

## **KIERKEGAARD'S EXISTENTIALISM ON THE MAIN CHARACTER IN PAULO COELHO'S THE ZAHIR**

**Asharuddin Asy'ari<sup>1</sup>, Ambar Andayani<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Prodi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Untag Surabaya; [asharuddin.asyari@gmail.com](mailto:asharuddin.asyari@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Prodi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Untag Surabaya; [ambarandayani@untag-sby.ac.id](mailto:ambarandayani@untag-sby.ac.id)

**Abstract:** This study aims to discuss the issue of Existentialism in Coelho's *The Zahir*. The objectives of this study are to analyze the existentialism exposed in the novel on the main character of the novel. This study uses descriptive qualitative method using philosophical approach and several theories of existentialism. The result of this study shows that the novel depicts the existentialism in the main character of the novel based on elements, stages of the existentialism and the subjectivity of the truth of main character. The elements are: despair and anxiety. The stages are: the aesthetic, ethical and religious stage. The subjective truth is defined as the way of person meaning a truth. The Concept of Anxiety in Relation with Ethical Stage. Despair is indicated when the character feels hopeless and soulless, anxiety is depicted when the character feels anxious without reason. In addition, the aesthetic stage is portrayed when the character acts selfish and arrogant, the ethical is described when the character becomes aware of the human nature, and the religious stage is shown when the character believes in god. The subjective truth is explained that the truth comes from the individual

**Keywords:** *existentialism, despair, anxiety, ethical, religious*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are many influential existentialist philosophers, such as Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and many more. One of them is Søren Kierkegaard known as the father of existentialism with the theory called 'leap of faith'. The statement is supported by Perry, et al (1989: 756) in *Western Civilization*. Human beings are God's creatures, according to Kierkegaard. There are two types of existentialism, atheistic and theistic existentialism (White, 2001:49; Andayani, 2018). Theistic is believed that God does exist and human's life is determined by Him. Meanwhile atheistic does not believe in God's existence. One of the theist existentialists is Søren Kierkegaard. Therefore, the idea of theistic fits to be applied in the object of this study.

Many information we can get in details the dialogues and descriptions. Little states this opinion in *Approach to Literatur*. "... a novel creates a whole imagined world through description and dialogue, and may thus explore basic human issues in depth" (Little, 1966: 68). There are several great novelists. However, Coelho is chosen by the thesis writer for some reasons. First, accordingly by the data Coelho is the recipient of numerous prestigious international awards. The sale of more than 100 million copies world-wide makes Coelho a distinguished writer. Second, Coelho is one of the biggest-selling authors in the world, and recently, he also becomes the most influential author. The statement is supported by The Jury of BAMBI Awards in 2001 (in Coelho's *The Zahir's* first page) not only is the Portuguese novelist Coelho one of the most widely read authors in today's world, but he's also one of its most influential writers.

The *Zahir* is a work of fiction with heavy personal elements. As well as being translated into 68 languages, *The Zahir* has been published in 150 countries, and it has been sold out. *The Zahir* may be welcomed and appreciated by many countries, no doubt about it. The statement can be seen in the (Coelho's website accessed on May, 14, 2020).

Theory of Existentialism. Existentialism, according to (Perry, 1989: 755), is the philosophic movement that best exemplified the anxiety and uncertainty. The term of existentialism was started in 19th century. There are two kinds of existentialism: theistic and atheistic existentialism (Sartre, 2001: 49; Andayani, 2018). Theistic believes that God does exist and human's life is determined by Him.

One of the existentialists of this type is Kierkegaard. Meanwhile, atheistic existentialism does not believe in God's existence. Therefore, this type of existentialism focuses on the free-will. The atheistic existentialism tries to negate the existence of God, based on this thought, then, appears the principle that existence precedes essence, which means man comes first and he defines how he is. One of the existentialists of this type is Jean-Paul Sartre.

Through this theory, Kierkegaard's existentialism is suit with the story of the novel by Paulo Coelho *The Zahir* along with the elements, stages, and subjective truth component.

Philosophy begins with the philosophical problem raised by the philosopher. In the other side, questions regarding the meaning, veracity, and logical relationship of fundamental ideas are considered philosophical problems (Diyani, 1994: 2).

Kierkegaard's Existentialism. Kierkegaard was a brilliant scholar and a deep thinker. Literature, religion, psychology, literary criticism and devotional literature are all intertwined in his writing, as is the study of philosophy. Kierkegaard used this powerful combination of discourses as a systematic critique and to reinvigorate Christian faith inside Christendom.

Simultaneously, he made several initial conceptual contributions to many of the fields in which he worked. Since his literary innovation, his vivid re-presentation of biblical figures in order to bring their current significance to the forefront, and his creation of important concepts that have been studied and redeployed by thinkers ever since are all crucial. He was working on a piece about Don Juan, Faust, and Ahasuerus (the wandering Jew), which he combined into Either/Or. As the father of existentialism, Kierkegaard stresses human beings as the essence of the philosophy of existentialism, which is founded on the understanding that individuals' nature is based on their love for life decisions, struggles, and wishes. However, as a theist existentialist, religious is one of his thoughts, which means to live within the religious sphere, one must put God before all others.

Elements of Kierkegaard's Existentialism. There are 2 elements about existentialism that Kierkegaard's mention in Stewart (2011: 101) which are despair and anxiety and also there is another element that supports existentialism which is subjective truth.

**Despair** is term in existentialism refers to the hopeless state, a situation where someone feels that he has lost everything in life and there is no hope. In existential point of view, man is free to define for himself about what he wants to be and it will be his identity. However, if he fails to be what he wants to be, he cannot blame others. This statement is supported by Kierkegaard in *The Sickness Unto Death*, a book by Kierkegaard translated by Lowrie (Kierkegaard, 1954: 146) said, "A synthesis of infinity and finiteness, of temporality and eternity, of freedom and necessity - man is a composite of the infinite and finite."

In *The Sickness Unto Death*, despair is divided into three main forms. There are despair not to be conscious of having a self, despair not to will to be one self, and despair to will to be oneself. This statement can be seen in Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death* translated by Lowrie. Despair not to be conscious of having a self, is a condition where man does not realize that he is on despair. This is the worst despair than two

others. Meanwhile, despair not to will to be one self, is despair when individuals does not get the reality as the willingness. And the last is despair to will to be one self, it is clear that individuals despair at willing to be one self is a hopeless state.

**Anxiety** is concept refers to the idea that sometimes man feels anxious without any direction to specific objects. He feels he is sinful and guilty for not doing the best in life. He has to accept this condition as an existence. Anxiety is present as a form of consciousness of an individual freedom that he had. It means that a person realizes that he has freedom then at the same time they are also aware that anxiety is present as a reality. Theory of anxiety by Kierkegaard presented through the story of Adam and Abraham in his work. In his book *The Concept of Anxiety* translated by Reidar Thomte, Kierkegaard explains that the anxiety felt by Adam is a result of sin, which he did (Kierkegaard 1954: 29).

Anxiety is the condition of an existentialism, which is isolating individual. This concept can be seen in Western Civilization. Existentialism is a subjective experience - the isolated individual. (Perry, 1989: 756)

**Stages of Kierkegaard's Existentialism.** There are 3 stages of existentialism according to Kierkegaard's, they are: The Aesthetic stage, Ethical stage, and Religious stage.

**The Aesthetic Stage,** in his book Kierkegaard in his book entitled *Either/Or* (Kierkegaard's, 1987: 79) describes and defines that aesthetic stage is the stage to interpret life which does not refer to good or bad things. A condition when individual refuses to make a commitment with society. Edwards and Horton in their book entitled *Background of American Literary Thought* states that the aesthetic is the life of sensuous moment. It means that individual in this stage only uses passion and spontaneity to do something because the person lives within the aesthetic sphere is concerned with personal satisfaction. It means that individual in this stage only uses passion and spontaneity to do something because the person lives within the aesthetic sphere is concerned with personal satisfaction. In childhood and in unreflective hedonism generally, the aesthetic is the life of the sensual moment. (Edwards, 1974: 474)

**The Ethical Stage,** While the human being who wishes to decide his life's purpose morally generally has an insignificant number of options from which to pick, the act of decision itself has considerably greater significance for Kierkegaard. An ethical life requires the individual to take others into account and perform those actions which would be best for all concerned. This statement is supported by Edwards and Horton in *Background of American Literary Thought*. After realizing that human existence is finite, a person tries to maximize the value of his own life in light of an ultimate moral standard. (Edwards, 1974: 473)

**The Religious Stage** is the highest stage in Kierkegaard's thought. Individuals who in this stage is a believer, it means that with God all things are possible, even things which are physically and logically impossible. This is irrational, but that is the nature of religious faith. "As long as I am unable to understand God objectively, I am required to have faith" (Kierkegaard's, 1992: 204).

From the quotation taken by Kierkegaard's book entitled *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments Vol.1*, it is clear that to live within the religious sphere, one must put God before all others; just as to live within the ethical sphere, one must put the welfare of all ahead of one's own personal welfare. As long as I am able to grasp God objectively, I do not have faith (Kierkegaard's 1992:204).

**Subjective Truth of Kierkegaard's Existentialism.** As in its Book *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments Vol.1*, Kierkegaard agrees that the truth is subjective, as can be observed from the idea of subjective truth. Truth is

subjective. (Kierkegaard's, 1992: 209) The truth is what people comprehend by choice and personal decision, not what they understand as something that exists in the distance. Truth as subjectivity emphasizes the interaction between human beings and that which is right and not the existence of truth alone.

The Concept of Anxiety in Relation with Ethical Stage. "Anxiety is a qualification of dreaming spirit," says Soren Kierkegaard. (Kierkegaard, 1980) The actuality of the spirit continuously reveals itself as an ephemeral shape that tantalizes its possibilities, but evaporates as soon as it attempts to grasp it. As long as it just reveals itself, it cannot accomplish anything more.

Dialectical determination of anxiety is ambiguous from a psychological point of view. Anxiety is a sympathetic antipathy and a sympathetic antipathy, both of which are characterized by sympathetic dislike. There is no guilt attached to innocence, and there is no unpleasant weight or suffering that cannot be brought into harmony with the blessedness of innocence, therefore there is no need to worry about it. To the degree that the worry is pronounced, the culture is pronounced as well. There is no room for uncertainty in the leap to the qualitative level.

As a result, this is the only possible psychological explanation. If you are morally evolved you must reject this praise as a new and more profound temptation because it influences your ethics, adds a quantitative determination and, with the assistance of psychology, pays man a compliment at the expense of ethics. Anxiety's arrival is the pivot around which everything of life revolves. As it initially gets the latter by spirit, the Concept of Anxiety action has both persistence and endurance. And yet it is also a friendly force, as it is just this which creates the relationship.

Anxiety is the way it manifests itself. As long as it is outside of itself, the spirit cannot get rid of itself; it cannot get hold of itself. As a spirit, he cannot sink into the vegetative; he cannot run from anxiety because he loves it; he cannot genuinely love it because he runs from it. As a result, the innocence has reached its absolute worst. Because of its ignorance, innocence causes anxiety, because it has nothing to worry about. Innocence is anxiety exactly because it has nothing to worry about, because it is ignorant of nothing. No knowledge of good and evil etc. is available in this situation. Innocence still exists, yet only a single word is needed to focus ignorance. Anxiety has a strange term at that point that innocence cannot grasp. *Die Erläuterung folgt daher.* In him, the ban causes anxiety, since it awakens in him the potential of freedom.

He both loves it and flees from it, because it's both true and false. It must also be said that the punishment, if it is viewed as arousing the desire, also awakens the idea of deterrence. This, on the other hand, will simply serve to complicate the situation. As a result, the panic in this situation is worry, not actual horror. As a result, innocency is brought to its furthest level of expression. As a result of the worry, there is a connection between the prohibited and the penalty. As if the innocence had been squandered, there is a sense of concern as if it were. Psychology cannot go any further than this, but it may go as far as it can. Anxiety between good and evil can be conveyed in words, but only for those who are free, since for those who are innocent, it can signify only what has been explained above.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researcher does analyze and comparing research to gather the information or we can say the data. The word analyzing and comparing research does not mean that the thesis writer does analyze and compare all of the journals. It means the thesis writer does the research based on the references, books, articles, and also the journal as well. While this study on progress, the thesis writer deal in the form of phrases and sentences quoted

from a novel entitled *The Zahir*, and therefore the data will be interpreted, this research is categorized as a qualitative research design. It is in line with what Creswell states in *Research Design*, "Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive." This suggests that the thesis writer or the researcher interprets the data. (Creswell, 2003: 20)

For the instrument is the researcher himself. The thesis writer observe the research with read the book *The Zahir* written by Paulo Coelho in first published 2005 by Harper Collins. The data will be in the form of the sentences quote and phrases from the descriptions and dialogues delivered by the main character in *The Zahir* utilize as the object of research. Many times to fully understand while collect the data as well. Then, the researchcer analyzes the novel with close reading, understanding the main character and choosing the data support to solve the problem of statement and find the most suitable answer for develop the research.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Despair**

Despair is a condition in which we have no enthusiasm and live as hopelessly. In this case, despair is the cause of our heart to feel empty or to feel like we are losing our way and walking aimlessly. The first statement which is shows the main character's despair is clearly seen when he visits the Cathedral of Santa Maria in Spain. The main character walks through the skeleton of the cathedral, but in the middle of the central nave, he realizes that he is lost someone who makes him livelier. It is clear that the main character is hopeless about his life because Esther leaves him. This statement can be found in the quotation below: "Yes, we are all cathedrals, there is no doubt about it; but what lies in the empty space of my inner cathedral? Esther, the *Zahir*. She fills everything. She is the only reason I am alive" (Coelho, 2005:52).

Another despair of the main character can be seen in his dialogue with Mikhail when they are on a restaurant in Armenia. The main character states that he will be a happy man if he can see Esther again. It means the main character's life means nothing without Esther, his wife. This dialogue can be found in the following quotation: "I didn't want it to appear like I was attempting to purchase his allegiance,' I thought. Careful. As a result, I had to exercise extreme caution. Error: He might be attempting to take advantage of my sorrow by stating the truth or by lying". (Coelho, 2005: 97).

From the quote above, the main character reveals that despair can come from various directions, such as he thinks that Mikhail could take advantage of his suffering because he has lost his wife: "In my next statement, I said, "I only know of one sort of love energy." One I feel for a lady who is waiting for me after she departed or went away. I would be a happy man if I could see her again. As a result, the entire planet would be a better place" (Coelho, 2005: 97).

The main character's despair occurs when he try to do everything except writes a book, his job. The main character lost his energy that makes him soulful before. So that he does not want to writes a book anymore. This idea is supported by the following quotation: "I accomplished everything but write a book. My career as a writer was ended for me, because the woman who had given me my start was no longer around" (Coelho, 2005: 49).

In the main character's despair, he tries to look for antidote. The main character starts to look for his wife in every woman he met. The main character does not want to trap in the despair deeply. This idea can be seen in the quotation below:

It grew in my soul, despite my initial annoyance or enthusiasm for it. I began to search for Esther in every woman I encountered. Each bar, every movie, and the bus

stops would be filled with her. More than once, I instructed a taxi driver to halt in the middle of the street or to follow someone until I could convince myself that the individual was not the person I was looking for. Something that would not drive me to the point of despair was needed. It grew in my soul, despite my initial annoyance or enthusiasm for it. I began to search for Esther in every woman I encountered. Each bar, every movie, and the bus stops would be filled with her. More than once, I instructed a taxi driver to halt in the middle of the street or to follow someone until I could convince myself that the individual was not the person I was looking for. Something that would not drive me to the point of despair was needed. (Coelho, 2005: 48)

A person who does not get the reality as the willingness also called despair. In this case, the main character thinks that better to live cherishing a dream than face the reality. It means that the main character's reality does not work as well as his dream. This idea can be seen in the quotation below:

"I'm still on the lookout for love and I'm still writing songs." What I do when people ask me is that I am a writer. It's part of my work, I say when someone says they only know my song lyrics. It's a falsehood that I tell them when they apologize and admit they've never read any of my novels. There is no doubt that I have the financial means to write a book. If I attempt and fail, I don't know what the rest of my life will be like. (Coelho, 2005: 17)

Another proof when the main character hopeless because he gets his reality does not like his dream is clearly seen when he in Paris. This idea is supported by the following quotation: "There is no television in the house. There is no supper. He writes in a language that nearly no one in his country knows, in a country that is reputed to have almost no readers" (Coelho, 2005: 16).

### **Anxiety**

Anxiety can be marked in two ways; action and speech. Someone who experiences anxiety usually do peculiar attitude which makes other confused. Based on the theory, anxiety can be recognize by several characteristics. First, someone who anxious feels sinful. Second, In *The Zahir* the main character's anxiety clearly seen in the main character's attitude and speech.

A person who feels anxious always does something he does not like before. The main character's anxiety is clearly seen when he in Paris. He feels anxious when he realizes that he has freedom then at the same time he also aware that anxiety is present as a reality. He also drinks wines he does not like before. He feels he is sinful and guilty for not doing best in his life. He realizes that he already hurt certain people, especially his wife. This idea can be found in quotation below:

"I'm free," the inspector tells me. It is true that I was free in prison, and that I am still free today. Freedom is still to me the thing that I value most in the world. It's led me to drink wines I didn't like, to do things I shouldn't have done and won't do again. It's also caused me to injure my body and my spirit, and it's caused me to harm others, although I've since begged for forgiveness. If my wounds were medals, I wouldn't want to forget the terrible moments. If you want to pay for freedom, you have to do it with joy and a smile, even if that smile is tempered by tears. (Coelho, 2005: 10)

The main character's anxiety also can be seen in his behavior when he just leaved prison in Paris. He feels so gloomy. He walks to every place he ever go with Esther, his wife who disappeared. He thinks so ridiculous about people he meet in every path near the Arc de Triomphe, he want other people to feels like what he feels. This idea can be

seen in found in quotation below:

Paris, Arc de Triomphe. My taxi driver puts me off at the Arc. Every time one of us returned from a vacation abroad, Esther and I would meet for hot chocolate and chat. Coming home brought us back to the love that binds us together, even while our lives took increasingly diverse paths. (Coelho, *The Zahir*, 2005: 11)

The quote above is an anxiety that occurs due to their experiences that are always shared, this causes changes that occur because of something that usually happens, but happens in a different way. That thing makes hearts will feel discomfort if something that used to happen can not be repeated.

I'm still on my feet. They don't know that I've just lost my wife; they don't comprehend how much agony I'm in. There are a lot of people who should be sorry, empathetic and supportive of a man who is losing love like if it were blood, but instead they are laughing and living their terrible weekend life.. (Coelho, *The Zahir*, 2005: 11)

Another anxiety occurs when the main character's lawyer meet him to console him with a bunch of flowers. The main character's lawyer needs to talk to him in order to draw up a legal strategy that will help him, but the main character refuses the offer. He only wants to be alone. This attitude can be seen in quotation below:

Outside, it's a bright Sunday, but it doesn't represent my mood at all. A few comforting words and a bouquet of flowers are waiting for me at my lawyer's office. "I've called all the hospitals and morgues," he adds, "but I haven't located her yet." When I was being kept in captivity, he was able to keep journalists from finding out where I was. (Coelho, 2005: 10-11)

In addition, he is also always worried when what he knows cannot lead to an answer and he is always looking for loopholes on how he can get what he wants as quickly as possible.

To assist me defend myself against future accusations, he says we need to discuss. This man is not interested in building out a legal plan. He merely doesn't want to leave me alone for fear of how I'll respond to his intrusiveness. (Will I get arrested again if I become too drunk? Is it possible that I'll spark a scandal? Will I attempt to kill myself? (Will I try to kill myself? There are certain essential things I need to take care of. We both know that I have no legal problems. After all, I'm a free man. He persists, but I don't give him any option. Freedom. To be alone in the world, even if it is wretchedly lonely. (Coelho, 2005: 10-11)

The main character still feels anxious when he on the way to the Hotel Bristol, Paris, he decides not to go home. The main character isolates himself because he wants to spend his time alone. The way he isolates himself is ignoring any incoming phone from other people. This attitude can be seen in the quotation below: "The phone is constantly ringing. Should I answer it? Should I even respond it? Some of these folks seem interesting. Should I arrange a meeting with them? I made the decision to remain on my own (Coelho, 2005: 12).

After the main character arrives in the Hotel Bristol, the main character's anxiety occurs when he enjoys the beauty of Eiffel Tower at the night. The feeling he had in the Champs-Elysees returns. The most beautiful everything around him makes him anxious. This statement can be seen in the quotation below:

I opted to stay home instead of going home. Ask for a room, a toothbrush, and deodorant at the front desk. Despite the hotel's capacity, the manager arranges for a room for me with a terrace, a view of the Eiffel Tower, and a window that looks out over Paris' rooftops as the city's lights slowly come on. "And the emotion I felt on the Champs-Elysees returns" (Coelho, 2005: 15-16).

In Spain, the main character finds himself on another anxiety. The main character's anxiety occurs when he wants to forget Esther, the way he forget Esther are writing a book, going to a party, and etcetera, but in fact, he always thinks about Esther even in the places he never visits before reminds him of his wife. This attitude can be found in the following quotation.

When I decided to drive the 1.400 kilometers to the airport by myself, I did so because I was trying to get out of my usual routine of writing a book, visiting Marie in Milan, going to parties and airports, going out to eat, going to hotels, going to the airport, going to interviews and airports, etc. Everyone and everything reminds me of my personal Zahir. (Coelho, 2005: 50)

Another action that shows the main character's anxiety is when he goes back to Paris. The main character is in a kind of trance. The situation continues when the main character gets home, the main character ruins the small apparatus that connects him to the internet and unplug the telephone. Then he isolates himself again in his study room, he does not want to meet other people, even to answer the incoming phone, he does not want to. This action can be found in the following quotation.

My mind is in a kind of trance on the trip back to Paris, under considerably more pleasant weather conditions: I do not think, I simply concentrate on the traffic. Upon arrival, I ask the maid to keep everyone out, and ask if she may sleep over for a few nights and cook me breakfast, lunch, and dinner during that time. I damage the tiny device that links me to the internet by stomping on it, causing it to fall apart. The phone is unplugged. In a box, I send my cell phone to my publisher, instructing him to return it only when I physically pick it up. Then I shut myself in my study for a week and walk along the Siene every morning (Coelho, 2005: 53).

### **The Aesthetic Stage**

A person who is on the aesthetic stage usually refuses to make a commitment with other people and became arrogant. Individual in this stage only uses passion and spontaneity to do something. In *The Zahir*, the main character experiences this stage, it is clearly seen in his attitude and speech. The first proof comes when the main character remember his memories with Esther. In his daydreams, he has a short debate with his wife who is complain about his thought which is always looking for adventure in order to forget more important things. Esther asks him to be responsible man, but the main character ignores it. This speech is supported by the following quotation.

While women are constantly yearning for stability and faithfulness, men are always seeking excitement and the unknown, and the same issues begin to arise with my new wife. However, this time around, the connection is more stable. Esther's typewriter, along with everything else she took with her, should be returned to her apartment after two years.

There is no way to make this work.

"But you and I both adore one other, isn't that true?"

"I'm not sure. Yes, if you ask me whether I like your company. What if you were to ask me if I could live without you? (Coelho, 2005: 17-18)

In this case, the main character wants everything the way he wants, but when it comes to sharing someone else's relationship, requirements, likes, and needs, he never takes them into account, and the only thing he cares about is his passion. it can be seen in the quotation below.

"I'm glad I wasn't born a man. I'm very content with my female condition. In terms of my female appearance, I'm happy. Only one thing is expected of us women: the ability to cook. In contrast, men are supposed to be able to do it all:

maintain a home, make love, take care of children and earn money."

In addition to this, I am extremely satisfied with myself. But I don't believe this is going to work."

My companionship is pleasant to you, yet you dislike being alone. Your constant quest for adventure is an attempt to distract yourself from more significant issues. Blood should be the only thing running through your veins, not adrenaline. (Coelho, 2005: 17-18)

Another speech that proves the main character is a man who concerns with personal satisfaction is when the main character has conversation with Marie. Marie also complains about the main character's thought. Marie asks him to respect for the time he has on this earth. This idea can be found in the quotation below:

"That little kid who had to hide his tears from his parents is still inside of you." As a tiny little kid who couldn't find a girlfriend and was never excellent at sports, you still retain the markings of that boy. There are still some wounds left by the injustices that have been done in your life. Why is it even a good idea?

When asked, "Who told you that?" (Coelho, 2005: 58)

In the aesthetic stage, the main character becomes very selfish and only wants to walk in his own principle such as wanting every little thing in the relationship that is done or said together must have a pleasant impact on the main character, because of his stance, the main character is also indirectly paving the way for a relationship which refers to destruction. This opinion can be seen in this following sentence.

"I have a gut feeling. In your eyes, I can see it, and it does you no good. A continual need to feel sorry for yourself, since you were the victim of someone stronger than you, is all it does. Someone who has been injured by you may go to the other extreme and portray themselves as an avenging angel, ready to strike out against them. This is a waste of time, right?"

As the saying goes, "it's only human." This is true, but it's neither logical or clever. God has always forgiven you and will continue to do so." (Coelho, 2005: 58)

When the main character was child, he rebels his parents. The main character does not want to be an engineer, as his parents wants. He decides to follow his dream, to be a writer. And he also makes freedom his most precious commodity. This idea can be seen in the quotation below: "Freedom has always been my most prized possession since I was little. They wanted me to be an engineer instead of a writer. I was bullied by the other boys at school, and it took me a long time to prove to them that I could take a beating without breaking down" (Coelho, 2005:8).

Another proof that the main character is on the aesthetic stage can be seen when he does a monologue. The main character sits on the terrace and look back over his life. The main character explains that he rebels his parents wanted and he likes to do something makes him satisfied. Therefore, he proves that his choice is better than his parents choice. It can be found in quotation below: "As long as he gets a degree, his family pushes him to attend university. If you're looking for inspiration for your next project, check out these great ideas for your next project. If you're looking for inspiration for your next project, check out these awesome ideas for your next project" (Coelho, 2005: 16).

### **The Ethical Stage**

It is the point at when a person becomes conscious of the brevity of human existence and attempts to understand its deeper meanings. A person who is on this stage usually thinks the consequences of the way he will choose. In *The Zahir*, the main character also experiences this stage, it is clearly seen in his attitude and speech. The first statement that proves the main character is on the ethical stage can be seen when he visits

the Cathedral of Santa Maria in Spain. He starts to find out what are the weaknesses of him that need to be corrected. This idea is supported by the following quotation.

This realization comes to me as I stand in the midst of the cathedral's nave. Each of us is always developing and changing shape. We are constantly aware of some flaws that need to be addressed, we don't always select the ideal answer, but we go on nonetheless (Coelho, 2005: 52).

The second statement proves the main character is on the ethical stage can be seen when the main character gets the accident. He has a lot of free time in hospital room. The main character makes a review of his life. It means that the main character starts to renew himself. This statement is supported by the following quotation.

Why would I put myself into a position that would lead me to make the same mistakes I had done in the past if Esther was as important to me as I thought, and if she still loved me (as Mikhail said she did)?

How to prevent making the same mistakes again?

Finding out what had changed and what had prompted this unexpected break in a journey that had always been defined by joy, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of myself. (Coelho, 2005: 144)

The quote above is a state of awareness of the main character when he has an accident. And it made main character think back, what had caused all the things he'd been through to happen to him. This condition is one of the stages that he goes through when he feels a difference that occurs within him.

Was that enough?

Who Esther was, and what changes she had through during our time together, were also important questions for me to ask.

En quoi a-t-il suffi pour pouvoir répondre à ces deux questions?

Third question: Why were we together?

So, I took a look back at my life throughout my stay in the hospital. Both adventure and stability had always been important to me. I was certain of my love for Esther, but I fell in love with other women just as quickly, because the game of seduction is the most exciting game in the world. (Coelho, 2005: 144)

A person will feel a change when they experience things that cannot be logically explained. it was one of factors the main character felt on the ethical stage and he acknowledged the changes after the incident in the following sections: "A visit to Vitoria Cathedral has changed my perception of myself. That has nothing whatever to do with reader's messages." I discovered love, no matter how absurd it may sound" (Coelho, 2005: 56).

A person who is on the ethical stage will think better than before. In this case, the main character starts to change his thought about freedom. In the past, he always thinks that freedom is free and independent. Therefore, he thinks that freedom is the responsibility. This idea can be found in the quotation below: "Divorced again. Free again, but it's only a feeling: freedom is not the lack of responsibilities, but the capacity to choose — and devote myself to -what is best for me" (Coelho, 2005: 16).

### **The Religious Stage**

A person who in the religious stage is always put God before all others, individual in this stage is a believer. In this case, the main character experiences this level, he realize that with God all things are possible. This idea can be seen in the quotation below:

In spite of the fact that I know I may have lost forever the love of my life, I must strive to appreciate the blessings that have been bestowed upon me by God today. Grace is not a resource that can be hoarded. When I feel more at ease, I may

deposit it in a bank. If I do not make full use of these blessings, I shall lose them forever. (Coelho, 2005: 292)

The statement below is an acknowledgment from him, that he clearly believes that in every life there is always a God intervention, just like things that happen in his life when he passes all obstacles.

Every one of us is a living artist, God understands that. We're given hammers one day, paint brushes the next, or paper and pencils to write with, and we're expected to build sculptures out of them. Painter: But you can't produce sculptures or paintings using the tools you have at hand. It's a lovely day, the sun is shining, and the children are singing in the street. In this manner, I will be able to overcome my grief and begin over (Coelho, 2005: 292).

Another statement that proves the main character in this stage is when he on the way to hospital after he gets an accident. He only believe in God. This idea is supported by the following quotation.

When the pain didn't arrive it was too late. I started to move, then decided against it. I felt like I was in torpor. A second time, I begged to not be relocated. Suddenly, I heard a distant siren and realized I could go to sleep, that I no longer had to struggle to save my life. (Coelho, 2005: 137)

After the main character gets an accident and walks the road to Santiago, he becomes a believer, he believe in God and believe in destiny of God. This statement can be seen in the following quotation.

I'm a sign believer. There is always something to learn, we simply have to look around us with respect and attention to find where God is guiding and which step to take next. I also learnt to respect the mysteries of the world around me. In the words of Albert Einstein, God does not play dice with the cosmos. We may not be able to see the actual purpose of our work all the time, but we always know we are getting closer to it when it is infused with excitement.

It's OK if it's true. If not, we'd best change our course immediately.

On the correct path, we follow the signals and, if we happen to trip up once in a while, the Divine intervenes to avert a mistake. (Coelho, 2005: 143-144)

### **Subjective Truth of Kierkegaard's Existentialism**

Subjective truth is the truth is not what individuals understand as something that had the distance, but what individual understand through choice and personal decision. Truth as subjectivity concerns to human relation to something that considered right, and not the nature of truth on its own. In this case, the primary character believes that the unseen world always expresses itself in the visible world. This idea can be found in the following quotation:

As if from the sky, a sensation of paradise falls. I am conscious of the fact that I am experiencing a moment in my life that will be with me forever. This is the type of knowledge we frequently have after the golden moment has passed. All my attention is on the morning, the sound of horses' hooves, my own body, the unexpected grace of studying sky, earth and mankind. I have no past and no future. A sensation of devotion and joy overtakes me. The fact that I am still alive is a source of great joy. I pray silently, listening to the voice of nature and realizing that the unseen world always reveals itself in the visible world. (Coelho, 2005: 272)

Another proof occurs during the main character looks for his wife. The main character starts to allow himself to be guided by something that he considered right (Andayani, 2018). This opinion can be seen in the following quotation: "Is the accident an indication of something? Mikhail had intuited a message for me. Yes, I answered these

questions. Because I embraced my fate and allowed myself to be directed by something higher than myself, I may have been able to achieve my goals” (Coelho, 2005: 144).

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter aims to answer the statement of the problem stated in chapter one. According to the analysis conducted in the previous chapter, there are some points of Kierkegaard’s existentialism found in *The Zahir* through the main character: those are elements, stages, and subjective truth. During the analysis of the novel, the technique which is used in analyzing is focused not only the action of the main character, but also the speech. Therefore, the close reading technique is applied to separate the sentences to distinguish the elements.

According to the analysis, the thesis writer makes conclusion that there are two ways to show the elements of Kierkegaard’s existentialism through the main character in *The Zahir*; through action and speech. The main character shows the first element of existentialism through action when he is on Paris. The main character’s anxiety occurs when he lost his wife, he feels sinful, he knows that his anxiety is the present of consciousness of an individual freedom that he had, and then he isolates himself and think about his wife in everywhere in Paris and in every single day.

The second element of Kierkegaard’s existentialism is despair. The main character experiences despair in the same time when he just lost his wife. The main character shows the element of existentialism through action and speech when he is in Spain and Paris. The main character get the reality does not like his willingness. He recognizes that his dream become a writer is not as good as his willingness. The main character also lost his hope to live, he cannot continue his work without his wife. He feels hopeless.

The last element or supporting elements is subjective truth, this thought occurs during the main character looking for his wife and continue until he finds his wife. The primary character believes that the unseen world always expresses itself in the visible world. The three stages of existentialism by Kierkegaard also experiences by the main character through action and speech. The Aesthetic stage experienced by the main character when he was a child, he rebels his parents. Then, the aesthetic stage of the main character continues until he grows old, he makes relationship with many women, he always rejects to make commitment with a woman.

Therefore, the main character experiences ethical stage when he visits the Cathedral of Santa Maria in Spain and then get an accident in Paris. He starts to find out what are the weaknesses of him that need to be corrected and makes a review of his life and then, he starts to renew himself. The last stage also found through the action of the main character. After he finally found his wife, he becomes believer, he only believe in God and he realize that with God all things are possible.

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