ANALYSIS OF THE CONFLICTS OF
THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL *THE ALCHEMIST*
BY PAULO COELHO

THESIS

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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Submitted to Fulfill a Partial Requirement for S1 Degree
In The Department of English Faculty of Humanities
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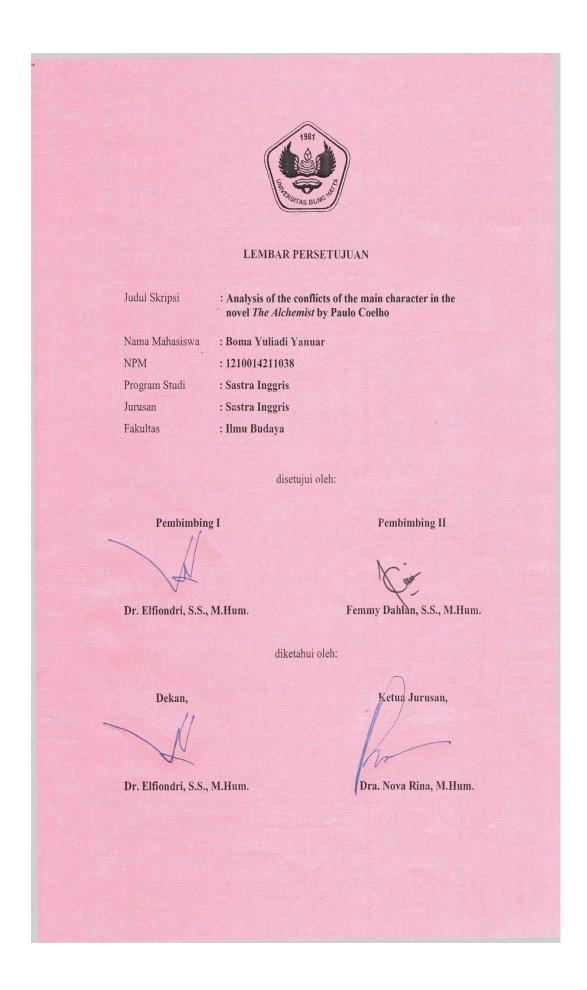
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Boma Yuliadi Yanuar

ABSTRACT

Boma Yuliadi Yanuar. (2015)   : Analysis of the conflicts of the main character in the novel *The Alchemist*

Supervisor I   : Dr. Elfiondri, M.Hum

Supervisor II   : Femmy Dahlan, S.S, M.Hum

This study is aimed to identify the character traits and find the relation to the setting of the novel. Besides that, the writer also describes how the main character's conflict depicted in the novel. In explaining the aim of the study, the writer applies the structuralism theory by Edgar V. Roberts which emphasizes to find the relation and connection among the elements of literature. From the analysis, the writer finds that the main character's traits are related to the setting and the conflicts that run in the plot of the novel. The main character faces two conflicts; they are external conflicts and internal conflicts. The external conflicts occur between the main character and the other characters in the novel. Meanwhile, the internal conflicts occur within the main character itself.

Keywords: *character traits, setting, conflicts of the characters*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reason for choosing the Topic

Human being faces many problems in their life. The problem can be in form of love, problem in the work place, inside or between families, or problem within the character itself or with other characters. Some people called those problems as conflicts. Conflicts also can be found in a literary work. And just like an imitation and representation of human being, characters in literary work may suffer in a conflict that can affect their life. The conflicts can appear in several forms; such the conflict with other people, conflict with the environment, and conflict that appear in one character only and so on. Further, Roberts states that there are two kinds of conflicts; they are external conflicts and internal conflicts.

One of the novels that depicts about conflicts is *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. Paulo Coelho is a Brazilian lyricist and novelist that born on August 24, 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. He ever worked as theatre director, actor, lyricist and journalist. As a teenager, he wanted to become a writer. At 16, Coelho's introversion and opposition to following a traditional path led to his parents committing him to a mental institution from which he escaped three times before being released at the age of 20. He started writing at hand but was not serious until he had an encounter with a stranger who suggested him to return to Catholicism and study the benign side of magic and also encouraged Paulo to walk the Road of Santiago de Compostela, the medieval pilgrim's route (Coelho, 193-194). Now, Paulo Coelho is Messenger of Peace for the UN, Ambassador of

European Union for Intercultural Dialogue for the year of 2008, Member of the Board of the Shimon Peres Institute for Peace, UNESCO special counselor for "Intercultural Dialogues and Spiritual Convergences", Board Member of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, and Member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters ("Biography").

Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist* is his second novel which is written in 1988. It has gone on to sell more than 65 million copies and become one of the best-selling books. *The Alchemist* has been translated into 71 different languages, the 71st being Maltese, winning the Guinness World Record for most translated book by a living author.

The Alchemist is a story about the journey of an Andalusian boy named Santiago. Santiago, believing a recurring dream to be prophetic, decides to travel to a Romani in a nearby town to discover its meaning. On the way of his journey, he meets some new characters which in the end help him to find out the treasure that he is looking for. The story starts when he meets Melchizeldek, a mysterious king from Saleem, who tries to convince him to pursue his dreams to the pyramid in Egypt. At that time, Santiago has faces whether he has to choose between his ordinary lives as shepherd or start chasing his dream. There, in Egypt, Santiago helps a shop keeper to run out his crystal shop after being robbed in Tangier. The story gets complicated because he always thinks to get back to his hometown and start a journey with his sheep flocks again. Instead of going back to his hometown and buy new sheep, he continues the journey to the Pyramid. Then, in the oasis of Al-Fayoum, Santiago meets the Alchemist whom teaches him how to be an

alchemist and to belief to his self. There in the oasis, Santiago meets Fatima, a Sahara girl, who accepted Santiago's feeling and decided to wait for him. And because of Fatima, he once again has to face another dilemma in deciding to continue his journey or stay at the oasis. Santiago faces more conflicts when he had to face the tribal wars and realized that the treasure is in his hometown.

After reading the whole of the novel, the writer chooses to analyze this novel because the writer finds that the main character of the novel is encountered several conflicts that change his life from a common shepherd into an alchemist that can turn himself to a wind. According to Cambridge Dictionaries, The word alchemist stands for "A type of chemistry, in the Middle Ages, that dealt with trying to find a way to change ordinary metals into gold and with trying to find a medicine that would cure any disease. Literary: a process that is so effective that is seems like magic". The writer believes that the conflicts that appear in the main character journey is become an interesting point to discuss.

1.2 The objective and scope of the study

The objective of this research is to describe the relationship between the intrinsic elements that the writer finds in the novel *The Alchemist*. To figure out the problem above, the writer gives the limitation to analyze this research. The writer decides the scope of this research focuses in the main character's traits, plot, setting and conflict, without relating it the world outside the novel and also does not relate with the author and the reader.

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

The writer identifies the problems of this research as follows:

1. How are the characters and setting related to the conflicts in the novel *The Alchemist*?

2. How are the main character's conflicts in the novel *The Alchemist* depicted?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Structuralism is a theory that is going to use by the writer in order to find the relationship among the intrinsic elements in a literary work. According to Guerin, "structuralism identifies *structures*, sytems of relationships, which endow signs (e.g., words) or items (e.g., clothes, cars, table manners, rituals) with identities and meanings, and shows us *the ways in which we think.*" (312). In other words, Guerin shows us how to think as a critical reader in analyzes a literary work.

The writer chooses structuralism theory because this theory only focuses on the relationship of the elements of fiction in the work itself. Robert states in his book, *Writing About Literature*, that, "structuralism is an analysis that attempts to find relationship and connections among elements that appear to be separate and discrete in the text without paying attention to the author and social condition when the novel created"(166). It means that every intrinsic element in literary works is related to each other and cannot be self-supporting. Intrinsic elements in literary works consist of character, setting, plot, point of view, style of language and theme. Since there is lot of intrinsic elements that influenced a literary work,

the writer focuses this analysis only in the elements that take big influence to the main character's conflict which is characterization, setting and plot.

According to Robert, a character is "a verbal representation of a human being presented to us by authors through the depiction of action, conversation, description reaction, inner thought and reflections, through action, speech, description and commentary. Author portrays who are worth caring about, rooting for and loving, although there are also characters you may dislike, laugh at, or even hate" (66). In the other word, character in a story is a figure that is described as having human personality and portrayed through the character interactions with each other and through the actions in the story.

Based on Robert's definition, setting is a "work's natural, manufactured, political, cultural, and temporal environment, including everything that characters know and own. Characters may be either helped or hurt by their surroundings. And they may fight about possessions and goal. Further, as characters speak with each other, they reveal the degree to which they share the customs and ideal of their time" (66). It is also means that setting is every aspect that can build one character whether it is tangible or intangible and take influence in the character's personality.

Moreover, plot also influences a character in building the story. Plot is known as the foundation of a novel or story which the character and setting are built around. It is a literary term used to describe the events that make up a story or the main part of the story. According to Robert, plot is "the arrangement of events that make up a story" (26). It usually a chain linking causes and effect

which means that one thing happens because of a result of something else. Plot consists of (1) exposition, (2) rising action, (3) climax, (4) falling action, (5) resolution. According to Harmon and Holman in their book a *Handbook to Literature Tenth Edition*, exposition is "the introductory material that creates the tone, gives the setting, introduces the characters, and supplies other facts necessary to understanding..." (172). Furthermore, they explain that exposition is also known as the beginning of the story where the characters and setting are established. Rising action is the part of a plot that has to do with the complication of the action. It begins with the exciting force, gains interest and power as the opposing groups come into conflict, and proceeds to the climax. Climax is the point of highest interest, whereas the reader makes greatest emotional response, climax designates the turning point in the action, the crisis at the rising action reverses and becomes the falling action,. Falling action is it follows the climax, beginning often with a tragic force, exhibits the failing fortunes of the hero and the successful efforts of the counter players, and culminates in the catastrophe. Resolution is the events following the climax and falling action." (172).

Conflict is defined as a clash of actions, ideas, desires or wills. In the clash, the main character may be pitied against some other persons or group of persons. He may be also in conflict with some external forces-physical nature, society, or fate; or he may be in conflict with some elements in his own nature.

Based on the definition of conflict, the conflict can be divided into two kinds. They are internal and external conflict. Internal conflict is a struggle that takes place in a character's mind. For example, a character may have to decide between right and wrong or between two solutions to a problem. It other word, it

can be said man against himself. External conflict is a struggle between a character and an outside force. Characters may face several types of outside forces. The outside force may be another character. It may be the character and the community or forces of nature.

1.5 Method of the Research

In collecting the data for this research, the writer applies library research method by reading several related book to support his analysis. The primary data is the novel itself, *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. The writer reads the novel with fully comprehension to understand the problem in the novel and then the writer analyzes it by his own interpretation.

The secondary data are obtained by reading and understanding several books, article, journal, or essay which supporting the research and also data browsed from the internet to find other sources. In analyzing the data, the writer starts from the analysis of the intrinsic elements of the novel that enables the writer in finding out and analyzing the wanted data. Then, after collecting the data from the intrinsic aspect that is the character and relating it to the other elements like setting, plot, theme and point of view, the writer can get the information clearly about the relationship between the main character's traits, the setting and plot on the novel.