

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

One of the most important thing to do as a human being is living in a meaningful life. People must consider about the meaning of life in order to find a purpose in life which in turn should reduce the pain and suffering of life. According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of meaningful is having a meaning or purpose. Another definition is from Oxford Dictionary, meaningful is having meaning, value, and importance. It can be described that meaning needs to be achieved by every human being in their own lives.

Living a meaningful and purposeful life is also being discussed by philosopher and psychologist. Existentialism is the reaction against traditional philosophies, such as Rationalism, Empiricism, and Positivism, to discover an ultimate meaning in the structure of the observed world. It asserts that people actually make decisions based on what the meaningful life to them.

Another central factors of meaningfulness is also associated with psychological well-being (Ryff and Singer, 1998:13). Frankl (1997:43) stated that the importance of value is a part of living in a meaningful life. It can be defined that meaning is including human life as an important feature in the experiences of life.

Meaningful life is not only to the attention of philosophy, psychology, religion aspects, but also to authors. One of the authors which is interested to discussing about seeking a meaningful life is Paulo Coelho. He was born in 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. He has written seventeen books, *The Pilgrimage* (1987), *The Alchemist* (1988), *Brida* (1990), *The Valkyries* (1992), *By the river Piedra I sat Down and Wept* (1994), *The Fifth Mountain* (1996), *Manual of a Warrior of Light* (1997), *Veronika decides to die* (1998), *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000), *Eleven Minutes* (2003), *The Zahir* (2005), *The Witch of Portobello* (2006), *Like The Flowing River* (2006), *The Winner Stands Alone* (2009), *Aleph* (2010), *Manuscript Found in Accra* (2012) and *The Spy* (2016). In total, Coelho has sold more than 210

million books in over 170 countries worldwide (June 2015 sales figures), and his works have been translated into 81 languages.

One of his book that gives imagery of the seeking of a meaningful life is *Eleven Minutes*. This book was released by Harper Collins in 2003. According to www.harpercollins.com, *Eleven Minutes* got some of the appreciations. This novel gets awards from Ex Libris Award Serbia 2004. It is also one of the best selling Brazilian books written by Paulo Coelho. It was number 1 in the 2003 annual list of Publishing Trends, which every year establishes, which fiction works sell more 150 million copies worldwide. The original title was Onze Minutos which means Eleven Minutes in English. It is translated from Portuguese by Margaret Jull Costa. It is translated more than 50 languages and consists of 288 pages. It can be seen that *Eleven Minutes* is one of the most popular novel of Paulo Coelho.

Eleven Minutes has an inspiring story about the journey of a prostitute in seeking a meaningful life and risking everything all that she had which are money and sexual pleasure. Paulo Coelho tells the story by Maria as a major character in his novel. It concerns in the seeking-meaning of Brazilian woman and also a high class prostitute in Geneva called Maria. When she was teenager, she was an innocent girl who had heartbroken with her first love. She becomes a girl who never believe about true love, after she had a heartbroken in her past relationship.

Forgetting about love relationship, she decided to work in in a draper's shop. After working there for about two years, she decided to resign and spends her holiday in her dream city which is Rio de Janeiro. A chance meeting a foreign man named Roger in Rio de Janeiro takes her to Geneva, Switzerland, in search of employment and ended up as a Samba dancer in a club. Unfortunately, she was failed as a Samba dancer and became frustrated of losing her job and has no money to stay longer in Geneva.

Then, when she decided to stay in Switzerland for a little while, so she could make some money before returning to Brazil. As a defeated and innocent woman who was disappointed and frustrated in her dreams of wealth and fame, she was forced to be a prostitute in Geneva. She realized that the easiest and the fastest way to earn money is from prostitution. Through her profession as a high class prostitute,

she met men of all ages and professions to learn her curiosity about sexual pleasure. All that she knew was a sexual pleasure instead of the meaning of life.

Maria's despairing view of a meaningful life is put to the test when she meets Ralph Hart, a handsome young painter. In this journey of seeking a meaningful life, Maria has to choose between pursuing a path of darkness sexual pleasure as a prostitute or risking them to choose the love of her life.

In a literary work, the work of a novel which is produced by an author does not always necessarily correspond with the hope of all readers of the work, as well as in the novel. Some readers have a positive and negative response.

Based on the public responses, there are some common responses; according to www.goodreads.com, the positive response is from Tina, she said that *Eleven Minutes* was very good novel which tells about the main character Maria who wants to find her true love but lost its beauty is pain. Selfishness will eliminate to the greatness of love and remove the happiness of life.

There are also negative response comes from Felicia who said that she did not find this novel as good as *The Alchemist*. She felt that Coelho was trying to get in the mindset of a woman by over-analyzing sex rather than a less philosophical and more emotional about Maria's experiences.

There are third reasons why the researcher is interested to analyze this novel. The first, *Eleven Minutes* has good quality novel in this novel the author gives the moral value that the person needs to seek the meaning of life instead of pleasure.

The second, *Eleven Minutes* is a novel by Paulo Coelho that is different from his novels before which means this novel is challenging and interesting to read. This novel also comes from true story which takes about sex and woman as the element of the novel.

The third reason is Coelho describes the character, setting, plot, style, and point of view in the *Eleven Minutes* clearly. Coelho tells the positive and negative characteristics of Maria that she was an innocent girl and then becomes a high class prostitute in Geneva which is significantly different from her characteristics when she was a teenager. The setting in *Eleven Minutes* is also interesting, it is located in two cities, namely Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and Geneva in Switzerland. Coelho uses

simple and direct prose to wield a very sensitive subject and converting it into a drama of Maria on the quest for true love. The author also tells the story from the third person limited point of view. This means that the author not only provides dialogue and events of the novel, he also shares the acts and the dialogue of the other characters but does not take the reader into their minds as he does with Maria.

Based on the illustration above, the writer is interested to analyze this novel by using existentialist perspective entitled **Seeking a Meaningful Life in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* (2003) : An Existentialist Perspective.**

B. Problem Statement

The main problem statement is how the seeking a meaningful life is reflected in the literary work. In order to depict how seeking a meaningful life is reflected in this work, the problem statement is further dissected into the following research questions:

1. What are the indicators of seeking a meaningful life in the novel?
2. How is seeking a meaningful life depicted in the novel?
3. Why is seeking a meaningful life specifically addressed by the author in the novel?

C. Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are in accordance with the research questions.

1. To identify the indicators of seeking a meaningful life in the novel.
2. To describe how seeking a meaningful life depicted in the novel.
3. To analyze why seeking a meaningful life specifically addressed by the author in the novel.

D. Significance of the Study

After analyzing the problem, this research is expected to give some benefits of the study as follows:

a. Theoretical Benefit

The writer expects that this research will give contribution, benefits, and information to the larger body of knowledge particularly the literary study in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes*.

b. Practical Benefit

The writer expects that this research will give significant benefit in the form of information, especially for students of English Department who manage themselves to increase their knowledge in analyzing *Eleven Minutes* novel by using existentialist perspective.

E. Research Paper Organization

The research paper organization of "SEEKING A MEANINGFUL LIFE IN PAULO COELHO'S *ELEVEN MINUTES* (2003) : AN EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE" is as follows: Chapter I is introduction which presents Background of the study, Problem Statement, Objective of the Study, Significance of the Study, and Research Paper of Organization. Chapter II is Literature Review which is consists of Underlying Theory of Existentialist Perspective, The Principles of Existentialist Perspective, Previous Study, and Novelty of The Research. Chapter III is Research Method discussing about Type of the Study, Object of the study, Type of the Data and the Data Source, Technique of the Data Collection, and Technique of the Data Analysis. Chapter IV is the Analysis of *Eleven Minutes* novel. Chapter V contains of Conclusion and Suggestion of the Research.