DEcision making in paulo coelho’s
“the alchemist”

a thesis

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. And to the best of this candidate’s knowledge and belief, it contains no material which has been previously published or written by other person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Surabaya, 10th June 2008

Lily Hasanah
To everyone whom I love...
Approved to be examined

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ABSTRACT

The Alchemist is a novel written by Paulo Coelho which tells about a struggle of a young Spanish boy named Santiago. The novel portrays the decision making process done by Santiago to overcome his dilemmas. The issue that is discussed in this study is Santiago’s experiences in dealing with his dilemmas and the process of decision making. The process itself eventually results in giving him a kind of satisfaction and signifies the emergence of self-existentialism as well. Moreover, Santiago’s decision making process is explained through the mechanism of existentialism, particularly Søren Kierkegaard’s theory.

In analyzing the problem, the writer uses the library research and qualitative method. The qualitative method is used by making the descriptive analysis and explanation through the events and actions in the story related to the identification process of making decisions done by Santiago in Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist. The study finds that when Santiago does his own decision making he is able to overcome his dilemmas but, on the other hands, it also leads him to experience dread. Moreover, Santiago’s decision making is based on his subjectivity. It puts him on a situation in which he tends to ignore the crowd’s opinions but, however, still considers opinions from the community. Santiago’s subjectivity still plays an important role although he still listens to the community’s opinion because Santiago keeps making his own consideration in the process of making decision.

Key words: decision making, dilemma, subjectivity, the crowd, the community.
“Philosophy is perfectly right in saying that life must be understood backward. But then one forgets the other clause—that it must be lived forward.” (Søren Kierkegaard)

“Nothing is impossible, as long as you wish it with all your heart.”
(Paulo Coelho)
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Human beings always face many choices in conducting their life. These choices often put them into dilemma. They must make decisions to overcome the dilemma, no matter how complicated the decisions are. The complicated dilemma is usually caused by the fact that the process of decision making sometimes becomes very personal which means that one’s choice is occasionally different compared to other people’s choices in the society. Meanwhile, the society’s opinion, which is called as ‘the crowd’ in Kierkegaard’s existentialism, usually constructs people about what they should choose or not. The crowd also provides reward for the ones who are willing to follow it. On the other hand, it is the crowd who criticizes or punishes its members who do not follow its rules. This circumstance often causes many people are afraid of taking their individual choices when it is against the opinion of the crowd. Therefore, in many ways it demands a very strong will for people to make their own choices. Beside his/her strong wills, individuals’ beliefs or his/her subjectivity and also the support from the community can be significant factors which support him/her for firming the decisions.

Regarding that the choices are personal matters so that in many ways it is often related to individual’s perspective closely associated with subjectivity. Subjectivity plays an important role in those choices because it does not rely on what the crowd’s opinions are. The subjectivity illustrates the big spaces of
freedom in decision making because the individual himself who has full authority. Yet, each individual who fully authorizes the freedom must take the consequences because the freedom of choosing obliges the responsibility to run the risk. Moreover, freedom of choosing tempts to make people to be aware of the consequences.


The Alchemist itself has been translated into 67 languages and edited in more than 150 countries. It has received several international awards such as the Nielsen Gold Book Award 2004 for its outstanding sales in the UK retail market, the Corine International Award 2002 for the best fiction in Germany, the Golden Book Award 1995 and 1996 in Yugoslavia, the Super Grinzane Cavour Book Award and Flaiano International Award 1996 in Italy, and the Grand Prix Litteraire of Elle 1995 in France (“News”). According to the official website of
BBC, this novel recorded as the 94th in the BBC’s Big Read Top 100 in April 2003 (“Top 100”).

The author of *The Alchemist*, Paulo Coelho, was born in 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. He ever worked as theatre director, actor, lyricist and journalist. His parents sent him twice to the mental institution because they failed to stop him dreaming to be a writer. He started writing at hand but was not serious until he had an encounter with a stranger who suggested him to return to Catholicism and study the benign side of magic and also encouraged Paulo to walk the Road of Santiago de Compostela, the medieval pilgrim’s route (Coelho, 193-194). Now, Paulo Coelho is Messenger of Peace for the UN, Ambassador of European Union for Intercultural Dialogue for the year of 2008, Member of the Board of the Shimon Peres Institute for Peace, UNESCO special counsellor for “Intercultural Dialogues and Spiritual Convergences”, Board Member of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, and Member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (“Biography”).

Paulo Coelho is fully appreciated. Many people acclaim *The Alchemist* on the book jacket and the website. In the book jacket, one of the reviews is stated by Indiana Polis (USA) that *The Alchemist* is a touching, inspiring fable. Kenzaburo Oe, Nobel Prize of Literature, states that Paulo Coelho knows the secret of literary Alchemy (“Reviews”).

Paulo Coelho presents the issue of decision making in *The Alchemist*. It is portrayed through Santiago, the major character of *The Alchemist*, who experiences the dilemmas. To overcome his dilemmas, he has to make choices. Unlike many people who just follow the crowd, Santiago has to consider each
choice. This illustrates that Santiago has the freedom to choose. The freedom enables him to understand his reasons of choosing. Although his decisions are not the same with the crowd’s opinion, Santiago is not afraid of making such decisions because the most important thing for him is to give meaning to his life. Moreover, the freedom of choosing obliges Santiago’s responsibility towards his choices by being consistent to survive and keep struggling although he faces many obstacles.

The fact that Santiago does not pay attention to the choice of the crowd means that his subjectivity plays important role in the decision making process. The subjectivity signifies that Santiago is the one who has the authority to decide what he wants. He is the controller of himself, not the crowd. However, Santiago still opens himself to the community, the one who shares the same idea. Santiago makes his own consideration in his decision making although he still listens to the community’s opinions. Santiago’s process of decision making is an interesting subject of discussion since it is related to existentialism. Therefore, for the writer of this thesis, Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist is worth to be researched.

Existentialism is a philosophical movement which emphasizes on individual existence to define himself and the world of his own subjectivity, wandering between freedom and choice ("Existentialism"). The experience of Santiago deals with the process of making choice as people often have in daily life is one of the issues discussed in Søren Kierkegaard’s existentialism. Therefore, Søren Kierkegaard’s existentialism will be applied in explaining Santiago’s decision making process.
1.2. **Statement of the Problems**

After reading the novel and determining the topic, there are questions that could be raised. The questions are as the following:

1. What are the experiences of Santiago in dealing with his dilemmas and the process of decision making?
2. How are the processes explained through the mechanism of Kierkegaard’s existentialism?

1.3. **Objective of the Study**

Regarding the statement of the problems above, the writer determines the objectives of the study are:

1. To know Santiago’s experiences in dealing with his dilemmas and the process of decision making.
2. To know the process of decision making experienced by the character through the mechanism of Kierkegaard’s existentialism.

1.4. **Significance of the Study**

The first significance of this study is to gain the knowledge about an international best seller novel entitled *The Alchemist*. Moreover, the issue about dilemma which is discussed in this novel is something familiar with everyone’s life. It arises the fact that every human being must face a difficult decision making which is often caused by some choices are opposed to the crowd. The study aims to explain about the decision making process experienced by Santiago.
The second is to give contributions of the analysis of literary work to the students of Airlangga University English Department, especially the students who major in literature. The theory used in the analysis becomes the example of the application of existentialism theory in analyzing the literary works.

1.5. **Scope and Limitation**

This study will concentrate only on the experience of the main character in facing dilemma. It analyzes the factors of subjectivity, freedom, and dread which are related to the process of making decisions.

1.6. **Theoretical Background**

This study aims to analyze the experience of Santiago’s decision making in Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*. The writer depicts how Santiago deals with his dilemmas to analyze the mechanism of his decision making. Hence, the writer uses Kierkegaard’s theory of existentialism to analyze the two aspects above.

Existentialist says the main point of existentialism is the emphasis on individual existence to define himself and the world of his own subjectivity, wandering between freedom and choice (“Existentialism”). David E. Roberts believes that the freedom which people have in making choices is not only related to how free they are, is there anybody else who influences them or not. Freedom means that we have a hand in making ourselves what we are to become (74). In this freedom, man is free, but he is conscious of responsibility, of remorse, of guilt for what he has done (8).
About dread, Dave Robinson acclaims in his book *Introducing Kierkegaard* that freedom can raise a dread. Dread is a symptom of “freedom’s appearance before itself in possibility”. Moreover, Robinson also stated that “the knowledge of that fundamental freedom is always there, and the anxiety never quite goes away (110).”

Moreover the concept of ‘the truth is subjectivity’ also influences the process of making decision. The question of truth is raised in subjectively; reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual’s relationship. If only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true (Kaufman 114).

According to D. Anthony Storm, Kierkegaard has wrongly been accused of being against community, of being an isolationist. Actually, he was opposed to the ‘numeric masses’ and the assumed righteousness of the majority. Although Kierkegaard rejects the crowd but he supports community (“Works of Love”). Based on Kierkegaard writing on his Journals stated that “in ‘the public’ and the like, the individual is nothing, there is no individual, the numerical is constitutive and the principle of coming into being *a generatio aequivoca* (spontaneous generation); apart from ‘the public’, the individual is nothing, and in the public he is not, in any profound sense, anything either (“Public”).”

1.7. Method of the Study

The method of study that will be applied in this study is library research while the main source is the novel itself, Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist*. The study applies the method of data collection by having closer reading to the novel,
making data classification, and determining the data based on criteria. The criteria used here are to know Santiago’s dilemmas which illustrate how his decision making is.

After discovering the criteria above, the data is analyzed using existentialism theory, the theory of Søren Kierkegaard’s existentialism. In order to make a complete analysis, the writer uses the qualitative method by using empirical information about the world, not in the form of number. It means in doing the analysis, the writer will use descriptive analysis and explanation through the events and action in the story related to the identification process of making decisions done by Santiago in Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist. The analysis elaborates monologues, dialogues, and the narrator’s voice in the novel. The outcome of the study is to know how Santiago’s decision making seen from Kierkegaard’s existentialism.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

Decision making : the process of making choice.

Dilemma : the circumstance when someone faces two or more choices at the same time in which these choices are equal.

The crowd : the common opinions which are considered morally right and good opinions because most of people believe that the opinions are true.
Community : the part of the society which consists of a group of individuals who hold the same idea which is against the crowd’s opinion.

Subjectivity : the individual’s perspective towards something.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into two parts, which are the theoretical framework and the review of related studies. The first part, theoretical framework, discusses about existentialism theory by Søren Kierkegaard. The second part, the review of related studies, discusses the studies which use Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist* as the subject of the research.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This chapter aims to explain specifically about the theories that are applied as a tool to analyze the novel *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. The existentialism theory is used to help the writer in analyzing the issues raised in the novel, as stated in statement of the problems. Particularly, the writer uses the theory of existentialism suggested by Søren Kierkegaard. The writer uses the concepts suggested by Kierkegaard, there are freedom, dread, ‘truth is subjectivity’, ‘the crowd is untruth’, and the community. However, the writer of this study also uses suggestions from other sources which help to support the theory, so that the analysis can be done comprehensively.

2.1.1. Existentialism

In his essays, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) concerns about existentialism. He is also considered as the first existentialist. In one of books, *Introducing Kierkegaard*, by Dave Robinson and Oscar Zarate, stated that
Kierkegaard’s key words are existence, freedom, choice, responsibility and anguish (156). The emphasis on individual existence is measured by individual’s capability to ‘get out’ from the anguish of the ‘crowd’ by making a choice freely. This freedom must be followed by the responsibility for things go wrong.

2.1.1.1. Freedom

In his book called *Existentialism and Religious Belief*, David E. Roberts believes existentialism regards man as fundamentally ambiguous. This is very close linked to its predominant stress on freedom. Freedom means that we have a hand in making ourselves what we are to become (74). In this freedom, man is free, but he is conscious of responsibility, of remorse, of guilt for what he has done. Hence there can be no simple answer to what man should do with his freedom. In one sense, he must himself create the answer by using his freedom to find out just what he wants to become. In this situation, man can not avoid the dilemma. It is caused by the uncovered inner conflicts in facing the freedom (8).

Man’s consciousness about himself begins the existential attitude. This consciousness raises the questions about man’s existence in the world. It is whenever man comes to face these questions with passionate earnestness, fully aware of the solemn risks and tremendous opportunities involved in them (10).

2.1.1.2. Dread

Dave Robinson acclaims in his book *Introducing Kierkegaard* that freedom can raise a dread. Dread is a symptom of “freedom’s appearance before itself in possibility” (110). According to Kierkegaard, the dread of freedom can
make individuals and whole societies to be ‘inauthentic’. People, as individuals or *en masse*, are too often happy to escape this fear by retreating into obedience to ideologies dictated by others (112).

2.1.1.3. ‘Truth is Subjectivity’

Robert Paul Wolff points out in his book entitled *About Philosophy* that truth does not consist in the proper relationship between the belief and the object; rather it consists in the proper relationship between the belief and the subject, the individual human being who holds that belief (360).

Therefore, the concept of ‘the truth is subjectivity’ also influences the choices. The question of truth is raised subjectively; reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual’s relationship. If only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true (Kaufman 114).

2.1.1.4. ‘The Crowd is Untruth’

Walter Kaufmann, in his book *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, writes about ‘that individual’. He stated that there is a view of life which conceives that wherever there is a crowd there is untruth, so that (to consider for a moment the extreme case), even if every individual, each for himself in private, were to be in possession of the truth, yet in case they were all to get together is crowd—a crowd to which any sort of decisive significance is attributed, a voting, noisy, audible crowd-untruth would at once be in evidence (94).
This causes the individual has no power in the crowd because it is the crowd which possesses the power (99). The crowd, in fact, is composed of individuals; it must be therefore in every man’s power to become what he is, an individual. From becoming an individual, no one at all, is excluded, except he who excludes himself by becoming a crowd. To become a crowd, to collect a crowd about one, is on the contrary to affirm the distinctions of human life. The most well-meaning person who talks about these distinctions can easily offend the individual. But then it is not the crowd which possesses power, influence, repute, and mastery over men, but it is the invidious distinctions of human life which despotically ignore the single individual as the weak and impotent, which in a temporal and worldly interest ignore the eternal truth—the single individual.

In his book called Existentialism and Religious Belief, David E. Roberts believes that existentialism, in the sphere of social theory, stands against all patterns of human organization in which the mass mentality stifles the spontaneity and uniqueness of the individual person (6).

2.1.1.5. The Community

According to D. Anthony Storm, Kierkegaard has wrongly been accused of being against community, of being an isolationist. Actually, he was opposed to the ‘numeric masses’ and the assumed righteousness of the majority. Although Kierkegaard rejects the crowd but he supports community. In the busy, teeming crowd, which as community is both too much and too little, man becomes weary of society, but the cure is not in making the discovery that God’s thought was
incorrect. No, the cure is precisely to learn all over again the most important thing, to understand oneself in one’s longing for community (“Works of Love”).

Based on Kierkegaard writing on his Journals stated that ‘in the public’ and the like, the individual is nothing, there is no individual, the numerical is constitutive and the principle of coming into being a generatio aequivoca (spontaneous generation); apart from ‘the public’, the individual is nothing, and in the public he is not, in any profound sense, anything either.

In community the individual is; dialectically, the individual is crucial as the prior condition for forming a community, and within the community the individual is qualitatively essential and can at any moment rise above ‘community’, that is, as soon as the others give up the idea. What holds community together is that each is an individual, and then the idea. The public’s cohesion, or its looseness, is that numerality is everything. Every individual in the community guarantees the community; the public is a chimera. In community the single individual is the microcosm who qualitatively repeats the macrocosm; here it is a case of unum noris omnes (you know one, you know all) in the good sense. In the public there is no single individual, the whole is nothing; here it is impossible to say unum noris omnes, for here there is no one. Community is no doubt more than a sum, but is truly still a sum of units; the public is nonsense, a sum of negative units, of units that are not units, that become units with the sum, instead of the sum being a sum of units (“Public”).
2.1 Review of Related Studies

There are some researchers on Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist* entitled *Thematic Unit The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho*, *Taxonomy Overview The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho*, and *Concept/Vocabulary Analysis The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho*. Moreover, the study entitled *Thematic Unit The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho* explores two similarities of thematic units between *The Alchemist* and other works. The study of thematic units examines about self discovery and journey. In the theme about self discovery, the researcher compares Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist* with, Louis Sachar’s *Holes*, Roald Dahl’s *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More*, Antoine de Saint Exupery’s *The Little Prince*, and Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. While the theme about journey, the researcher compares *The Alchemist* with Robert McCoskey’s *Make Way for Ducklings*, and Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* (“Thematic”).

Another research entitled *Taxonomy Overview the Alchemist by Paulo Coelho* classifies the novel into four aspects there are plot, setting, author, and theme. Then, each classification is discussed further through six categories there are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (“Taxonomy”).

*Concept/Vocabulary Analysis The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho* is the other study focuses on novel *The Alchemist*. The study divides its analysis into nine sections: organizational patterns, issues related to this study of literature is later categorized into: theme, setting, foreshadowing, narrative voice’s point of view, tone, irony, affective issues related to the work vocabulary issues, background
knowledge, implications for students of diversity, gender issues, research issues/project ideas, informational/functional texts ("Concept Analysis").

The thesis is different from the above studies since it more concerns on the discussion of Santiago’s process of decision making which is explained through Kierkegaard’s existentialism.
CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS

For answering the statement of the problem, the writer divides the discussion into two parts. The first part is to give descriptive explanation about Santiago’s dilemma, to explain how Santiago’s process of decision making is. The second part explains Santiago’s decision making seen from Kierkegaard’s point of view.

3.1. Santiago’s Dilemmas

In this section, the writer explains Santiago’s dilemmas and his decision making into six parts. This part tries to describe Santiago’s choices which in some ways are supported by the community while, on the other hand, it is different from the crowd’s opinion. Moreover, this part tries to describe Santiago’s experiences of dread feeling and to describe Santiago’s decision making which signifies his freedom.

3.1.1. Being a Shepherd

The dilemma begins when Santiago’s parents want him to be a priest. For his parents as a simple farm family, having a son who becomes a priest is very prideful and give them a sense of being important in the society. Therefore they even send their son themselves to the seminary since he was a child. However, on the other hand, Santiago himself does not care with the pride he may get from the
society because in his mind the most important thing in his life is travelling and knowing the world (8).

In spite of being a priest, on his young age, Santiago decides to be a shepherd. Santiago’s motives for this decision are his subjectivity and his financial background. As the writer has mentioned above that since Santiago was child, he wants to know the world. It means that he wants to be a traveller. For him, understanding the existence of God is not only by entering seminary. For him, travelling can give him many experiences about God and His being (8).

Moreover his financial condition gives him the only choice to be a shepherd, as his father said “the people who come here have a lot money to spend, so they can afford to travel. Amongst us, the only ones who travel are the shepherds (9).” Becoming a shepherd does not diminish his spirit to pursue his dream because it is not a matter of being a tourist or a shepherd; the most important is he is able to travel, wandering around the country (11).

Santiago’s perspective distinguishes him from the crowd. In this dilemma, his parents’ and society’s opinion are considered as the crowd. The difference between Santiago and the crowd is while his parents concern on the pride they get if their son becomes a priest, Santiago prefers thinking and trying to pursue his dream to travel (8). The difference is caused by the fact that Santiago only concerns on his personal consideration, his subjectivity. His subjectivity influences his perspectives toward his parents as he said that “they worked hard just to have food and water, like the sheep (8).”

Then, the option to become a shepherd comes from Santiago’s father. It seems like Santiago just follows what his father said. However the presence of his
father is nothing related with a provocation act, but only to give him a guidance to realize his dream. As his father’s suggestion is something related and supported his struggle to attain his dream, he is open and conscious to receive his father’s suggestion. This event shows Santiago’s subjectivity. Moreover it also explains that Santiago still needs the community, the individual who shares and or supports the same idea, in his decision making process.

Santiago’s choice to be a shepherd illustrates that Santiago has the freedom to choose. The freedom is entailed by his responsibility, to enjoy his days as a shepherd, although this decision causes him apart from his family. This joy is experienced by Santiago since he could pursue his dream as he uttered that “it’s the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting…. (11).”

As the consequence of his choice to be a shepherd, Santiago accepts all the responsibility. Being separated from his family is a new situation that he must face. Being a shepherd also means that he has to be alone, his sheep are the only friends he has. Although he is still able to meet other people when he arrives in a town but he spends most of his time in the field with his flock. Those do not make him sad and fell lonely.

Being a shepherd also means that Santiago only has a temporary shelter. When the day is hot, Santiago must feel hot and when the night is cold, Santiago feels the cold. He only has a jacket which warmth him when the cold night comes. But when he does not need it, the weight of the jacket sometimes annoys him. Although he annoys the jacket’s weight but Santiago tries to remember how helpful is the jacket to warmth him (8). He also has a book which he reads in the day and he uses it as a pillow when he sleeps (3). Those illustrate that Santiago is
aware of the consequences of his choice to be a shepherd. Moreover, his acceptance towards the obstacle is the proof of his responsibility towards his decision. Furthermore, his acceptance also leads him to enjoy his life as a shepherd.

3.1.2. Looking for the Hidden Treasure in Africa

Another dilemma occurs after he becomes a shepherd. In the following dilemma, he has to choose whether to be a shepherd in order to meet the merchant’s daughter or to leave his job as a shepherd in order to look for the hidden treasure in Africa after he dreams about finding a hidden treasure. In this dream, he is in a field when a child appears and begins to play with his sheep. After playing for a while, suddenly the child takes his both hands and transports him to the Egyptian pyramids. The child said to him if he comes to the Egyptian pyramids, he will find a hidden treasure. He wakes up when the child shows him the exact location (13-14).

This dream happens when it is only four days until he meets the merchant’s daughter he admires (6). Santiago is very enthusiastic about the meeting because the last meeting really impresses him. But he doubts whether the merchant’s daughter still remembers him or not:

AND NOW IT WAS ONLY FOUR DAYS BEFORE HE WOULD BACK in that same village. He was excited, and at the same time uneasy: maybe the girl had already forgotten him. Lots of shepherds passed through, selling their wool. (6)
Santiago worries his future meeting with the merchant’s daughter because he is afraid that it would make him to stop travelling, as he said “…like seamen and like travelling salesmen, always found a town where there was someone who could make them forget the joys of carefree wandering (6-7).”

Those choices puzzle him. Both, the merchant’s daughter and the hidden treasure are unsure matters. It means that both choices do not promise the certain results. Santiago doubts whether he should pursue one of the choices or not; going to Africa and sacrificing all his sixty sheep for something he knows nothing about or meeting the merchant daughter whom he is not sure that she still remembers him. It is complicated choices. This circumstance illustrates that Santiago think very carefully of all the possibilities and the consequences of each choice he takes.

After a daylong thinking about the options, Santiago decides to accomplish his dream, looking for the hidden treasure (28). Before it, Santiago asks a Gypsy woman to interpret his dream but he is very disappointed since there is no precious good fortune he gets from the fortune teller. In spite of it, the Gypsy even wants one-tenth of his treasure as the payment if he could find it (15). This meeting makes him feel cheated and discourages his plan for the hidden treasure. This event illustrates that Santiago is a sceptic person. It is caused by the fact that his own perspective, his subjectivity, is his basic reason of deciding.

Shortly after his meeting with the Gypsy, he has a conversation with Melchizedek, the King of Salem. Although at the first time of their meeting he does not really care about Melchizedek but on the following meeting Melchizedek
gains Santiago’s spirit of finding the treasure. In this dilemma, Melchizedek has a function as the community because Melchizedek supports Santiago’s decision.

Melchizedek tells Santiago about many things such as about the world’s greatest lie (18), Personal Legend (20), and the omens (29). Melchizedek also tempts to attract Santiago’s will to travel by telling Santiago about a baker who wants to travel. The baker once thinks to become a shepherd but he decides to buy his bakery and put some money aside because bakers are considered to be more important people than shepherds, as Melchizedek said that “…bakers have homes, while shepherds sleep out in the open. Parents would rather see their children marry bakers than shepherds (23).”

The statement above draws a distinction between Santiago and the crowd, when Santiago already has sixty sheep he does not think to put his money aside in order to have his own business because he enjoys travelling. On the other hands, the baker, as the crowd, prefers having any other businesses which are considered important among their society.

Even though Melchizedek seems to impress and challenge him, but Santiago does not trust him immediately. In the last moment of the first meeting, Melchizedek said that he will show Santiago how to find the treasure but he asks one-tenth of Santiago’s sheep (20). He gives Santiago a day to think about the choices (25). Although all the subject of his conversation provokes Santiago but it is Santiago himself who has full authority of himself because Melchizedek leaves him when Santiago makes decision. Melchizedek has the same function as Santiago’s father in the first dilemma. Melchizedek’s presence is to give him
guidance to his dream. In the time when Santiago makes the consideration, Melchizedek does not meet him to avoid influencing too much.

Santiago decides to go to Africa in order to find the hidden treasure. After Santiago makes a decision, Santiago meets Melchizedek for the second time. Here the function of Melchizedek is to help Santiago to firm up his decision. He gives Santiago two stones called Urim and Thummim. Urim is the black stone and it signifies ‘yes’, while the white stone is Thummim which signifies ‘no’. Those stones will help Santiago to read the omens if he is unable. But Melchizedek suggests Santiago makes his own decisions if he can. This point shows that Melchizedek teaches Santiago to trust himself because it is only him who has a full authority of himself, not the stones or the crowd.

Santiago’s second meeting with Melchizedek intends to firm Santiago’s decision. The second meeting occurs after he does the decision making. This explains that Melchizedek takes a part to support Santiago’s decision. Melchizedek does not influence Santiago in the process of decision making because the decision is chosen by Santiago. In the next dilemma, all statements and messages said by Melchizedek later give significant influence towards Santiago. The occurrence above shows that Santiago still has relationship with other who empowers and or supports him.

Santiago’s freedom is a responsible freedom. It means that when Santiago decides to do something, he must accept all of the consequences. As he chooses to look for the hidden treasure in Africa, Santiago must sell his sixty sheep which he takes care for two years in order to get the money to go to Africa. Santiago does not lament his condition although Santiago’s decision results in leaving his good
life as a shepherd and also his dream to meet the merchant’s daughter. This is the proof of Santiago’s responsibility towards his choice.

This is not an easy choice. Most people would not leave their good life and to pursue their dreams such as the baker. Although the baker once thinks to become a shepherd but he decides to buy his bakery because bakery is a good career prospect than to become a shepherd (23). The writer categorizes the baker’s opinion as the crowd opinion. On the contrary, Santiago’s decision is classified as the decision opposed to the crowd. He prefers to be a shepherd because he is able to travel around the country. Although the crowd argues that a shepherd is not considered as an important person in the society but he does not follow what the crowd wants because he believes that ‘the crowd is untruth’. In addition, his subjective reason, to travel around the world, also influences his decision.

3.1.3. Staying in Africa

When Santiago arrives at Tangier port, Africa, a man robs all Santiago’s money. Santiago is depressed by this condition since he thinks that the man would be his guide to the Pyramids (36). The worse is he does not know anything about this continent especially about the language spoken in Africa. This condition puts him into dilemma whether to go back to Spain or to continue the journey to the Pyramids. It makes Santiago laments his drastic change which occurs between sunrise and sunset:

…He recalled that when the sun had risen that morning, he was on another continent, still a shepherd with sixty sheep, and looking forward to meeting with a girl…. But now, as the sun began to set,
he was in a different country, a strange in a strange land, where he couldn’t even speak the language. He was no longer a shepherd, and he had nothing, not even the money to return and start everything over. (39)

Soon after this incident, he wants to get back to Spain again, a place where he knows all about. The incident leads him to question God’s unfair as the narrator said that “…he wept because God was unfair, and because this was the way God repaid those who believed in their dream (39).” His lamentation of his decision is assumed as his experience of feeling the dread.

In this problematical situation, he once thinks to sell the stones and buy a return ticket (40). But then the stones remind him about all Melchizedek’s statements. It relieves Santiago because he feels like Melchizedek still accompanies him in this journey. The feeling of being accompanied by Melchizedek is the feeling of longing into community because it is the community who supports him.

At this time, Santiago remembers about the stones that is why Santiago asks the stones if he should pursue his Personal Legend or not. His action of asking the stones explains that he experiences dread. He doubts his ability to choose because his previous decision making leads him to the robbery. Afterwards, he learns that he has to make his own decisions because he himself who has the power to decide what he wants. The feeling of having the power brings a positive energy to Santiago. Santiago becomes more confident and he is less desperate than before (41). Although he does not have a cent in his pocket but
he has a faith. He decides to think himself as an adventurer in quest of his treasure than as the poor victim of a thief (42).

If the crowd experiences this, the crowd may not be as positive as Santiago. Although Santiago once thinks to give up, but then he is sure that he could pass this problem. He is optimistic about his next day in Africa because he changes his perspective, he is not a victim of a thief in a strange land but he is an adventurer in a new land.

In the next morning, Santiago welcomes his new adventure happily. He walks to the narrow street of Tangier. In this street, he finds a crystal shop. Santiago offers an exchange to the crystal merchant:

“I can clean up those glasses in the window, if you want,” said the boy. “The way they look now, nobody is going to want to buy them.”

The man looked at him without responding.

“In exchange, you could give me something to eat.” (45)

This occasion illustrates how a positive person he is. In a short time, he does not lament his condition again. He tries his best to look for the way to get food. This is the proof of his commitment to stay in Africa.

3.1.4. Working at the Crystal Merchant’s Shop

After cleaning the crystal, Santiago asks for food. The crystal merchant invites Santiago to eat out. At this time, Santiago’s spirit to look for the hidden treasure is suddenly disappeared because the crystal merchant’s response to Santiago’s statement about the money he needs to get to Egypt:
The merchant laughed. “Even if you cleaned my crystal for an entire year … even if you earned a good commission selling every piece, you would still have to borrow money to get to Egypt. There are thousands of kilometers of desert between here and there.” (47)

The statement above weakens Santiago’s spirit. He is more hopeless when the crystal merchant adds that he can give Santiago the money he needs to get back to his country. This statement really diminishes his spirit. It becomes the reason why Santiago decides to work for the crystal merchant and said that he needs the money to buy some sheep, not to go to Egypt (47). The dilemma ends at this point. He has already decided to work for the crystal merchant to earn money to buy some sheep.

The reason of choosing is the fact that Santiago is someone who does not have anything in this new continent. He does not have knowledge about the continent, he cannot speak the language, he does not have the money, and also he does not know how far the Egyptian pyramids are. This point signifies that Santiago is a realistic one. He considers his own ability whether he is able to continue the journey or not. This aspect also influences his pending journey to the Egyptian pyramids and working at the crystal merchant’s shop.

As the proof of his responsibility towards his previous decision to work at the crystal merchant’s shop, Santiago works hard and seriously. He offers the crystal merchant two innovative ideas, to build a display case, and to sell a tea in the crystal glass.

The day he passes with the crystal merchant involves him in some debates with the crystal merchant. Through those debates, the writer examines the
different perspectives between Santiago and the crystal merchant. Those differences are used to distinguish him from the crowd, the crystal merchant.

The debate begins in the first month he works at the crystal merchant. It happens when Santiago offers to build a display case for the crystal. According to Santiago, they need to take the advantage when the crystal merchant’s business improved (54). On the other hand, the crystal merchant is afraid if the people pass, they would break his crystal (52). Santiago disagrees with the crystal merchant’s perspective, Santiago argues “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 shepherd (52).”

Santiago’s awareness of the consequences he may take is implied by the statement above. His courage is followed by his responsibility to run the risk of his choices. Unlike Santiago, the crystal merchant is considered as someone who is afraid of running the risk that is why the crystal merchant does not want to make any innovative progress.

Two days later, the merchant explains his reason of declining Santiago’s idea of making a crystal display. The crystal merchant stated that Santiago and he are not like Hassan, the rich merchant. If he makes a mistake, it doesn’t affect him much. But they two have to live with their mistakes (53). This reason really differentiates the crystal merchant from Santiago. Santiago, in the previous dilemma, made a mistake by giving all his money to the robber. It affects him so much but he does not have to live with his mistake. Santiago tries to improve his mistake and does something. It shows that he has commitment when he already decides to do something.
The crystal merchant continues his talk. He denies Santiago’s claim that he has never had dreams of travelling. He tells Santiago that he still dreams of having a pilgrimage to Mecca, to complete the five obligations. When he was young, he wanted to save his money to start his crystal shop. He wanted if he is rich, he could go to Mecca. Unfortunately, he could never bring himself to leave someone in charge of the shop. According to him, crystals are delicate things.

Then, he continues his statement to Santiago, “you dream about your sheep and the Pyramids, but you’re different from me, because you want to realize your dream. I just want to dream about Mecca…. But I’m afraid that it would all be a disappointment, so I prefer just to dream about it.”

The crystal merchant’s statement illustrates the difference between Santiago and the crystal merchant. Most people do not pursue their dream because they are afraid of the risk they may run will disappoint them. It is not the same with Santiago, he rather concerns on the satisfaction of realizing his dream. The risk he may run is not something important to think about because he comprehends that every action obliges him to make commitment to accept the following consequence.

The display succeeds to attract many people to come to the shop. Afterward Santiago tempts the crystal merchant again to make new innovation. Santiago encourages the crystal merchant to sell tea in the crystal glass. This offer is really innovative because there is no one sells tea in the crystal glass. By selling tea in that way, the crystal merchant will get double profits because the consumers would enjoy the tea and want to buy the glasses.
After the shop is closed, the crystal merchant gives his argument. He is afraid of changing his way of life if his shop is expanded because the crystal merchant does not know how to deal with change (57-58).

The crystal merchant continues his talk to Santiago:

“You have been a real blessing for me. Today I understand something I didn’t see before: every blessing ignored becomes a curse. I don’t want anything else in life. But you are forcing me to look at wealth and at horizons I have never known. Now that I have seen them, and now that I see how immense my possibilities are, I’m going to feel worse than I did before you arrived. Because I know the things I should be able to accomplish, and I don’t want to do so.” (58)

The crystal merchant’s statement shows that Santiago inspires him so much. It is Santiago who makes the crystal merchant becomes aware of himself. On the contrary, Santiago is a person who has a high self-awareness of what he wants, how he reaches it, and what his responsibility is.

3.1.5. Continuing the Journey to the Pyramids

After working in a crystal merchant for eleven months and nine days, Santiago has much money. The money he has is enough for him to buy a hundred and twenty sheep, a return ticket to Spain, and a license to import products from Africa into Spain (60). This confuses him whether he should go back to Spain or keep trying in pursuing his dream, a hidden treasure in Egyptian pyramid. This
situation is similar to the first dilemma he faces since Santiago is in a good life and he has to leave it to be able to reach his dream.

Santiago said to the crystal merchant that he leaves the shop because he has the money to buy his sheep and the crystal merchant also has the money to go to Mecca. Before giving his blessing to Santiago, the crystal merchant comments that “…you know that I’m not going to go to Mecca. Just as you know that you’re not going to buy your sheep (61).”

The crystal merchant’s statement above shows that the crystal merchant believes Santiago’s spirit will not diminish. After living together for eleven months, the crystal merchant really knows how Santiago is. Santiago is completely different from him since the first time they meet. Moreover it also signifies that the crystal merchant’s perspective towards his dream is different with Santiago’s. While the crystal merchant prefers always dreaming about it, Santiago likes to see his dream comes true.

The decision making process begins when Santiago packs his belongings. At this time, he finds his old shepherd’s pouch (61). The stones remind him about the old king and all the king’s statements. This memory eventually does not influence him to decide to go to the Pyramids because after finding the stones Santiago decides to go back to Spain and become a shepherd. When he chooses that option, he thinks that maybe it is better for him to do what the crystal merchant does, never tries to realize his dream (64). He tries to firm this decision, but the decision does not make him happy. The unhappiness he feels after choosing to go back to Spain illustrates that his point of view about the happiness is not the same with the crystal merchant’s perspective.
Then, Santiago enters the bar where he entered at the first time he arrived in Africa. Here he tries hard to consider what he loses or gains from each choice. He also traces the reason back why he prefers to be a shepherd. He finally knows that it is caused by the fact that he already understands sheep; they are no longer a problem, and they can be good friends (65).

Santiago also thinks the possibilities if he chooses to continue to go to the Pyramids. In his opinion, he thinks that he can always go back to be a shepherd because he never forgets how to care for sheep (64). If he could not find it, he can always go home, to become a shepherd or a crystal salesman again. Santiago is also aware what makes him afraid to continue his journey is because he does not know how the desert is (65). After thinking about the two choices, Santiago decides to continue his journey. Soon after deciding, Santiago “suddenly felt tremendously happy…. Maybe the world had other hidden treasure, but he had a dream, and he had met with the king. That doesn’t happen to just anyone! (65).”

This dilemma really explores Santiago’s subjectivity. It shows by the fact that when Santiago makes decisions he asks himself about what his feeling is, whether he is happy or not by his decisions. I perceive the emergence of this feeling is a kind of concerning the self-satisfaction. Moreover, his consideration does not rely on what the crowd says. That is why his consideration is based on his subjectivity. Although the recall of his dream is caused by the appearance of the stones and the memory of Melchizedek, Santiago’s act of asking back himself signifies that Santiago still makes his own consideration which is based on his subjectivity.
After deciding to continue the journey to the Pyramids, Santiago goes to the warehouse to be able to find a caravan which leaves for Egypt. At the warehouse, Santiago meets an Englishman who is an educated person. It is stated that the Englishman has been ten years at the university. First he studies Esperanto then he knows how to speak Esperanto. Later he studies the world’s religious, and he finally understand all the major religions well. His travelling aims at finding the one true language of the universe (66-67).

When Santiago enters the warehouse, the Englishman ignores him because the Englishman is reading a book. Santiago thinks that the Englishman is unfriendly (68). While waiting for the caravan, Santiago tries to do what the Englishman does, reading a book, but he could not concentrate because:

He still had some doubts about the decision he had made. But he was able to understand one thing: making a decision was only the beginning of things. When someone makes a decision, he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision.

When I decided to seek out my treasure, I never imagine that I’d wind up working in a crystal shop, he thought. And joining this caravan may have been my decision, but where it goes is going to be a mystery to me. (68)

The question revealed above does not aim to question the choice he makes before, but it rather emphasizes the mystery of the future risk which he may run. This thought signifies that Santiago experiences the dread. Moreover, the
statement also illustrates Santiago’s responsibility towards his previous decision since he tries to stick to continue his journey to the Pyramids.

At this time, Santiago could go back to Spain but there is an incident which makes him forget about lamenting his mystery risk. When Santiago tells to a stranger and the Englishman about his stones, Urim and Thummim, which he gets from a king, the stranger responds:

“Not at all. It was shepherds who were the first to recognize a king that the rest of the world refused to acknowledge. So, it’s not surprising that kings would talk to shepherd.”

And he went on, fearing that the boy wouldn’t understand what he was talking about, “it’s in the Bible. The same book that taught me about Urim and Thummim. These stones were the only form of divination permitted by God. The priests carried them in a golden breastplate. (69)

The stranger’s statement really empowers Santiago because Santiago, as someone who ever became a shepherd, thinks that he is special as what the stranger said. His meeting with the king and also his willing to recognize the king are his own experiences which do not happen to anyone. Moreover, Santiago thinks that he is special because he already receives the stones which are considered as the only form of divination permitted by God.

Afterward the Englishman’s statement about the omen is surprised Santiago. The Englishman said that “everything in life is an omen (70).” In this circumstance, the stranger and the Englishman gives an effect of companion.
Although Santiago does not know the two people but Santiago experiences the feeling of sharing the same idea.

His beginning meeting with the Englishman shows how different Santiago and the Englishman are. The Englishman really concerns with the scientific matters that is why the Englishman such an ignorance person towards everything but the scientific matters. Santiago is someone who pays attention on what is going on his surround. He tries to comprehend many little things which could be considered unimportant by other people such as the king and the stones.

3.1.6. Leaving Al-Fayoum Oasis

The caravan must stop at the oasis because the tribal war occurs in the desert. The leader of caravan chooses the oasis because it is a neutral place. At the oasis, Al-Fayoum, Santiago meets a woman named Fatima. This woman causes a dilemma for him. This desert girl impresses him so much. Santiago loves her and plans to stay in the oasis in order to marry Fatima. As he stated that “I came to tell you just one thing. I want you to be my wife. I love you (95).”

In his opinion, Fatima may be his treasure so he needs not to go to the Egyptian Pyramids to find the hidden treasure (115). However, Santiago is already near to the Egyptian Pyramids. That is why he confuses to choose whether staying at the oasis to be able to marry Fatima or leaving the oasis to look for the treasure.

Everyday Santiago goes to the well to meet Fatima (96). He tells her about his life. One day, Fatima said to him that she fears nothing because she is a part of his dream, a part of his Personal Legend. Fatima wants him to continue his
journey. She believes that if she is really a part of his dream, he will come back someday (97).

Hearing Fatima’s statement, Santiago is very sad. The next day, Santiago tells Fatima about his concept of love that love requires people to stay with the people they love (97). Fatima responds him by saying that “I’m a desert woman, and I’m proud of that. I want my husband to wander as free as the wind that shapes the dunes. And, if I have to, I will accept the fact that he has become a part of clouds, and the animals, and the water of desert (98).” This statement confuses him because Santiago has to deal with Fatima’s concept of love which is distinct from possession and no separation (99).

When this dilemma has not been overcome yet, there is another dilemma. It occurs after he tells to the tribal chieftains about his prognostication that there would be an army comes to the oasis (105). His prognostication is true, that is why the tribal chieftain presents him fifty pieces of gold and asks him to be the counsellor of the oasis (113). The tribal chieftains’ offer is really interesting because it enables him to stay close to Fatima.

After telling about his vision to the tribal chieftains, Santiago meets a strange horseman who challenges Santiago to meet him at the sunset if the army really comes to the oasis (111). At the sunset, Santiago meets this horseman who later known as the alchemist. They have a conversation and the alchemist said to him that “when a person really desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream (114).” This statement reminds Santiago about the old king. He understands that the alchemist is there to help him toward his Personal Legend (114). Santiago questions the presence of the alchemist. The
alchemist answers that he is only going to point Santiago in the direction of his
treasure (115). Santiago disagrees with the alchemist, according to him he has
found his treasure, he has camel, the money from the crystal shop, and he has fifty
pieces of gold (115). The debate still continues between Santiago and the
alchemist:

“But none of that is from the Pyramids,” said the alchemist.
“I also have Fatima. She is a treasure greater than anything else I
have won.”

“She wasn’t found at the Pyramids, either.”

In the last meeting, the alchemist asks Santiago to sell his camel and buy a
horse. The alchemist also invites him to come to his tent again the following
night. The following night, Santiago comes with a horse. The alchemist inquires
Santiago to show him life out in the desert because only those who can see such
signs of life are able to find treasure (116).

Santiago is able to find a life in the desert, the omen that is needed by the
alchemist. According to the alchemist, it is important because the Pyramids are
surrounded by the desert. The alchemist said that he is going to guide Santiago
across the desert. But Santiago insists that he wants to stay at the oasis because he
found Fatima and she is worth more than treasure (118).

Then, the alchemist ensures him by saying:

“Fatima is a woman of the desert,” said the alchemist. “She knows
that men have to go away in order to return. And she already has
her treasure: it’s you. Now she expects that you will find what it is
you’re looking for.” (118)
This statement is the same with what have been said by Fatima. But Santiago still doubts that choice. Santiago once asks the alchemist how if he decides to stay. Then, the alchemist tells him what will happen if he stays at the oasis. In the first year, Santiago will be a counsellor of the oasis and he will marry Fatima. In the second year, Santiago will remember about the treasure. The omens begin to speak of it, and he will try to ignore it. In the third year, the omens will continue to speak of his treasure and Personal Legend but he tries to ignore it. At that point, the omens will tell him that his treasure is buried forever. Then, in the fourth year, the omens will abandon him because he has stopped listening to them. Santiago will be dismissed from his position as the counsellor but he will be a rich merchant, with many camels and a great deal of merchandise. The last is he will spend the rest of his days knowing that he did not pursue his Personal Legend, and it is too late (119-120).

When Santiago comes back to the oasis with the alchemist, Santiago says to the alchemist, “I’m going with you”. After saying it, he immediately felt peace in his heart (121). This statement shows that Santiago is not the one who just follows what the other says; in this point is the alchemist’s statement. The peace he feels illustrates that Santiago’s subjectivity plays important role as the centre of consideration in decision making process. Moreover, his choice is really different opposed to the crowd, especially about the concept of love. Although in the first time of meeting, Santiago’s concept about love is opposed to Fatima’s concept but he tries to consider about the other extraordinary background of desert people which influences Fatima’s perspective. After thinking about it, then Santiago prefers going to the Pyramids, to find the hidden treasure.
In the very beginning of the journey, Santiago still thinks about Fatima. His thinking about Fatima signifies that Santiago experiences dread, he is afraid of being apart from his lover. Afterward, the alchemist said to him not to think about what he has left behind. Santiago agrees with the alchemist, as he said that “men dream more about coming home than about leaving (123).” Here the alchemist has the same function as the old king of Salem, Melchizedek, to encourage Santiago to firm his decision and tempts him to keep on concentrating his goal, Personal Legend. Santiago’s response to the alchemist’s statement illustrates that he concerns on the future because the future keeps him alive and makes him high-spirited person who is able to pass all the obstacles in order to meet Fatima again.

3.2. Santiago’s Decision Making Seen from Søren Kierkegaard’s Existentialism

This section is divided into four points which are related to Santiago’s process of decision making. The first point is to analyze Santiago’s freedom. Then, in the second point, the writer discusses Santiago’s dread. Later, the analysis examines Santiago’s experiences related to the concept of ‘truth is subjectivity’ and ‘the crowd is untruth’. The last point of the discussion is about the presence of community in Santiago’s decision making.

3.2.1. Freedom

Santiago’s experiences when he deals with his dilemmas signify that he has the freedom of choosing because he has to consider each choice. Santiago’s
freedom is responsible freedom. This responsibility is revealed on his action to take all the risk of his choices and his commitment to stick to his decisions although he faces many obstacles.

In the first dilemma, Santiago thinks about the two choices whether becoming a priest or a traveller. Being a traveller allows him to wander along the country. Moreover, Santiago thinks that travelling can give him many experiences about God and His being (8). Unlike becoming a priest which could limit his chance to get new experience, becoming a traveller will make him an open-minded mind as he said, “I couldn’t have found God in the seminary, he thought, as he looked at the sunrise (10).” It is sufficient for him to have the knowledge which he gets from the seminary, the knowledge about God and man’s sin.

The responsibility he has after he makes decision to become a shepherd is Santiago takes all the consequences such as being separated from his family. It is a new situation that he must face. Being a shepherd also means that he has to be alone, his sheep is the only friend he has. Those things do not make him sad and fell lonely.

Being a shepherd also means that Santiago only has a temporary shelter. He brings a jacket and a book along his journey. Sometimes the jacket’s weight annoys Santiago but he tries to remember how helpful the jacket is, to warmth him when the night is cold (8). He also has a book which he reads in the day and he uses it as a pillow when he sleeps (3). Those illustrate that Santiago enjoys his days as a shepherd by accepting the consequences. It is the proof of his responsibility towards his decision.
In the second dilemma, Santiago also considers two choices whether to become a shepherd or to look for the hidden treasure. Being a shepherd does not promise him to be able to meet the merchant’s daughter again. However, the option of looking for the hidden treasure requires Santiago leaves his well-steady life as a shepherd because he already has sixty sheep. But this choice also does not promise that he could find the hidden treasure. Those two choices are understood well by Santiago. The following is Santiago’s consideration:

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. There was also the merchant’s daughter, she wasn’t important as his flock, because she didn’t depend on him. Maybe she didn’t remember him. He was sure that it made no difference to her on which day he appeared: for her, every day was the same, and when each day is the same as the next, it’s because people fail to recognize the good things that happen in their lives every day that the sun rises. (27)

The statement above obviously explains that Santiago is aware that the flock is something he is accustomed to. Then, for him, the merchant daughter is not important as his flock. Those consideration means that the flock is the most important of all. Not only considering about the flock and the merchant’s daughter, Santiago also thinks about his will of travelling as the following:

The boy felt jealous of the freedom of the wind, and saw that he could have the same freedom. There was nothing to hold him back except himself. The sheep, the merchant’s daughter, and the fields
of Andalusia were only steps along the way to his Personal Legend.

(28)

The narration above illustrates that Santiago associates his freedom with the wind. His will of travelling is getting stronger and he understands it well. As he decides to look for the hidden treasure, he lives his choice. It is a proof of his responsibility towards his choice. Santiago sells his flock without lamenting his effort to expand his flock for two years. This occurrence explains that Santiago does his decision wholeheartedly which means that if he already decides to do something then he does it seriously.

Then, in the third dilemma, after losing the money, Santiago considers the choice whether to go back to Spain or to stay at Africa. Santiago’s reason why he wants to go back to Spain is “when I had my sheep, I was happy, and I made those around me happy. People saw me coming and welcomed me (39).” On the other hands, staying in Africa is a problem for him because Santiago does not have money and he does not know anything about Africa, especially the language spoken at Africa (39).

Santiago decides to stay at Africa. As a person who has responsibility towards his choice, Santiago tries to be consistent. Although he encounters the obstacle, losing his money, Santiago keeps trying to focus on his goal to find the hidden treasure. As the narrator exclaimed:

After all, what he had always wanted was just that: to know new places. Even if he never got to the Pyramids, he had already travelled farther than any shepherd he knew… As he mused about these things, he realized that he had to choose between thinking of
himself as the poor victim of a thief and as an adventurer in quest of his treasure. (42)

The statement above shows that Santiago is conscious that staying in Africa means that he has to change his perspective towards Africa. Africa is not a strange land, but it is a new land which must be learned. Moreover, Santiago tries his best to look for the way to get food as the proof of his commitment to stay in Africa. He must be tough to be able to pass the obstacle. This action shows that Santiago’s decision is something which has to do with responsible actions.

When Santiago decides to work at the crystal merchant’s shop, Santiago does it seriously. His innovative ideas to expand the shop are the proof of his seriousness. His innovative ideas are he offers the crystal merchant to build the display for the crystal (52) and to sell tea in the crystal glasses (57). It obviously explains that Santiago is responsible towards his choice.

After Santiago earns much money, Santiago is in dilemma between going back to Spain and continuing the journey to the Pyramids. Santiago always wants to go back to Spain because he already understands the sheep; the sheep is not a problem for him (65). On the other hand, Santiago does not know anything about the desert where his treasure is located. However Santiago makes his own consideration as follows “I don’t know if the desert can be a friend, and it’s in the desert that I have to search for my treasure. If I don’t find it, I can always go home. I finally have enough money, and all the time I need. Why not? (65).” The statement explains that Santiago knows well the reason of choosing each choice. When Santiago decides to continue his journey to the Pyramids, Santiago knows
the worst possibility of his choice that is he does not find the treasure. But he already considers it and thinks that it is not a big deal for him because he has already enough money and time to go back to Spain. This shows that Santiago thinks about each choice carefully.

In the warehouse, Santiago is free to choose whether he continues his journey to the Pyramids or goes back to Spain. When he chooses to go to the Pyramids, he is worried of the future risk he may run. But then his meeting with the Englishman and the stranger empowers him to continue his journey to the Egyptian Pyramids. His decision to leave the warehouse is the proof of his consistency towards his previous decision to continue his journey to the Pyramids.

In the last dilemma, Santiago decides to do something opposed to his fundamental wish, to marry Fatima. He decides to leave Fatima, the one whom he loves. It happens after Fatima asks him to find the treasure because for Fatima, a desert woman is the one who knows everything about waiting the one she loves to come back to her (98). This statement is also the same with the alchemist’s statement about the desert woman (118). After deciding it, Santiago is responsible towards his choice. He convinces himself that “men dream more about coming home than about leaving (123).” Santiago attempts to focus on his goal, to arrive at the Pyramids, find the treasure, then to come back to Fatima.

Those analyses above show that Santiago’s freedom is similar to Kierkegaard’s concept about freedom. As it is stated in David E. Roberts’s *Existentialism and Religious Belief*, that man is free, but he is conscious of responsibility, of remorse, of guilt for what he has done (8). In making choices, Santiago is responsible towards his decision by taking all the consequences.
Santiago knows what he wants to be because he has the freedom and he uses his freedom to explore what he wants. As Roberts points out that “there can be no simple answer to what man should do with his freedom. In one sense, he must himself create the answer by using his freedom to find out just what he wants to become. In this situation, man can not avoid the dilemma. It is caused by the uncovered inner conflicts in facing the freedom (Roberts 8).” Through the explanation above, it is obvious that Santiago himself does not avoid dilemmas because he makes choices.

3.2.2. Dread

Moreover, the freedom leads Santiago to dread. This dread is continuously experienced by Santiago because he has freedom of choosing. If Santiago simply follows the crowd, Santiago does not need to feel the dread because the crowd already decides which choice he should take. His confusion of deciding implements the dread. The dread always occurs when he makes decisions, in the six dilemmas above, because Santiago has the inner conflict when he makes decisions. This is comparable to Kierkegaard’s concept about dread. According to Kierkegaard, “dread is a symptom of ‘freedom’s appearance before itself in possibility’... (Robinson 110).” The symptom of dread is analogous to what happens in Santiago’s process of decision making. Decision making is the manifestation of Santiago’s freedom. Before Santiago is able to achieve his freedom, Santiago feels a kind of feeling which is called dread. The emergence of dread is caused by the fact that Santiago does not know which decision he should take and what the future risk he may run.
Dread also exists after the process of decision making. After he decides something, Santiago sometimes feels afraid of making mistakes by choosing something wrong. This happens when someone robs his money after Santiago decides to look for the treasure, the narrator said:

… He recalled that when the sun had risen that morning, he was on another continent, still a shepherd with sixty sheep, and looking forward to meeting with a girl…. But now, as the sun began to set, he was in a different country, a strange in a strange land, where he couldn’t even speak the language. He was no longer a shepherd, and he had nothing, not even the money to return and start everything over. (39)

Throughout the narrator’s voice above implicitly signifies Santiago’s feeling. The decision to look for the hidden treasure leads him to lose all his money. At this time, Santiago experiences dread after he makes choice because he thinks that he makes a mistake by deciding to look for the treasure.

When Santiago decides to continue the journey to the Pyramids, he also experiences dread, as stated in the following:

He still had some doubts about the decision he had made. But he was able to understand one thing: making a decision was only the beginning of things. When someone makes a decision, he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision.

When I decided to seek out my treasure, I never imagine that I’d wind up working in a crystal shop, he thought. And joining this
caravan may have been my decision, but where it goes is going to be a mystery to me. (68)

This narrator’s statement indicates the emergence of dread. The dread arises after he makes choice. The emergence of dread is caused by the mystery risk he may take.

Another dread which Santiago feels is when he decides to leave Al-Fayoum oasis because leaving Al-Fayoum oasis means leaving Fatima whom he loves. In the very beginning of the journey, Santiago once thinks about Fatima (123). Thinking about Fatima signifies that Santiago feels dread. This dread occurs after Santiago decides to leave Al-Fayoum oasis.

Those are similar to what is stated in a book Introducing Kierkegaard that “the knowledge of that fundamental freedom is always there, and the anxiety never quite goes away (Robinson 110).” That is why dread always exists in every freedom, whether before and after making decisions.

3.2.3. ‘Truth is Subjectivity’ and ‘the Crowd is Untruth’

After analyzing Santiago’s decisions, the writer argues that Santiago’s processes of making decisions are based on his subjectivity. When Santiago makes decisions, Santiago always asks to himself about what he wants to choose. This makes Santiago himself becomes the centre of truth for his own decision.

Being someone who really pays attention to his subjectivity, Santiago’s choices are different from the crowd’s opinion. The concept about ‘the crowd is untruth’ is automatically related to the concept of ‘truth is subjectivity’. It is
related because when someone believes that 'the crowd is untruth' in many ways his subjectivity becomes the centre of the truth for himself.

In the first dilemma, Santiago chooses to become a shepherd because he himself wants to be traveller, wandering along the world. Becoming a shepherd allows him to travel. This reason of deciding to be a shepherd shows that his basic consideration is his own subjectivity. His subjectivity also influences him not to pay attention to the crowd’s opinion and the pride he may get if he follows the crowd. Furthermore, Santiago’s decision, to be a shepherd, is opposed to the crowd’s opinion which is to become a priest (8). His belief that the crowd is untruth leads him to criticize the one who belongs to the crowd. It is stated in the first dilemma that even Santiago himself criticizes his parents, as he said that his parents work hard just to have food and water, like the sheep (8). He thinks that he is different from his parents because in his life he has a dream and he attempts to pursue his dream so he has a meaningful life, his life is different from the sheep’s life.

Later, in the second dilemma, when Santiago wants to look for the hidden treasure, the narrator said that “the boy felt jealous of the freedom of the wind, and saw that he could have the same freedom (28).” By associating the freedom of the wind and his own freedom illustrates that Santiago’s subjective consideration becomes the basic reason of looking for the treasure. It is not the only subjectivity in this dilemma. Then, in the second meeting with Melchizedek, there is a butterfly flutters around them when they talk about the treasure (29). For Santiago, it is a good omen. This belief strengthens his previous decision. Those become his reason of choosing.
Moreover, the decision to look for the hidden treasure is completely opposed to the crowd. By choosing it, Santiago also chooses to leave his job as a shepherd by giving one-tenth of his flock to the king and selling the rest of it (28). If the crowd already have well-supported life, the crowd would not leave it. In this dilemma, there is a presence of a baker as the crowd who prefers not to leave his well-steady life as a baker to reach his dream, as a shepherd (22-23).

The third choice made by Santiago is also based on his subjectivity. When he is hopeless since a man robs all his money, Santiago finds the stones given by Melchizedek, the old king. As remembering about the use of the stones to read the omens, Santiago asks the stones. When Santiago asks about whether he should pursue his Personal Legend or not, the two stones fall to the ground. For him, it is an omen. He realizes that it is he himself who must make the decision (41). His belief in the omen is the proof of his subjectivity which leads him to decide to stay in Africa. Moreover, Santiago’s decision to stay in Africa is opposed to the crowd. If the crowd is in the same condition as what happens to Santiago, the crowd would choose the opposite choice to Santiago’s while Santiago decides to stay in Africa and continue his journey to the Pyramids although all money he has is robbed (39).

When Santiago chooses to work at the crystal merchant’s shop. Santiago makes decision based on his subjectivity. His belief that he needs money to continue his journey to the Pyramids leads him to accept the crystal merchant’s offer. Although this choice is the only choice which is not opposed to the crowd, Santiago’s subjectivity still plays important role in making decision. His pending
journey is caused by the fact that he has no money. It is a logic decision because without money he could not continue his journey.

After working for the crystal merchant for almost a year, Santiago earns much money which is enough for him to start a better life in Spain (60). Unfortunately, this choice does not make him happy. On the other hands, he is happy when he decides to go to the Pyramids to find the treasure (65). The happiness and unhappiness when he decides each choice is the emergence of his subjectivity. His subjectivity becomes his own consideration to continue the journey to the Pyramids. Santiago’s choice is opposed to the crowd, the crystal merchant. Although the crystal merchant already has the money to go to Mecca, the crystal merchant does not want to pursue his dream. He prefers only dreaming about it (61). The crowd only measures his happiness by doing no mistakes in his life so he/she does not need to live with his/her mistake. Santiago’s belief that the crowd is untruth makes him criticizes the crystal merchant. The crystal merchant is described as someone who avoids taking the risk, does not attempt to pursue his dream, and does not want significant changes in his life that is why the crystal merchant does not make any innovation which could expand his shop. The crystal merchant’s perspective is really different from Santiago’s perspective. Compare to the crystal merchant, Santiago is someone who is willing to take the risks of his choices and he is aware that it is a must for him. Then, Santiago works hard to attain his dream. Santiago always makes any changes in his life; everyday is not the same for him because every day is a new experience. Santiago is not afraid of making any innovative ideas in living his life. If the crowd possesses much money just like Santiago, the crowd is not willing to do the journey because it spends
money for nothing, the unsure matter. This choice is opposed to the crowd’s opinion.

Still in the same dilemma, after deciding to continue the journey to the Pyramids, Santiago goes to the warehouse to find a caravan which transports him to Egypt. Here he once doubts his decision to go to Egypt. But his meeting with the Englishman and a stranger firm his decision. In this dilemma, his subjectivity also becomes his reason of going to Egypt (70). The presence of the Englishman draws a distinction between Santiago and the Englishman as the crowd. The Englishman really concerns with the scientific matters that is why the Englishman is such an ignorance person towards everything but the scientific matters. On the contrary, Santiago is someone who pays attention on what is going on his surround. Santiago tries to comprehend many little things which may be considered unimportant by other people such as the king and the stones.

In the last dilemma, Santiago plans to stay in the oasis because he loves Fatima, a desert woman. In this dilemma, Santiago deals with Fatima’s perspective about love which is against his. For Fatima, love does not require someone from achieving their dreams (97). This kind of statement is also said by the alchemist. His belief in the wisdom of the alchemist becomes his reason of leaving Fatima, his lover, to go to Egypt (121). Here, his subjectivity plays important role of making decision because his own subjectivity determines his choice.

Moreover, Santiago’s choice to leave his lover, Fatima, is opposed to the crowd’s opinion. Santiago himself presents a story about the married shepherds he knows. The married shepherds have difficult times to convince their wives when
they have to go to the distant fields because love requires them to stay with the people they love (97). From Santiago’s story about the married shepherds, it draws a distinction between Santiago and the married shepherds. Then, it also distinguishes between Santiago’s choice and the common concept about love which requires the people to stay with their lovers.

### 3.2.4. The Community

The concepts of ‘truth is subjectivity’ and ‘the crowd is untruth’ strengthen Santiago’s subjectivity, in many ways, he is not influenced by the crowd’s opinion. Santiago makes himself as the centre of truth. Although Santiago is portrayed as someone who still opens himself to the community, the one who shares the same idea and or simply supports his own idea. Santiago still listens to the community’s opinion although in his decision making he makes his own consideration. In the first dilemma, when Santiago determines to be a shepherd, there is a presence of his father in the process of decision making. The following is the conversation between Santiago and his father:

“But I’d like to see the castle in the towns where they live,” said his son.

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

“Well, then I’ll be a shepherd!”
The conversation above explains that Santiago accepts his father’s opinion about becoming a shepherd. It shows that Santiago still opens himself for the opinion of the person surrounds him which supports his decisions.

Then, in the second point of the dilemma, there is a presence of Melchizedek before Santiago chooses to look for the hidden treasure in Africa. Melchizedek has a function as someone who shares his thought to Santiago (16-33). Santiago still listens to Melchizedek because Melchizedek has the same point of view about travelling and pursuing the dream.

In the third dilemma, when Santiago decides to stay at Africa, there are some presences of the memory about his previous meeting with Melchizedek. Santiago remembers all Melchizedek’s statements, about the universe, the stones, the omens, and also about Personal Legend (40). Although there is no person who is presence around him, but the memory of Melchizedek gives him a significant impact, he keeps struggling and staying in Africa. The memory of Melchizedek’s statements explains that Santiago is still longing to receive the community’s opinion which supports his decision.

Santiago’s decision to work at the crystal merchant’s shop is also accompanied by the presence of the crystal merchant. It is Santiago who comes to the crystal shop with a high spirit. But all the crystal merchant’s utterances influence him to be hopeless. The crystal merchant laughs at Santiago while saying, “even if you cleaned my crystal for an entire year... even if you earned good commission selling every piece, you would still have to borrow money to get to Egypt. There are thousands of kilometres of desert between here and there (47).” The merchant’s laugh shows how silly Santiago’s decision is. This
statement really makes him desperate because he does not know that the desert is
far away. The crystal merchant’s opinion affects his decision. At that time, Santiago receives the crystal merchant’s offer because Santiago needs money to
buy some sheep (47). The crystal merchant also has a function as the community
because the crystal merchant helps him in his difficult time by supporting him to
earn money.

After nearly a year, Santiago works hard and only thinks only to put aside
even money to return to Spain with pride. Santiago accidentally finds the stones
given by the old king. This recalls his memory about the old king and gains his
will to travel (62). Although in the process of decision making, Santiago makes
his own consideration without any other people’s presence but the previous
Melchizedek’s statements encourage him to continue his journey.

The presence of a stranger who tells him about Urim and Thummim, and
also the Englishman who tells him about the omen really encourage him to leave
the warehouse and find the hidden treasure. The stranger’s statement makes him
happy to be at the warehouse (69). Later, the Englishman said to him about the
omens. Both, the stones and the omen make him feels like being accompanied
because those two people share the same knowledge with him. This feeling
motivates him to leave the warehouse. It also describes that there is a presence of
community in the process of decision making done by Santiago to overcome this
dilemma.

The last point of Santiago’s dilemma is when he decides to leave Al-
Fayoum oasis. In this dilemma, Santiago is accompanied by the presence of the
alchemist and Fatima, his lover. Then, the alchemist is another person who
encourages him to do what is asked by Fatima (116-121). Those two people are considered as the community which accompanies him to decide to continue his journey to find the hidden treasure.

Santiago’s existence is something which has relationship with community, the smaller scope of society. The community is the people who share the same perspective with him. As stated by Anthony D. Storm that “what holds community together is that each is an individual, and then the idea (“Public”).” Santiago’s existence is the existence which still needs the presence of other people which are called as community. Community is not the crowd or ‘the public’. The distinction between the public and the community is stated by Bretall that “a public is neither a nation, nor a generation, nor a community, nor a society... (266).” Storm also points out that “every individual in the community guarantees the community; the public is a chimera (“Public”).” It means that individual in the community supports each other.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist tells about a young Spanish boy named Santiago. The plot of the story shows that Santiago experiences six dilemmas in living his life. The dilemmas are being a shepherd, looking for the hidden treasure in Africa, staying in Africa, working at the crystal merchant’s shop, continuing the journey to the Pyramids, and the last dilemma is leaving Al-Fayoum oasis.

Santiago’s process of making decisions seen from Søren Kierkegaard’s existentialism explain about Santiago’s freedom, dread, subjectivity, the influence of the concept ‘the crowd is untruth’ towards Santiago’s decisions, and also about the presence of the community in Santiago’s decision making. Because of the freedom he has, Santiago must consider each choice in every dilemma. If Santiago does not have the freedom, he just follows what is chosen by the crowd, Santiago does not need to make considerations. By having the freedom of choosing, Santiago is conscious of what he chooses and he is responsible to take all the consequences of his choices.

Santiago’s freedom leads him to experience dread. The dread occurs before and after Santiago makes decision. Santiago feels the dread because Santiago himself must consider each choice. His confusion when he makes decision is the result of the dread he feels. Moreover, the dread which occurs after he makes choices is caused by Santiago sometimes doubts his previous decision making since he is afraid of choosing something wrong.
Moreover, Santiago’s subjectivity becomes the basic reason of making decisions. That is why his consideration plays significant role. He does not care about the crowd. He is regardless the crowd’s opinions so his decisions are against the crowd. The crowd is considered as the untruth because the crowd possesses the power. If the individual wants to be authentic individual, Santiago must not follow the crowd.

However, Santiago still listens to the community, the people who share the same idea and or simply support his idea. The presence and support from some people around him, the community, also give significant effect since it makes him able to choose his own choices regardless of the crowd’s opinion. The feeling of being accompanied and supported by the community completely strengthens the process of making decision. The presence of the community does not break the concept of truth is subjectivity although Santiago still listens to the community’s opinion since Santiago keep asking back to himself whether he is happy or not with the decisions he makes.
WORKS CITED


SYNOPSIS

Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy, has a dream about finding a treasure in the pyramids of Egypt. A gypsy woman and an old man claiming to be a mysterious king advise him to pursue it. “To realize one’s destiny is a person’s only obligation,” the old man tells him. “And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

With the courage of an adventurer, Santiago sells his sheep and travels to Tangiers in Africa. After a thief steals his money, Santiago takes a job with a crystal merchant who unwittingly teaches Santiago important lessons for his long journey ahead. After working at the crystal shop for a year, Santiago earns enough money to cover his losses and return home. But then something unexpected happens. On a desert caravan, Santiago meets an intriguing Englishman. The Englishman’s passion for knowledge and his relentless quest to uncover the secrets of alchemy inspire Santiago to pursue his own dream of finding the treasure. As the Englishman searches for the two hundred year old alchemist who resides in the desert oasis, Santiago falls in love with a young woman, Fatima. Exposed to the greatest and eternal alchemy of all, love, Santiago thinks he has found the treasure. But the greatest test of all is yet to come. With the help of the alchemist, Santiago completes the last leg of his journey, dangerous and infused with discoveries of the most profound kind, to find that the treasure he was looking for was waiting for him in the place where he least expected (“Plot Summary”).
APPENDIX

Fw: the alchemist

Paulo Coelho <felicidade.cornwell@yahoo.com>

Dear Lily,

I cannot begin to express my gratitude for your kind message. Knowing what my readers are feeling and going through in their lives only inspires me to continue my work.

Nothing is impossible, as long as you wish it with all your heart.

Paulo Coelho
www.paulocoelho.com
www.paulocoelhoblog.com
http://www.warriorofthelight.com

> At 01:24 27/05/2008 -0300, you wrote:
>>Nome = lily Hasanah
>>email = lily_hasanah@yahoo.com
>>Pais = Indonesia
>>subject = The Alchemist
>>Mensagem = Dear Paulo, I'm a student of Airlangga University in Indonesia. Now,
>>I'm using your novel "The Alchemist" as my thesis for bachelor degree. I
>>apply Kierkegaard's existentialism to analyze Santiago's decision makings.
>>For me, The Alchemist is a wonderful novel.
>