

**CRITICISM AGAINST TEXTUAL RELIGIOUS
UNDERSTANDING IN “THE ALCHEMIST”
NOVEL BY PAULO COELHO (1988) :
SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE**



**Submitted as a Fulfillment of the Requirement for Getting Bachelor Degree
of Education in English Education**

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APPROVAL

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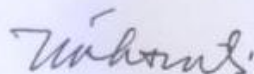
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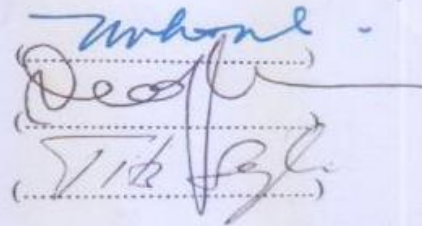
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Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisa tentang isu kritik terhadap pemahaman agama tekstual yang diambil dari sebuah novel berjudul “Sang Alkemis” yang dikarang oleh Paulo Coelho pada tahun 1988. Penelitian ini dianalisis menggunakan teori sosiologi sastra dari Swingwood. Teori tersebut menjelaskan tentang ilmu pengetahuan, tujuan dalam masyarakat, lembaga sosial dan proses sosial menyatakan, menyatakan tentang cara bekerja, bagaimana masyarakat mungkin, dan mengapa itu bertahan. Kemudian, novel “Sang Alkemis” ini terdapat beberapa pandangan tentang agama tekstual yang dijelaskan melalui aktivitas yang dialami oleh karakter didalamnya serta dijelaskan mengenai latar, kejadian, dan gaya bahasa yang digunakan dalam menjelaskan isu tersebut. Peneliti mengangkat 3 macam masalah dalam penelitian ini yaitu (1) indikator yang mendukung adanya pemahaman tekstual dalam agama (2) gambaran proses terjadinya pemahaman tersebut (3) alasan pengarang menggambarkan pemahaman tersebut ke dalam novelnya.

Kata kunci: sang alchemist, paulo coelho, pemahaman tekstual, sosiologi sastra.

Abstract

This research is focused on the analysis of an issue of criticism against textual religious understanding which taken from a novel with the title “The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho in 1988. This research was analyzed by the sociology of literature theory by Swingwood. The theory explained about scientific, the purpose in society, social institution, and the social process stated its declaration about how to work, how society is possible, and why it persisted. Then, “The Alchemist” novel contained some understandings about textual religious which explained by the activity of the main character and explanation of the issue inside. The researcher took 3 kinds of problems in this research, such as (1) indicator which supported textual religious (2) depiction of the understanding process (3) the author’s reason for the understanding in his novel.

Keywords: the alchemist, paulo coelho, textual understanding, sociology of literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Textual understanding is a preference or method related to literal text meaning. Text is also an explanation about the structure of the statement and the real word of the author of books. Textual understanding is understood by orientation on the

text. Textual understanding focuses on grammatical work with literal understanding. It is disposed to analyze a text and context. The researcher found ten previous studies related to the material object, they are consist of “ The Influence of Dream on Santiago’s Life in *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho” by Nurfajrin.R.A (2015). This research shows the analysis of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho which divided into two discussions. In the first discussion, there is some influence of the dreams on Santiago’s life, Santiago always considered his dreams, he looked for the meaning of his dream, and he effort to make his dream true. The second, Nurfajrin description Santiago’s dream thought psychoanalysis which consists of the realization of apprehension, fulfillment, and reflection. “A Main Character Analysis of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho Using Hierarchy of Human Needs of Abraham H. Maslow’s Theory” by Mawaddah.S (2010). This research definite about human needs which are described by Santiago’s fulfillment in his life-based Abraham H. Maslow theory consists of psychological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Mawwadah shows the content of level when Santiago touchdown in Mesir and he met with Fatimah, the woman who lived in Mesir. In self-esteem needs level was showed when Santiago with King Salem and he can get an appreciation to become a counselor. The last level, self-actualization becomes the ending of Santiago’s trip as a shepherd. “Dream Chaser: the Explanation of Santiago’s Journey in *The Alchemist* by Dianto.A (2016). This research analyzes based on the hero’s journey in the character of Santiago. The journey was performed by Santiago’s process in the second stage of initiation. “The Spiritual Identity of Santiago in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*” by Khasanah.N (2018). The spiritual focus on Foreclosed status, the meaning of the status-related to Santiago’s legacy. The spiritual start when he was more choose as a shepherd than a Pastor. Then, Santiago studies theology and science of God and man through a seminar since he was very young. “Plural Society Portrayed in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*” by Warso (2015). This research was identified about plural society portrayed especially for the characteristic attitude of the novel, the attitude supports the plural society of the novel. There is a component of attitude plural society such as

assimilation, acculturation, pluralism, culture, change, culture integration, and accommodation. “An Analysis of Figurative Languages Used in Coelho’s Novel Entitled “*Alchemist*” by Harya.T.D (2016). The researcher used Leech theory to analysis type and contextual the language, Figurative language is a difference of literal interpretation that can be used in literary work among others novel, daily conversation, newspaper articles, poems, and advertisement. “The Principles of Islamic Faith in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*” by Kurniawan.F (2010). The principle of Islamic will be analyzed especially about the plot of the novel, there are four types of plot such as exposition, complication, climax, and denouement. When the researcher gives an expression of the Islamic principle, the readers can quickly understand the relationship of context or circumstances of the novel. “Deictic Analysis of the book “*The Alchemist*” by Paulo Coelho” from Soberano.C (2015). According to Carlo’s analysis, the novel language is powerful and influential. Carlo concludes that humans can give an expression of deictic with a person, place, and time. “Santiago’s Psyche and Self-Defense Mechanism Development in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*” by Iswara.N.P.A (2018). Psyche and Self-Defense mean that many hindrances which exist in this world, self-defense mechanism to human will arrange over time. “The Influence of The Minor Characters on Santiago’s Motivation in Realizing His Dream As Seen In Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*” by Ningrum.L.K (2010). This research discusses Santiago’s character in form clever, critics, and belief to God, free, and self-confident.

Based on some previous studies above, there are four researchers conducted research about the dream. They are namely the influence of dream on Santiago’s life from Nurfajrin.R.A (2015), Dream Chaser: the Explanation of Santiago’s Journey in *The Alchemist* by Dianto.A (2016), The Influence of The Minor Characters on Santiago’s Motivation in Realizing His Dream As Seen In Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*” from Ningrum.L.K (2010). Mawaddah.S (2010). The title of the research was “A Main Character Analysis of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho Using Hierarchy of Human Needs of Abraham H. Maslow’s Theory and Harya.T.D (2016). They have some analyzes of the influence of the dream of

Santiago, but they have a difference. Next, there are two researchers conducted research about language. They are namely Harya.T.D (2016). The research titled “An Analysis of Figuarive Languages Used in Coelho’s Novel Entitled “*Alchemist*” and Soberano.C (2015). The research title was “Deictic Analysis of the book “*The Alchemist*” by Paulo Coelho”.

If seen from the previous studies, the researcher can conclude that there are not find about Criticism Against Religious Textual Understanding, so the researcher wants to focus on religious understanding. The researcher wants to deliver it in textual understanding.

This research used sociology of literature theory. According to Swingewood and Laurenson (1972:11), the Sociology of Literature is a study about science, the purposes in society, social institution and social process states, it declaration about how to works, how society is possible, and why it persists. Swingewood has three perspectives to analyze the sociology of literature among others: (1) literary work is assumed as a document about situation reflection. (2) literary work is presented as a mirror of the social situation. (3) literary work refers to a historical event and social condition of culture. Sociology of literature also related to Werren and Wellek’s assumption, according to the literary work is about the expression of life, but the expression is not complete because the social phenomenon is not showed by the author in literary work.

2. METHOD

The research methodology of the study uses a qualitative method. According to Creswell (in Herdiansyah, 2010: 8), mentioned that “Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. This research uses two objects of the study. They are material object and formal object. The material object of study is a novel from Paulo Coelho “*The Alchemist*”. The formal object of the study refers to the writer was taken by an issue about criticism against textual religious understanding. The type of data was analyzed by text in the novel which includes dialogues and narration of the novel. The primary data source was taken from the

novel “*The Alchemist*” by Paulo Coelho was published in 1988 (Bahasa Indonesia). The secondary data consist of the other information was gotten from website <http://novelfreja.blogspot.com/2018/07/download-novel-sang-alkemis-the-chemist-paulo-coelho.html?m=1> and <https://www.quora.com/How-can-I-download-a-PDF-format-of-The-Alchemist>. There are three steps for collecting data, they are as follow: (1) Reading and understand the novel “*The Alchemist*” in Bahasa Indonesia (2) Collecting data will be analyzed with the problem statement and objective of the study (3) Collecting others supported by online resources. There are six steps of technique to analyze data such as organizing and preparing the data, reading through all the data, categorizing the data, description of the data, interrelating description and interpreting the meaning of data description.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Finding

3.1.1 Indicator of Textual Understanding of Religious Teaching

3.1.1.1 Literal Meaning

3.1.1.1.1 Shepherd

The shepherd in textual understanding was described as a job that can make money by wandering around. The shepherd's is very populer with Santiago. He settled in Andalusia. He became sheep keeper and started his dream. It became the first understanding of the job. It was a good choice for him. The character of the novel assumed that the shepherd is symbolized not only as a sheep keeper but also as a work that is considered to be a way to reach dreams. Shepherd characters are also considered to be able to find new things. As described in the novel dialogue, the shepherd figure is described by his behavior who likes to read books. The other assumption, herding can know and learn about the world and it is more important than knowing God and studying human sins. This is evidenced in the main character's expression to other characters in the novel. The understanding was delivered by Santiago when he meets with his father to asking permission to be shepherded, the dialogue in the novel related with the statement above: "The

people who come here have a lot of money to spend, so they can afford to travel," his father said. "Amongst us, the only ones who travel are the shepherds."

"Well, then I'll be a shepherd!"

3.1.1.1.2 Prayer

In textual understanding, a pray has many kinds in every religion also has their respective functions. There were some kinds of pray. In the novel, a prayer was described by the Sacred Heart of Jesus which delivered about Our Father silently. According to the old woman, a dream was a God-language. On the other hand, pray, on the other hand, prayer can also be referred to as the language of the soul as described by the old female figure in the novel. The prayer was read by the old woman, she said to the boy that she reads the pray to understand his dream, not for his palm. The argument of the old woman above can prove that prayer functions are so much.

3.1.1.1.3 Dream

A dream can be interpreted by many arguments and every dream has a specific purpose. In textual understanding, a dream describes by general interpretation. It can be described by God language as a description of the woman in the novel. In the novel, God language is assumed as a language that can be understood by each individual and dreams can also be referred to as language languages according to the characters in the novel, the language is very difficult to interpret. But, there is an interpretation of the dream conveyed by an old woman figure, she said that the dream can be found on a pyramid. On the other hand, there were also said that a dream can be delivered by the language of the soul which has assumed can be understood by ourself.

3.1.1.1.4 Treasure

In textual understanding, the treasure is not only described by money, gold, or jewelry. It can be described by many arguments adapted to the actual situation. As explained in the novel, a treasure didn't describe in the form of material but it describes valuable experience and wisdom from a journey of a shepherd. The experience starts from :

He met a king called Melchizedek :

The king describes as Arabian people and he was regarded can read about a strange prayer. In the novel was said that Melchizedek was chosen by the author as a king of Salem and he admits come from many places. The king was the first person who has met by the shepherd to interpreted his dream. Salem king also said to the shepherd about every human has a destiny.

He works at a crystal shop :

This character was the people who met by the shepherd after he loses his sheep and he decides to work the shop so that he can buy his sheep comeback. Besides he gets a job from the crystal trader, he also gets many knowledge such as the assumption about glasses and crystal were collaborating in his success.

"Everything on earth is being continuously transformed because the earth is alive... and it has a soul. We are part of that soul, so we rarely recognize that it is working for us. But in the crystal shop, you probably realized that even the glasses were collaborating in your success."

He meets with The Alchemist to find the treasure :

The Alchemist was the people who have searched by the shepherd, he lives in the oasis. The Alchemist was assumed as a people can create something from nothing and he can turn pebbles into gold. In the novel, the shepherd looking for him in some tents in the oasis to understanding the reality of Alchemist.

3.1.1.1.5 Love

Love is a positive feeling and it is given to the human, animal and the other something. The use of love words was influenced by the development of period and time. The understanding and using of love can change a meaning suitable with the response, situation, status, and generation of different humans. One love description was delivered by Fatima, she said that people were loved because people were loved.

3.1.1.2 Conservative

Conservative is the attitude of maintaining the prevailing conditions, habits, and traditions, firmly adhering to the principles adhered to and tend to look at the problem from an ideal point of view of himself. According to Charlotte Thomson:

1999, conservative was a human concept to keep old tradition or traditional things and against modernity. If conservative meaning was related to the content of the novel, the understanding focused on the arguments of each character of the novel such as :

3.1.1.2.1 Wandering can earn a lot of money

The argument explained to get a lot of money in just one way, which is wandering. Beside it, the argument comes from the people who come to the area. It was delivered by Santiago's father in dialogue :

"The people who come here have a lot of money to spend, so they can afford to travel," his father said. "Amongst us, the only ones who travel are the shepherds."

3.1.1.2.2 Life is controlled by fate

It explained that the life of human cannot be lost by control of fate and there was a certain point in our lives. We lost control of what's happening to us and our lives become controlled by fate. It can be described through the experience of Santiago who has a fate become a shepherd.

3.1.1.2.3 Assumption of Urim and Thummim Stone

According to tradition related the novel, Urim and Thummim stone can be signed to say "yes" or "no" and it uses black color. The stones were given by the old man to the shepherd. It can help if the shepherd can not understand about the omens

3.1.1.2.4 Tangier Culture

In the novel, culture was described by the behavior of smoke with a giant pipe, women with closed faces, the priests climbed the spire and sing. The giant pipe becomes a tradition of Tangier people to do a smoke activity.

He was sitting in a bar very much like the other bars he had seen along the narrow streets of Tangier. Some men were smoking from a gigantic pipe that they passed from one to the other.

3.1.1.3 Refusing Other's Perspective

3.1.1.3.1 There is assumption against belief in only one God

The meaning of assumption related to the novel was the belief of prayer five times and worship in Ramadhan. Beside it, the Prophet gave us the Al Qur'an and left us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives.

The merchant was silent for a few moments. Then he said, "The Prophet gave us the Koran, and let us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives. The most important is to believe only in the one true God. The others are to pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, and be charitable to the poor."

3.1.1.3.2 Live life according to Islamic law

There was an understanding of one of five obligations. Every Muslim is a pilgrimage and it is performed by visit the holy city of Mecca.

He was a devout man, and, even with all his impatience, he wanted to live his life in accordance with Muslim law.

"What's the fifth obligation?" the boy asked.

"Two days ago, you said that I had never dreamed of travel," the merchant answered. "The fifth obligation of every Muslim is a pilgrimage. We are obliged, at least once in our lives, to visit the holy city of Mecca.

3.1.1.3.3 Assumption of Mekkah can make them continue to live

This assumption was addressed by the crystal trader who has a dream goest to Mekkah also assumed to keep someone alive. The place can help us face these days. "Because it's the thought of Mecca that keeps me alive. That's what helps me face these days that are all the same, these mute crystals on the shelves, and lunch and dinner at that same horrible cafe? I'm afraid that if my dream is realized, I'll have no reason to go on living.

3.1.2 Depiction of criticism against textual understanding of religious teaching depicted in the novel

3.1.2.1 By Characters

3.1.2.1.1 Shepherd Boy

The author chose shepherd to describe the textual understanding of the interpretation of his dream meaning and the boy's journey to find it. There was an assumption that although the shepherd was a full risk it makes a life of a shepherd was interesting.

3.1.2.1.2 The old woman

The old woman described textual understanding through dream and she argued that dream was the language of the world and it can be interpreted by traveling to Mesir.

3.1.2.1.3 King Salem

The character explained about textual suitable with his understanding based on “destiny”. There were delivered that destiny as a description of humans who are not afraid to dream.

3.1.2.1.4 Crystal Trader

The trader understood textual in religious teaching based on the belief of Prophet and Al Qur’an. There were explained that five obligations had to obey during life, we can read dialogue: The merchant was silent for a few moments. Then he said, "The Prophet gave us the Koran, and let us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives. The most important is to believe only in the one true God. The others are to pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, and be charitable to the poor."

3.1.2.1.5 Leader of Caravan

The leader delivers about textual understanding that every human has its own God. Their respective beliefs and caravan had a belief of Allah, we can see dialogue: "There are a lot of different people here, and each has his own God. But the only God I serve is Allah, and in his name.

3.1.2.1.6 The Alchemist

The character used an object in the form of Philosopher Stone and Elixir of Life. According to him, those two objects gave a moral lesson about life lessons in the world in a simple way.

3.1.2.2 By Setting

3.1.2.2.1 Andalusia

It is an autonomous community in Spain. Andalusia is the most densely populated region and the second largest of the 17 regions that make Spain. In the novel, Andalusia peoples depict textual understanding with a difference of the past and now. According to them, the past was better than now.

3.1.2.2.2 Tarifa

It is a small city located in the south of the coast of Spain. Tarifa is also part of Cadiz province and also part of the Andalusia region. The example of fortune-telling was an interpretation of treasure located in Mesir pyramid, there were explained that the treasure can make our lives rich.

"And this is my interpretation: you must go to the Pyramids in Egypt. I have never heard of them, but, if it was a child who showed them to you, they exist. There you will find a treasure that will make you a rich man."

3.1.2.2.3 Oasis

It is a remote fertile area in the middle of the desert. In generally surrounding a spring or other water source. Oasis can also be a habitat for animals and even humans if they have a large enough area. For textual understanding, oasis describe that a secret which delivered by The Alchemist character, the secret was applied as the word of God.

3.1.2.3 By Event

3.1.2.3.1 Santiago Dreamed

The story of the novel was started by Santiago's dream. His dream told about many kids were playing with his sheep. The kids brought him to the pyramid. He could find a treasure but they did not explain the form of treasure.

3.1.2.3.2 Meeting between Santiago and his Father

The event presented about Santiago wants to ask permission because he wants to travel to become a shepherd. Even though his father did not want it. His father wants him to become a Pastur, with expectations he can study about his religion. His parents had wanted him to become a priest, and thereby a source of pride for a simple farm family.

One afternoon, on a visit to his family, he had summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn't want to become a priest. That he wanted to travel.

3.1.2.3.3 Meeting with a Gypsy

The meaning of Gypsy is people who like to move or nomadic, but they have a unique fact. They can predict the human future. In the novel, there were also explain about it and they try to predict about a dream, the statement can be proved

by dialogue: The woman sat down and told him to be seated as well. Then she took both of his hands in hers and began quietly to pray.

The boy was always cheerful until he was gone, he knew that the gypsy would catch him and in his childhood he was afraid and would return to the old woman and hold her hand

3.1.2.4 By Style

3.1.2.4.1 Warrior of the Light

It uses to deliver an expression of the old man. The expression described the confidence of Gypsy when he wanted to ask a treasure from the shepherd.

3.1.2.4.2 The Butterfly

The animal becomes the expression of good omen. It was made by the boy's grandfather and the good omen can be also mentioned as one of textual understanding.

3.1.3 Reason of the author address textual understanding of religious teaching in the novel

The author often sees a phenomenon about many peoples who argued to something is only one perspective or they only see it in textual without seeing from the contextual contents inside. Based on Paulo Coelho's blog, he said that "*Many people believe that the main aim in life is to follow a plan. They never ask if it that plan is theirs or it was created by another person*". It was one example of the people's argument about aim in their life is only from a plan. It was revealed because there are many people put forward the opinions of others compared to their own beliefs.

3.1 Discussion

If seen from the theory in chapter II, there were three kinds of sociology. They were the sociology of the author, sociology of readers, and sociology of society. So, criticism against textual understanding in religious teaching was more refers to the sociology of the author because the story of the novel many describe the author's character and experience.

This research refers to criticism against textual understanding in religious teaching, so it encompasses the understanding of all of the textual understanding every religion in general. If it was related to the previous study, this research almost similar to the research of Fajar Kurniawan (2010). The research title was “The Principles of Islamic Faith in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*”. The status of this research serves to complement the material about religious teaching research above because it was only focused on the understanding of principle in Islamic which refers to faith, whereas the novel does not only explain about faith and Islamic religion but there are also explanation of the other religion and the other understanding beside of faith. So, this research as complementary religious teaching with increase some component that has not been included the research from the previous study above such as this research has explained the material of two religion understanding. The previous study was only depicted by plot but this research depicts religious teaching through character, setting, event, style, and part of style there are complicated by diction and symbol.

4. CONCLUSION

Indicators of textual understanding can be divided into three types. They are consists of literal meaning, conservative, and refusing other’s perspectives. Textual understanding can be described as text analysis or in the literal meaning, textual can be applied as the real meaning of the text because the meaning is part of a dictionary or lexicon. It can be mentioned as the most basic meaning of lexical.

Depiction of textual understanding can be depicted by four types such as by characters, by settings, by events, and by style. If one example was taken from each of the four types. For character, The author chooses shepherd to describe textual understanding about the interpretation of his dream meaning and the boy’s journey to find it. For settings, the author chooses Andalusia. Andalusia is the most densely populated region and the second largest of the 17 regions that make Spain. In the novel, Andalusia peoples depict textual understanding with a difference of the past and now. For the event, it can be seen by the shepherd

dreamed. The story of the novel was started by Santiago's dream, his dream told about many kids were playing with his sheep and the kids brought him to the pyramid. He could find a treasure, but they did not explain the form of treasure. For style, the researcher explains part of the symbol, that is Egypt Pyramid.

There are reasons why the author addresses textual understanding in the novel because the authors are concerned about people who see things only from one perspective. The author often sees a phenomenon about many peoples who argued to something is only one perspective or they only see it in textual without seeing from the contextual contents inside.

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