

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) movie is one of the most popular horror movies ever produced. The screenplay of this movie is adapted from the graphic novel or comic book miniseries with the same name by Steve Niles and Ben Ketai, and adapted for the screen by Niles. Steve Niles was born on June 21, 1965 in United States. He is an American comic book author and novelist, known for works such as *Criminal Macabre*, *Simon Dark*, *Mystery Society* and *Batman: Gotham County Line (2008)*, and *30 Days of Night*. He is credited among other contemporary writers as bringing horror comics back to prominence, authoring such work as *30 Days of Night*, its sequel, *Dark Days*, and *Criminal Macabre (Dark Horse Comics)* with frequent artist collaborator Ben Templesmith.

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) movie is directed by Ben Ketai. Ben Ketai is an American film director, writer, and producer. He directed and wrote the following Ghost House Pictures productions: the upcoming feature film *30 Days of Night: Dark Days* and the web series *30 Days of Night: Dust to Dust*. The other movie from Ben Ketai such as *30 Days of Night: Blood Trails (2007)*, *Megan (2008)*, *30 Days of Night: Dust to Dust (2008)*, *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)*, and *the Resistance (2010)*.

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) is a movie about the Alaskan town of Barrow's population that is decimated by aging of vampires during its annual month long sunset. Riddled with grief over the death of Stella's husband, bound by nightmares and void of all emotions beyond hate and sorrow, Stella has spent the past months travelling the world, trying to convince others that vampires exist in this world. Constantly feeling as though she is being hunted, Stella is well aware the impending threat in her life, the death of her husband Eben having taken from her ability to feel emotions, leaving her feeling cold and empty inside. Following instructions from a mysterious man named Dane, she eventually ends up Los Angeles.

After the destruction and rebuilding of Barrow, Alaskan, Stella misses her beloved husband Eben and spends her time giving lectures. One night, while giving a lecture to an audience of people with whom she hopes to convince that vampires exist and aware that they attend when she speaks, she activates overhead ultraviolet lamps that incinerate several of the vampires in the audience before the humans. She is quickly arrested and harassed by a man named FBI Agent Norris to whom she quickly learns that he is a familiar one of many thousands of human followers of the vampires all over the world, placed to keep their activities covered up. After they released her from custody with a warning to keep quiet about the existence of vampires, she returns to her hotel room to find three people waiting for her; Paul, Amber, and Todd who had been sent by Dane to collect her in order to hunt down the vampire queen Lilith. Stella asks if she is responsible for the incident at

Barrow and is notified that she was. She is taken to meet Dane and is shocked to discover that he too is a vampire, though due to a superficially inflicted wound he has maintained a grasp of humanity, only drinking blood from packaged hospital stocks he keeps.

At first hesitant to join on a plan to attack a vampire nest, Paul eventually convinces Stella to join them, telling her of his daughter being killed by one and his accusations of a vampire killing her resulting in a divorce with his wife. The following day, the four of them find their way to a vampire's nest and they are ambushed by a group of them. In the attempt to flee, Todd is bitten and turns after they lock themselves in a cellar room. When Paul hesitates, Stella manages to kill him by smashing in his head with a cinder block. They decide to wait for night when the vampires go out to feed in order to make their escape.

After night falls, Dane comes and frees them, on their way out capture a vampire. Taking him back to their base of operations, Dane interrogates speaking animalistic vamp with ultraviolet lamps, eventually following him back to another nest. They invade the nest and rescue a human they were using as a feeding station and with her memories of Lilith's lair aboard one of the ships on the bay they are able to plan an attack on her directly. Lilith decides that Agent Norris should prove his worth to become a vampire and he bites the neck of a captive girl, named Stacey, drinking her blood until dead. Afterward she turns him to hunt Stella and the others. Dane is killed when Norris arrives, and the others flee with the survivor from the nest, they travel

to a boat yard and Jennifer points out the boat that they are set to sail to Alaskan in for another 30 day feeding period. They tell Jennifer to leave and the three of them stowaway on the ship and discover that vampires can be resurrected after death if their corpses are fed human blood. They eventually confront the human captain who says he is doing this because they had threatened his family. Amber tells the captain that his wife and family are probably already dead when she is suddenly pulled away by someone from behind and kills the captain when she accidentally fires her gun. She is dragged through the decks and Stella and Paul are too late to save her from being eaten. They are quickly captured by Norris and Lilith who orders that they be bled dry. Stella manages to free herself when they are alone with Norris and kills him by cutting his head off, but they are subsequently attacked by Lilith when attempting to sabotage the ship and Paul is killed. After being outmatched in hand to hand combat, Stella hides from Lilith and when the queen comes looking for her, Stella emerges from her tub of blood and manages to decapitate her. The other vampires appear, but seeing that she killed Lilith, they quietly stand aside and let her pass without a fight. Stella returns to Barrow.

A few days later, Stella digs up Eben's grave and recovers his body to feed her own blood, it appears not to work and she lies down slowly dying from blood loss. After a few minutes, she sees Eben has returned back to his former health and she stands to greet him with a hug. As they embrace, the

animalist vampire Eben pulls back her shoulder and his fangs come down on her neck killing her.

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) movie was a major critical success. *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* was made in July 23, 2010 and released premiered in United States on October 5, 2010. This film was setting of place at Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The film runtime is 92 minutes, released in VCD and DVD distributed by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. Besides that, this movie is also published in Netherlands, USA, Argentina, UK, Poland, Russia, Finland, Italy, Hungary, Spain, Germany, and Japan. The good response from public makes *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* which only had \$30 million for their budget; with box office \$102,254,137 including DVD sales.

The good acceptance does not only come from the market, but also from the film expert. Saffer (2010) said that *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* basically picks up right where the previous film left off. *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* is the sequel to *30 Days of Night* and focuses on Stella Oleson in the aftermath of the horrific slaughter of the citizens of Barrow. In *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* Steve Niles had a premise and ran with it. The story was gripping and well paced and other than it being sad and scary, there was not much else to the book. But that is what made it good with the simplicity and the focus of it. *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* is more in depth, it is subtler and has more of a narrative in that it's complex story that develops through each chapter. *30 Days of Night: Dark*

Days (2010) hints at the humanism behind the vampires that they are not all merely sadistic creatures that have a thirst for blood.

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) is nominated for two sounds Awards and the film has been nominated for a CAS Award and also a Golden Reel Award for original DVD programming. In 2011, *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* get C.A.S Award with category Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing for DVD Original Programming for Michael T. Williamson (production mixer), and Eric Lalicata (re-recording mixer). And then in the same year get Golden Reel Award with category Best Sound Editing - Direct to Video for Matthew C. Beville (foley editor or foley mixer), Alex Ullrich (foley artist), Dhyana Carlton-Tims (dialogue editor or adr editor), John Sanacore (adr editor), Sean Gray (sound effects editor), Eryne Prine (sound effects editor), Jaclyn Newman (music editor), Ryan Gegenheimer (sound designer), Eric Lalicata (supervising sound editor), and Ryan Young (adr editor).

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) is the successful movie and interesting for many people. *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie has four reasons which make the researcher is interested in this movie. The first is the major character of this movie; Stella publishes a book about the events in Barrow. This gets the attention of the Los Angeles vampire population. Learning that there may be a way to bring back Eben, Stella strikes a deal with a vampire named Dane. The two form a brief romantic relationship. Stella exchanges proof of the existence of vampires for her husband's

remains, in the hope of bringing him back from the dead. She double crosses the vampire party, blowing up a large number of them in a house, before successfully resurrecting Eben. She is reunited with her husband who goes for her throat, turning her into a vampire.

The second reason is Stella joins the gang in implementing their anti-vampire agenda for revenge. With nothing remaining to live for, and nothing left to fear, Stella joins their mission and ventures into the uncharted underbelly of Los Angeles where she pushes herself to the most extreme limits to stop the evil from striking again.

The third is the element of plot from the story which takes Stella in the town of Barrow in Alaska, which is known for being in the dark for a complete month each year. In this mind-blowing horror movie, Barrow's sheriff is seen as a person who strives for the welfare of the town's inhabitants. When the residents of Barrow are gearing up for the 30 days of darkness, the town, according to the movie, is attacked by a team of vampires. These creatures have come to Barrow with the only intention of wrecking havoc on the inmates of the town. They start their mission of destruction by breaking all means of communication that the town has with the rest of the world. When they feel that the town has been segregated, they start quenching their thirst for blood. But the sheriff would simply not let this happen, and hence, along with his wife, he sets out on a mission to save as many people as he can.

The last reason is cinematography from this movie having only discovered Steve Niles' work a few months ago; he is rapidly becoming one of the favorite comic book creators. A small Alaskan town was beset by blood thirsty vampires during a month long period of darkness. In this series Stella follows one of the survivors, the wife of the sheriff who sacrificed his life to save the town, as she fights to make the world believe in the menace that destroyed her husband. Niles has an incredible ability to take concepts as old as vampires, zombies and were wolves and find new and intriguing angles to view them through. The major character of this movie tries to convince a skeptical world that vampires are real, that they have worked for centuries to cultivate the belief that they are fiction, and that they are very dangerous.

From those reasons, the writer found the existence from the major character from this movie for life and she has something mission to do. Stella's existence becomes an issue chosen by the researcher in this movie. In the philosophy of existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre views each person as an isolated being who is the subject into an alien universe, and conceives the world as possessing no inherent human truth, value, or meaning. A person's life as it moves from the nothingness from which it comes toward the nothingness where it must be end, defines an existence which is both anguished and absurd.

Based on the reason the writer will observe *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie by using an existentialist theory by Kierkegaard and Jean Paul Sartre. So the writer constructs the title **STELLA'S EXISTENCE**

**REFLECTED IN *30 DAYS OF NIGHT: DARK DAYS* MOVIE (2010)
DIRECTED BY BEN KETAI: AN EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010) movie can be classified into a new series movie. Therefore, the writer only found one study on this movie conducted by Hanna Hamad, a Massey University with the thesis entitled “*The Gendered Hyper-Visibility of Whiteness in Whiteout (Dominic Sena, 2009) and 30 Days of Night*”. The research focuses on critically explores the centrality, visual aesthetic and over determined articulation of discourses of whiteness in the contemporary Hollywood thrillers *Whiteout* (Dominic Sena, 2009) and *30 Days of Night*. Paying particular attention to the manner in which whiteness has been gendered in these films, and specific gendered tropes of whiteness that correspond to familiar cultural scripts. Both the serial killer and the vampire are, of course, stock figures of troubling white masculinity in over determined representations of whiteness in popular cinema and culture more broadly, but the over-determination of the extent to which their whiteness is made visible here is noteworthy. Contrary to the state of affairs critiqued by early scholarly conceptualizations of cinematic whiteness, in which whiteness was notable for its invisibility and default status relative to social identity formations that had been discursively culturally other, whiteness in these films is notable instead for its hyper-visibility. This is exacerbated and accentuated by the “persistence” of its visibility in the absence of natural light, in conceits germane to each,

specifically the Alaskan setting of *30 Days of Night* and Antarctic setting of *Whiteout*. Finally from her thesis it addresses discourses of whiteness in these films with regard to gender and visual aesthetics, the alignment of whiteness with death (the first murder victim in *Whiteout* is significantly named 'Weiss'), and its broad discursives over determination.

Different from the previous writer, the writer has a different perspective in analyzing the data. The writer uses an existentialist approach to analyze the data in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie as an object. The writer analyzes Stella's existence reflected in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie by using existentialist approach.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the title and background above, the writer formulates the problem statement as follow: "How does Stella's existence reflected in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie, the main character of *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie?"

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses this researcher in analyzing Stella's existence in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie based on Kierkegaard and Jean Paul Sartre theory of existentialism.

E. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.

2. To describe Stella's existence in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie based on an existentialist approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The study of Stella's existence in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie has two benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is expected to give a new contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and another student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another university who have interest with literary study on the movie from an existentialist approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research which results the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object.

2. Type of the Data and the Data Source

a. Type of Data

The data of this study are image and text in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie by Ben Ketai.

b. Data Source

- 1) The primary data source is the film and script of *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* movie directed by Ben Ketai which is related to the study.
- 2) The secondary data sources are the books and other sources that support the analysis.

3. Object of the Study

The object of this study is *30 Days of Night: Dark Days (2010)* directed by Ben Ketai and publishing by Sony Home Pictures Entertainment in 2010. It is analyzed by using an existentialist approach.

4. Techniques of the Data Collection

The method of data collection in this study is note-taking and image-capturing. The researcher views the primary data repeatedly to reach more understanding of source. Next, the writer takes, compares, quotes, and studies others data into some categories and develops them into a good unity.

5. Techniques of the Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis in this study is descriptive. It concerns with the structural elements of the movie, the writer uses an existentialist approach, and draws conclusion.

H. Research Paper Organization

The researcher systematizes this research of “Stella’s Existence in *30 Days of Night: Dark Days* (2010) movie Directed by Ben Ketai: An Existentialist Approach” into five chapters. Chapter I is Introduction, which consists of background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method, and research paper organization. Chapter II comprises of the underlying theory, which presents The notion of Existentialism, Sartre’s Major Theory of Existentialism, Structural Elements of the movie and Theoretical Application. Chapter III deals with the structural analysis of the work, which consists of character and characterization, plot, point of view, setting, theme, and discussion. Chapter IV presents the Existentialism analysis. Chapter V presents Conclusion and Suggestion.