

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of study, statements of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is an interpretation of man's life by using language as its medium. According to Robert, (1993: 1) literature is writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings, and attitudes toward life. It is also happened on novel as one of the genre of literature.

The highlight of characters in a novel is really important to be understood to reach a comprehensive understanding, because, "learning literature is the same way as to overcome our problems" (Wellek and Warren, 1965: 23). As a fictional work, literature is considered having its internal characters apart from the author, audience, and the real world. Literature is drawn from the imagination rather than history or fact. Related to the consideration that literature is an imaginative world, Abrams (1981: 61) said that literature as a work of fiction is absence from historical truth. Literature has its 'own imaginary world' rather than the 'true historic' one.

Rees (1973:106) defined that novel is a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and action representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity. In another definition, Taylor (1981:78) says that novel is a prose work of quite some length and complexity which attempts to reflect and express something of the quality or value of human experience or conduct.

Novel is one of literary genres that present complicated problems in detail. Peck and Coyle (1984: 103) state that novels are long work with great amount of detail on every page. It needs to be taken into account before people can reach any judgment. The effect of this detail is that people come to recognize the complex reality of a character or an event in the story. The novel can also contribute to a deeper understanding of the central themes, complicated characters, and its readers' view of the world. Novelists create a certain character trait and personality as part of human psychology. It aims at making a certain image that will be related to the whole works.

The Alchemist has been translated into 67 languages and edited in more than 150 countries. It has received several international awards such as the Nielsen Gold Book Award 2004 for its outstanding sales in the UK retail market, the Corine International Award 2002 for the best fiction in Germany, the Golden BookAward 1995 and 1996 in Yugoslavia, the Super Grinzane Cavour Book Award and Flaiano International Award 1996 in Italy, and the Grand Prix Litteraire of Elle 1995 in France ("News"). According to the official website

ofBBC, this novel recorded as the 94th in the BBC's Big Read Top 100 in April 2003 (“Top 100”).

The author of *The Alchemist*, Paulo Coelho, was born in 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. He ever worked as theatre director, actor, lyricist and journalist. His parents sent him twice to the mental institution because they failed to stop him dreaming to be a writer. 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 is fully appreciated. Many people acclaim *The Alchemist* on the book jacket and the website. In the book jacket, one of the reviews is stated by Indiana Polis (USA) that *The Alchemist* is a touching, inspiring fable. Kenzaburo Oe, Nobel Prize of Literature, states that Paulo Coelho knows the secret of literary Alchemy (“Reviews”).

The Alchemist novel has many positive appreciations from the readers. This novel is full of symbols, wise words, motivation, cultural aspects and human

values. Many researches are done to analyze this novel. Intrinsic and extrinsic elements are already done by some previous researcher. The study about plural society that are clearly portrayed in this novel, has not been analyzed yet. Start from this point, the researcher wants to do some research on this novel entitled “Plural Society Portrayed in *The Alchemist* novel”.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

Based on the background of study described above, this research is conducted in order to find the answers to the research problems that can be formulated below:

1. What are the characteristics of plural society portrayed in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*?
2. How are the attitudes of both main and supporting characters toward the plural society in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the statements of the problem, the objective of the study intends to find out as follows:

1. to describe the characteristics of plural society portrayed in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*
2. to explain the attitudes of both main and supporting characters toward the plural society in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*

1.4 Benefit of the Study

The benefit is intended into three objects. First, this research is supposed to enrich the theoretical bases of literary studies, particularly in the science of analyzing some problems in plural society using sociology theory and multiculturalism criticism. The researcher hopes this study can be a useful contribution to the academic world which includes in the teaching-learning process in the research, and also by writing this thesis, the researcher hopes that the result of this thesis will be useful and can arise reader's spirit to read as many as books on literature, especially novel to enrich and enhance their knowledge about life. As the last significance, the researcher hopes that the readers will understand how important the attitudes of maintaining harmony in plural society.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses only to analyze the plural society that has been described by Paulo Coelho in *The Alchemist* novel. The researcher uses the theory of multiculturalism to analyze the data found in this novel. The researcher also analyzes the attitudes of characters toward plural society in this novel.