THE MAIN CHARACTER'S SYMBOLIC INTERACTION DESCRIBED IN PAULO COELHO'S *THE ALCHEMIST*

THESIS

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **"The Main Character's Symbolic Interaction Described in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*"** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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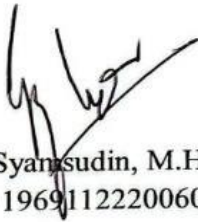The researcher

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MOTTO

"Why do we have to listen to our hearts?" the boy asked. "Because, wherever your heart is, that is where you'll find your treasure."

-Paulo Coelho-

DEDICATION

I proudly dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, family, and all of my friends,

who always supported me through my ups and downs while completing my thesis

until I made it possible to reach this step.

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First, researcher would like to express this gratitude to Allah SWT, who has given us His grace and guidance. The researcher can use the title "The Main Character's Symbolic Interaction Described in Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist*" to obtain the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.). Furthermore, prayers and greetings are also addressed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has informed us about the coming of the dark ages towards the light ages.

The researcher would like to thank to herself for her extraordinary fortitude and persistence in completing this writing. You kept trying during a storm of doubt, when all seemed impossible. When long nights greeted you, words refused to be written, and your mind felt stuck, you chose not to give up. Thank you for every drop of sweat and time you have sacrificed to pursue this dream. Right now, as sheet after sheet of this writing is completed, allow yourself to be proud. You have proven that limitations are just an illusion. Thank you for being the best version of yourself. This is not the end, but the beginning of a greater life adventure.

A very extraordinary thank you to the researcher's parents, Mr. Parmuji and Mrs. Siti Rondiyah, who have faithfully prayed, supported, and facilitated all the needs and desires of the researcher both materially and morally in living a life full of learning and self-maturation. Thank you for never demanding that the researcher be a human being who is always perfect. Thank you for always allowing the Researcher to express themselves wherever they are. Thank you for always giving peace to the researcher. Hopefully, they can always accompany the researcher in his

ABSTRACT

Wijaya, Satria Difa (2025) The Main Character's Symbolic Interaction Described in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Syamsudin, M.Hum.

Keyword: Symbolic interaction, santiago, the alchemist, george herbert mead, individual development.

Symbolic interaction is essential in human life so that individuals can understand themselves, others, and the surrounding environment using symbols, language, and actions. George Herbert Mead in (Mead, 2015), explains that an individual's identity and consciousness can be formed through continuous interaction involving three main concepts: mind, self, and society. *The Alchemist* features many symbolic interactions experienced by the main character. This research aims to discover the forms of symbolic interactions experienced by Santiago and analyze how these interactions affect Santiago's individual development throughout the novel. This research uses a literary criticism with a sociological approach to literature. Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist* is used as the data source, and data collection is done by reading and recording appropriate data. George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction theory was used to identify the forms of symbolic interaction and their influence on Santiago`s individual development. The research found that Santiago experiences symbolic interactions through George Herbert Mead's mind, self, and society concepts. These interactions shape Santiago's self-awareness, identity, and worldview through the stages of play, game, and generalizing others to help him overcome obstacles to achieve Personal Legend. This study concludes that symbolic interaction is essential in shaping Santiago`s individual development in *The Alchemist*.

مستخلص البحث

ويجايا، ساتريا ديفا (2025) التفاعل الرمزي للشخص الرئيسي في *The Alchemist* لباولو كويلو. البحث الجامعي، قسم اللغة الإنجليزي وأدبها، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولان مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: د.شمس الدين، M.Hum.

الكلمات الأساسية: *التفاعل الرمزي، سانتياغو، The Alchemist ، جورج هربرت ميد، تطور الشخصية.*

التفاعل الرمزي ضروري في حياة الإنسان حتى يتمكن الأفراد من فهم أنفسهم والآخرين والبيئة المحيطة باستخدام الرموز واللغة والأفعال. أوضح جورج هربرت ميد (ميد، 2015) أن الهوية الفردية والوعي يمكن تشكيلهما من خلال التفاعل المستمر الذي يتضمن ثلاثة مفاهيم رئيسية، وهي العقل والذات والمجتمع. يتميز *The Alchemist* بالعديد من التفاعلات الرمزية التي تمر بها الشخصيات الرئيسية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أشكال التفاعل الرمزي التي يمر بها سانتياغو وتحليل كيفية تأثير هذه التفاعلات على تطور سانتياغو في جميع أنحاء الرواية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة المدخل الوصفي الكيفي على ضوء النقد الأدبي. تستخدم رواية باولو كويلو *The Alchemist* كمصدر للبيانات، ويتم جمع البيانات عن طريق قراءة البيانات المناسبة وتسجيلها. تم استخدام نظرية جورج هربرت ميد للتفاعل الرمزي لتحديد أشكال التفاعل الرمزي وتأثيرها على تطور شخصية سانتياغو. وجدت هذه الدراسة أن سانتياغو يواجه تفاعلا رمزيا من خلال مفهوم العقل والذات والمجتمع من جورج هربرت ميد. شكلت هذه التفاعلات وعي سانتياغو الذاتي وهويته ونظرته للعالم من خلال مراحل اللعب والألعاب والآخرين المعممين حتى يتمكنوا من مساعدته في التغلب على العقبات للوصول إلى أسطورته الشخصية. تخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن التفاعل الرمزي ضروري للغاية في تشكيل تطور شخصية سانتياغو في *The Alchemist*.

ABSTRAK

Wijaya, Satria Difa (2025) Interaksi Simbolik Karakter Utama yang Digambarkan dalam Novel *The Alchemist* Karya Paulo Coelho. Skripsi, Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Pembimbing Dr. Syamsudin, M.Hum.

Kata kunci: interaksi simbolik, santiago, the alchemist, george herbert mead, perkembangan individu.

Interaksi simbolik sangat penting dalam kehidupan manusia agar individu dapat memahami diri sendiri, orang lain, dan lingkungan sekitarnya dengan menggunakan simbol, bahasa, dan tindakan. George Herbert Mead (Mead, 2015) menjelaskan bahwa identitas dan kesadaran individu dapat terbentuk melalui interaksi yang berkesinambungan yang melibatkan tiga konsep utama yaitu pikiran (mind), diri (self), dan masyarakat (society). *The Alchemist* menampilkan banyak interaksi simbolik yang dialami oleh karakter utama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bentuk-bentuk interaksi simbolik yang dialami oleh Santiago dan menganalisa bagaimana interaksi tersebut mempengaruhi perkembangan Santiago di sepanjang novel. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan kritik sastra dengan pendekatan sosiologi sastra. Novel *The Alchemist* karya Paulo Coelho digunakan sebagai sumber data, dan pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan membaca dan mencatat data yang sesuai. Teori interaksi simbolik George Herbert Mead digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk interaksi simbolik dan pengaruhnya terhadap perkembangan karakter Santiago. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Santiago mengalami interaksi simbolik melalui konsep mind, self, dan society dari George Herbert Mead. Interaksi-interaksi ini membentuk kesadaran diri, identitas, dan pandangan dunia Santiago melalui tahapan play, game dan generalized other sehingga dapat membantunya mengatasi rintangan untuk mencapai Personal Legend-nya. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa interaksi simbolik sangat penting dalam membentuk perkembangan karakter Santiago dalam novel *The Alchemist*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the initial part of the research conducted below. This section consists of several subchapters. It begins with a description of the background of the study, followed by a presentation of the research questions to be answered and an explanation of the significance or importance of the study conducted. At the end of this chapter, the researcher also discuss the scope and limitations of the study, as well as the definition of keywords.

A. Background of the Study

Human life is an interaction between one individual and another that cannot be separated. In social life, dependence between living things has become a basic necessity (Sari et al., 2022). As social beings, communication is crucial in developing self-concept and realizing self-potential. Understanding oneself and the process of self-actualization are essential for creating harmonious interactions and highlighting the unique characteristics of each individual. Individuals engage in interactions, including social priorities, actions, attitudes, and symbols, to help them understand their goals and desires (Firdaus, 2019).

In this modern era, social pressures and isolation, often exacerbated by digital media, encourage individuals to seek meaning in life through symbols such as dreams and signs (You & Liu, 2022). The phenomenon is evident in the rising trend of self-help and mindfulness around the world. Such trends thrive in stressful modern contexts and often involve the use of books, seminars, apps, and programs

designed to help individuals achieve their potential, peace of mind, or happiness. It is shown that symbolism in literature helps individuals understand themselves and achieve life goals through meaning constructed from their social interactions (Carter & Fuller, 2016).

In literary studies, Dick Hartoko (Kartikasari & Suprapto, 2018) explains that understanding the character of a character in a literary work is very important to analyze the meaning and values contained in it. One of the tools or approaches that can be used to analyze character behavior is the symbolic interaction approach, which is inspired by the theory of George Herbert Mead, an influential figure in psychology and sociology (Citraningsih & Noviandari, 2022). Symbolic interaction offers a unique perspective for analyzing literary characters and their development (Blumer, 1969).

George Herbert Mead was an influential figure in developing symbolic interaction theory. As a human subject in social life, this theory focuses on how people think about themselves and the society that supports communication. Symbolic interaction focuses on how individuals formulate their concepts based on their interactions with people (Wijayanti & Utami, 2023).

Symbolic interaction theory is used to analyze a literary work, such as a novel, because of social interactions between the characters or actors. A novel is a small representation of human life in society, where many actions and reactions occur as a form of social interaction. Characters, sometimes called actors, are humans who use symbols and language as a means of communication in a novel.

Individually, characters are at the micro level, but when social interactions occur, they are at the macro level. The integration between the micro and macro levels is the primary focus of symbolic interaction theory (Anwar, 2019).

The object of study in this symbolic interaction study is a literary work in the form of a novel by one of the famous Brazilian writers, Paulo Coelho. The novel is titled *The Alchemist* and was published in 1993. The novel tells the story of a young shepherd named Santiago who dreams of a buried treasure near the Egyptian pyramids and decides to leave his life in Spain to pursue the dream. On the way, he meets characters such as King Melchizedek, a crystal merchant, a desert woman named Fatima who becomes his true love, and a mysterious alchemist. Each encounter teaches him important lessons about following your heart, reading the universe's signs, and trusting his journey.

The novel has sold more than 175 million copies and has been translated into nearly 80 languages around the world (Mirxela Qaumitaquna, 2021) which demonstrates its significant impact on readers. The novel presents various pieces of advice about truth, especially the need to carefully consider dreams and ideals by considering all possible risks.

The researcher chose Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist* as the object of study because he was interested in examining how Santiago, the main character, builds meaning in life to achieve his dreams through spiritual journeys and interactions with the people he meets, using George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction theory approach. The focus of this research is to find what symbolic interactions are found

in the novel and how symbolic interactions affect Santiago's development in *The Alchemist.*

The researcher found several studies that took *The Alchemist* as their object of study. First (Nahdhiyah et al., 2023), which is entitled: *Ecocritical Study on Relationships Between Humans, Nature, and God in the Novel The Alchemist*. The Researcher used the descriptive qualitative method in his research. The results showed that literary works such as *The Alchemist* can bring up new awareness in readers regarding the relationship between humans and nature, and their relationship with God as the creator. The harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and God is depicted in the novel as a positive state of inner peace, tranquility, and balance, as well as a feeling of being in harmony with nature. Nature and natural phenomena are signs God sends to humans as guidance in living life.

The second is (Sebastian, 2022), entitled: *Relevance of Symbols in Paulo Coelho`s The Alchemist.* The purpose of this study is to evaluate the symbols that are present in the text. The results indicate that the symbols in *The Alchemist* function as signs that are, in the text, basically formed by social codes that have been recognized and accurately expressed. The process of symbolization in this work is both mechanical and structural, depending on the ability of the reader to understand the social codes that are being used.

The third is (Gyawali, 2024), which is entitled: *Santiago's Self-Discovery in Paulo Coelho`s The Alchemist.* This study employs the qualitative research methodology to identify the factors that affect Santiago's journey. The ultimate goal

of the emphasis on the main plot point of the story is to explain the elements that make up the transformation. This study suggests that *The Alchemist* depicts self-discovery as a spiritual journey in which a person may only achieve self-awareness and a fulfilling life by accepting life's challenges and overcoming them.

The fourth is (Irmawati et al., 2020), which is entitled: *The Lesson Life of Santiago as Main Character in Coelho`s The Alchemist.* Using a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze data. The results of this study teach readers several things: life is a struggle that must be completed wholeheartedly; everyone, every human being, needs to learn from everything, including animals and humans, and must dare to fight for life and be responsible by accepting all the consequences. Finally, every life problem must be faced patiently with all the challenges of life.

The Fifth is (Pratiwi, 2022), which is entitled: *Santiago's Personality Type and Personality Development in Paulo Coelho`s The Alchemist.* The descriptive qualitative method was applied in his research, and combined with Riso's personality theory based on the Enneagram model. The results of this research found Santiago's personality type as seen in the Enneagram theory, those reformer, helper, status seeker, artist, loyalist, generalist, and peacemaker, with the most dominant type being a reformer.

Also (Hastuti et al., 2023), which is entitled: *An Analysis of Moral Values in The Alchemist Novel.* The researcher used descriptive methods to analyze the data. The results showed that there were 25 data points containing moral values about commitment to something greater than oneself, 6 data points containing self-esteem

with humility, self-discipline, and responsibility, 3 data points containing respect and concern for others, and 7 data points containing concern for other creatures and the environment found in the sentence.

The thesis from (Jitske van Luit, 2020), entitled: *Following Your Personal Legend: Santiago's Spiritual Journey in The Alchemist*. This study aims to examine the phases of Santiago's spiritual development and portray Santiago's journey in *The Alchemist* as a metaphor for spiritual development and personal transformation (Personal Legend). The findings show that Santiago's journey in *The Alchemist* is a metaphor for spiritual seekers, with "Personal Legend" acting as a springboard for her growth and self-awareness. Santiago's journey includes a number of stages, including dream, doubt, temptation, and accomplishment, all of which help one better understand his self and one's relationship to the spiritual world.

Furthermore, there is a thesis written by (Hamdani, 2024), entitled: *Deconstruction Analysis in the Novel The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho.* In this study, the post-structuralism approach and deconstruction theory were used to conduct literary criticism. In this study, researcher found several binary oppositions found in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemis*t: shepherds are poor people, shepherds are uneducated, gypsy women cheat, Santiago depends on others, crystal tool sellers resist change, and Santiago is confident to pursue his dreams. The researcher then deconstructs this supposedly true meaning by proving that the subordinate text in the binary opposition is also the truth and vice versa.

The study on Paulo Coelho`s *"The Alchemist"* has examined the subject from various perspectives. The researcher have used various techniques to investigate the themes in the novel. Such studies include ecocritical analysis, moral values, philosophical values, novel style, use of euphemisms, Santiago's life lessons, Santiago's personality type and development, and deconstruction.

Furthermore, the researcher also found several studies that used symbolic interaction in a literary work. The first previous study (Widyastuti et al., 2022), entitled*: Cultural Identity and Symbolic Interactionism in Karma Brown's Novel "Recipe for a Perfect Wife": Anthropology of Literature Study*. Descriptive qualitative research methods and content analysis were used in this study to analyze the object of research. This research also uses an intrinsic approach to analyze characters, plot, and setting. Using Stuart Hall's cultural identity theory, the findings show that there are five cultural identities in the past and present related to housewives, reflected by the two female characters in the novel. This study also uses the theory of symbolic interactionism by George Herbert Mead to reveal symbols, memory, and the three concepts of symbolic interaction.

Then (Jambak et al., 2023), which is entitled*: Symbolic Interaction of The Main Character in The Novel Laut Bercerita by Leila S. Chudori*. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The findings of this study reveal the existence of two different conceptual frameworks related to the mind, those "Seyegan House" and "Asmara Jati's concerns." The idea of self is explored in the literary works "Kidnapping Biru Laut" and "Asmara Jati's Decision." The idea of society is explored in "Blangguan Corn Planting Action 1993" and "Kamisan Action 2007".

Also (Akbar & Qasim, 2022), which is entitled: *Exploring gender relations in Shamsie's Home Fire: A symbolic interaction perspective*. The purpose of this study is to understand gender roles and explain how gender roles influence character individuality in the text. Through gender analysis, it can be inferred that Shamsie has depicted social behavior based on the personality that occurs in unique situations. In this work, gender roles are explored and contrasted between men and women because the world has changed a lot, and people have different interpretations of the same thing.

All three studies used symbolic interaction theory as a research tool. In addition, the studies examined literary works in the form of a novel. In addition, the Researchers have their characteristics and focus on each aspect of each study. The focus of the research is cultural identity, the main character, self-concept, and the principles of symbolic interaction principles in the novel. Each of these provides different research results from one another.

As explained earlier, several studies have taken *The Alchemist* as their object of study in the past five years. However, no study has specifically used symbolic interaction theory to analyze the novel, which suggests that further exploration is needed, so the researcher decided to conduct a study entitled "The Main Character's Symbolic Interaction Described in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist*". This type of research falls into the category of research that studies literature in the form of novels. The interesting one about this research is the use of novels in symbolic interaction research, which is still rare. This research also focuses on the form of

symbolic interaction and its influence on characters in a novel, which is still very little. This shows that this research is interesting and different from previous studies.

This research has elements in common with other relevant studies, especially using George Herbert Mead`s Symbolic Interaction theory. The purpose of this study is to understand the form of symbolic interaction and its influence on the main character in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist*. The distinction one is quite visible from this research is the formulation of the problem and the data to be studied. Thus, the results of this study will be different from previous studies and will provide new discoveries in symbolic interaction.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background described above, the research problem formulation is as follows:

1. What are forms of George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction found in the character of Santiago in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist*?
2. How does symbolic interaction influence Santiago's individual development in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist*?

C. Significance of the Study

This research was conducted with two objectives. First, by using George Herbert Mead`s concept of symbolic interaction, this research is expected to provide new insights into George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction and how it affects the development of the main character in literary works.

Second, the findings of this study are expected to be a guide to understanding more deeply the process of identity formation through symbolic interactions in literary works, especially novels. In addition, the results of this study can be used as teaching materials or teaching aids in the fields of literary analysis, social theory, and literary studies.

D. Scope and Limitation

In this study, the researcher only uses the understanding and application of the concept of symbolic Interaction from George Herbert Mead`s (Mead, 2015) perspective to analyze the main character. With a clear problem, this research will be more focused and in-depth in analyzing the influence of symbolic Interaction on Santiago's character in *The Alchemist* from George Herbert Mead`s perspective.

E. Definitions and Key Terms

Some key terms are used in this study. To facilitate understanding of the research questions, the researcher will provide a brief explanation of the keywords mentioned:

1. Symbolic Interaction: Based on several conceptual theorists who influenced the development of these concepts, Mead explained that in symbolic Interaction theory, the central idea is symbols because symbols are noble concepts that distinguish humans from animals. This symbol arises as a result of the need for each person to interact with others. In addition, some actions or deeds begin or start with thoughts in this interaction process (Raho, 2012).

2. Individual development: According to George Herbert Mead, is the process by which a person matures into a self-assured social being who can reflect, understand, and contribute to society. Individual growth does not occur in biological isolation, but rather occurs in social interactions. (Mead, 2015). Through symbolic communication, especially with language, each individual learns to understand himself as others do.

3. Personal Legend: is the main concept in Paulo Coelho's The Alchemist. This terminology illustrates the goals of each person's life and based on the character traits or life goals that have been ingrained in each person since birth. Personal Legend is more than just a wish, it is a spiritual journey, if followed him with seriously, it would teach individual to be honest and to live a good life.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This research focuses on the main character in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist* using George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction theory to find out forms of symbolic interaction and how they affect the main character's development. This chapter consists of symbols, George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction, and the way symbolic interaction influences individuals. The theoretical foundation is structured to make it easier for readers and other researchers to understand this research's basic principles.

A. Sociological Approach

The researcher uses a sociological approach to analyze the literary in this research. According to Wellek and Warren (1949), sociological approach is the study of the world as a reflection or representation of social life, wherein the truths and values expressed in texts may be used to understand the social realities, values, and dynamics of the populace.

According to Laurenson and Swingewood (1972), The aims of sociological approach is to understand literary not only as an aesthetic practice but also as a social product that contains the values of individuality and realism. The main focus of this study is the relationship between literary and social structures that underpins them, or how characters, symbols, and social conflicts in a story reflect human social realities.

Because it is most closely related to the focus of this research, the researcher has chosen this approach. The main goal of this research is to analyze the type of symbolic interaction and the process of Santiago individual development in *The Alchemist* through the use of George Herbert Mead's symbolic interaction theory (Mead, 2015). The aforementioned theory of George Herbert Mead is based on sociological theory and explains how an individual's identity is formed through symbols, communication, and social interactions. Even though The Alchemist is a work of fiction, the social process and symbolic creation that Santiago experiences may be studied as a reflection of the historical social experiences of humans. This approach also draws from (Damono, 1979) views, which asserts that literary is a component of the social system and may be used to understand the norms and interactions within society.

B. Symbol

Symbols are communication tools that allow individuals to refer to objects, events, or ideas that are not directly present. Symbols are not only a means of communication, but also a tool for creating and sharing meaning and allowing individuals to understand and interpret actions, both their own and those of others.

Symbols that are conveyed are not only decorated for beauty alone but carry a deep meaning as part of the ceremony (Azzahro & Indriyanto, 2019). According to Spradley in (Azzahro & Indriyanto, 2019), a symbol is any entity or event that refers to something else. Symbols become a representation of something that has additional meaning. Symbols can be hidden and not visible. Therefore, to interpret symbols or understand their meaning, accuracy, and sensitivity to the surrounding

context are needed. According to Mead, symbols emerge as a means to communicate in society, mediating relationships between individuals and helping them respond to their environment (Blumer, 1969).

Communication through symbols is a sign that has a special meaning that is understood by other individuals who have similar thoughts to these symbols, and this will trigger the thinking process. In the process of communicating, not only physical cues but also words, which are sound symbols that have a shared meaning and are standardized (Wicaksono et al., 2014). Joel M Charron in (Susilastri, 2019) argues the importance of understanding symbols. According to him, symbols are social objects used in communication that are determined by the individuals who use them in interactions. The individual gives meaning, creates, and changes the object in the interaction.

C. Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interaction communication theory provides direction for individuals to respond appropriately to the meanings embedded in symbols used in conversations, objects, and situations. Language is used by individuals not only to interact with others but also to understand themselves and their internal thought processes. Language allows people to develop a sense of self and to interact with others in a community (Ramadhanti, 2020). Communication is the activity of exchanging messages between the sender of the message (sender) to the receiver of the message (Yasa et al., 2021).

Symbolic interaction is influential in a variety of social contexts, including the formation of individual identity, the learning process, and the construction of

social reality. This theory has a significant impact on the understanding of how humans interact with each other and how social meanings are formed and maintained in society. The important thing in Mead`s symbolic interaction theory is another function of significant symbols, namely, enabling mental processes and thinking (Kurniarti, 2020). Mead describes thinking only by using symbols that have special meanings, especially through human language, as a process of implicit individual conversation with himself using signs. According to Mead, each individual forms an understanding of himself through his involvement with other people in the social environment, which is realized through the communication process (Firdaus, 2019).

The essence of symbolic interactionism is the attention to the essence of interaction, which is a dynamic human social activity. (Nugroho, 2021) argues that this perspective assumes that individuals are essentially active, reflective, and creative, interpreting and displaying complex and unpredictable behavior.

Some figures are also influential in symbolic interaction, such as John Dewey, a renowned thinker who realized that between ethics and science, theory and practice, thought and action are always interrelated and cannot be separated from one another. Ritzer in (Kurniarti, 2020), argues about Dewey's thoughts about the mind. Human thinking not only functions as a tool but is also an integral part of human attitudes. This principle stems from the understanding that human thought is not just an imitation but is a product of the human self itself.

There was also Charles Horton Cooley, an American sociologist who lived in the early 20th century. Cooley was an important figure in the development of symbolic interaction. He sought to gain a deeper understanding of the individual. Cooley stated that individual identity is socially influenced because it is constructed through interaction with shared language and culture, as well as individuals' subjective interpretations of people they consider important, referred to as significant others or people who have close relationships (Ahmadi, 2008).

D. Forms of George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interaction

George Herbert Mead initiated the development of symbolic interaction theory, which began in the 1920s when he served as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago (Hidayani, 2022). In the early stages of its development, symbolic interaction emphasized the study of human behavior in the context of interpersonal relationships rather than the scope of groups or society as a whole. A fundamental characteristic of symbolic interaction is its emphasis on human behavior and interaction as revealed through the use of symbols and the assignment of meaning. Mead is interested in the dynamics of interaction, where every nonverbal cue (such as body language, physical movements, clothes, status, etc.) and verbal message (such as words, sounds, etc.) that is interpreted based on mutual agreement by all parties involved in an interaction is a form of symbol that has a very important meaning (a significant symbol) (Siregar, 2011).

According to Mead, symbolic interaction is social interaction that occurs because of the use of symbols that have meaning. It was here that Mead as an individual with an original thought, made an important contribution to social

science by introducing a theoretical perspective that later became the basis for the development of symbolic interaction theory. During his career, Mead was known as a social psychologist who played a role in the sociological context (Siregar, 2011).

According to Mead (2015), there are three core ideas of symbolic interaction as follows:

1. **Mind**

Mead in (Mead, 2015) defines the mind as the ability to use symbols with the ideas and meanings to themselves and others. Symbols allow individuals to isolate and understand the relationship between stimulus and response, and Mead believes that humans must develop their minds through interactions with others. In this case, language becomes very important because the interaction between one person and another begins with language. Mead calls language, in this case, a significant symbol or symbol that gives rise to the same meaning for many people. By using language and interacting with others, we develop what Mead calls a mind, enabling a person to create an interior setting for a society that operates outside oneself.

2. **Self**

Mead defines an entity that develops through social experiences and interactions with other people (Mead, 2015). In this case, the self develops from a special type of role-taking, which means imagining how we are seen by others. Mead refers to this as the looking-glass self. This 'looking-glass self' is the ability

to see oneself in the reflections of others. There are three concepts of development associated with the self-mirror, which is also the unit of analysis of this study. (1) We imagine how we look in the eyes of others, (2) we imagine their judgment about our appearance, (3) we feel hurt or proud based on personal feelings. The essence of this concept is that one learns about oneself from the way others treat, perceive, and label oneself.

Meanwhile, Mead`s thoughts on the mirror self imply the power that labels have over self-concept and behavior. In addition, he also explained that the giving of a label, or what is referred to as the Pygmalion effect, is a powerful psychological weapon to bring change, either positive or negative, within the individual (Panda, 2022). For example, the difference between an upper-class woman and a poor flower seller is not her behavior but how others treat her.

Mead`s theory of the self says that through language, people can become subjects and objects to themselves (Mead, 2015). As subjects, we act, and as objects, we observe ourselves acting. Mead calls the subject, or acting self, as I, and the object or observing self as Me. I is spontaneous, intrusive, and creative. At the same time, Me is reflective and socially sensitive. The I may be eager to go out and party every night, while the Me may be more cautious and realize there is homework to be done rather than partying.

3. Society

Society is defined by Mead as a place where individuals develop and form their identities (Mead, 2015). Individuals engage in society through behaviors that

they actively and voluntarily choose. Thus, society describes the interconnectedness of multiple sets of behaviors that individuals continually adjust. Society exists before individuals but is also created and shaped by individuals, by performing actions in line with other people.

In the previous discussion, the mind and individual identity emerged as key elements in the formation of human personality. For a society that values these roles of mind and identity, they must be viewed as an integral part of ongoing social dynamics. Mead`s main difference from other psychologists who adopt a psychological approach is his attempt to show how the human self arises in the process of social interaction, especially through language and role-taking (Cronk, 2024). For him, an understanding of this process lies in the context of social interaction, which is the central point for both psychologists and sociologists. Psychologists tend to see the mind as an entity in the brain that they then try to explain, while sociologists focus on the relationships between individuals, groups, and institutions, and how these relationships shape the way people think, feel, and act within a given society to understand the evolution of thought and self-concept (Member, 2023). So, this is an important point and will become clearer when analyzing his arguments about the formation of the mind, what constitutes the self, and what constitutes society.

The important thing in Mead`s Symbolic Interaction theory is another function of significant symbols, which is to enable mental processes and thinking. Only through significant symbols, especially through human language. Mead defines thinking as an individual's explicit conversation with himself using signs.

Mead says that thinking is the same as talking to others. In other words, thinking involves the act of talking to oneself (Kurniarti, 2020).

E. The Way Symbolic Interaction Influences Individual Development

According to (Mead, 2015), there are three basic concepts about individual development that develop identity through the process of social interaction as follows:

1. Play Stage

The play stage is the initial phase when a person learns to develop into a social individual by taking on the role of others spontaneously and imaginatively, but still thoughtlessly and unstructured one by one. At this stage, he/she does not yet understand complex social systems, but begins to understand how to be "other" in social interactions.

2. Game Stage

The next stage in self-development is the "Game Stage." This stage is an advanced stage that is more complex than the play stage. In the "Game Stage," individuals acquire the ability to bring together various social roles at once and in a well-coordinated manner. In the "Game Stage," a person not only knows how to perform his role, but also knows that his role is inseparable from how the various roles are systematically interrelated and interdependent (Mead 2015). In the structure of the self, this stage marks maturity, where a person begins to form a complete social identity, integrates social values into himself, and acts based on the realization that he is part of a larger social system.

3. Generalized Other

The final stage in the formation of the self is the "Game" stage. This stage is the stage where individuals begin to be able to understand social roles in a comprehensive and structured manner. In this stage, a person is not only able to take on other people's roles one by one as in the Play stage, but also understands how various roles interact in a particular social system (Mead, 2015). Individuals begin to realize that their actions must be adjusted to the expectations and rules of the entire social group.

Symbolic interaction focuses more on studying the patterns that occur in social interactions in certain situations. In the symbolic interactionism paradigm, society is considered the result of daily symbolic interactions between individuals. Symbolic interaction, which is characteristic of humans, is the activity of communication or the exchange of symbols that have meaning for them, Alex Sobur in (Wanulu, 2016).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, the researcher discusses methodology, which includes four main aspects of research: research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This research is a type of literary criticism research with sociological approach because it uses literature in the form of a novel entitled *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho as a primary source. Literary criticism is one of the branches of literary science that applies to judge a literary work. In addition, literary criticism also plays a role in studying and interpreting literary works more broadly (Bardi et al., 2025). This research also uses George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interaction theory to analyze the object of study. In the analysis, researcher collect data regarding symbolic interaction and its influence on Santiago`s individual development. Data collection is done in triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of this study emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2011).

B. Data Source

This research uses one primary data source. Primary data sources are data sources that provide data directly to the researcher (Sugiyono, 2011). The data source in this study is *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. This novel was published in 1993 and consists of 2 chapters with a total of 178 pages (25th Anniversary Edition).

C. Data Collection

The researcher took the following two actions while collecting data: The researcher first carefully read the novel and comprehended the novel to understand the overall narrative, followed by a focused re-reading that specifically identified symbols related to the main character and concepts from George Herbert Mead's symbolic interaction theory. Second, the researcher then record relevant sentences, dialogues, and paragraphs from the novel that corresponded to Mead's symbolic interaction concepts, after which the collected data was classified and analyzed to examine how symbolic interaction influenced individual development throughout the story.

D. Data Analysis

After the researcher collects data from Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist*, which has been determined and classified according to the concept of George Herbert Mead`s Symbolic Interaction theory, then the researcher analyzes the data based on George Herbert Mead`s Symbolic Interaction theory with the following steps: First, the researcher selects and categorizes data or components of interactions according to George Herbert Mead`s concept of symbolic interaction. Second, the researcher interpreted the data of symbolic interaction and its implications with three basic concepts in Symbolic Interaction, which include dimensions (mind, self, society) towards individual development. Then, the researcher reviews the data results and concludes the data findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist* based on George Herbert Mead`s symbolic interactionism theory. The focus of the discussion is directed at two problem formulations: (1) the forms of symbolic interaction found in the novel, and (2) the influence of symbolic interaction on the individual development of Santiago as the main character.

A. Forms of Symbolic Interaction in *The Alchemist*

One of the influential figures in the development of symbolic interaction is George Herbert Mead. In his famous book (Mead, 2015), it is stated that symbolic interaction consists of three interconnected concepts in the formation of an individual's meaning and identity. The three important concepts are mind, self and society.

1. Mind

Each person has a different ability to use symbols that have similar social meanings (Mead, 2015). Social factors are also something that can hinder communication between individuals. When people create a shared understanding of the meaning of certain symbols, they build agreement and understanding. This is in line with the concept of mind where it will appear when someone interacts using symbols that have meaning in communication.

According to George Herbert Mead (Mead, 2015), the ability of human thinking to interact with their environment is a very important aspect of understanding the concept of the mind. This can be seen explicitly in datum 1:

"He had always believed that the sheep were able to understand what he said."
(Coelho, 1993, p. 14)

In the quoted sentence, it can be seen that Santiago uses language to communicate with his sheep; he believes that his sheep can understand his words. However, in reality, his sheep may not fully understand these words. This belief shows that Santiago has developed a concept of mind that allows him to recognize meaningful symbols between himself and other beings. It also reflects the process of self-reflection, where he realizes that he is not just communicating but also considering what he can learn from the communication. This is in line with Mead`s theory (Mead, 2015), because the mind is not limited to one mode of communication, but instead, it is understood in collaborative social relationships, even if the other person is not human, as described in datum 2:

"Sometimes he would comment to them on the things he had seen in the villages they passed."(Coelho, 1993, p. 15)

The sentence illustrates the unique relationship between Santiago and his sheep. He not only speaks to his sheep but also forms a deep and meaningful communication with them about the outside world. This action shows that Santiago uses symbols, like language, to share his personal experiences with his sheep, even

though they may not actually understand his comments. This indicates the developmental mind of self-reflection, where Santiago processes experiences through language, emphasizing the meaning of what he sees and feels by telling others about it. Not only that, the developmental mind is also able to capture the meaning of symbols that are not explicit, as described in datum3:

> *"He had learned some important things, like how to deal in crystal, and about the language without words . . . and about omens."(Coelho, 1993, p. 47)*

The sentence shows the learning process in Santiago, where he is able to understand a deeper form of communication, which is something abstract. Santiago begins to understand that meaning can be conveyed through gestures, events, or signs in the surrounding nature, without having to use words. Santiago's ability to understand the meaning of symbols that are not always expressed verbally is the essence of mind development. According to Mead (Mead, 2015), the mind develops through the ability to use and understand symbols in social interactions. This shows advanced self-reflection, where he understands the meaning of the surrounding world as part of the communication process. In the concept of Mind, communication can occur beyond words, signaling reflection on symbolic meanings in social and natural experiences as seen in datum 4:

> *"There must be a language that doesn't depend on words. I've already had that experience with my sheep, and now it's happening with people"(Coelho, 1993, p. 39)*

Santiago's statement shows a deep understanding that communication and meaning do not always depend on verbal language. He recognizes that there is a process of meaning exchange that occurs without the use of words. This realization shows that Santiago has developed the concept of mind, which is the ability to understand social relations and meaning through nonverbal symbols such as natural signs. It involves a process of self-reflection and an understanding of wider social responses. Santiago's understanding of nonverbal symbols is not something that just happens, but also involves the process of thinking and interpreting symbols and building personal understanding, as in datum 5:

> *"The boy was trying to understand the truth of what the old man had said. There he was in the empty marketplace, without a cent to his name, and with not a sheep to guard through the night. But the stones were proof that he had met with a king—a king who knew of the boy's past.,"(Coelho, 1993, p.38)*

The sentence shows the process of deep self-reflection in Santiago, namely trying to understand the meaning and truth of the message he got from the old king. Santiago's attempt to understand the truth of the old man's message shows that he has made a conscious interpretation of meaning. This indicates that he uses the ability of the mind to think and understand that the message he gets has a deeper meaning that must be interpreted based on his life experience. Santiago's reflection is an important foundation for him to be able to build an understanding of himself and his life purpose, in accordance with the main principle of mind development that can be used to relate experiences with broader meanings, as in datum 6:

> *"And dreams are the language of God. When he speaks in our language, I can interpret what he has said. But if he speaks in the language of the soul, it is only you who can understand."(Coelho, 1993, p. 20)*

Here, there is an understanding of the relationship between Santiago and the spiritual world. She understands that communication is not only limited to human language, but also to larger symbols, such as dreams. By understanding dreams as the "language of God," Santiago demonstrates the concept of mind, which is interpreting inner experiences and giving meaning to something unseen. In this case, dreams function as symbols that connect humans to something greater than themselves, namely the will of the universe or spirituality. This is in line with the advanced form of symbolic ability, which is the use of symbols in action as seen in datum 7:

"He had discovered that the presence of a certain bird meant that a snake was nearby, and that a certain shrub was a sign that there was water in the area."(Coelho, 1993, p. 34)

This sentence shows the development of Santiago's ability to observe natural phenomena and attribute them to certain signs. He understands that if there are birds and shrubs, then there are indications of the presence of snakes or water in that place. This action shows that he has developed the concept of mind, which is realizing the relationship between the stimulus (the presence of birds) and the response (watch out for snakes). This is a mental process that shows reflection and understanding that develops through interaction with the environment and shows that learning comes from making meaning of experience, not from direct teaching. Something similar is also evident in datum 8:

"I am learning the Language of the World, and everything in the world is beginning to make sense to me . . . even the flight of the hawks," he said to himself."(Coelho, 1993, p. 74)

The sentence is also similar to the previous sentence in which Santiago is forming a deep internal understanding of the world around him, through non-verbal symbols such as the movements of an eagle. When saying the sentence, Santiago shows reflection on the meaning he finds through his own experience. And when Santiago speaks to himself, it shows the function of the concept of mind, which is able to be the subject and object that he is learning and understanding. This is a real form of symbolic interaction that produces self-awareness and understanding of the world more broadly through reflective processes such as datum 9:

"There are probably other things in the world that the sheep can't teach me, thought the boy as he regarded the old merchant. All they ever do, really, is look for food and water. And maybe it wasn't that they were teaching me, but that I was learning from them."(Coelho, 1993, p. 48)

This sentence shows the reflective process that is at the core of the concept of mind according to George Herbert Mead (Mead, 2015). When Santiago says this he realizes that learning does not always occur explicitly through teaching, but can be through reflective interaction based on his personal experience. This shows that he is not just an object in the learning process, but also a subject who interprets and reflects on his own actions and responses through interaction with the surrounding world. This ability is included in the concept of mind because individuals are able to see and understand themselves and the real world on a broader and more complex scale, such as datum 10:

"He realized: If I can learn to understand this language without words, I can learn to understand the world."(Coelho, 1993, p. 40)

The quote shows the ability to understand non-verbal language and the world. When Santiago states that he wants to understand non-verbal language, he is referring to a deeper understanding of universals, such as natural language, intuition, or non-verbal signs. Santiago realizes that by understanding these symbols, he can understand the broader meaning of the world. This is a form of self-reflection and development of the concept of mind, where individuals seek to understand the context more deeply through symbols and meanings formed from non-verbal language. This realization confirms that the mature concept of mind comes as a result of interaction and interpretation of social and natural reality, as in datum 11:

"It was the pure Language of the World. It required no explanation, just as the universe needs none as it travels through endless time"(Coelho, 1993, p. 70)

This last quoted sentence shows Santiago's ability to give meaning without having to go through explicit verbal symbols, in other words, intuitively. Here, Santiago shows the form of the next stage of the concept of mind, namely, intuitive awareness. An ability that can understand something's meaning without the need for rationality, but by being deeply felt and understood. This shows that the development of the concept of mind is not limited to human language, but also includes awareness of universal symbols that influence an individual's understanding and interaction.

2. Self

Santiago's spiritual journey in *The Alchemist* illustrates the process of identity transformation and self-formation that continues to evolve. This process does not just happen, but through social interaction, personal experience, and deep inner reflection. Santiago's personal journey begins with a man who loses his old identity, as depicted in datum 1:

> *"He was no longer a shepherd, and he had nothing, not even the money to return and start everything over." (Coelho, 1993, p. 37)*

Santiago's spiritual journey at this stage begins when there is a fundamental change in his self-concept, where he used to have a clear role and identity as a shepherd; now he feels he has lost everything related to himself in his social role. When Santiago says that he is no longer a shepherd, it shows an identity crisis he experienced, which illustrates that there is an emerging self-concept where a person experiences a loss of social roles and also the meaning of identity attached to him. Even when he is in a position to start over, but he has no money, it shows the emptiness felt by Santiago towards the world and himself. However, this emptiness is actually an opening for Santiago to form a new self because of the freedom to find his true identity again. It gives rise to interaction with outsiders who do not validate his old identity, forces Santiago to start building a new, more meaningful identity, depicted in datum 2:

> *"He had come to the town only to find a woman who could interpret his dream. Neither the woman nor the old man was at all impressed by the fact that he was a shepherd." (Coelho, 1993, p. 29)*

This is the point where Santiago is faced with the process of testing his identity in a place that is different from his native environment. His decision to come to the city in order to understand and find meaning, purpose, and direction in life is now broken by the characters he meets, and he does not get recognition from them because they see Santiag as just a shepherd. This illustrates the concept of the looking glass self, which explains how he wants to be seen and how others see him. This is an important lesson that dentitas is not something permanent but can be sought and shaped so that when Santiago is in the process, a simple but meaningful inner dialog emerges, such as datum 3:

> *"He told himself that he would have to start reading thicker books: they lasted longer, and made more comfortable pillows," (Coelho, 1993, p. 14)*

The process of forming Santiago's identity is seen in the internal conversation with himself, which shows a reflective consciousness. Through these conversations, he can make himself a subject and object at the same time. This is in line with what is explained in the concept of self, according to Mead (Mead, 2015), that in this concept, there is an interaction between I and Me. In this condition, the "I" aspect appears as Santiago's spontaneous desire to find comfort in his new life as a traveler, and the "Me" aspect appears in the form of considerations that he gets based on his experience. This simple reflection illustrates that the concept of self is not always formed in the context of interactions with others, but also through inner

conversations and deep reflections that make Santiago also have an awareness of his limitations, as seen in his statement in datum 4:

> *"Now he understood why the owner of the bar had been so upset: he was trying to tell him not to trust that man. "I'm like everyone else—I see the world in terms of what I would like to see happen, not what actually does." (Coelho, 1993, p. 37)*

The sentence is an important stage in Santiago's self-development because it shows his introspection. The concept of self appears clearly through the use of the word "I" which indicates how he interprets the world based on his personal desires and expectations. This shows self-reflection, which is how the character is able to recognize and acknowledge the limitations in his own perception. By revealing this to Santiago, it shows that his identity is formed from social reality (Me) and subjective desires (I), showing that the self is not only formed through social interaction, but also through introspective awareness of the difference between personal desires and existing reality. Something similar can be seen in datum 5:

> *"So the boy was disappointed; he decided that he would never again believe in dreams." (Coelho, 1993, p. 22)*

A significant psychological turning point occurred for Santiago. Santiago experiences a crisis of confidence in the beliefs he once believed in. The decision he wants to take to no longer believe in dreams reflects a process of deep self-reflection, caused by his self-awareness in evaluating the disappointment he experienced. This is in line with the concept of self, in which there is an "I" aspect

in Santiago, which acts spontaneously based on the disappointment he experienced, while the "Me" aspect may judge that believing in dreams is futile or irrational. This shows that self-identity is the result of a combination of personal experience, evaluation, and response to their respective environments. The rejection of expectations, after experiencing disappointment, reflects the emotional response of the "I" aspect, also illustrated in datum statement 6:

> *"But now I'm sad and alone. I'm going to become bitter and distrustful of people because one person betrayed me. I'm going to hate those who have found their treasure because I never found mine." (Coelho, 1993, p. 37)*

The excerpt shows Santiago's self-awareness of the emotional response after her experience of betrayal. In the concept of self, this statement reflects the dynamic between the "I" which is the knee-jerk reaction to pain and the desire to shut down as a form of protection and the "Me" which assesses that experience in a social context and concludes that one betrayal is enough to affect the judgment of all people. This sentence illustrates that the self is not only formed by positive experiences, but also by trauma and hurt. In the initial phase of the search, Santiago shows his initial motivation, which is simple but can shape the direction of his interactions with the outside world, as seen in datum 7:

> *"He had worked hard for a year, and the omens were that it was time to go. I'm going to go back to doing just what I did before, the boy thought" (Coelho, 1993, p. 50)*

The use of "I" shows a high level of self-awareness of his past experiences. Through this sentence, Santiago shows the process of forming a self-concept based

on experiences that have been lived, in the past (a shepherd), before starting the search for treasure. This statement illustrates the interaction between the "I" aspect in the form of spontaneous intention towards difficulties and the intention to return to his old life, and "Me" in the form of his reflection on social expectations or returning to the values he has internalized. By thinking of returning to his previous state, even his decision to return to his old life unconsciously slows down his inner journey, which indicates that the process of self-formation is still ongoing, as illustrated in sentence 8:

> *"He decided to return to his friend's stable by the longest route possible,"(Coelho, 1993, p. 29)*

The decision made by Santiago shows self-awareness and personal control over the choices he makes. The act of choosing the longest path is not an ordinary decision, but can also be seen as a symbol of the process of self-reflection before returning to the routine or place that he has recognized. In this case, the "I" in Santiago is described as the side of the self that can make decisions based on his feelings, and the "Me" aspect appears from the realization that time and new experiences can provide a deeper understanding of himself and what he has been through so far. In addition to this, there is something else that plays an important role in Santiago's identity dynamics, namely social pressure, as illustrated in datum 9:

> *"When someone sees the same people every day, as had happened with him at the seminary, they wind up becoming a part of that person's life. And then they want the person to change. If someone isn't what others want them to be, the others become angry."(Coelho, 1993, p. 22)*

This statement illustrates the existence of a conflict in the process of self-development between following oneself and social expectations, because sometimes the process of character formation is not in accordance with social expectations formed by the environment. When Santiago does not adjust himself to what is expected by society, there will be negative reactions, such as anger, from the surrounding environment. This underlines how difficult it is to hold one's own principles when the outside world tries to interfere in one's self-development process. This sentence shows that social influence is so influential in shaping one's identity that it sometimes makes someone feel afraid of failure and external judgment, as in datum10:

> *"People are afraid to pursue their most important dreams, because they feel that they don't deserve them, or that they'll be unable to achieve them,"(Coelho, 1993, p. 94)*

This sentence shows that fear and doubt often appear as obstacles to big dreams because they are afraid of their choices and do not believe in themselves. This is closely related to the self in the aspect of "Me," which is in the form of social expectations or judgments that have been believed by a person and the fear of failure shows that self-identity is not only influenced by personal desires ("I") that are free and but also by concerns about how failure will be perceived by oneself and others ("Me"). Over time, however, Santiago begins to reach a stage where he can harmonize his emotions and reason, as seen in datum 11:

> *"The boy and his heart had become friends, and neither was capable now of betraying the other. When his heart spoke to him, it was to provide a stimulus to the boy, and to give him strength, because the days of silence there in the desert were wearisome."(Coelho, 1993, p. 97)*

This sentence shows a significant achievement in Santiago's individual development, namely a harmony that occurs between "I" and "Me". The "I" aspect is seen as Santiago's inner will (in this case represented by "heart"), and the "Me" aspect is a judgment that regulates life experiences based on social norms. Furthermore, the word "become friends" shows that Santiago has achieved harmony within himself. This relationship that does not betray each other marks the maturity of the self-concept in Santiago. He has reached a high level of self-awareness, where the heart and mind are in harmony in achieving the meaning and purpose of life, and Santiago's self-awareness continues to grow, as shown in datum statement 12:

> *"His heart told the boy what his strongest qualities were: his courage in having given up his sheep and in trying to live out his Personal Legend, and his enthusiasm during the time he had worked at the crystal shop,"(Coelho, 1993, p. 97)*

Here, the heart functions as a symbol of Santiago's inner voice or moral consciousness. When the Heart has "spoken" to itself, it shows that Santiago has reached a point where he is able to honestly introspect on the quality of himself, as evidenced by his courage to leave the old comfort for the sake of life goals (Personal Legend) and his success in working in a crystal shop. This is a moment of strengthening self-identity, where Santiago builds confidence and clarity about who

he really is. This realization reaches its peak when he realizes that the meaning of life can be found in the journey itself in datum sentence 13:

> *"He was proud of himself. He had learned some important things, like how to deal in crystal, and about the language without words . . . and about omens."(Coelho, 1993, p. 47)*

The sense of pride Santiago feels signifies the realization that he has successfully formed norms and experiences that make him grow into a better person. It shows the active engagement between the "I" seen in Santiago's actions and initiatives during his travel and learning process, and the "Me" seen in his self-evaluation. Santiago's individual development shows that the formation of the self does not only come from knowledge of the real world, but also from an awareness of universal language and the meaning of life.

3. Society

Society is not just a collection of individuals but also a complex and dynamic network. The concept of "society," according to George Herbert Mead (Mead, 2015), emphasizes that society is formed through symbolic interactions between individuals, and uses meaningful symbols (language) where meaning and social identity are formed collectively as reflected in datum 1:

> *"There is a universal language, understood by everybody, but already forgotten. I am in search of that universal language, among other things. That's why I'm here. I have to find a man who knows that universal language. An alchemist."(Coelho, 1993, p. 55)*

The Universal Language referred to in the sentence describes a symbol and a form of communication that was shared by all humanity. However, the language has been "forgotten", suggesting that shared social meaning can be lost when the underlying social interaction weakens. When everyone understands the universal language, they have a common symbolic basis or tool to communicate and form togetherness, which is the essence of society. According to Mead (Mead, 2015) if this interaction stops, then the shared meaning will slowly disappear if it is not continuously exchanged in social life. Indirectly, this sentence illustrates that society is a dynamic space that shapes and animates meaning. The process of forming meaning in this society can be seen from simple social interactions, as in the statement in datum 2:

> *"When they had eaten, the merchant turned to the boy and said, "I'd like you to work in my shop. Two customers came in today while you were working, and that's a good omen."(Coelho, 1993, p. 41)*

In this statement, there is an initial process of social relations between the shop owner and Santiago. The sentence uttered by the shopkeeper is not just an exchange of words, but also begins a complex social dynamic. The request to work in the shop is not only unconscious but has undergone a process of observation and is also a symbol of social acceptance and the formation of a new role in a small community structure (shop). This sentence shows how Santiago not only becomes part of economic activity but also begins to shape his social identity through involvement in a socially recognized role, namely as a worker. This is also reflected in datum 3:

"A long note was sounded on a bugle, and everyone mounted up. The boy and the Englishman had bought camels, and climbed uncertainly onto their backs."(Coelho, 1993, p. 57)

The act of Santiago and the Englishman purchasing camels and riding them together is not only a physical activity, but also a social act that reflects involvement in a wider social system that they are not familiar with (the caravan community preparing to cross the desert). Mead`s concept of society (Mead, 2015), emphasizes that individuals shape and understand themselves through the roles they play in shared interactions. The discomfort of riding a camel and staying on it, as well as their participation in the caravan travel system, shows how individuals learn and adapt to social norms through social interaction. Social interaction also occurs in the form of observation of cultural symbols, as illustrated in datum 4:

"In just a few hours he had seen men walking hand in hand, women with their faces covered, and priests that climbed to the tops of towers and chanted—as everyone about him went to their knees and placed their foreheads on the ground"(Coelho, 1993, p. 33)

In this scene, Santiago experiences a cultural encounter, and he observes cultural symbols in the new society where he is. The behavior of men holding hands, covering their faces, and prostrating themselves when they hear the chanting from the minaret is a social symbols that express friendship and social closeness in the community, even though they seem foreign to Santiago. He seems unfamiliar and does not fully understand the meaning of these symbols, but he is experiencing the initial process of entering and recognizing a new social structure. This reflects how society functions as a symbolic container that shapes behavior and meaning, and

how individuals learn about the social world through observation and interaction with symbols used by others. These symbols can be diverse, but still form a social unit, as in datum 5:

> *"There was a murmur from the crowd. Each was swearing quietly to his or her own God. The boy swore to Jesus Christ. The Englishman said nothing."(Coelho, 1993, p. 57)*

The sentence describes a beautiful moment in a simultaneous social action where everyone who has different religious beliefs still swears to their respective God. The moment is a form of symbolic communication that is accepted in the social structure where they are, namely the caravan community that will face the journey together. This shows that the community is able to unite individuals in the same symbolic action, even though their personal identities and beliefs are different. Community values and norms are also embedded through religious symbols, as seen in datum 6:

> *"The merchant was silent for a few moments. Then he said, "The Prophet gave us the Koran, and left us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives. The most important is to believe only in the one true God."(Coelho, 1993, p.45)*

In this case, the owner of the crystal shop shared that our holy five daily prayers serve as social symbols that are agreed upon and shared by members of the Muslim community around the world. These symbols not only guide behavior for Muslims, but also strengthen social relations because they create a standard of value that is shared and practiced together. When someone mentions that the five daily prayers are something the Prophet left behind, it shows the internalization of social

values that have been passed down through generations and will also always be practiced. Individuals understand and internalize these norms through social interaction, not just from textual instruction (the Qur'an). Not only does it appear in religion, but social meaning also appears in economic actions, as in datum 7:

> *"I'm surprised," the boy said. "My friend bought all the other sheep immediately. He said that he had always dreamed of being a shepherd, and that it was a good omen."(Coelho, 1993, p. 30)*

The action taken by Santiago's friend in the quote is not just an economic transaction, but a social action involving trust, interpersonal relationships, and deeper symbolic meanings. Mead (Mead, 2015), explains that in society, actions are only meaningful if they are acceptable to others. Here, "friends" as part of Santiago's social environment take action based on their social relationships. The actions taken by Santiago's friend also help change Santiago's social status from that of a shepherd to that of someone who is ready to pursue his "Personal Legend". This shows that society is not only a place where interaction occurs, but also a tool for social transformation through meaningful actions between individuals, even in the character's awareness of differences in social status, as in datum 8:

> *"I'm the king of Salem," the old man had said.*
>
> *"Why would a king be talking with a shepherd?" the boy asked, awed and embarrassed. (Coelho, 1993, p. 25)*

This sentence is a moment where Santiago encounters an event that changes his view of why a king and a shepherd are in a very different social position, so as to make direct interaction between them occur with discomfort. This shows that

individuals learn to understand their own position and others ' positions through social symbols, such as social status, that have meanings that can be understood together in society. According to Mead (Mead, 2015), society is formed from a series of interrelated social roles, and each individual interprets themselves based on how others position themselves toward them. These norms can also shape social behavior as seen in datum 9:

> *"There is no wine in this country," the young man said. "The religion here forbids it." (Coelho, 1993, p. 35)*

At first glance, it is a simple sentence that explains that the prohibition against drinking wine is not just a religious rule, but also part of a shared value system that guides social behavior for Muslims. Religion, as a powerful social symbol, serves to structure actions and give meaning to what is considered right or wrong in a community. This prohibition signifies that the local community has a shared moral identity that must be respected by every native or migrant individual who is part of the community. Understanding norms requires a tool called language or symbols used to interact with others, as seen in datum 10:

> *"Two more months passed, and the shelf brought many customers into the crystal shop. The boy estimated that, if he worked for six more months, he could return to Spain and buy sixty sheep, and yet another sixty. In less than a year, he would have doubled his flock, and he would be able to do business with the Arabs, because he was now able to speak their strange language." (Coelho, 1993, p. 46)*

In this simple sentence, it explains the extraordinary achievement for Santiago, the ability to speak a language that was initially foreign to him because

of his involvement in social interactions with the local community now he understands Arabic. According to Mead (Mead, 2015), language is a significant symbol that enables communication and shared understanding. It marks that he has begun to understand the social norms, values, and meanings inherent in that society.

B. The Influence of Symbolic Interaction on Santiago's individual development in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist*?

The main character (Santiago) in Paulo Coelho`s *The Alchemist* undergoes several major personality developments during his journey in search of treasure. This phenomenon is very much in line with Mead`s symbolic interaction theory. Mead (Mead, 2015), identifies three stages in the formation of self, namely the play stage, the game stage, and the generalized other, which are clearly seen in Santiago's journey. Each stage shows how social experiences and symbolic meanings shape the way Santiago understands himself, others, and the world around him. This section will discuss these three stages and how they influence Santiago's individual development.

1. Play Stage

In the previous discussion, it was explained that symbolic interaction is very instrumental in Santiago's individual development. The play stage process in George Herbert Mead`s theory is seen in the early stages of Santiago's life when he begins to form self-awareness through simple roles that are lived out imaginatively as seen in datum 1 which explains Santiago's relationship with his sheep which shows the initial form of symbolic interaction that shapes his identity:

"He had always believed that the sheep were able to understand what he said. So there were times when he read them parts of his books that had made an impression on him, or when he would tell them of the loneliness or the happiness of a shepherd in the fields."(Coelho, 1993, p. 15)

Santiago treats his sheep like his friends and considers his sheep as creatures that can understand human language, implying that Santiago has carried out symbolic interaction with his sheep. When Santiago reads parts of the book that impress him or pours out his personal feelings about loneliness as a shepherd in the field without fear of judgment, he unconsciously processes inner experiences through symbols (words) and emotions. This shows that his identity has begun to form, even though it is still in a small scope. Santiago's bond with his sheep is also strengthened through shared experiences and routines that shape his identity as a shepherd, as seen in datum 2:

"He had noticed that, as soon as he awoke, most of his animals also began to stir. It was as if some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep, with whom he had spent the past two years, leading them through the countryside in search of food and water."(Coelho, 1993, p. 14)

The observations made by Santiago are not simple but are based on their experiences when living together, so he can observe the habits carried out by his sheep repeatedly. From his observations, he realized that a mysterious energy showed a symbolic bond between Santiago and his sheep that created a structure of meaning in Santiago's life. This symbolic interaction helped Santiago feel "understood" in the world he had built for himself. This is reinforced in datum 3:

"Sometimes he would comment to them on the things he had seen in the villages they passed,"(Coelho, 1993, p. 15)

Santiago's comments to the sheep while passing through the village show Santiago's habit, which he often does, which is telling stories, making observations, and positioning his sheep as good listeners to his stories. It explains that Santiago is not a human being who is just stuck in his surrounding life but can also observe and interact with the wider world around him in a way that is meaningful to him. Besides that, Santiago also develops a deep understanding through symbolic interaction with his sheep, as in datum 4:

"Well, usually I learn more from my sheep than from books," he answered."(Coelho, 1993, p. 15)

This sentence explicitly shows a shift in the value of knowledge in Santiago. It can be seen when he says "well," which indirectly shows that Santiago not only shows a spontaneous response but also makes an observation. Santiago's knowledge shift began to shift from books to knowledge gained through direct experience with his sheep. He puts experience as a source of knowledge rather than from a book, in accordance with the principles of symbolic interactionism, which views meaning as a result of social interaction, not knowledge alone. Santiago's development becomes visible when his symbolic interaction extends from his sheep to humans and other symbols, as seen in datum 5:

"But for the past few days he had spoken to them about only one thing: the girl, the daughter of a merchant who lived in the village they would reach in about four days."(Coelho, 1993, p. 15)

The topic of discussion changes when he talks with his sheep, namely, he starts to talk about his relationship with a girl. Here, he begins to internalize the meaning of human relations through symbolic interaction with his sheep, before he actually dares to interact and live in the human world. This is an important stage in the development of his identity from a life that is closed and full of solitude to a life that is more open to life. As Santiago's symbolic interaction expands, there is also an inner conflict that occurs as in datum 6:

> *"He was excited, and at the same time uneasy: maybe the girl had already forgotten him. Lots of shepherds passed through, selling their wool. "It doesn't matter," he said to his sheep. "I know other girls in other places." But in his heart he knew that it did matter. And he knew that shepherds, like seamen and like traveling salesmen, always found a town where there was someone who could make them forget the joys of carefree wandering."(Coelho, 1993, p. 16)*

After Santiago's interactions expanded, an inner conflict arose between his former self as a free shepherd who was not bound by anything and his current self, which began to take shape through human feelings and relationships. This shows that identity can be shaped and tested through the negotiation of meaning in various social situations. The denial before the sheep is symbolic of a self-defense mechanism, while his inner awareness is a reflection of the development of deeper emotions and desires. Over time, she is now able to interpret the meaning of life as in datum 7:

> *"I'd like to build a display case for the crystal," the boy said to the merchant.*
>
> *"We could place it outside, and attract those people who pass at the bottom of the hill."*

"I've never had one before," the merchant answered. "People will passby and bump into it, and pieces will be broken."

"Well, when I took my sheep through the fields some of them might have died if we had come upon a snake. But that's the way life is with sheep and with shepherds."."(Coelho, 1993, p. 44)

The maturity in interpreting a symbol is very visible in the sentence. This maturity is not obtained from something as simple as convincing based on his experience as a shepherd. Through the symbols of "sheep" and "snake," he understands that life is full of risks and uncertainties. However, he is not afraid of it, rather he accepts it as part of life's choices. This reflects an advanced stage of meaning development in him from simple symbols to a broader understanding.

2. Game Stage

Santiago's subsequent individual development began to show a more complex understanding of social roles. In this stage, according to Mead (Mead, 2015), the individual does not just play one role, but begins to understand the relationship between various social roles and how his actions affect others. Santiago's stage of development in this phase occurs through his symbolic interactions. Here begins the process of self-discovery in which Santiago realizes that being a shepherd that he has been doing all this time is no longer fully relevant to himself, and as a result he decides to leave the life of a shepherd, as seen in datum 1:

"He said that to himself with certainty, but he was no longer happy with his decision. He had worked for an entire year to make a dream come true, and that dream, minute by minute, was becoming less important. Maybe because that wasn't really his dream. Who knows . . . maybe it's better to be like the

crystal merchant: never go to Mecca, and just go through life wanting to do so, he thought, again trying to convince himself.''(Coelho, 1993, p. 52)

This phase shows the confusion Santiago experienced. He began to realize a shift in his identity. This statement shows that he began to question the meaning of his social role. He chose to become a shepherd so that he could explore and see a world he had never seen before. He began to question whether his new identity reflected him or not after interacting with the wider environment. But when he remembered his initial goal, he finally decided to continue his journey to go to Egypt, as seen in datum 2:

"I'm leaving today," said the boy. "I have the money I need to buy my sheep. And you have the money you need to go to Mecca."(Coelho, 1993, p. 50)

This was the turning point of Santiago's journey of self-discovery. Santiago is very firm in declaring his departure and continuing his journey. Santiago not only makes a decision without hesitation but is also confident in pursuing his personal legend. He refuses to return to his old identity as a shepherd and chooses a new path, which reflects a full understanding of hope. Furthermore, when on his journey, he ran out of money and decided to work in a crystal shop. Santiago's action of working in the crystal shop opens up space for the formation of new meanings through social interaction, as seen in datum 3:

"In his pouch, he had his jacket—he certainly wasn't going to need it in the desert. Taking the jacket out, he began to clean the glasses. In half an hour, he had cleaned all the glasses in the window, and, as he was doing so, two customers had entered the shop and bought some crystal" (Coelho, 1993, p. 41)

The sentence looks simple but shows the formation of Santiago's character and social understanding. Through interactions with crystal traders, Santiago is now not only in the process of imitating roles (as in the play stage), but also begins to understand in depth about the socio-economic system of interconnected structures and roles between himself as a worker, traders as superiors, and customers as part of the economic system. In this case, a meaning is not only attached to something but can also be formed through social interaction and meaning in the old experience, as in datum 4:

> *"He was learning a lot of new things. Some of them were things that he had already experienced, and weren't really new, but that he had never perceived before. And he hadn't perceived them because he had become accustomed to them. He realized: If I can learn to understand this language without words, I can learn to understand the world." (Coelho, 1993, p. 40)*

Santiago explained that in his current life, he had many new experiences trying, but he also began to reinterpret the experiences he had had in his previous life with a new perspective gained from social relationships. This shows that a meaning is not always automatically attached to something for sure, but can be interpreted based on the symbols around it. Santiago's deep reflective process can make him see the world more complexly. In this process, the main character (Santiago) also experiences conflict within himself as in datum 5:

> *"Here I am, between my flock and my treasure, the boy thought. He had to choose between something he had become accustomed to and something he wanted to have." (Coelho, 1993, p. 29)*

The dilemma experienced by Santiago is a defining moment in his journey. Where he must choose to leave his comfort zone with certainty, stable finances or continue the journey towards his initial goal, namely the personal legend that led him this far, this shows that symbols not only function for communication, but also to determine something freely without anything else influencing. He no longer simply responds to circumstances, but begins to see the deeper meanings of various elements in his environment. Subsequently, Santiago experienced a shift in the way he interacted with the environment as seen in datum 6:

> *"I'd like to build a display case for the crystal," the boy said to the merchant. "We could place it outside, and attract those people who pass at the bottom of the hill." (Coelho, 1993, p. 44)*

The initiative put forward by Santiago shows a big change in Santiago, who was originally a passive person who can now contribute to his social environment. He is not only someone who only obeys the crystal seller, but he can also provide two innovations in the form of building a display cabinet and selling the crystal. This shows that a person's ability can not only be influenced by the social structure where he is, but can also influence and create it himself. He becomes an actor in the process of negotiating meaning. His insight develops through datum 7:

> *"There had been a time when he thought that his sheep could teach him everything he needed to know about the world. But they could never have taught him Arabic."(Coelho, 1993, p. 48)*

In his life with the crystal seller, Santiago clearly made this learning process happen, but there was a process of exchanging information and views that were

understood by both of them. Santiago learns many things from the crystal seller, such as the meaning conveyed to him, and hope despite his limitations. Through the alignment process carried out by the two, Santiago now begins to adapt and understand the trader's world, and this brings out new ideas in him that have been hidden so far. However, in the process of heading towards his personal legend, Santiago experienced inhibition in himself, but because of the rapid development in his understanding, it gave rise to awareness in himself as seen in datum 8:

> *"He was going to miss the place and all the good things he had learned. He was more confident in himself, though, and felt as though he could conquer the world."(Coelho, 1993, p. 51)*

As he lives with crystal sellers in the Tangier neighborhood and has symbolic interactions with them, Santiago can now develop his potential. The deeper form of self-awareness that he gets shows that Santiago is starting to be able to recognize what things can help him achieve his dream of getting his personal legend. He also became part of the social structure where he was, and he also adopted the values of the experience he got from the social structure, such as responsibility and hard work. Furthermore, Santiago's success in helping traders by providing unique innovations so that the crystal seller's shop becomes crowded is not only an economic transformation but also his character seen in datum 9:

> *"Eventually, the merchant had to hire two more employees. He began to import enormous quantities of tea, along with his crystal, and his shop was sought out by men and women with a thirst for things new" (Coelho, 1993, p. 49)*

Santiago's success in changing the condition of the crystal shop, which was initially deserted, has now become so crowded that the shop owner employs two more people is not only an economic transformation but also a social value. This shows definite results. He managed to provide new innovations where the store is now the center of attention. Mead`s theory shows that Santiago can manage his ability to play an active role in complex social systems. In this stage, he can understand the surrounding social structure and adjust himself through these actions. Shared meaning formation can be seen when Santiago communicates with the crystal seller, datum 10:

> *"You brought a new feeling into my crystal shop. But you know that I'm not going to go to Mecca. Just as you know that you're not going to buy your sheep."(Coelho, 1993, p. 50)*

The sentence spoken by the crystal seller shows mutual understanding and the openness and honesty expressed to Santiago. This is not something that happens just like that, but it can happen after they develop a relationship based on their understanding and determination. In this case, they not only conveyed information but also confirmed each other's symbolic transformation. Santiago has changed from a simple young man to a man with a mission. This is evidence that he has internalized a new social role and put aside his old identity. After feeling sufficient with his supplies, he decided to continue his journey, which resulted in a new confidence in him as seen in datum 11:

> *"Tangier was no longer a strange city, and he felt that, just as he had conquered this place, he could conquer the world."(Coelho, 1993, p. 51)*

When Santiago arrived in Tangier, a new city for him, it contained symbols, language, customs, and social norms that he had never seen or understood before. However, with the demands of the social and environmental environment, he had to make frequent interactions so that it gradually made him familiar. Through these constant interactions, he can now read the social symbols of the city. This is a phenomenon where Santiago can not only accept his new environment but also internalize the values that exist in him. In the end, after getting lessons throughout his journey. Now Santiago recognizes his personal growth in datum 12:

> *"He was proud of himself. He had learned some important things, like how to deal in crystal, and about the language without words... and about omens."(Coelho, 1993, p. 47)*

The pride shown in Santiago's character stems from the abilities that he is currently mastering. Santiago's understanding of the knowledge he has gained shows a high level of symbolic understanding. Santiago calls "language without words" and "signs" two forms of nonverbal interaction that require close observation and sensitivity to their hidden meanings, showing that his understanding is not only limited to human interaction, but extends to the symbols of nature around him.

3. Generalized Other

In symbolic interactionism theory, the concept of the generalized other explains how to adopt social norms, values, and expectations that are internalized

in individuals through social interactions. The process starts with how a person views himself based on those closest to him, but also considers the opinions of the wider community so that individuals can understand how the community will view the individual (Mead, 2015). In this case, Santiago no longer acts solely based on his old habits as a shepherd, but begins to consider the social expectations that exist around him, such as how he can contribute, develop, and make meaning of life through his new role to step towards his Personal Legend. This is reflected in datum 1, which occurs at the beginning of the story:

> *"But the sheep had taught him something even more important: that there was a language in the world that everyone understood, a language the boy had used throughout the time that he was trying to improve things at the shop. It was the language of enthusiasm, of things accomplished with love and purpose, and as part of a search for something believed in and desired."(Coelho, 1993, p. 51)*

In the process of transforming Santiago's self-identity, he started with the creatures around him (sheep). After spending a long time with his sheep, he learned from them that there is a universal language that is more than just words, namely the language of action (enthusiasm) with love and affection. The understanding he gained from his sheep was evident when he worked in the crystal shop. This shows the initial stage of the process of recognition of universal social symbols, "Generalized Other," a value that is understood and appreciated by the social structure regardless of their cultural background. Further in datum 2:

> *"But in his heart he knew that it did matter. And he knew that shepherds, like seamen and like traveling salesmen, always found a town where there was someone who could make them forget the joys of carefree wandering."(Coelho, 1993, p. 16)*

Along with his wandering journey, Santiago began to realize that he was not the only one who lived on the move like sailors and itinerant traders. At that time, he realized that there would be something that could discourage them from continuing their wandering process. And he also realized that his social status as a shepherd was not just a profession but a social role that had social norms and expectations in it. Through this understanding, he began to position himself as part of a wider social group, namely people whose lives are lived with changes in social status. This is an illustration of the Generalized Other, where Santiago begins to see himself based on his social perspective. In the process of personality development on his journey, Santiago met a crystal seller who wanted to go to Mecca but never tried to achieve it, but he realized one thing: the concept of generalized other could be through religious symbols, datum 3:

> *"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 café. I'm afraid that if my dream is realized, I'll have no reason to go on living."(Coelho, 1993, p. 46)*

The sentence is one uttered by the crystal seller to Santiago, who tells him that his desire to go to Mecca is a reason to stay alive. This shows how dreams and religious values can become symbols that give meaning to life, even without being realized. Based on the story told by the crystal seller, Santiago learns that many people live their lives by clinging to symbols shaped by social and religious norms. In his deeper interaction with the crystal merchant. Furthermore, Santiago's journey

of identity development continues until he arrives at a Muslim settlement and learns about the value of the generalized other as seen in datum 4:

> *"The Prophet gave us the Koran, and left 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."(Coelho, 1993, p. 45)*

During his time in the Muslim environment, he began to get to know the principles that exist in Islam. This is where Santiago absorbed the values of the religion-based Generalized Other, where the norms taught in Islam are not only rules that must be followed, but also ingrained in the adherents. The internalization process makes Santiago understand that the community lives according to the norms and teachings of religion. Santiago also realizes that religion is very effective in regulating social life, giving direction, and creating order. Santiago's journey continues until he is robbed, which causes him to understand that the reality of life is not always in line with what is imagined as seen in datum 5:

> *"The old king hadn't said anything about being robbed, or about endless deserts, or about people who know what their dreams are but don't want to realize them. The old king hadn't told him that the Pyramids were just a pile of stones, or that anyone could build one in his backyard."(Coelho, 1993, p. 51)*

The sentence appears after the incident of Santiago being robbed, when he begins to realize that the reality of life is not always in line with the words he received from the old king. This shows a conflict between social expectations and the actual experiences he experiences do not always match. Santiago begins to think critically about the messages she receives, showing that the understanding of the

Generalized Other is not always passive, but also involves a process of reinterpretation of meaning. However, he never dismissed everything the old king said as a hoax. Santiago continues to hold the principles he learned from the old king, such as datum 8:

> *"When you want something, all the universe conspires to help you achieve it."(Coelho, 1993, p. 51)*

The sentence is the essence of Santiago's journey, which is that not all reality is always in accordance with expectations. Although reality does not always match expectations, Santiago still adheres to the principles of the old king, which have become a motivation for him. The sentence shows that all difficulties have their own message and have a purpose in order to help someone achieve their dreams, depending on how the person internalizes the difficulty as a positive thing, and must hold firm to their determination. This is the final form of internalization, where the originally external value now becomes an internal motivation, and shows how the Generalized Other becomes a permanent part of identity and life direction for Santiago.

Through complex symbolic interactions with his sheep, the crystal merchant and various elements on his journey, Santiago develops a deeper and deeper understanding of himself and the world around him. These symbolic interactions allow him to manage and adjust between his own desires and social expectations and slowly develop a new identity that incorporates the lessons of all his symbolic interactions, bringing him closer to the realization of his Personal Legend.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter contains conclusions that include the findings of the entire analysis that has been discussed previously, and suggestions aimed at readers and researchers who are interested in the theme of the research that has been done.

A. CONCLUSION

Research on the novel "*The Alchemist*" by Paulo Coelho using George Herbert Mead's symbolic interaction theory concluded that Santiago experienced three concepts of symbolic interaction that occurred during his journey. The concept of mind from Santiago is seen and appears when he talks to his sheep, so that he begins to learn to understand the universal language and understand the signs of nature, so that it can guide him during the journey. Meanwhile, the concept of self is seen when he begins to meet and interact with several figures, such as Old King Melchizedek, crystal traders, and Muslim people, so that he knows what is meant by "I" and "Me" in himself. And when he is in a new environment, he learns how other people's views on him in a new environment. This shows that Santiago also experiences the concept of society.

This research also found that Santiago underwent significant individual development caused by his symbolic interactions with the characters he met during his journey and the environment around him. Santiago's individual development was at the play stage, when he began to form self-awareness through simple roles lived imaginatively with his sheep. Then he goes to the game stage, where he begins

to understand the role of social roles, such as how to be a seller, customer, and how he provides innovations so that he can influence the social environment around him based on the experience he gained earlier. The next stage of Santiago's individual development is when he can view himself from a personal and societal perspective at large, as well as the prevailing norms. By following the stages in symbolic interaction, Santiago manages to achieve a true understanding of who he is and to realize his Personal Legend.

B. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted by the Researcher regarding symbolic interaction and its influence on the main character in The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, the Researcher hopes that future research can expand the research to be carried out by analyzing other novels using symbolic interaction theory or combining it with other theoretical approaches to gain a deeper understanding of symbolic interaction and individual development in literary works. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be a reference for students, readers, and teachers in understanding the importance of symbols and social interactions in shaping personality and individual life journeys, both in the context of literature and everyday life. This research also encourages readers to reflect on symbolic meanings in their own life experiences, so that they can take lessons from the journey of the main character (Santiago) in The Alchemist. Thus, it is hoped that further research can continue to develop symbolic interaction studies in literature and make a positive contribution to the academic world and the wider community.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Satria Difa Wijaya was born in Bojonegoro on September 9, 2002. I graduated from MA Mambaus Sholihin in 2018 to 2020 with a major in science and was part of the English Development Department. After graduating, I continued my studies at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2021 as an English Literature student. During his studies at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, I actively participated in various organizations, including as Vice President of the HIMAM. I am proficient in several languages, including Indonesian, English, Arabic, and Javanese. Additionally, I possess a range of soft skills such as leadership, problem-solving, and public speaking. In the field of technology, I am proficient in using Microsoft Office and Canva. During my studies, I developed an interest and skills in writing, particularly in article writing, translation, and subtitle writing. As part of my professional development, I completed an internship at Bee Happy Translation Services in 2024. In this program, I was tasked with translating a book titled The Fifth Season. This experience strengthened my ability to translate literary texts from English to Indonesian accurately and in accordance with cultural context.