



## Self-Actualization Depicted in *Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes* and *Milena Busquets's This Too Shall Pass*

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### Submission Track:

Received: March 19, 2022

Revised: May 28, 2022

Accepted: June 01, 2022

### Keywords:

Self-Actualization, Comparative Literature, Hierarchy of Needs, Paulo Coelho, Milena Busquets.

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**Abstract:** This research of comparative literature compares two pieces of literature with a similar theme—Self-Actualization—from two distinct countries. By utilizing Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, this study aimed to understand how the main characters are going about obtaining Self-Actualization. Maria and Blanca, the two main protagonists in the two literary works, are both undergoing the Self-Actualization process. Using the descriptive qualitative method, the author completes the analysis by presenting all of the data in the form of words and sentences. The writer collects data from various sources including *Eleven Minutes* by Paulo Coelho, *This Too Shall Pass* by Milena Busquets, relevant books, articles, and journals to support the analysis. Based on the results of the analysis, the two literary works show similarities and differences relating to Self-Actualization that is experienced by the two main characters of both literary works. Both main characters fulfilled four lower-level needs in the Hierarchy of Needs which are: Physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, and esteem needs before finally achieving Self-Actualization.



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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of self-actualization was first introduced by Abraham Maslow in his paper “*A Theory of Human Motivation*” in 1943. Maslow is an American psychologist who introduced the Hierarchy of Needs theory. Maslow's hierarchical needs consist of physiological needs, safety needs, affection or love needs, esteem needs, and the last is self-actualization. For an individual to reach that actualization is also not an easy journey because people have to pass so many obstacles and fulfilled so many needs to reach that highest hierarchy of human needs.

The motif that will be analyzed in this study is self-actualization. This motif could be seen between the two novels with the title “*Eleven Minutes*” by Paulo Coelho from Brazil, South America, and “*This Too Shall Pass*” by Milena Busquets from Spain by analyzing the main character of both literary works. *Eleven Minutes* is a novel by Paulo Coelho that was published in 2003. This novel tells about a girl called Maria. She is a young girl who is in hopes of great adventure and great love, leaves her Brazilian home to go to Geneva, Switzerland. Her condition does not prove to be what she had hoped for, and to make money quickly to return home, she pursues a career in prostitution. All

events that happened in her life, she pours them into her diary. Maria experiences pain, joy, and love during her time in Switzerland and have to decide on the right course to live her life in the future.

The other novel is *This Too Shall Pass* by Milena Busquets. This novel is a Spanish novel that was published in 2016. This novel tells the story of the 40-year-old Blanca, a woman with two exes, has two children from her exes, has married two times, and also divorced two times. She also has a drinking problem. After losing her mother, Blanca feels lost and devastated without her mother's guidance, so she decides to move from Barcelona to Cadaques, where she lived with her mother as a child. She decides brilliantly to travel with her two ex-husbands, her children, a few close friends, and a desire to soothe her sadness over her mother by planning an affair meeting with her lover, Santi, who will be on vacation in Cadaques with his wife. Santi is a married man. Upon Blanca's arrival in Cadaques, in the company of her equally bizarre family, it puts the story into the realm of absurdity. Blanca behaves like a teenager, using her grief as an excuse, alternatively sleeping with one of her ex-husbands, Oscar, and her lover, while asking herself why she's so unhappy in love. Drinking nights, dancing, smoking pots, and sleeping around, make room for Blanca's grief at her mother's death.

The reason why the writer has chosen these two literary works as the object of the study is that the writer has an interest in disclosure the self-actualization that happens in both literary works. By reading both of these literary works, "*Eleven Minutes*" and "*This Too Shall Pass*" will help the readers to find out about the Self Actualization that occurs in a character of literary work. The similarities and differences will therefore be found in the analysis of literary works, which is a crucial element for the study of Comparative Literature.

## THEORETICAL SUPPORT

Literature is the product of interpreting the patterns of human thought events from the actual world. Literature can be said to be a representation of real-life that is presented in the form of text such that it incorporates educational and life values that can support readers. This clarification complies with Horace's literary purpose, called *dulce et utile*, (Wellek and Warren). Relied to the fact about literature, it means that the same motives might occur in different literary works, either from the time or the culture. The same motives might happens in two different literary works. Because of that, it leads the literary study to have comparative literature study.

### 2.1 Comparative Literature

Comparative literature is a study that focuses on comparing one literary work to another literary work, based on certain aspects. Comparative literature was started in the 18th century with comparisons between literary works.

Razali Kasim (1996:26) in his book *Sastra Bandingan: Ruang Lingkup dan Metode* argues that comparative literature is an analysis that includes a comparison of literary works from different national literature, the relationship between literary works and science, religion (belief) and the arts along with theories, history, and critics.

## 2.2 Hierarchy of Human Needs

According to Maslow (1970), There are five levels of needs, which are then called as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which should be fulfilled during a human being's lifetime. They are (1) physiological needs, (2) safety needs, (3) belonging and love needs, (4) esteem needs, and (5) self-actualization need.

### 2.2.1 Physiological Needs

According to Feist and Feist (2002), People's physiological needs for air, food, water, oxygen, sugar, salt, protein, warmth, calcium, mineral, and vitamin are the first and most essential needs they have. It also includes other requirements such as maintaining body temperature, resting, sleeping, and sex needs. These physiological needs are the most basic but also the most important.

### 2.2.2 Safety Needs

According to Maslow (1970), People will work to fulfill their needs for safety and security after their physiological needs have been met. People experience a sense of safety because they know they will not be harmed physically, psychologically, or emotionally. Security needs include the need for protection, law, stability, rules, structure, dependence, order, and freedom from threatening factors such as disease, fear, risk, and chaos.

### 2.2.3 Love and Belonging Needs

According to Maslow as quoted in Feist and Feist (2002), says that people are driven by higher levels of love and belongingness needs after they have partly satisfied their physiological and safety needs. These needs are provided by positive interactions with family members, colleagues, peers, classmates, teachers, and those with whom the person interacts. The human need for friendship, love, the need for a mate and children, the need to belong to a family, a community, a workgroup, a neighborhood, or a nation are all examples of these needs.

### 2.2.4 Esteem Needs

According to Maslow, There are two types of self-esteem needs: internal and external. External esteem needs include things like credibility, which is described as the perception of a person's prestige or social standing, attention, reward, recognition, or fame in the eyes of others. People want to hear that others think highly of them. Internal esteem needs, on the other hand, are those that are linked to self-esteem, or a person's feelings of value and trust. Self-respect, accomplishment, integrity, freedom, and equality are also included.

### 2.2.5 Self-Actualization

According to Maslow (1970), When lower-level needs are met, people can move on to the next level in a more or less autonomous manner. Self-actualization requires self-fulfillment, the recognition of one's full potential, and a desire to be imaginative in the broadest sense. Feist and Feist (2002) stated that people who have achieved the state of actualization have become completely human, meeting needs that others only see in passing or never see at all. They are

natural in the same way as animals and children, in that they communicate their basic human needs without being influenced by society.

According to Heylighen (2002), Only after the previous four needs have been met then this one can be approached. When all of your needs, particularly the most important one, are met, you have achieved self-actualization. Because of the constructive feedback, self-actualization is a continuous phase rather than a static condition. The phrase comes from the idea that each person has a variety of untapped potentials: talents or skills that could be developed but have yet to surface. Self-actualization means that the self's potentials are realized, that they are realized through a continuous process of unfolding

## METHOD

For analyzing this research, the writer is using the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a method in research that considers explanation and description are the most important things than prove the data in numbers when analyzing the study. the data is described not in the form of numbers but the form of words, in a note, a photo, a recording, and a document (Semi, 1993: 24). A qualitative study is one that does not rely on statistical analysis or other methods of quantification. (Moleong, 2007: p.6). The aim is to describe the data in words that are expected to clarify the form of the study.

With qualitative data, we can follow and understand the flow of events chronologically, assess causation in the context of local people's minds, and obtain many useful explanations. In addition, qualitative data is more likely to guide us to make unexpected discoveries and to form new theoretical frameworks. The data helps researchers to go beyond preconceived notions and initial frameworks. the use of the qualitative research method relates to ideas, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs. All data in creative writing are words and phrases that are analyzed on the basis of theory.

To obtain the data as a reference to the process of writing of this study, the writer uses library research and internet research. The author collects data from a number of books and many other resources that may be related to the subject and topic being analyzed. The author will perform the following actions: collecting, selecting, analyzing, interpreting, and finally concluding to achieve the most effective results of the study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Physiological Needs

Both of the main characters in *Eleven Minutes* and *This Too Shall Pass* are able to fulfilled their physiological needs. In *Eleven Minutes*, Maria has to work and finally saving enough money for herself and family. In *This Too Shall Pass*, Blanca is an architect and was born in a wealthy family. So, she has any problem to fulfilled this physiological needs.

**Table 1.** Physiological needs in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* and Milena Busquets's *This Too Shall Pass*

Love and Belongings Needs	Eleven Minutes	This Too Shall Pass
	"Here was her man, who was giving	"With my mother by my side, holding my

	<p>her pleasure and joy, with whom she could be the person she really was, with whom she could talk about her sexual problems, and tell him how much she would like to stay with him for the rest of the night, for the rest of the week, for the rest of her life.” (Coelho, 2003: 138)</p> <p>“I love you.”</p> <p>“I love you too.” (Coelho, 2003: 139)</p>	<p>hand and brushing my forehead with hers.” (Busquets, 2016: 9)</p> <p>“I guess you were partly aware that you were the love of my life, and no other stormy love affair would ever come close to outdoing ours.” (Busquets, 2016: 48)</p> <p>“For a long time, the only love story I cared about was ours.” (Busquets, 2016: 78)</p>
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#### 4.2 Safety Needs

Both of the main characters in *Eleven Minutes* and *This Too Shall Pass* are able to fulfilled their safety needs. In *Eleven Minutes*, Maria finally found someone that able to give her security after went through a lot of obstacles in her life. In *This Too Shall Pass*, Blanca just lost her mother, even though she miss her mother. But she is taken care and protected by people around her.

**Table 2.** Safety needs in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* and Milena Busquets's *This Too Shall Pass*

Safety Needs	Eleven Minutes	This Too Shall Pass
	<p>“The next thing she knew, Ralf was picking her up and putting his jacket around her shoulders. She must have fainted from the cold, but she didn't care; she was happy, she hadn't been afraid—she had come through. She had not humbled herself before him.” (Coelho, 2003: 168)</p>	<p>For all the love of my friends, of my children, it isn't enough to withstand the impact of your not being here—I need to be held tightly by a man so as not to fly away. They say that most women look for their father in other men, but I look for you, I did even when you were alive. (Busquets, 2016: 67)</p>

#### 4.3 Love and Belongings Needs

Both of the main characters in *Eleven Minutes* and *This Too Shall Pass* are able to fulfilled their love and belongings needs. In *Eleven Minutes*, Maria ignores her insecurity of her past and accepts Ralf Hart's love to her. In *This Too Shall Pass*, Blanca just lost her mother, even though she miss her mother. But she is taken care by people around her.

**Table 3.** Love and Belongins Needs in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* and Milena Busquets's *This Too Shall Pass*

Love and Belongings Needs	Eleven Minutes	This Too Shall Pass
	<p>“Here was her man, who was giving her pleasure and joy, with whom she could be the person she really was, with whom she could talk about her sexual problems, and tell him how</p>	<p>“With my mother by my side, holding my hand and brushing my forehead with hers.” (Busquets, 2016: 9)</p> <p>“I guess you were partly aware that you</p>

	<p>much she would like to stay with him for the rest of the night, for the rest of the week, for the rest of her life.” (Coelho, 2003: 138)</p> <p>“I love you.”</p> <p>“I love you too.” (Coelho, 2003: 139)</p>	<p>were the love of my life, and no other stormy love affair would ever come close to outdoing ours.” (Busquets, 2016: 48)</p> <p>“For a long time, the only love story I cared about was ours.” (Busquets, 2016: 78)</p>
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#### 4.4 Esteem Needs

Both of the main characters in *Eleven Minutes* and *This Too Shall Pass* are able to fulfilled their esteem needs. Both characters are praised and recognized by other people for their pretty and attractive physical features.

**Table 4.** Esteem Needs in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* and Milena Busquets's *This Too Shall Pass*

Esteem Needs	Eleven Minutes	This Too Shall Pass
	<p>“Maria earned both Milan's confidence and her colleagues' envy; they said she was ambitious, arrogant and thought only about earning money—the last bit was true, but she felt like asking if they weren't all there for the very same reason.” (Coelho, 2003: 144)</p> <p>“You've got a special light about you. Let me at least do a sketch.” (Coelho, 2003: 84)</p>	<p>“What do you mean? You were gorgeous;” (Sofia to Blanca) (Busquets, 2016: 48)</p> <p>“Hugo opens the wine and sits down next to me, smiling.</p> <p>You look beautiful, he says.” (Busquets, 2016: 55)</p> <p>“I love freckles.” (Marti to Blanca) (Busquets, 2016: 79)</p>

#### 4.5 Self-Actualization

Both of the main characters in *Eleven Minutes* and *This Too Shall Pass* are able to achieved the self-actualization. In *Eleven Minutes*, Maria is coming to the point where she can accept herself, release herself from prostitution, and plan a better life in her hometown, In *This Too Shall Pass*, Blanca able to accept her mother's death and release herself from an affair with someone else husband so she won't suffer anymore and live a happier life without her mother.

**Table 5.** Self-Actualization in Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* and Milena Busquets's *This Too Shall Pass*

Self-Actualization	Eleven Minutes	This Too Shall Pass
	<p>“She felt she had discovered herself through independence, despair, love, pain, and back again to love—and she would</p>	<p>“I drink in the day's new, unspoiled air and tell myself that tomorrow I'll stop smoking, as I slowly continue climbing the hill to the dirt esplanade,... I'll do</p>

	<p>like things to end there.” (Coelho, 2003: 185)</p> <p>“On the other hand, she now had enough money to buy a farm, she had her youth ahead of her, a great deal of experience of life and a great independence of soul. Nevertheless, as always happened when fate chose for her, she thought, once again, that she would take the risk.” (Coelho, 2003: 225)</p>	<p>things the right way, without losing my temper, I’m sure everything will work itself out.” (Busquets, 2016: 112-113)</p> <p>“The day will come when we talk all about you. I’m beginning to breathe a little better now and the nightmares have almost subsided. Some days I almost feel a little pixie dust fall on my head; not a lot and not very often, but it’s a start.” (Busquets, 2016: 117)</p>
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## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, The writer listed the conclusions found in the analysis below: Both main characters in these two literary works are portraying the motif of Self-Actualization. In *Eleven Minutes*, Maria achieved her Self-Actualization by coming to the point where she can accept herself, release herself from prostitution, and plan a better life in her hometown. She wants to leave everything behind and live a better life while in *This Too Shall Pass*, Blanca achieved her Self-Actualization when she is able to accept her mother’s death and release herself from an affair with someone else husband so she won’t suffer anymore and live a more happy life without her mother.

Although both literary works have the same motif which is self-actualization, There are also some differences found in these two literary works through some factors. First, both of these literary works are coming from different countries, Paulo Coelho’s *Eleven Minutes* is from Brazil while Milena Busquets’s *This Too Shall Pass* is from Spain. There is also difference in the setting of place, In *Eleven Minutes*, it mostly happens in Brazil and Switzerland while in *This Too Shall Pass*, it happened in Cadaques and Barcelona. In *Eleven Minutes*, Maria mostly has to go through the journey to achieve her self-actualization alone until her friends and Ralf Hart come along to help her while in *This Too Shall Pass*, Blanca is always surrounded by the people that love her to go through her grieving over her mother’s death until she achieved her self-actualization. Through the difference in some factors like the setting between these two literary works, It also shows the cultural difference between these two literary works that may be the reason why there are differences in the way the main characters achieved self-actualization.

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