

An analytical Study of truth-seeking life lessons revealed in the fictional work of Paulo Coelho with focus on *The Alchemist*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is aimed to show visible image of Paulo Coelho's novel which is analyzed by using individual psychology approach. The objectives of the research are to analyze the novel based on the structural elements and to analyze the novel based on individual psychology approach proposed by Alfred Adler. This research belongs to qualitative research. Data of the research are divided into two, primary data and secondary data. The primary data of the research is *The Alchemist* novel and secondary data of the research are biography of the author, websites, and other source about individual psychology approach that support the analysis. The method to analyze this data is descriptive analysis. The researcher comes to conclusion as follows. Based on individual psychology approach analysis, Paulo Coelho illustrated psychological phenomena in that an individual has experienced spiritual journey. The outcome of the study shows that Paulo Coelho illustrates psychological phenomenon when an individual experiences when he is travelling to get treasures. In the search for treasure, he finds something more important than the material that is high spiritual level.

1. Introduction

The Alchemist is a novel by Paulo Coelho, first published in Portuguese with a title O Alquimista in 1988. This novel has been translated into English by Alan R. Clarke in 1993, and published by Harper Collins Publishers. It has been translated into 56 languages as of September 2012. *The Alchemist* is an allegorical novel. This novel contains 192 pages. The main character in this novel is Santiago, the shepherd boy from Andalusia. Overall, this novel tells the story about Santiago who travels from Andalusia to Egypt to find treasure.

There are three reasons why the researcher interested to analyze this novel. First reason is that the researcher is interested in the story of philosophy, adventure and spirituality. Second reason is because the major character is a simple shepherd boy who is able to achieve his dream for most people is probably impossible. The last reason, this novel bring the researcher to the past is when the Andalusian era still prevail. This is very interesting, because we can know the history of that place.

The problem statement is the spiritual journey experienced by the major character in *The Alchemist* novel. The researcher will analyze the novel based on structural elements of the novel and spiritual journey experienced by the main character in this novel using Individual Psychological Approach. Objectives of study in this research are divided into two parts. The first is to analyze Paulo Coelho's Novel *The Alchemist* (1993) based on its structural elements. The second is to analyze Spiritual Journey in Paulo Coelho's Novel *The Alchemist* (1993) based on individual psychology approach.

In this study of this novel, the researcher is not the first to examine this novel. There are some who have examined this novel previously; here are some of these people. The first is by Oktavida Wijayanti that analyzed *The Influence of Setting*

towards Santiago's Characteristics as seen in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. That study was conducted in 2007. Her study focused on the intrinsic element of main character in this novel, which is Santiago. The second study is from Nuri Aprillia Ramadhona student of University of Indonesia. Her title of the study is *Analysis of persuasion strategies ad identity of Santiago's character in The Alchemist novel : an approach of critical discourse analysis*. Her research focused on three points; strategies of persuasion practiced by persuaders in the narrative; power relations among characters; and Santiago's identity in the whole persuasive discourse. The last research is by Umi Akhiriyah, a student from Ahmad Dahlan University: Yogyakarta. Her title of the study is *THE STRUGGLE OF SANTIAGO TO FIND THE TREASURE IN PAULO COELHO'S THE ALCHEMIST*. Her research intended to describe the intrinsic element of the novel and to describe the moral values revealed from the novel.

The difference of this present research from the previous research is the focus of the study that is, spiritual journey in the story of *The Alchemist* novel. The researcher uses individual psychology approach to analyze. Individual psychology is the most suitable approach to analyzing about the issue of spiritual journey. Researcher's title is *Spiritual Journey in Paulo Coelho's Novel The Alchemist (1993): An Individual Psychology Approach*.

In this study, the researcher uses some literary review to help researcher in analyzing this novel. To analyze the structural element of this novel, the researcher use literary review from Koesnosoebroto (1998) and Kennedy (1963). Literary review from Hall and Lindzey (1981), Hjelle and Zigler (1992) and Cloninger (2009) are use in individual psychology analyze. The researcher needs to analyze psychology of the author, so the researcher uses literary review from Wellek and Warren (1962) to analyze the psychology of literature.

2. Research Method

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research because there is no need a calculation. It aims to analyze *The Alchemist* novel using individual psychology approach. The primary data source is the novel and the secondary data source is other works or any information that related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and access internet. The technique that is use for analyzing the data is descriptive qualitative method. It means that the researcher describes the text and content analysis to get the characteristic of the data to individual psychology approach analysis of the novel *The Alchemist*. Then the researcher interprets those data through the study.

3. Research Finding and Discussion

(i) Research Finding

(a) Individual Psychology of Santiago

[I] Fictional Finalism

Based on Alfred Adler's theory (Cloninger, 2009: 103) defines fictional finalism as "a subjective experience rather than an object reality. It gives direction to the individual's striving. Because an individual's fundamental motivation is to move toward this fictional finalism, a person cannot be understood without knowing the unique goal. Once it understood, it explains the consistency of a person's striving".

Analysis conducted by researcher may be a bit complicated. Researcher divided into two sections each basic concept in theory of individual psychology. Researcher does this because the issue is taken in this study implied in this novel that is spiritual journey. Spiritual journey experienced by Santiago is a coincidence that he experienced by looking for treasures.

The first fictional finalism that is reflected in this novel Santiago wants to be a rich man by looking treasures. Second, the real treasures aren't materials but understanding of life, happiness and spiritual.

[II] Inferiority Feeling

Based on Adler in Hjelle & Ziegler (1992) describe inferiority feelings and compensation that "each individual, certain organs are somewhat weaker than other, making the person more susceptible to illnesses and diseases involving these organs" (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1992: 141). In their book, Adler assumed that "every person succumbs to disease in that region of the body which has been less well-developed, less successfully functioning, and generally "inferior" from birth" (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1992: 141).

The inferiority feeling in this novel cause by the economic imperfection that experience by Santiago. Santiago is a son's of the poor farmer in the Andalusia. He feels inferior because he can't reach his happiness. He thinks that happiness comes from the material or money. The inferiority feeling which experience by Santiago depicted in this novel. Santiago's inferiority feeling in his spiritual journey is spiritual imperfection. He thinks that knows about God doesn't really important than traveler around the world. He doesn't know that travel around

the world without knows about God is an attitude of arrogance. This is depicted in this novel.

[III] Striving for Superiority

Hjelle & Ziegler (1992: 143) define striving for superiority in explanation of Adler as "fundamental law of human life a something without which life would be unthinkable. Adler believed that the striving for superiority is innate and that we are never free of it because it is life itself".

He thinks that happiness comes from material or money. So, he strives to get a lot of money and become a rich person. He dreams that any treasures in the Egypt. He wants to realize his dream. One of his struggles to get his treasures is by asking to the oracle about his dream. It's depicted in this novel. He is also helped by a king of Salem to know about his treasures. The king gives him some advice how to get the treasures.

In his effort to be superior in his spiritual journey, he has to understand about universal language. Universal language is a language without words that use and understand by all creatures. He realizes that in his journey, he begins to learn and understand about universal language. It's depicted in some parts in this novel. The other aspects of striving for superiority in Santiago showed when he gets the understanding about Soul of the World. Understanding soul of the world becomes an important aspect in his successful in his spiritual journey. Soul of the world is a place where all of creatures life in the next life, soul of the world also a place where all of the energy in the entire world life in. if he understand soul of the world, he also can be the part of it. So, his effort to reach his personal legend becomes easier.

[IV] Social Interest

Hjelle & Ziegler (1992: 147) quoted Adler's theory that "we humans are social creatures-that we must consider our relationship to other and to the larger sociocultural context in which we live if we are to fully understand ourselves". "Development of social interest takes place in a social environment".

Santiago wants to get the treasures, so he communes with people who can help him to get it. The treasures are at Egypt, he always looking for people who can deliver him to there. Social interest of Santiago depicted in this novel. He joins with the caravan that can help him goes to Egypt. Santiago also aided by the alchemist, *The Alchemist* is very important role in helping Santiago finding her Personal Legend. This is reflected in this novel.

The social interest aspect in his spiritual journey in the novel has shown when Santiago meets Melchizedek. He learns much more about what soul of the world it is. Santiago also communes with the camel driver, his friend in the caravan. He teaches Santiago about why we have to accept destiny.

[V] Style of Life

Hjelle & Ziegler (1992: 144) explain style of life in their book that is "concept, idiographic, in nature, that identifies the person's unique mode of adaptation to life, most notably

including the person's self created goals and means of achieving them".

Santiago's style of life is about how to be a rich man. Santiago does some effort in order to be rich. His effort reflected in this novel. In order to be rich, the first think that he tries to be a shepherd. After become a shepherd, then he work in the crystal shop. That is depicted in this novel. Being a shepherd and crystal shop assistant cannot make him rich. Then he finds another alternative that is by looking for treasure. He knows there is a treasure somewhere through a dream. Then he was looking for the treasure.

The style of life in the novel is depicted through Santiago's style of life. Style of life is something that he likes from child and it can't be change. His style of life is he always wants to adventure and seek something new. It's depicted in this novel. His adventure brings him to the deeper meaning of life.

Santiago type life-style belongs to the socially useful type. Because he is a person with this type expresses with genuine concern for and fellowship with other people. Another reason is because Santiago likes to help others.

[VI] Creative Self

Creative self is the subordinate construct in Adler's theory, his ultimate achievement as a personologist. Adler maintained that the style of life is "shaped by the person's creative power" (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1992: 150). The creative self shows in the novel when Santiago has brilliant idea that never thought by other people to develop her business.

(ii) Discussion

As a human being, Santiago wants to live happily. One way that he thinks he can be happy is to be rich, that is by looking for treasure. However, over time, the perception of happiness has change; he thinks that happiness is not only of material but also of inner peace. Therefore Santiago does spiritual journey.

The inferiority feeling arises because of the economic and spiritual imperfections. The economic imperfection that is he comes from a poor family, but he wants to be rich. The spiritual imperfection that he doesn't really believes in God, but he wants to be close to God.

The responses of his inferiority feelings, he does many effort to be superiority. He struggles to be rich man by looking for treasures. He does everything to reach his personal legend. To make easier in his journey, he has to learn and understand about universal language and soul of the world. Santiago wants to be rich man and he wants to be close with God. So, the social interest of Santiago that is he always communes with people who can help him to be rich and close with God. Santiago Style of life is about how to be rich that is by looking for treasures. He takes a long journey to Egypt to get the treasures. In addition, he also did anything, of course the way to be closer to God.

Santiago is a creative person. It has proven when Santiago works in the crystals shop. He has a lot of idea and

innovation to increase the income of that shop. The psychological analysis above shows that personality development of the major character, Santiago is influenced by his desires to reach his personal legend. His struggle to reach his personal legend reinforces his personality of Adler's Individual psychology is connected to each other and builds a unity from Santiago personality through his great struggle to reach his personal legend.

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, according to the theory of Christensen (2003) states that "some form of travel, physical or mental, which may occur over a long or short period of time, and might be any distance or to a specific location" (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-spiritual-journey.htm>). She also defines the purpose of spiritual journey is "spiritual enlightenment or understanding, and this could mean a person has greater faith, understands a spiritual path better, or simply feels mentally and emotionally refreshed" (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-spiritual-journey.htm>).

There are several goals of spiritual journey that is depicted in this novel. The first, spiritual enlightenment or understanding, and this could mean a person has greater faith, understands a spiritual path better, or simply feels mentally and emotionally refreshed. Second, Santiago wants to better understand what he really wants. Third, Santiago wants to get closer with God.

Santiago gets various benefits after doing a spiritual journey. First, he becomes more careful in thinking and acting. Secondly, Santiago became a better person and wiser. Third, Santiago gets a peace of mind after doing a spiritual journey. The cause Santiago doing the spiritual journey is actually a coincidence. In the beginning, Santiago just wants to find the treasure. However, over time and meet some people, without he realizing he has done a spiritual journey.

As a result of doing the spiritual journey is Santiago becoming a better person. He gets a material and spiritual happiness. In the form of material that he has gained over the treasure he was looking for, it certainly improved the economics of the family. However happiness is most important is that he has succeeded in doing a spiritual journey. It certainly makes getting peace of mind.

According to Wellek and Warren (1962), psychology of literature means "the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature or the effects of literature upon its readers or audience psychology." The relation between literature and psychology is literature can affect the feeling and personality of the readers. So, Paulo Coelho writes *The Alchemist* as one of literary work to show his condition at that time and he wants to give motivation to the readers to get better situation with always struggle and have positive self-concept even though in bad circumstance.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, this study comes to the following conclusion. Firstly,

based on structural analysis, it can be concluded that in this novel, the author delivers a message that a spiritual journey can make people wiser in thought and action. So, Paulo Coelho brought character and characterization in such way to prove the spiritual journey. Setting of place in this novel in Andalusia, Spain and in Egypt; setting of time in this novel around 15th-17th centuries. Paulo Coelho uses traditional plot in order that reader can be easier to understand the novel; and the story is interconnected between one part to another part. The author uses third-person point of view because he uses personal pronoun and character's name.

Secondly, based on the psychological analysis it can be concluded that in the novel, the author illustrates the psychological phenomenon in which a person of the major character. Santiago is influenced by his desires to reach his personal legend. His struggle to reach his personal legend

reinforces his personality of Adler's Individual psychology is connected to each other and builds a unity from Santiago personality through his great struggle to reach his personal legend.

Pedagogical problems were found in this novel is that there are some people who are not able to achieve their goals or personal legend. This is because the doubt that they are able to make it happen. Moreover, because of their lack of support from others that they are able to do so. The impact of these things is they are easily satisfied with what was achieved even though that is not the real desires. The solution is to convince yourself to be able to achieve what we want, to get the support of people around, and increase our knowledge. The parties involved are family, friends and the community around.

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