am I your enemy?*

*Hamzah: So be it.*

With his unconsciousness, Hamzah regarded Abu Sufyan as his enemy. This happened because of a problem of different beliefs between both of them. Hamzah believed in the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad, while Abu Sufyan was one of those who opposed him. From here, the type of existence "in-itself" was regardless of consciousness and simply [21].

#### 4) Data 4

*Who can prevent them? I am thinking about my relatives Hashem's children. If this is all your concern, Muhammad will come to Mecca in front of our trade, it will hurt our trade. We will believe in God that we don't see.*

Abu Sufyan appealed the people of Mecca to do not believe and worship God that no human could visibly see. This means that he existed as a person who did not trust God and was not aware that he was even created by God that he did not believe in.

This existence represented something which has freedom of consciousness as the real things with its freedom or as an object in itself [21]. Consciousness determined the wish and admits its free existence and not tied to the truth.

#### 5) Data 5

*Abraham: Who came to me, they begged me to have mercy on them and I have mercy on them. Some of them, he wanted to fly with me. Some were he wants war against me. I want you now to leave your God. And bend to me otherwise I will destroy all your sanctities and your homes and join me. I give you another chance.*

*Abdul Muthalib: I have a request. Your soldiers destroy my homes. If you don't leave, I will not give you anything.*

Abraham clarified to Abdul Muthalib that he was a bearer of mercy for everyone who came to him. He exaggerated himself as if people were submissive and obedient to him. Like God, he said that without any rightest awareness in him. He only believed in what he thought at that time.

Existentialists said that the truth is an experience of life subjectively. Human experiences the truth in themselves. The truth about human nature and destiny is not something that can be touched and expressed with the abstract concepts or with propositions[5].

#### 6) Data 6

*Abraham: I am the king, great. All Abyssinia is under my command. With only one wall by my room, I can buy all of Mecca and in Mecca, I can buy them. O Lord of the Kaaba, Why do people always come to the Kaaba? What distinguishes them? Do people come from different countries here? What the secret of the Kaaba?*

*Abdul Muthalib: I do not know if it was a secret. I know only one thing, only the stones where the Kaaba was built. No one, not any king has built it.*

Abraham considered himself as the leader of an elephant army, not as a God who can do and achieve everything he wants. This is declared in the film through the scene of the death of Abraham by his elephant in the middle of his mission to destroy the Kaaba. Apart from it, the sentence spoken by Abraham is an implementation of the "being-in-itself" form of human existence, because he tried to understand himself as a totality, as an entity that is specified and known[22].

#### 7) Data 7

*I've heard bad news about Mecca, Ismail. They stopped trading in Mecca with us. Is this now in our favor? Do you think? Does our religion not accept to trade with other people? We must feed our nation and not let them down, it is not in our interest to create enemies.*

The Christian leader emphasized to his members to do not discriminate against people who have different beliefs with them. This shows the form of tolerance in the religious community. This means that the Christian leader had an existence or as a person who was tolerant of the different religions or believers with him. This dialogue declared when he detected that one of his members wanted to war and rebellion with the followers of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

#### 8) Data 8

*Depending on our religion, God will send someone merciful to the worlds, a white cloud moves over him. He will save us all. Get my scarf!*

Buhaira Priest showed his existence as a religious leader who believed that the last Prophet would be sent to this world. The Prophet was none other than the Prophet Muhammad who would sow mercies and blessings to his followers. So, even though he was not a follower of the Prophet, he still believed in the majesty of the Prophet because it had been written in his religious scriptures.

Thus, man inspires his existence as an absolute solitude. He chose his way of life. The decision to make that choice is self-responsibility, although it is felt like a decision that affects others [23].

#### B. I'etre-pour-soi (being-for-itself)

From the movie Muhammad: The Messenger of God, the researcher found data in the form of fragments of dialogue in the movie that contain elements of I'etre-pour-soi (being-for-itself). The data are as follows:

#### 1) Data 1

*Abu Sufyan: The prophet, Muhammad if it did not exist we'd be better of.*

*Abu Thalib: He has chosen by God.*

Abu Sufyan and Abu Thalib talked about the existence of Prophet Muhammad as the chosen messenger of Allah to preach Islam in the land of Mecca and Madinah. This showed that there was a type of human existence in the form of "being-for-itself", where their consciousness showed their existence for themselves or others. Because they were aware that they never identical themselves and always able to negate what determine themselves and others[20].

#### 2) Data 2

*Abu Sufyan: Do you say that these people do not have religion, for example? Don't say no. Muhamad calls people to believe in their hearts only. Let us be weak and strong and you O Abu Thalib, as in the old days be our great and great trader.*

*Abu Thalib: You know more than me. It does not matter money, children and fame. There is no benefit to it.*

Abu Sufyan told Abu Thalib that the Quraysh who did not worship God was not necessarily said to have no religion.

They existed as creatures of religious consciousness but not one God with Muslims.

It can be concluded that human as a conscious creature has full responsibility for their world. He will see that he is the source of all the meanings, truths, and values of his world[21].

3) *Data 3*

*Allah, this returning to you. We invite you to save it.*

When Abraham came with his elephant army to destroy the Kaaba, Abdul Muthalib asked for help directly to Allah for the Kaaba to remain in His protection. The Do'a of Abdul Muthalib showed that he existed and was aware of being a servant who has been never separated to ask for protection and help to his God.

Based on the type of existence "being-for-itself", the human is told to be in existence to existence itself when people are conscious and aware of the object itself [21].

4) *Data 4*

*They forgot the religion of Allah and the religion of Abraham.*

Aminah and the Prophet Muhammad discussed when they saw the Quraysh performing rituals of worshiping statues and idols solemnly. Aminah realized that the Quraysh were in a real error. Likewise with the Prophet Muhammad who realized that they needed a touch of Islam into their lives.

This is where humans realize that the past is only in human himself until finally, he is free to choose which is better for the next better future life [22].

5) *Data 5*

*No one has been up to him at the top. He was stubborn, brave, and strong. The sun was shining on him.*

Abdullah, during his life, is someone whose existence and presence was meaningful a lot for Aminah. Aminah told her son, Prophet Muhammad, that later when she was an adult she could inherit all the good things her father had.

This is related to humans' existence as a conscious creature. As *I'etre-pour-soi*, human's existence precedes its essence. Humans must create essence for themselves. The essence depends on the man himself, how he creates and recognizes himself [20].

6) *Data 6*

*Abdul Muthalib: Abu Thalib, Don't ever leave him. He didn't see his father and his mother is dead. You raise him like your children. Teach him everything.*

*Abu Thalib: Sure, dad.*

*Abdul Muthalib: Now, I'm going to die, and I'm relieved.*

Abdul Muthalib delivered his last message to Abu Thalib to care and nurse the Prophet Muhammad after his death. This showed that Abdul Muthalib believed in Abu Thalib as his successor in nursing the Prophet Muhammad. In other words, Abu Thalib had an existence as a trusted person in carrying out a mandate. When he was aware of the existence, he would carry out the mandate so well. The awareness itself will describe how he will be in the future [24].

7) *Data 7*

*Buhaira Priest: Is he your son?*

*Abu Thalib :Muhammad? He's like my son. My nephew.*

*Buhaira Priest: Your nephew.*

*Abu Thalib : Yes.*

*Buhaira Priest: And another sign He is under the protection of God. God was doing with our prophet the same things?*

*Abu Thalib : What exactly do you mean?*

*Buhaira Priest: He is a human being like us, but God is always with him. It's... it'll be like our prophet.*

As for the type of "being-for-itself" contained in this fragment of dialogue, Buhaira priest realized the existence of the Prophet Muhammad as the last Prophet, the noblest messenger of God to spread peace on earth with his intercession.

8) *Data 8*

*Muhammad, the prophet of God. He has a message for you. Please hear him and understand him well. Please be upon him.*

Humans as conscious creatures have total responsibility for their world. He will see that he is the only source of all the meanings, truths, and values of his world[21]. This is contained in the meaning of Hamzah's words above. He stressed to the unbelievers of Quraysh that the Prophet Muhammad was a Prophet and a messenger of Allah to change the life of the ignorance of the infidels of Quraish to be a life of Islamic grace.

9) *Data 9*

*Only God's name is left. Look at the message of your gods eaten by ants, right? God did this. If nothing and you know God is, why war? Only God alone has no partner.*

Hamzah convinced Quraish about the imitated documents from the statue and idol were showed the existence of the Supreme of God. Hamzah insisted on Abu Sufyan that God and his followers had worshiped nothing and were not real, there is only God Almighty. That is an essential truth.

Thus, the human becomes a form for himself with consciousness and self-freedom. That is by realizing an object and its existence, accepting nothing in its existence, having total freedom in its existence, and being fully responsible for its world. For Sartre, freedom is absolute. Without freedom, existence becomes an absurd incarnation. The man who continually creates himself has a meaningful thing that he continues to appreciate himself as a plan for his future[23].

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above analysis, the researchers found two types of spiritual human existence contained in the movie Muhammad: The Messenger of God, namely: the existence of "being-in-itself" as many as 8 data and type of existence "being-for-itself" there are 9 data. Being-in-itself or *I'etre-en-soi* in the movie showed the existence of its character as a religious human being, whether it is Muslim, Christian or Jewish. Being-for-itself or *I'etre-pour-soi* showed that the

figures manifest their existence as human beings to determine and defend the most true religion, namely Islam as a blessing for all nature and acknowledging the teachings of the last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad SAW.

In the human spiritual journey, possessing the religious and being tolerant character toward the distinction of religion is the most exalted discharge for humans. So that way, the human will be more understand and recognize themselves as spiritual creatures. The real perfection of human is on their spirituality. The existentialism theory of Jean-Paul Sartre is acceptable with the theme of discussion in this research, which is about a human spiritual journey. This theory has the principle of freedom which emphasized the search for human identity which exists and how humans interpret readings or symbols of divinity in their lives. This theory defines humans through their actions to produce life guidelines by explaining the nature of the world and describing the human condition what life is like as a human being.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers dedicate this study to The Forum of Young Researchers, Fakultas Humaniora, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang, Indonesia; where we studied together, conducted various academic activities together, and dreamt to reach the best future together.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] R. E. I. E. O. C. M. Christopher Faiver, *Explorations in Counseling and Spirituality: Philosophical, Practical, and Personal Reflections*, USA: Thomson Learning, 2000.
- [2] A. K. Riyadi, *Antropologi Tasawuf*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 2014.
- [3] M. Polanyi, *Kajian tentang Manusia*, Yogyakarta: PENERBIT KANISIUS, 2001.
- [4] A. Hidayatullah, "Novel Deng Karya Godi Suwarna Analisis Eksistensialisme Jean Paul Sartre," Skripsi Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, p. 6, 2017.
- [5] M. S. S. R. T. N. Harold H. Titus, *Persoalan-persoalan Filsafat* (Penerjemah: M. Rasjidi), Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984.
- [6] R. Pitt, "Jean-Paul Sartre: Key Concepts ed. by Steven Churchill, Jack Reynolds (review)," Project MUSE, French Studies: A Quarterly Review, vol. 69 no. 1, pp. 108-109, 2015.
- [7] Z. Abidin, *Analisis Eksistensial: Sebuah Pendekatan Alternatif untuk Psikologi dan Psikiatri*, Jakarta: PT. RajaGrafindo Persada, 2007.
- [8] A. Rokhmansyah, *Studi dan Pengkajian Sastra: Perkenalan Awal terhadap Ilmu Sastra*, Yogyakarta: GRAHA ILMU, 2014.
- [9] S. I. Lathief, *Sastra: Eksistensialisme - Mistisme Religius* (Cetakan III), Lamongan: PUSTAKA puJAngga, 2010.
- [10] J. P. Sartre, *Eksistensialisme dan Humanisme* (Penerjemah: YUdhi Murtanto), Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA BELAJAR, 2010.
- [11] J. Duban, "Sartre and Koestler: Bisociation, Nothingness, and the Creative Experience in Roth's The Anatomy Lesson," Project MUSE, Philosophy and Literature, vol. 41 no. 1, pp. 55-69, 2017.
- [12] P. R. Hardiningtyas, "Manusia dan Budaya Jawa dalam Roman Bumi Manusia: Eksistensialisme Pemikiran Jean Paul Sartre," Aksara, vol. 27, p. 83, 2015.
- [13] A. D. Purnamasari, "Eksistensi pada Tokoh Hiromi dalam Film Nude Karya Yuchi Onuma," Skripsi Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Brawijaya, p. 1, 2014.
- [14] C. N. d. A. Achmadi, *Metodologi Penelitian*, Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA BELAJAR, 2009.
- [15] S. Wahyuni, *Qualitative Research Method: Theory and Practice*, Jakarta: Salemba Empat, 2012.
- [16] V. A. Siswanto, *Strategi dan Langkah-langkah Penelitian*, Yogyakarta: GRAHA ILMU, 2012.
- [17] ع. ا. قنديلجي, البحث العلمي واستخدام مصادر المعلومات, عمان: دار اليازوري العلمية, 1999.
- [18] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*, Bandung: Afabeta, 2008.
- [19] Afrizal, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Sebuah Upaya Mendukung Penggunaan Penelitian Kualitatif dalam Berbagai Disiplin Ilmu*, Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2015.
- [20] Muzairi, *Eksistensialisme Jean Paul Sartre: Sumur tanpa Dasar Kebebasan Manusia*, Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA BELAJAR, 2002.
- [21] T. Lavine, *Jean Paul Sartre: Filsafat Eksistensialisme Humanis* (Penerjemah: Andi Iswanto dan Dedy Andrian), Yogyakarta: Penerbit Jendela, 2003.
- [22] N. R. d. M. Thompson, *Cara Mudah Mempelajari Eksistensialisme* (Penerjemah: Benyamin Molan), Jakarta: PT. Indeks, 2015.
- [23] F. Hassan, *Berkenalan dengan Eksistensialisme* (Cetakan ke-9), Jakarta: PT. Dunia Pustaka Jaya, 2005.
- [24] ن. ع. و. ا. غربي, إشكالية العدم عند جان بول سارتر "بحث جامعي بكلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية قسم العلوم الاجتماعية بجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة, 2017.