

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Human's life has a close relation with human's existence and human's environment. In their existence human tend to form a character which has responsibility over themselves in making decisions for their existence, their freedom, and their desire. In every decisions their made, human will always be confronted by some options. Thus, human being always relate with the existence of life to find out self-discovery. In this case, language is the key in which humans applicate their existence through literary work. Literary works and human's life are two social phenomena that are complementary each other in their presence as something existential (Suyitno 3). Therefore, literary work and human real life in addition have its own autonomy, both of them also have a reciprocal relationship.

Literary works are used by author to express ideas, experiences, thoughts, and phenomenas. Literature contains the author's subjective experiences, people's subjective experience (individual or libidinal facts), and group of people's experience (social facts) (Sangidu 41). Literary work is not created based on the cultural void, but its created based on the phenomena that occur in society (Teeuw 125). Therefore, literary works can be called as a representation of the author responses towards the world around him.

Based on the genre, literary work consists of prose, drama and poetry (Aminuddin 36). And based on the types, literary work consists of fiction and

non-fiction. Fiction is a work based on the imagination of the author. While, non-fiction is a work written by author based on actual phenomenon (Sumardjo and Sumaini17).

In its development, literature continued to develop from era to era, to have come to the modern phase. The writings on modern literature have themes range from social life even the things that are controversial, as well as manifesting themselves under the influence of the psychoanalysis and the phenomenon of cultural history (Klarer 72). Therefore, some of literary works in this era mostly focus on alienation, despair, psychological problems, denial of history and the social system which sometimes cannot cope of human's satisfaction. These conditions encourage people to seek the other happiness by doing self-discovery.

Self-discovery involves the development of the mind to understand ourselves to be able to accept it. Self-discovery is the way human develop their mind by experiencing life, obtaining a wisdom, learning about oneself, coming to an understanding of these and at the end discovering one's identity (Armstrong 96). It is the stage where human is trying to find his true existence. At this stage, human also tends to realize that he is a unique figure in front of God. And the way of thinking is one of understanding contained in existentialism.

Existentialism is a philosophy of living life as an active, aware, and authentic individual as an effort to look for the truth subjectivity (Solomon 4). The reality that happens beyond an individual could have a great influence toward the individual itself, but at the end the decision to do or not, depend on the individual

itself (Delfgaauw 152). Therefore, human defines their own meaning of life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. Human should make decision to select among the various possibilities that exist with full responsibility (152-154). Hence, existentialism emphasizes on an individual existence, freedom and choice.

Soren Kierkegaard is the founding father of existentialism believes that there is no moral standard which limit an individual to be a human being, faith is an important basis for making choices, because only on the basis of faith does an individual have a chance to become a true self (Solomon 13). Kierkegaard argues that there are three stages on the way how human's life. Those are aesthetic, ethics, and religious.

Cheryl Strayed is one of the writers who write some of literary work related to existentialism. Cheryl Nyland or known as Cheryl Strayed is an American author, novelist, essayist, and memoirist. One of her literary work is *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pasific Crest Trail*. It talks about the journey of Cheryl when she crosses over to The Pasific Crest Trail. She was doing a journey after she faced a various obstacle in her life. Her father left her life when she was six, her mother died when she was twenty-two, her husband also divorced her, and so on. Strayed's sadness makes her live worse. Strayed starts to use a drug and have a free sex with uncounted amount of man she met. She thought that she had lost everything. She never believed in God.

Because she wants to move on and looking for the meaning of life, Strayed make an impulsive decision for her life. Without experience or training, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State. And she does it alone. She has to face the wildness of nature, loneliness, and a reflection of her past life which still haunts her. *Wild* intertwines the stories of Strayed's life before and during the journey, describing her physical challenges and spiritual realizations, seeking self-discovery and resolution of her enduring grief and personal challenge.

Based on the explanation above, the issue of this study focus on the fundamental theme of self-discovery in *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*. Since the study of Strayed's self-discovery has a strong relation with the issue of existentialism or more precisely with the one that belong to the religious field, the researcher uses Kierkegaard's existentialism as a main theory and using new criticism as a supporting theory to analyze the characterization of the main character.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study is conducted to answer the problems formulated in the following questions:

1. How is Cheryl Strayed characterized in *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*?



research is also expected to be useful for the public to understand their existence in the world by being a unique people, dare to think differently and have the freedom to decide their choice.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

To avoid an extensive discussion, the study will be limited to the novel written by Cheryl Strayed's *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pasific Crest Trail*. This research focuses on the main character in the novel, Cheryl Strayed. To answer the main problem, Strayed character's becomes the most important principal point for analysis. Therefore, the scope of this study focus on how the process of Cheryl Strayed's self-discovery.

### **1.6 Method of the Study**

This part discusses the methodology of the research. It consists of research design, data and data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

#### **1.6.1 Research Design**

This study will be in a qualitative design. The research uses library research by using some books and other references like articles, journals, and websites relate to the subject that will be analyzed. In addition, this research will be descriptive form because it will be conducted to describe the elements that become object of the research.

### 1.6.2 Data and Data Sources

Data is an important part in the research. There are two sources of data, the primary data and the secondary data. The primary data in this study are words or sentences contained in the novel of *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pasific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed was published in 2012 by Alfred A. Knopf. The secondary data come from books, articles, journals, and websites that relate with the novel and explanation about existentialism theory.

### 1.6.3 Data Collection

Since the data becomes the most important part for conducting a research, so it must be collected effectively and completely. Method of data collection is one of the research methods parts that will explain how the data are collected to support the research. In collecting data for the research which based on the qualitative research method, the steps of data collection are:

1. Preparing novel entitled *Wild* as the main data
2. Collecting the data from the novel by reading comprehensively and repeatedly to get a valid data
3. Selecting the reference that is related to novel that can support the research data

### 1.6.4 Data Analysis

The data in this research is written text come from a novel, the data that have been collected will be analyzed using the theory of literature. The analysis data will involve some steps, those are:

