

Spiritual Refiguration (Ar-Rujū' ilallāh) in Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics: An Analysis of Existential Escape in the Lyrics of the Song "33x" by Bronze

Suryo Bayu Tirto Aji ^{1*}, Muhammad Rijal Achsanuddin ², Muhammad Shaumil Burhanuddin ³

1-3 Master of Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

*Correspondence: bayutirtoajisuryo@webmail.umm.ac.id

Abstract : The phenomenon of existential anxiety has become a social reality for the modern generation who have lost their direction and meaning in life. Amidst the pressures of life and the tedious routines, many people choose escape as a way to relieve their inner burdens. This study attempts to understand this form of escape through psychological, philosophical, and spiritual approaches, by making the song "33" by Perunggu a representation of the anxiety and search for the meaning of life for modern humans. The method used is library research with Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach through three stages of mimesis (Prefiguration, Configuration, and Refiguration). Primary data in the form of verses from the Qur'an and Hadith relevant to spiritual escape, as well as secondary data from studies of psychology, sociology, and social statistics, analyze the lyrics of the song "33" and interpret its meaning based on the concepts of existential anxiety (Kierkegaard), escape from freedom (Fromm), and Islamic teachings on spiritual escape (ar-rujū' ilallāh). The data is strengthened by the songwriter's explanation in the Class Mild Naik Kelas podcast with Soleh Solihun which describes spiritual awareness after going through the emptiness of life. The results of the study show that Ricoeur's hermeneutics successfully transforms the meaning of existential escape. Mimesis I (Prefiguration) explains the reality that existential anxiety (Soren Kierkegaard) triggers destructive escape in modern humans who are trapped in emptiness. Mimesis II (Configuration) interprets the song "33x" as a symbolic narrative that organizes this anxiety into an inner reflection, culminating in the awareness that full control lies with the Almighty and calls to "Call His name." Mimesis III (Refiguration) places the text of this song in the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, where negative escape (chasing mata' or deceptive worldly pleasures) is refigured into a spiritual process (ar-rujū' ilallāh). Thus, the song "33x" is understood not merely as an expression of anxiety, but as a healing medium (healing text) that guides individuals from alienation to true serenity through divine awareness.

Received: September 29, 2025
Revised: October 16, 2025
Accepted: November 07, 2025
Online Available: November 18, 2025
Curr. Ver.: November 18, 2025

Keywords : ar-rujū' ilallāh, existential anxiety, Mimesis, Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of escape, self-healing .

1. BACKGROUND

Soren Kierkegaard described existential anxiety as a state in which humans are aware of their freedom but have not yet discovered the meaning of life. In this situation, many people choose to escape from anxiety, rather than confront it. However, according to Kierkegaard, true freedom demands responsibility and the courage to face anxiety (Ayu et al., 2023). Reflecting on this text, humans need a space for escape. This escape is meant as a form of escapism, a psychological mechanism for humans to avoid or escape from inner pressure and anxiety. (Prabajati & Iskandar, 2022). In this case, escape can be understood as part of a human defense mechanism when facing life's pressures.

However, this escape should not end in negative forms of coping that actually worsen psychological conditions. Instead, escape should be directed towards positive coping strategies such as positive reappraisal, seeking social support, and playful problem-



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

solving that help individuals recover and adapt healthily (Maryam, 2017). This means that escape is not about avoiding problems, but rather how one manages stress in a constructive and meaningful way. However, social reality shows that many modern humans choose destructive escapes. National Narcotics Agency (BNN) data related to drug abuse, involving approximately 4.8 million people, or 2.29% of the productive-age population (BNN, 2024), generally as an escape from stress and social conflict. Alcohol addiction is also on the rise, with per capita consumption rising from 0.6 liters to 1.0 liters per year, particularly in urban areas facing work and social pressures (WHO, 2023).

Gadget and social media addiction is another significant phenomenon. As many as 39.7% of internet users spend more than five hours per day on social media, usually to cope with loneliness and social pressure. Meanwhile, online gambling addiction has recorded 3.2 million active accounts, the majority of which are held by productive-age individuals seeking an escape from economic problems (Kominfo, 2024). Passive forms of escapism are also common, with 42% of adolescents and young adults experiencing mild to moderate symptoms of depression. This is often seen in avoidance behaviors, such as excessive sleeping, being unproductive, and withdrawing from social interactions. Furthermore, casual sex and premarital sex are considered a way to escape from emotional crises and seek emotional validation (Kemenkes, 2024). Data shows that 62.3% of high school students in Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) have watched pornography, and 21.2% have engaged in sexual intercourse, often influenced by broken homes.

Overall, these data illustrate how psychological, social, and economic pressures drive individuals to seek escape, and this escape has become an existential pattern for modern humans. They fall into the search for meaning, but are trapped in that search. Unlike the secular worldview, escape in Islam is not merely a form of worldly escape, nor is this escape an outlet, but rather an effort to return to God through worship, dhikr, and prayer (Shihab, 2006). This provides true peace, not just physical pleasure. With this approach, Islam guides humans to use life's pressures as a momentum to draw closer to the Almighty, so that escape becomes a means of purifying the soul and strengthening the meaning of life (Lutfiah & Nahuda, 2024). In this context, Paul Ricoeur's existential hermeneutics provides a relevant framework for understanding modern human escape. Ricoeur interprets texts, including works of art and music, as symbolic spaces where humans reinterpret their lives. According to Ricoeur, texts not only convey messages, but also open up the human inner world, allowing the reader (or listener) to experience a process of self-reflection and transformation (Ricoeur, 1981).

Through three stages of mimesis consisting of prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration, Ricoeur explains that chaotic life experiences (prefiguration) can be arranged into meaningful narratives (configuration), and finally re-lived with a new awareness (refiguration) (Fithri, 2014). In this study, the negative escape that occurs in society reflects mimesis I: the reality of humans who have lost the meaning and direction of life. The song "33" from Perunggu is present as mimesis II: a form of configuration or an attempt to reorganize existential anxiety into a reflective narrative about self-discovery. Meanwhile,

mimesis III occurs when the text of this song is reinterpreted in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith, so that the escape metamorphoses into a spiritual refiguration, namely an inner journey towards divine awareness (ar-rujū' ilallāh).

Thus, Ricoeur's hermeneutics helps interpret the song "33" not merely as an expression of modern human anxiety, but also as a healing text. Music, in this case, becomes a spiritual medium that guides humans from emptiness to an awareness of God (Dau, 2014). Within this framework, existential escape is no longer a form of alienation, but rather a path home to true serenity and meaning.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Paul Ricoeur's existential hermeneutics provides a relevant framework for understanding modern human escapism. Ricoeur interprets texts, including works of art and music, as symbolic spaces where humans reinterpret their lives. According to Ricoeur, texts not only convey messages but also reveal the inner world of humans, allowing readers (or listeners) to experience a process of self-reflection and transformation (Ricoeur, 1981).

Through three stages of mimesis consisting of prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration, Ricoeur explains that chaotic life experiences (prefiguration) can be arranged into meaningful narratives (configuration), and finally re-experienced with a new awareness (refiguration) (Fithri, 2014).

Studies on indie music highlight its role as a medium for expressing depressed feelings and as an emotional escape for young people (Septian & Hendrastomo, 2019). Furthermore, research shows that listening to music plays a crucial role as a form of self-healing in reducing stress levels in COVID-19 survivors in Surabaya (Firmansyah & Abrorry, 2023). Furthermore, music can provide an alternative outlet for non-verbal emotional expression, relieve stress, and temporarily escape the pressures of life (Sinaga & Winangsit, 2023).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a library research approach with Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework. This hermeneutic approach is used to interpret the phenomenon of existential escape in the lyrics of the song "33" by Perenggu. The study emphasizes understanding the song's text as a symbolic space where modern human experience can be reflected and reconfigured into spiritual meaning. Primary data consists of verses from the Quran and hadith relevant to spiritual escape, while secondary data are obtained from interpretation literature, psychological studies, sociology, and social data regarding modern human escape behavior, including drug use, online gambling, social media, and adolescent behavior.

The analysis is conducted through Ricoeur's three stages of mimesis. The prefiguration stage presents the reality of human existential anxiety, which has lost its direction and meaning in life. The configuration stage interprets the song lyrics as a narrative that organizes this anxiety into meaningful reflection. The refiguration stage places the song text in the

perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, transforming negative escape into a spiritual process that leads individuals back to God (ar-rujū' ilallāh).

With this approach, the song "33" is understood not simply as an expression of modern human anxiety, but also as a medium for reflection and self-healing. Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach allows existential escape to be transformed into a constructive process toward a deeper awareness of divinity and the meaning of life.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mimesis I: The Social Phenomenon of Anxiety and Escape

Humans often don't fully understand what existential anxiety is. Unlike fear, which has a clear object, this anxiety exists without a definite direction, born from an awareness of one's limitations and freedom of choice. Kierkegaard asserted that anxiety arises from a human's awareness of their freedom, yet at the same time, they haven't found a meaning for life that can serve as a foundation (Ayu, et al., 2023).

Existential anxiety can arise from a variety of complex life situations. It stems not only from fundamental questions about the meaning of life, but also from the real-life situations people experience daily. Family disharmony can also lead to feelings of alienation and loss of direction (ibid). Similarly, stress from financial problems, strained social relationships, or failure to achieve life goals can trigger profound anxiety (Sahputra et al., 2022).

Beyond the aforementioned issues, health problems, both physical and mental, can exacerbate feelings of fragility and uncertainty about the future (Sahputra et al., 2022). In such circumstances, people often feel as if they are on the verge of confusion, trapped between the desire to survive and the urge to give up, between the hope for meaning and the emptiness that haunts the heart. Thus, existential anxiety is not simply a simple feeling of anxiety, but rather an inner turmoil that arises when people are faced with questions about their own purpose in life.

When experiencing existential anxiety, individuals often seek a way out or escape. This is done to avoid being trapped by the crushing burden of consciousness (Prabajati & Iskandar, 2022). Erich Fromm called it an escape from freedom, which is a human attempt to avoid the responsibilities of freedom by fleeing to a false sense of comfort. This escape can take various forms, ranging from entertainment and religious activities to other forms of psychological compensation that provide temporary relief (Erich Fromm, 1941). In other words, escape emerges as a mechanism for humans to relieve the tension caused by existential anxiety, although its nature is not always permanent and comprehensive. The escape undertaken by people experiencing this anxiety can be destructive or constructive. Destructive forms include addictive behaviors, Crime and social isolation (Junita Friska). Meanwhile, constructive forms refer to escape, used as a means of inner healing and spiritual deepening, so that humans can rediscover the full meaning of life (Kamila, 2020).

In this context, music can be a form of positive escapism that soothes the soul and opens up space for reflection. Through music, one can channel feelings, unburden psychological

burdens, and find meaning behind their existential experiences (Sinaga & Winangsit, 2023). One work that exemplifies this is the song "33" by the band Perunggu, which depicts the inner journey of humans facing anxiety and searching for the meaning of life.

Mimesis II: The Meaning of the 33X Song from Bronze

Music, particularly in the indie genre, often serves as a medium for self-reflection and existential expression for the younger generation. Amidst stressful routines and intense social demands, music serves not only as entertainment but also as a platform for channeling anxiety and searching for meaning in life (Septian & Hendrastomo, 2019). Psychologically, music can serve as a constructive escape, helping individuals calm their minds, relieve stress, and restore self-awareness to more essential matters (Firmansyah & Abrorry, 2023).

This is clearly evident in the song "33x" by the band Perunggu, which was born from the personal experience of the lyricist. He describes how modern humans often experience emptiness due to mechanical routines, losing direction, and feeling far from the true meaning of life. In an interview, the writer explained that this song stems from a phase in his life when he felt empty and alienated from the Creator, until he finally realized that the way out of emptiness was to draw closer to God. This spiritual awareness is the core message of the song (Perunggu, 2025). This meaning is strongly reflected in lyrics such as:

“The treatise is bound,
locked mind and body,
Above the Almighty
all control is taken over.”

This line demonstrates the awareness that humans are inherently weak and locked within their limitations; only the Almighty, Allah SWT, has complete control over life. This bond between the mind and body depicts the existential conflict of humans who desire freedom but are bound by their own weaknesses. The next section of the lyrics reads:

“Call on His name,
stay on His path,
One day you will remember,
you will remember.”

This line represents a turning point from a restless inner journey to spiritual serenity. The phrase "Call His name" serves as a call or invitation to monotheism and invites humanity to remember Allah SWT as the center of all searches for meaning. Meanwhile, the phrase "One day you will remember" depicts a moment of realization that all life experiences, including fatigue, loss, and isolation, will ultimately culminate in a recognition of God's existence and power.

This song doesn't stop at expressing anxiety, but instead opens up a contemplative space for listeners to re-examine their life journey. It depicts an escape that isn't simply an escape from problems, but rather a path toward inner healing and spiritual closeness. Thus, music acts as a transformative medium from existential escape to spiritual awareness (Perunggu, 2025).

The inner journey depicted in "33x" demonstrates that true escape isn't about escaping reality, but rather finding a new direction within it. Music bridges the gap between humanity's restless search and the urge to return to the source of true meaning. This is where the subsequent discussion becomes crucial: how the Qur'an and Hadith view escapism not merely as a psychological mechanism, but as a spiritual journey toward God (ar-rujū' ilallāh).

Mimesis III: Ecapism from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith

Similar to the previous interpretation, from an Islamic perspective, escapism can be understood as a form of human escape from the realities of life towards things that are considered pleasant or calming, both physically and psychologically (Ma'Luf, 1986). However, this escape is temporary and does not address the root of the problem. In the Qur'an, a concept similar to escapism is referred to as *matā'* (مَتَا), namely all forms of worldly pleasure that are temporary, limited, and easily lost (Shihab, 2002).

This word is mentioned in the Qur'an 31 times (Abd al-Baqi, 1945) consisting of several letters and their context. The verses are as follows:

No.	Category of Meaning of "Matā'"	Surah & Verse	Summary	Context of Interpretation and Explanation
1.	Temporary Worldly Pleasures (Matā' al-Ḥayāh ad-Dunyā)	Al-Baqarah: 36, Al-A'raf: 24, Yunus: 23, Hud: 3, Al-An'am: 32, Ali 'Imran: 14, Ali 'Imran: 197, An-Nisa': 77, Al-Kahf: 46, Al-Hadid: 20, At-Taubah: 38, Ash-Shura: 36, Al-Qashash: 60–61	Worldly life is just a deceptive pleasure.	The world is called a place of temporary pleasure before heading to the afterlife; humans often get caught up in chasing fleeting pleasures (ibid).
2.	Post-Divorce Gift or Mut'ah (Matā' bi al-Ma'rūf)	Al-Baqarah: 236, Al-Baqarah: 241, Al-Ahzab: 28, Al-Ahzab: 49	"For divorced women there is a gift (matā') in an appropriate way."	Matā' here means giving material things to a divorced wife; this is a form of kindness and social responsibility. (Muhammad Thāhir)
3.	Beneficial Blessings or Provisions (Matā'an Ḥasanan)	Hud: 3, An-Nahl: 80, An-Nahl: 81, An-Nahl: 112, Ar-Ra'd: 17	"We give you good pleasure for a certain time."	Allah gives humans various worldly pleasures (houses, clothing, sustenance) as a means of gratitude, not the goal of life (Shihab, 2006)
4.	Deceptive Pleasure (Matā' al-Ghurūr)	Al-An'am: 32, Al-Hadid: 20	"The life of this world is but a deceptive pleasure."	Matā' al-ghurūr describes the illusion of this world that makes humans neglect the afterlife (Al Qurthubi); it is often repeated as a

			moral warning. (Abd al-Raḥ mān)
5.	Little Pleasures (Mata' Qalil)	Ali 'Imran: 197, At-Taubah: 38, An-Nisa': 77, Al-Ahzab: 28	“It's just a little fun, then it's hell for them.”
			Emphasizing that worldly pleasures are very limited compared to the pleasures of the hereafter; they are called “little” because they are quickly exhausted (Abd al-Raḥ mān)
6.	The Pleasures of the World as a Test or Comparison with the Hereafter	Ar-Ra'd: 17, Al-Mu'minin: 33, Al-Qashash: 60–61, Yunus: 70, Al-Ankabut: 64, Ghafir: 39	"What is given to you is only the pleasures of this worldly life; while the hereafter is better."
			Mata' is used to emphasize the difference in quality between this world and the afterlife; this world is only a test for humans. (Ibid).

From these verses, it is clear that the mata in the Quran depicts worldly pleasures that are temporary and deceptive. Escapism, in the Islamic perspective, is a form of human escape into false pleasures that do not provide true peace. The Quran emphasizes that true happiness can only be found in closeness to God, not in transient worldly pleasures. In addition to the verses above, the Prophet's hadith also directs humans towards a transcendental escape (Ahmad bin Husain, 2023), as in the hadith:

الكافِرِ وَجَنَّةٍ، الْمُؤْمِنِ سِجْنِ الدُّنْيَا: ﷺ Allah رَسُولُ قَالَ: قَالَ عَنْهُ Allah رَضِيَ هُرَيْرَةَ بِيَّ عَنْ

"The world is a prison for believers and a paradise for disbelievers." (HR. Muslim).

This hadith illustrates that for believers, the world is merely a place of trials and limitations; while for unbelievers, it is their only pleasure. In another hadith, the Prophet also said that when we are faced with problems, the way out is to be patient and draw closer to the Creator :

فَكَانَ شَكَرًا سَرَّاءُ أَصَابَتْهُ نَأْيٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ؛ Allah لِأَحَدٍ ذَلِكَ وَلَيْسَ، خَيْرٌ Allah كُلُّهُ أَمْرُهُ إِنَّ، الْمُؤْمِنِ لِأَمْرٍ عَجَبًا
Allah خَيْرًا فَكَانَ صَبْرًا ضَرَّاءُ أَصَابَتْهُ وَإِنْ، لَهُ خَيْرًا .

“How amazing is the affair of the believer, for all his affairs are good. This is not the case for anyone but the believer. If he experiences happiness, he is grateful, and that is good for him; and if he is struck by hardship, he is patient, and that is good for him.” (Narrated by Muslim).

5. CONCLUSION

This research confirms the success of Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic framework in transforming the meaning of modern human existential escape, shifting it from a negative psychological mechanism to a constructive spiritual process through three stages of mimesis. Mimesis I (Prefiguration) explains the reality that existential anxiety (Soren Kierkegaard) triggers destructive escape in modern humans who fall into emptiness. Mimesis II (Configuration) interprets the song "33x" as a symbolic narrative that organizes this anxiety into an inner reflection, culminating in the awareness that full control lies with the Almighty and calls to "Call His name." Mimesis III (Refiguration) places the text of

this song in the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, where negative escape (chasing matā' or deceptive worldly pleasures) is refigured into a spiritual process (ar-rujū' ilallāh). Thus, the song "33x" is understood not merely as an expression of anxiety, but as a healing medium (healing text) that guides individuals from alienation to true serenity through divine awareness.

REFERENCE LIST

- Abd al-Baqi, MF (1945). *Al-Mu'jam al mufabras li-alfaz al-Qur'an al-karim*. Matabi'a;Sha'b.
- Ahmad bin al-Husayn bin 'Ali bin Mūsā Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqī. (2003). *Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā*, Vol. X. Beirut-Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Al-Qurthubi. *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi*. Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, volume 4, p. 735.
- Ayu, WRG, Sumaryati, S., & Urbayatun, S. (2023). A Study of Rollo May's Existential Psychology Truth in the Clinical World. *Psikobuletin: Scientific Bulletin of Psychology*, 4(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.24014/pib.v4i1.18924>
- Bronze. (2025). Bronze: Family, Work, New Band! [Video]. YouTube. Uploaded by NAIK CLAS. https://youtu.be/_HZj4nSHOqE
- Dau, S. (2014). The use of the three fold mimesis: New Approaches, Old Realities. *Academic Quarter | Academic quarter*, 112-125.
- Erich Fromm. (1941). *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.
- Firmansyah, DA, & Abrorry, L. (2023). The Role of Listening to Music as Self-Healing in Reducing Stress in Covid-19 Survivors in Surabaya. *Psycho Aksara: Jurnal Psikologi*, 1(2), 161-169. <https://doi.org/10.28926/pyschoaksara.v1i2.1020>
- Fithri, W. (2014). The Specificity of Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics. *Tajdid Journal*, 17(2).
- Kamila, A. (2020). Dhikr psychotherapy in dealing with anxiety. *Happiness: Journal of Psychology and Islamic Science*, 4(1), 40-49.
- Lutfiah, H., & Nahuda, N. (2024). Mental Health in the Perspective of PAI Critical Analysis of the Quran Surah Ar-Rad Verse 28. *Journal of Education and Teaching Review (JRPP)*, 7(3), 11071-11075.
- Ma'Luf, L. (1986). *al-Munjid fi al-Lughab wa al-'Alam*. Beirut: dar al-Masyriq, 60.
- Maryam, S. (2017). Coping strategies: Theory and resources. *Andi Matappa Counseling Journal*, 1(2), 101-107. <https://doi.org/10.31100/jurkam.v1i2.12>
- Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. (2024). *National Online Gambling Data Release*. Jakarta: Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. (2024). *Risikesdas 2023: National Mental Health Report*. Jakarta: Ministry of Health.
- National Narcotics Agency (BNN). (2024). *BNN Annual Report 2023*. Jakarta: BNN.
- Prabajati, DH, & Iskandar, DA (2022). The Phenomenon of Escapism in the Formation of Urban Social Space. *Ruang*, 8(2), 87-96. <https://doi.org/10.14710/ruang.8.2.87-96>
- Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action and interpretation*. Cambridge university press.
- Sahputra, D., Afifa, A., Salwa, AM, Yudhistira, N., & Lingga, LA (2022). The Impact of Online Gambling on Adolescents (Tebing Tinggi Case Study). *Islamic Counseling: Journal of Islamic Counseling Guidance*, 6(2), 139-156. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jbk.v6i2.3866>
- Septian, WT, & Hendrastomo, G. (2019). Indie Music as Youth Identity in Yogyakarta. *Journal of Sociology Education*, 8(7), 1-21.
- Shihab, MQ (2006). *Insights from the Qur'an on dhikr and prayer*. Lentera Hati Group.
- Shihab, MQ. *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Messages, Impressions, and Harmony of the Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002). Juz I, 358.
- Sinaga, FSHS, & Winangsit, E. (2023). Music Therapy to Improve Mental Health: A Literature Review from a Psychodynamic Perspective. *Assertive: Islamic Counseling Journal*, 2(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.24090/j.assertive.v3i01.8017>
- World Health Organization. (2023). *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2023*. Geneva: WHO.