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PROSTITUTE SOUL'S CHANGE INNOCENCE TO VULNERABILITY FROM THE
ROMANTIC NOTIONS OF LOVE AND SEX IN PAULO COELHO'S *ELEVEN MINUTES*

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ABSTRACT

Maria, a naive, innocent and attractive Brazilian girl becomes heartbroken during her teenage years through her realization that love is a terrible emotion that brings only pain and suffering. Maria was lonely and her mind and soul was lost in order for her to continue with her difficult career choice. Maria had relationships with many other clients but she did not fall in love with her clients. She finds herself from having fallen in love with Ralf Hart and she begins to feel much happier. Finally, Maria realised that she had been found and her soul was healing. It is not clear that she will marry the painter, at least Maria has found mutual love, and something she thought would elude all her life. For the first time in her life Maria loves with her soul as well as with her body. Maria discovered sex is sacred and goes beyond one's soul.

Key words: Body, love, pain, prostitute, sex, soul,

Maria grew up in a small town in Brazil. In this town, folk, love, superstitions and traditional roles for women are woven into the culture. She is good at school and always tries to make her situation better by reading books. Maria's only goal is to fall in love with a man, marry him and raise a family. She has three main aims in her life: quest, money and husband. When she was eleven years old, she fell in love with a boy but unfortunately he went away. Maria feels alienated because she can't express her love to him. After some time, she gets a second love opportunity and does not reprise her mistake. She wants to be good. Maria has several experiences with her teenage love but she never finds her true love. She says,

Think of herself as an experienced young woman, who had already allowed one grand passion to slip from her grapes and who knew the pain that this caused, and now she was determined to fight with all her might for this man for marriage, children and the house by the sea (EM7).

Maria is different from other girls in her town and she craves adventure in her life. It is not until she has graduated and has worked in a textile shop. Maria had saved enough money for a small vacation. During her holiday Maria meets a Swiss tourist, Roger who is looking for girls to work in the night club as a samba dancer. Maria learns the truth that she earns less money and she has forced her lifestyle much more restricted than the one she imagined. Maria becomes self-conscious and she grows up as a matured woman. Rio de Janeiro

discovers that Maria has dated a man whom she met at the club; she is fired. But this does not last long when the boy leaves her dating with her own friend. She is full of frustration and lots of failures in her life. She has decided not to fall in love again in her life. She wants more money and soon becomes famous when she arrives in Geneva. In Geneva, she faces many problems but still she wants to become more adventurous and conscious in search of her treasure. She says, "I can choose either to be a victim of the world or an adventurer in search of treasure. It's all a question of how I view my life (EM 39)

She prefers to herself as an adventurer in search treasurer "*The Alchemist*" and incidentally has read a copy of that book. Maria is nostalgic to the feeling of love she wants to be loved and feels alive. She is full of self-consciousness and can find a way out of every trouble she encounters. Maria gets a generous package and she is able to live for a while and she signs up at a modelling agency. She meets so many clients to discuss a fashion show, but Maria quits all these attempts and sleeps with the man for money. It is the beginning of Maria's career as a prostitute and she does because it is good money for relatively little investment. Maria is attracted in prostitution and she aims to become a prostitute and so, she can earn money overnight, depending on the number of men she charms and goes to sleep with.

My aim is to understand love. I know how alive I felt when I was in love, and I know that everything I have now, however interesting it might seem, doesn't really excited me. But love is a terrible thing: I've seen my girlfriends suffer and I don't want the same thing to happen to me. ... Although my aim is to understand love, and although I suffer to think of people to whom I gave my heart, I see that those who touched my heart failed to arouse my body, and that those who aroused my body failed to touch my heart (EM 16).

As a prostitute she has to spend about forty- five minutes with her clients. Out of forty- five minutes only eleven minutes is given to actual sex. Rest of the time is given to take off clothes, make some gestures. Forty- five minutes is devoted to the soul; only eleven minutes is devoted to the body. Maria has promised herself never to fall in love again. She focuses on her love and soul is more important than the eleven minutes of love. But she never gives up writing or thinking about love. Maria realizes that nobody loves wholeheartedly when she had her feelings about the betrayal of her first boyfriend at the beginning of the young age. Love equals freedom rather than enslavement. Maria is an adventurer as Coelho's hero *The Alchemist*, Santiago and she is a very confident woman, capable of making an extremely difficult situation and she can defend herself. Unlike other prostitutes she will leave this place once she has enough money to buy a house in her hometown. Even Maria makes more money in prostitution but she still stays there.

When Maria meets Ralph Hart for the first time, Maria feels ashamed of being a prostitute. But she has nothing to lose. Even in this situation she honestly says it's her virtue. Maria's feeling of alienation disappears when she is with Ralf Hart and she finds herself falling in love with him. Maria's love is unconditional and she is willingly falling in love which indicates her own self-conscious. She feels secure with Ralf and he is seen in her special light. She has slept with many men, but she realizes that Ralf Hart does not see her as a woman but he sees her will power and her inner light. Ralf does not force Maria as asexual object and her trust of emotional bonding with men slowly changes. Maria finds herself deeply she fell in love with Ralf Hart. The two young lover's sex became an exploration of pleasure and that is strongly inspired by emotions. Maria started to hate her job as a prostitute and she feels that it's killing her soul. She is afraid that her true and spiritual love bonding with Ralf Hart might be destroyed because of her clients she slept with lots.

I've met a man and fallen in love with him. I allowed myself to fall in love for one simple reason; I'm not expecting anything to come of it. I know that, in three months' time, I'll be far away and he'll be just a memory, but I couldn't stand living without love any longer; I had reached my limit. (EM 140)

Maria experiences pain, pleasure, love and sex decide the correct path in her own life. in Geneva being a prostitute Maria could not find her true love without physical pain. Reality hits hard and she is forced to sell her flesh in order to survive at first and for pure physical pleasure later. The whole brutalization pushes her away from real love till the time of her emotional barriers are tested by a painter. Maria chooses the dark path and he

is risking everything to find her inner light was not an easy decision. She finally discovers her own strengths and weaknesses confronting her doubts, insecurities and fears along the way in her life. In her whole life Maria experiences whether positive or negative as she shapes herself and moulds her character in an individual way.

Conclusion

The novel *Eleven Minutes* takes a different perspective of the prostitute's view of love and sex in Maria's life. *Eleven Minutes* novel title refers to the time duration indicating exact minutes for prostitutes having a sex with their male partner. It shows the different love and sex affairs of the protagonist. But none of these love affairs could not be successful. Due to her frustrations and love failures in her teenage years, Maria decided never to fall in love with anyone. At a very young age Maria experienced love, betrayal of love, masturbation and sex. Maria shifted her innocence to vulnerability accidentally. She learns so many things about sex from her various clients in her life. Maria's dilemmas between whether to choose between morality and righteous things in her life. Throughout the novel Maria tries to find her individualistic character in many ways. But her character and her view of life is always different and unique from other prostitutes. She finally realized sex and love are after she met Ralf Hart. From the ancient time to till now society sees prostitutes as an object of pleasure for men. During her prostitution Maria lost her soul and after she meets Ralf Hart, she tries to find her soul back in her life. Ralf Hart sees Maria's soul only as not an object of sex. in sex one soul enhances the insights of others.

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