

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Human beings are always confronted by choices in their life time. Sometimes the choices can be difficult to be decided, especially when it comes to be a serious matter such as determining goals or lifetime commitments. But no matter how difficult the choices are, people have to be capable of choosing their ways because the choices that they made will in turn determine what they will be. As being suggested by Sartre (1992) that: *“Man is nothing else but his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfils himself; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life.”*Hence, in determining how one wants to life, everyone is free to choose his possibilities in any given situation. Nevertheless, sometimes it can be so dilemmatic for individuals in choosing their ways, especially when they find a difference or contrary between what they personally believe as best or true and what other people or public might say in general. As a result it creates such a conflict between the need of individual and the demands of the community which makes it sometimes dilemmatic for individuals to firm their own choices.

Indeed public opinion usually constructs certain ideal about what people should and should not choose which tends to render people to do conformity. However in so doing, people potentially reduce their own possibilities and lose

their chances to actualize what they really need to do in the first place. People who fail to see many possibilities in their life because they keep following certain standard that society imposed and fall to see the world as merely a “big full stop” rather than a “big question mark” might eventually lose their enthusiasm of life and become pessimistic about what they are actually capable of. They might turn to see their routines as merely demand that must be fulfilled and end up feeling estranged from themselves.

Regarding to this, scholars especially existential thinkers attempt to examine the issue related to personal freedom and the meaning of human’s existence in order to overcome the self-estrangement caused by the blind mechanical acceptance of the externally imposed codes of values. Mainly existentialists argue that in reconciling such conflict between the individual need and the social demand, the subjectivity and a true self-knowledge is necessary though it is something that one must continually discover. For Heidegger particularly the self-knowledge is neither immediate nor transparent (Salomon, 2000), thus one must continually interpret himself. In his work *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1996) articulates the notions of authenticity and inauthenticity which signify the two different modes of being. Stated in general, authenticity refers to a condition when one can take hold of his own and being true to himself existentially. In this mode of being one is brought to make a meaning out of meaninglessness of the indifference ‘average everydayness’. In this regard one does not only think of himself as indifference or merely a carrier of social role but as a distinct self with unique possibilities. It is distinguished from the inauthentic mode of being, in

which one is being influenced more by the public way of understanding rather than by oneself in determining how one wants to live and thus rendering one to be estranged from oneself (Golomb, 1995).

In Heidegger's philosophy the notion of authenticity is associated with the they (Das Man) or the impersonal way of understanding, Angst, conscience call, and resoluteness (O'Brien, 2011). The quest for authenticity revolves around self-creation and self-reflective processes. To be authentic is rather a process of becoming the way one truly engage in that needs to be constantly resolved until one ultimately reaches its end, that is death (Hardiman, 2016). The quest for authenticity starts when one decides to pay head to his *Angst* and choose to anticipate the future possibility in resoluteness. Furthermore as suggest by Heidegger, the authenticity involves the authentic being-with-other in the first place that is confronting the other people not in a maner of controlling or dominating but rather liberating others to choose their 'own-most' possibilities for being themselves (O'Brien, 2011).

Paulo Coelho's *By The River Piedra I Sat down and Wept* depicts such interesting journey in search for the authenticity. Through the main character, Pilar, the author portrays the conflicts within the self of the main character in her struggle to seek for a true love and find a good life. Pilar was a timid woman who at first dreamed about living an adventurous life. Turns out, the failures in the past made her become negative and bitter with life. She became too afraid to dream and take the risks and thereof only obsesses with planning and having a stable life. She only took for granted the possibility that seemed obvious to her until she

finally reunited with her old friend and learned from him to open up her heart again to truly love and dream. During the time she spent with her childhood friend, Pilar eventually faces herself and accepts the challenge to transform her life. The rest of the story explains just how important the faith, love and genuine selfhood in order to find the happiness in life. Thus this study attempts to examine the turn of the main character, Pilar, from inauthenticity to authenticity.

The issue of existential authenticity itself has been frequently shown in several other works by Paulo Coelho such as *The Alchemist* (1993), *Veronica Decides to Die* (1999), *The Zahir* (2005), *The Winner Stand Alone* (2008), and *Adultery* (2014). Almost all of Paulo Coelho's works reflect the theme of self-realization, beginning with the existential-self struggling to make meaning out of meaninglessness and ending up by the spiritually evolved self. The themes of meaninglessness, nothingness, absurdity, Angst and awareness of death that often being implemented in Coelho's works make his novels are often associated with existentialism (Mishra, 2012).

Paulo Coelho is considered as not only the most widely read but also most influential writers in the world today. He is the recipient of numerous international awards, including the Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum. Now, Paulo Coelho is Messenger of Peace for the UN, Ambassador of European Union for Intercultural Dialogue for the year of 2008, Member of the Board of the Shimon Peres Institute for Peace, UNESCO special counsellor for "Intercultural Dialogues and Spiritual Convergences", Board Member of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, and Member of the Brazilian Academy

of Letters (*An Interview With Paulo Coelho, The Coming Of Age Of A Brazilian Phenomenon, 2003*).

Every book of Paulo Coelho reflects his philosophical view which conveyed through a story about a journey or a search for a way of life that enriches the meaning of existence (More & Bed, 2015). In *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* itself, Paulo reveals an idea that ‘Love is Liberty’ (More & Bed, 2015), stating his point of view in the author’s note section in the novel that “*One doesn’t love in order to do what is good or to help or to protect someone. If we act that way, we are perceiving the other as a simple object and we are seeing ourselves as wise and generous persons. This has nothing to do with love.*”. This view that Paulo conveyed in the story of *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* echoes the similar message with Heidegger’s notion of authenticity which illuminates the necessity of placing the other as another *Dasein*, as a ‘whole being’ rather than an object which is ‘ready-to-hand’, thus one supposed to liberate oneself as well as the others for being transparent in their care and being free for it through the act of resoluteness (Golomb, 1995; O’Brien, 2011). From that standpoint this study is interested to understand further about the main character’s quest for authenticity which is depicted by Coelho in his work *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* which is not just dealing with the quest for the authentic selfhood but also the ‘authentically bound’ relations in which people, including oneself, ‘caring for’ each other’s ‘existence’.

There are several studies has been conducted concerning about the depiction of the existential authenticity in novel. One of them is *Authentic Hero in The Book*

of *Evidence* by Dr. Kubilay Gecikli (2011), this study attempts to analyze the main character, Freddie Montgomery, as the example of authentic hero. The study reveals that the main character is authentic because he never hesitates to do what he wants and desires in the first place and only accepts values, beliefs and customs in so far as he himself activates them. Another study which covers the issue of existential authenticity in fiction is *Fear, desire and the ideal of authenticity: antinomies of modernity in the works of Abe Kobo and Martin Heidegger* by Carl Cassegard (2005). This study attempts to compare the ideal of authenticity which depicted in Abe Kobo's fictions (*Secret Rendezvous, The Ruined Map, The Woman of The Duns*) and what is proposed by Martin Heidegger in his work, *Being and Time*. The study reveals that while Abe's version of authenticity tended toward an affirmation of desire even in the face of having to accept shock and final defeat, in Heidegger, by contrast, the tendency is to put priority on the need for self-preservation, even at the cost of suppressing desire.

Another previous related study is *Existentialism Isabel Archer in Portrait of Lady* by Henry James that is conducted by Maria Berlian (2007). The study attempted to find the authenticity of the main character through the three features based on Sartre's theory: Bad faith, being-for-others, and freedom and responsibility. Meanwhile this study attempts to examine the quest for authenticity of the main character in Paulo Coelho's *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* by using Heidegger's theory. This study reveals the main character's quest for authenticity which is indicated by the three features: lost in the they (*Das Man*), *Angst* and call conscience, and resoluteness.

1.2 Research Question

How is the quest for authenticity of the main character, Pilar, in Paulo Coelho's *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* depicted?

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study is intended to reveal the depiction of the quest for authenticity of the main character in Paulo Coelho's *By The River Piedra I Sat Down And Wept*.

1.4 Scope of the study

This study is limited by the depiction of the quest for authenticity of the main character, Pilar shown in the dialogues and the narrations based on Heidegger's theory.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is expected to give contribution for those who interested in the issue of authenticity in the novel, especially for student of English literature study program. Hopefully, by reading this study the reader would have better understanding about the issue related to the existential authenticity and related theory.