

**DECIPHERING THE HOBBITS IN THE MOVIE OF *THE LORD
OF THE RINGS; THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING***

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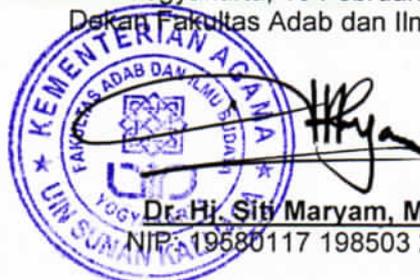
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Deciphering the Hobbits in the movie of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

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ABSTRACT

Film is a product of culture which has been develop in such way with a variety of genres. Film also considered as the new media of literature which is usually used by some film-makers to deliver the idea or concept. In a film, not only the work of literature which is served but also the ideas and elements of audio-visual. A film genre like fiction is usually used to express an extraordinary imaginative thought about the existence in the world. In this research, the writer analyzes a fiction movie *The Lord of the Rings* which is adapted from the novel by J. R. R Tolkien with the same tittle. This film has three different separate parts. The first part is *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the second is *The Two Towers*, and the last is *The Return of the King*. From those parts, the writer focuses on the first part which tells about the involvement of Hobbits, a strange, unique, and weak creatures in a war. This research aims to identify and explore the character of Hobbits. This research uses the objective approach, and applies the structuralism theory by Jonathan Culler, as well as film theory by Christian Metz. Culler's basic theory is about how the meaning of the particular object is produced. As the result of this research, the writer concludes that some elements of the Hobbits such as their nature, their lifestyle, and the landscape are resemble the rural folk, Pastoral. Regarding the process of referring the meaning, applying Culler's concept, those meanings are obtained by examination of the Hobbits start from their physical appearance, non-physical appearance, roles, and their homeland as well.

Key words: The Fellowship of the Ring, meaning, the Hobbits.

Deciphering the Hobbits in the movie of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

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ABSTRAK

Film merupakan hasil dari suatu budaya yang kini sudah berkembang sedemikian rupa dengan berbagai macam aliran. Film juga disebut sebagai media baru sastra yang biasa dipergunakan oleh para pembuat film dalam menyampaikan ide atau gagasan. Didalam film, tidak hanya karya sastra yang disajikan tetapi juga ide dan unsur audio visual. Aliran film seperti fiksi, sering digunakan oleh beberapa pembuat film untuk menyampaikan pemikiran imajinatif yang luar biasa yang berisikan tentang suatu kehidupan di dunia. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis meneliti sebuah film fiksi yang berjudul: *The Lord of the Rings* yang diadaptasi dari novel karya J. R. R Tolkien dengan judul yang sama. Film ini memiliki tiga seri yang berbeda dimana seri pertama berjudul *The Fellowship of the Ring*, seri yang ke-dua berjudul *The Two Towers*, dan seri yang terakhir berjudul *The Return of the King*. Dari ketiga seri tersebut, penulis fokus pada seri yang pertama dimana seri pertama tersebut menceritakan tentang keterlibatan beberapa makhluk yang aneh, unik dan lemah yang disebut dengan Hobbit dalam sebuah perang. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dan menyelidiki makhluk yang bernama Hobbit. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan objektif dengan mengaplikasikan teori strukturalis dari Jonathan Culler, serta teori film dari Christian Metz. Konsep dasar strukturalis Culler adalah bagaimana sebuah arti atau makna dari suatu objek itu dihasilkan. Sebagai hasil dari penelitian ini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa beberapa hal dari Hobbit seperti cara hidup dan pemandangan alam tempat tinggal mereka itu menyerupai penggambaran dari Pastoral. Dengan mengaplikasikan teori Culler, makna tersebut diperoleh berdasarkan penelitian tentang Hobbits mulai dari fisik, non-fisik, peran, dan juga lingkungan tempat tinggal mereka.

Kata kunci: Persaudaraan Cincin, makna, hobbit.

MOTTO

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given
to us

~J. R. R. Tolkien~



DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to

My beloved father and mother

My dearest sister

My big family

English Department of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

and

The altar of knowledge



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Assalamu'alaikum wr. wb.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTON

1.1. Background of Study

The Hobbit is difficult character to analyze. They are small, living in the hole in the ground, a hole that full of food supply. But, Stanton states “Hobbits are not *little* people: they are not to be confused with the miniatures elves and fays who hide in cowslips, nor with leprechauns, nor with any other race beings whose essence is cuteness” (Stanton, 2001: 7). In another statement, there is comparative quotation which is taken by Stanton from Tolkien’s conception about Hobbit that “The Hobbits are just rustic English people, made small in size because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination-not the small reach of their courage or latent power” (Stanton, 2001: 7). Physically, the body of hobbits is short. They live as farmers. Then, the shortness of their body reflect their life as farmers, not their simply appearance. Thus, the character of Hobbit is important to investigate since they are the center character of the story.

The Fellowship of the Ring movie begin in the Shire, a place of Hobbits. The Hobbits are hairy-footed race of diminutive peoples of imaginary world of Middle-earth (Gilsdorf, 2012: 3). The Hobbits through their life as farmers. They have been farming in four areas of the Shire for many years. These farmers really love food and very skilled in beer-making, but they are not skilled in fighting. They are also very skilled in handy craft-making, but they are not skilled to make

shoe. People can find any handy craft in the Shire but they can never find shoe because it has been remarkable that Hobbits seldom-never in fact- wear shoes.

Thus, the Hobbits are not quite important to the people of Middle-earth. They are unknown as the warrior or great warrior. They are nothing more than dirty farmers and unwise creature who are greedy for food. The Hobbits, indeed, seem to be weak and powerless. Yet, surprisingly, this movie tells about the involvement of this race in the war of the Ring that focuses on the character Frodo Baggins as the Ring bearer. He offers himself to take the powerful Ring in the Mount Doom of Mordor, a place where Sauron forged the Ring with his malice and cruelty to control all people life. Thus, it makes Hobbits interesting and significant to investigate that the smallest and the weakest race becomes the one who carries the most difficult task.

The Lord of the Rings serves some various characters. The story of fiction that combined with imaginary characters are exciting to analyze. From all characters in the movie, the Hobbits are the most attractive characters. They are phenomenal, unique, and interesting characters. The existence of the Hobbits is quite phenomenal. If Elves, Dwarves, and Wizard are already existed in the mythology, the Hobbits are newcomers. They are new invention to the work of fiction (Haviřová 2005: 50). The physical appearance of Hobbits is unique. They are characterized as small people, and in fact, they are smaller than the Dwarves on that movie. Moreover, the role of the Hobbits is incredible. The only character who able to take the Ring in a good intention is Hobbit. When the other characters try to seize the Ring for their own ambition and desire, a Hobbit is able to carry

the Ring of evil for people safety. Those are some aspects of the Hobbits that make the writer interests to find out the deciphering of Hobbits.

Recently, people can enjoy the story of *The Lord of the Rings* by movie. Movie is one of the popular culture that serve a visual views which emphasizes style, spectacle, special effects and images. According to Cambridge, film or movie “is a series of moving pictures, usually shown in a cinema or on television and often telling a story” (Cambridge Dictionary). If literary works in the previous era are identical with prose, poem, and play which mostly about tragedy, comedy, and romance, a film presents as a new media of literary works that serves many various genres: fiction, action, horror, documentary, and many more. As soon as the cinema began to see itself as a narrative entertainment, the idea of adopting the novel-that already established of narrative fiction-as source material got underway, and the process has continued more or less unabated for ninety years (McFarlane, 1996:6).

The Lord of the Rings is one of fiction movies by New Line Cinema made based on novel by J. R. R. Tolkien. The writer has reasons why choose the movie than the novel. Movie and novel are closely related. Both of them are told something, something that dramatically but just in a movie, the way tells the story is by getting dialogue and visual. Movie which is showed visually gives different impressions to audiences and support the atmosphere of story and scene of the movie. On that account, movie always evoke the bigger reaction and emotion than novel to people when they watch. The spectators do respond to film, in a form of reactions, or verbal commentaries during or after the film (Stam, 1992:36).

Moreover, film can also reflect our society and reality. The sound film is 'superior' in 'capturing reality', and in giving the masses the opportunity to consider what it has captured (Strinati, 1995:77).

The Fellowship of the Ring is the first part which becomes the beginning of the whole story of *The Lord of the Rings* that introduces the characters: Hobbits, Men, Elves, Dwarves, Wizards, Orcs, Nazgul, and other strange creatures. Though Hobbit is the most unlikely creature imaginable in that movie, but in fact, the existence of the Hobbits is important to the plot, and Frodo Baggins, a Hobbit, is the main character on the movie.

In a literary work, especially a movie, character is an important element of the story. Apart from which one is the main character and which one is not, it is quite necessary to know first about character and characterization. According to M. H. Abrams about character;

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action (Abrams, 1971:21).

There are two kinds of character: flat characters and round characters. According to William Kenney,

The simple, or flat, character is less of a representation of human personality than the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession in a character. Foster calls this kind of character flat because we see

only one side of him... the complex (round) character is obviously more lifelike than the simple, because in life people are not simply embodiment of single attitudes. It called round by Foster because we see all sides of him (Kenney, 1966:28)

Something that set or establish the characters in a story, it's called characterization. The representation of persons in narrative and dramatic works (Baldick, 1990:37). There are two kinds of characterization: showing and telling. In showing, the author merely presents his characters talking and acting, and leaves the reader to infer what they say and do. In telling, the author himself intervenes authoritatively in order to describe his characters (Abrams, 1971:21).

Every story requires a main character to develop the story and achieve some purposes in a story. In a fiction works, every element including character is a works product of imagination which is not real. The character which only exists in mind, character is not only as a complement in a work. Character is one of the intrinsic element that commonly used by the author to deliver the message or purpose of the story. Nevertheless, in this movie, most of the elements-including the characters-have no relation to the author though this movie based on the novel. Thus, the writer uses one of the types of critical theory and practice, the objective criticism. Objective criticism approaches the work is something which stands free from poet, audience, and the environing world. It describes the literary product as a self-sufficient or integer, or as a world-in-itself, which is to be analyzed and judged by "intrinsic" criteria (Abrams, 1971:37).

Apart from the analysis of Hobbits, some values in the movie can be found in Islamic perspective. Entirely, the theme of the movie is a struggle between good and evil. However, the theme of the first part as the object of the research is a friendship. The conception of friendship in the movie directly portrays the conception of brotherhood in Islamic perspective. Muslim tenet of brotherhood is said in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-Hujurat ayah 10:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوِيكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ١٠

Which means: The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear God, that you may receive Mercy (Al-Hujurat: 10).

1.2. Problem Statements

The writer formulates the problem statement based on the background and the scope of study as follow:

1. Though the Hobbits are small, innocent, and weak, but the task that is given to one of them is truly hard and difficult. How can this be explained?
2. How does the Islamic perspective regard the character of Hobbits in *The Fellowship of the Ring* movie?

1.3. Objectives of Study

The research of *The Fellowship of the Ring* movie aims to identify the character of Hobbits and to relate and integrate the character of Hobbits with the Islamic perspective.

1.4. Significances of Study

1. Practically, this paper can mainly be used as reference for the study on the analysis deciphering of "*The Lord of the Rings*" both movie and novel. This research also has several intentions:
 - a. For student, it hoped that this research can encourage them to learn and know more about deciphering and stimulate them to analyze it.
 - b. For lecturer, it can also be used for further supporting sources for those who interested in deciphering and cultural study.
 - c. For litterateur, it hoped that they will develop their literary works in every aspect, especially in deciphering.
 - d. For people in general, it can engage them to read and watch literary works, and learn it.
2. Theoretically, it is hoped that this research can be used as helpful reference to understand the content of *The Lord of the Rings* and how the semiotic theory applied in this research. This research is also hoped that it can be used by student especially of literature, cultural study and even, lecturers, litterateur, and those people who love fiction and drawing art in common.

1.5. Literature Review

The Lord of the Rings has been discussed in some graduating papers. Most of those discussion analyzes the novel version. Thus, it makes the writer interest in analyzing the movie version. There are many discussion about *The Lord of the Rings* with different topics around the world. Therefore, in this section, the writer only states the works which discuss *The Lord of the Rings*.

The first part of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Fellowship of the Ring* has been discussed in graduating paper of Sanata Dharma University student, Widyastuti Budiningsih (2005). The title of her graduating paper is *The Relationship between the Members of The Fellowship of the Ring in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings*. In this paper, Budiningsih analyzed the nine protagonist characters of the Fellowship of the Ring's members. She analyzed the characteristics each members then how the relationship between each other. Because they are from different race and different culture, Budiningsih used the psychological approach to answer the relationship between them. Budiningsih concluded that the relationship arises from their differences; race and culture. He stated that it represents the social beings. People unable to live by themselves. People must need other people.

Another work which analyzes *The Lord of the Rings* is graduating paper by Petrus Ronald Adi Prasetyo (2011) entitled *The value of Heroism in the Characteristics of Frodo Baggins in The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. Prasetyo analyzed the novel version which focused on character of Frodo Baggins. Frodo is the most important character and the center character of the

story. In his paper, Prasetyo used theory of character and characterization to reveal the heroism aspect of Frodo Baggins. As the result, Prasetyo concluded that the heroism aspect of Frodo is already existed inside him. It based on Frodo characterization that Frodo is brave, courageous, and sacrificial.

Then, the other work is graduating paper by Samuel Arief Gunawan (2004) under the title *Middle-Earth Races in Tolkien's The Lord of The Rings as the Representation of the Modern British Society*. In his comparative study, Gunawan used socio-cultural historical approach to reveal the similarities between the races of Middle-earth and the social classes of modern British society. As the result, he concluded that there are similarities between them like ambitious, party loving behavior, and social relationship. The similarities are also based on J. R. R. Tolkien's social background at that time.

Some literary reviews above make the writer interested to analyze the character in *The Lord of the Rings*. However, in this paper the writer chooses the movie version and focuses on the character of Hobbits or the race of Hobbits. Therefore, this research is different than the other works.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

1.6.1. Structuralism Theory

Since the research analyzes the character which is character is one of the structure of the movie, the main theory used is structuralism. Structuralism, basically, is a theory of language, founded by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure rejected the idea that language is a word-heap gradually

accumulated over time and that its primary function is to refer to things in the world (Selden, 2005:63). According to him words are sign which has two aspects: the signifier (what is written or spoken) and the signified (what is thought when the word is written or spoken). It means that the meaning is perceived not through the word's relation to something but in understanding it as a part of system of relationship, as a part of a sign-system (Carter, 2006:42). Thus, structuralism is not only for analyzing the language after all, but also for analyzing social phenomena.

In analyzing film, the writer prefers structuralism by Jonathan Culler to Ferdinand de Saussure. Culler accepts the premise that linguistics affords the best model of knowledge for the humanities and social sciences. However, he sees the structure not in the system underlying the text but in the system underlying the reader's act of interpretation. His main endeavor is to shift the focus from the text to the reader (Selden, 2005:75).

In his book, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, Culler states that structuralism focuses on how meaning is produced. It seek not to produce new interpretations of works but to understand how they can have the meaning and effects that they do (Culler, 1997:124). In analyzing the deciphering of Hobbits, this research explains how the Hobbits can have the meaning not what the meaning of the Hobbits. Summary, this research aims to explain the process of how the Hobbits have the meaning from what they do and say.

1.6.2. Film theory

Since the object of this research is movie, film theory is used as the secondary theory of this research. Film theory is an evolving body of concept designed to account for the cinema in all of its dimension (aesthetic, social, physiological) for an interpretive community of scholars, critics, and interested spectators (Stam, 1992:6).

This theory is used to analyze the cinematographic language (Moving photographic image, record photographic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, and writing-diegesis) of the movie, so the audiences/readers can understand the hidden messages of particular scenes.

1.7. Methods of Research

1.7.1. Type of Research

This research is a library research because it takes a text and *The Lord of the Rings* movie as the object of study and uses many materials from books and other writings to support subject of research. Besides, the thesis uses descriptive method because it does not include any statistic calculation and enumeration. It is descriptive technique that explain about the problem statements, whereas the method of collecting data is qualitative

1.7.2. Data Sources

The main data of this research is the epic fiction movie: *The Lord of the Rings*. Thus, the data which are analyzed including the movie and the movie

script. The writer also uses some critical works about the movie and some literary books to support the data analysis of this research.

1.7.3. Data Collecting Technique

In this step, the writer uses a method of documentation. The documentation done by the writer in the main step by making categories:

1. The writer categorizes the whole characters into protagonist and antagonist character,
2. The writer elaborates the physical and non-physical of the whole characters,
3. The writer compares and contrasts each characters.

1.7.4. Data Analyzing Technique

This step is the most important in the research. In this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative method to analysis data. This research divided into three steps.

- a. The main source of data, "*The Lord of the Rings*" screen play, are read repeatedly, and comprehended deeply. Then researcher makes the list of data, selects the data that deal with the problem and excludes the data that are unnecessary.
- b. After collecting data and classifying the data, the researcher applies theory.
- c. After describing and analyzing, researcher infers the entire to certain

conclusion.

1.8. Thesis Organization

Chapter one provides the background statement as to why the discussion of *The Lord of the Rings* is significant and interesting to study. It also explains the objective of study, which is to describe the kind of Hobbits or from what is Hobbit formed and describe the deciphering of Hobbits. These two questions are inquired using expressive Semiotics theory.

Chapter two provides the content of the play; the intrinsic element. In addition to the intrinsic element, it also elaborates the describing the terms in The Fellowship of the Ring series of *The Lord of the Rings*

Chapter three is the constituent part of the research or the analysis of data research. This research elaborates the result of the research and along with the explanation. Each sub section is the explanation of the problem statements. Then the Last Chapter will answer the question of problem statement in introduction

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this research are to understand the deciphering of the Hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings*' first part movie: *The Fellowship of the Ring* and how the writer's perspective as Muslim regarding the Hobbits in *The Fellowship of the Ring* is. To get the most reasonable answer, the writer analyzes the physical and non-physical of the Hobbits, compare and contrast the Hobbits to the other characters, and analyzes the plot of how the Hobbits become better than other characters regarding the task as the Ring bearer.

From the discussion in the previous chapter, the writer get some points from the Hobbits. These some points are the physical, non-physical, existence, and the task that the Hobbit takes. Physically, the Hobbits are weak. Because of their body is small ad their daily activities are farming, smoking pipe, eating foods a lot, and drinking beer, those make the Hobbits looks brittle in the self-defence. Furthermore, the Hobbits are not warriors or great warriors. Though some of Hobbits involved in a war, but they tended to run away when they meet the enemies.

The weak body of the Hobbits is made clear by their existence as the villagers. As the villagers, they never practice self-defense and the like. The only activity of the Hobbits is till the earth. However, they have strength beyond their physique. Though

they inclined to be powerless but they are hospitable and close people. Because they always do their activities together in in the field and meeting each other every day, those make them become friendly and kind. People will feel a sense of kinship in the Shire. The Shire looked like a house which occupied by one family.

Moreover, the existence of the Hobbits resemble the pastoral. Start from the landscape till the people who occupy there. The Shire is a beautiful land which contains of green grass, shading trees, and humming bees. The Shire is dwelling place with natural landscape. If the landscape is natural then the dweller must be natural too. The Hobbits are the innocent and pure people. They are innocent because they did not love war or confrontation. They are people who love peace. They pure because they only do what they can do: till the earth, farming and shepherding. The landscape of the Shire and the lifestyle of the Hobbits are truly resemble the pastoral vision.

Considering the movie, the Hobbits are the only race who dare to take the task. Frodo Baggins bravely accepts and offers himself to take the prominent task as the Ring bearer. The task is not easy. It is the heaviest duty and the most dangerous path. Frodo has already realized that something that he brings is the enemy's weapon. He has to confront many strong enemies directly before he makes his move in the Mount Doom to destroy the Ring. The point here is the weakest folk is able to carry

the heaviest task. Then the writer concludes that the Hobbit is better than any other creatures in this movie.

The Hobbits are different from the other characters like Men, Elves, Wizards, and Dwarves. Those other characters are brave and strong. But the Hobbits are weak. Besides, they did not have any skill of fighting. They look like some cowards who cannot do anything except run away when they meet the enemies. The Hobbits are not like Gandalf who has the power of magic. They also differ from Gimli who has extraordinary stamina in fighting and adventuring. The Hobbits are the farmers of the Shire who have the pure powers to endure the Ring's power. They did not fall into Sauron's temptation even they wear it. The powers that the Hobbits have are the power of love and care. Those are the reasons why the Hobbit is better to take the most difficult and dangerous task as the Ring bearer than the other characters.

In conclusion, what the Hobbits can do is the other characters cannot do. This makes the writer conclude that the change of the world is not always by the "big" person and great power. The all need to change the world is the big effort. What the Hobbits do in this movie prove that something small can carry a change. The story of the movie about the long and dangerous journey of hobbits is the representation of human real life. Every human beings must have a purpose in life. Whether it big or small, they definitely face with some obstacles and deal with them.

Furthermore, the conception of heroism of Frodo Baggins and the existence of the Hobbits are already stated in Sunnah. In Islam, the hero is someone who struggle in the good way and sacrifice for good thing with all he has. The existence of the Hobbits as the strangest people of Middle-earth is called ghuraba'. Ghuraba' is the people who considered to be the strangest by many people around them.



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