

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In simpler understanding, existentialism is philosophy that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is the view that humans define their own meaning in life. In existentialism, the meaning of someone's life is really important. It is strengthened by Cooper that ;

Broadly speaking that existentialism explores the meaningfulness of human existence and the manner in which the individual attempts to overcome the various forms of alienation from world, one another, and oneself (Cooper 2003;1).

The quotation above shows that existentialism emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is the view that humans define their own meaning in life and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. It focuses on the question of human existence and the feeling that there is no purpose or explanation at the core of existence. It is added by Sartre in Flynn that;

'The fundamental choice man makes and gives direction to his life, is made by reflecting his previous life up to present. In other words we've already made our choice implicitly'. (Flynn, 2006:12)

The quotation means that human choice would define human life forward. It is described that human is a creature that full of choice to determine their life and it is our duty to pick what is the best of human life in the future. Here, also described that actually human not bounded. A fundamental of human choice lies in their hand not in others. The best individual is the one who struggles for their life. Decisions made by individual are not without consequences.

In existentialism, it's widely viewed that life starts without any specific reason and lived through with lack of energy and desire and ends by chance. It is defined as irrational, meaningless and absurd. Immediate perception of life seems different but ultimate stance of life is similar to each other in terms of lack of energy and desire.

One of a literature that come up with idea of existentialism is Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*. It is a story about young guy named Johnny Truant who spend the last few years in a fog of LA sex and drugs. He tell the story of discovering Zampanò's manuscript, called *The Navidson Record*, in Zampanò's musty, sealed-from-the-inside apartment after his death. Johnny finds the manuscript on various sorts of paper strewn around the apartment, and how the manuscript lead him in questioning his existence.

Much like the labyrinth at the center of the plot, Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* is complex web of hidden meanings and shifting perspectives. The author of the manuscripts goes to great lengths to eradicate evidence about the labyrinth's deeper meanings and the beast lurking among its ashen walls, omitting the text in red as a way of repressing the monstrous figure of guilt and how his experience of guilt became his themes in questioning his existence in the world.

The objective of this study is to analyze Mark Z. Danielewski's characters in *House of Leaves* from existential point of view considering all major features of existentialism. The study also investigates Johnny Truant, the protagonist, as a character beyond this perimeter. Danielewski write a novel about interpretation, his house of leaves is a house of interpretation that does not exist in spite of these

competing claims to meaning but because of them. Here he describes his protagonist as the house either means everything or it means nothing. Danielewski creates horrific sentiment through his use of nothingness and meaninglessness in the experiences of each character as well as in the overall form of the novel. From here the writer sees that the character struggles to find meaning from novel *House of Leaves* as existentialism is an interesting part to discuss and prove it where that's true or not. *House of Leaves* certainly represents several depictions of "what it means to be human" and although the author's intentions are unknown, this research argues that Danielewski is attempting to make a point about existentialism and the ways which humans deal with these powerful forces in their lives.

The paper critically engages with Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical project of *Being and Nothingness*, especially with the way Sartre articulates the key philosophical question of the meaning of human existence. It argues that the problem of the meaning of being in Sartre's thought is rooted in the negation of the metaphysical base.

1.1 Research Question

According to the background of study above some problem can be identified as follows ;How does Sarte's existentialism described in Danielewski's *House of Leaves*?

1.2 Research Object

Concerning from the statement of the problem above the writer only focus on existentialism issue by Sarte as seen in Danielewski's *House of Leaves*.

1.3 The Uses of The Study

1.4.1 Theoretical Uses

Theoretically, in discussing about this issue will give further understanding and knowledge that will be useful and advantageous for the readers, but also helps next researcher who are interested in analyzing the characteristics of Existentialism in Danielewski's *House of Leaves*.

1.4.2 Practical Uses

To provide obvious information about philosophical device inside the story and how to analyze the characteristics of existentialism in main character on Danielewski's *House of Leaves* by using philosophical approach to other researcher in order to give help for those who intend to conduct the similarity of research.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The writer focuses on the details of existentialism. Further on, it elaborates the characters of existentialism based on the source that shows in a novel Danielewski's *House of Leaves* their freedom. In this respect the writer analyzes the characteristics of existentialism in main character on Danielewski's *House of Leaves*.