

تحري الأسطورة الشخصية والسعادة في رواية الخيميائي
لباولو كويلو: تحليل نموذجي من خلال عدسة يونج

**Investigating Personal Legend and
Pursuing Happiness in Paulo Coelho's *The
Alchemist*: An Archetypal Analysis
Through Jungian Lens**

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الكلمات المفتاحية: باولو كويلو، الخيميائي، نظرية النماذج الأولية، النماذج اليونغية،
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**Keywords: Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*, The Archetypes Theory,
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المخلص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة مفهومين رئيسيين: البحث عن الأسطورة الشخصية والبحث عن السعادة في رواية الخيميائي لباولو كويلو. ستمت الدراسة من خلال تطبيق نظرية النموذج اليونغي لتحليل وتتبع بعض الشخصيات الرئيسية في الرواية. وتظهر الرواية أن السعادة تأتي من سعي الفرد لمواصلة رحلته الداخلية نحو أسطوره الشخصية، مما يعمق أهمية الجانب النفسي للشخصية. تؤكد الرواية أن السعادة الحقيقية تكمن في تحقيق السلام الداخلي وليس في الأشياء المادية. سيتم اختبار الشخصيات في الرواية، وخاصة سانتياغو، وفقاً لنظرية النموذج الأصلي (الاركي تايب). وتسلط الرواية الضوء على أن طريق الفرد لتحقيق الأسطورة الشخصية والسعادة ينبع من رحلته الداخلية للوصول إلى ذلك. وهكذا فإن الشخصيات الرئيسية في الرواية رمزية لأنها تمثل التحدي والقوة الداخلية التي تواجه الأفراد في رحلتهم نحو السعادة وتحقيق الذات. علاوة على ذلك تبين الدراسة قيمة الرواية على المستويين الفلسفي والنفسي. كما أنها تزيد من فهم القارئ للطريق إلى السعادة الحقيقية وتلهمه للسعي نحو الأسطورة الشخصية.

Abstract

This study explores two main concepts: searching for a personal legend and pursuing happiness in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* (1988). The study will be conducted by applying Jungian archetype theory to analyze and trace some archetypal characters in the novel. The novel shows that happiness comes from an individual striving to continue his inner journey toward his personal legend, which deepens the importance of the psychological side of the personality. The novel stresses that real happiness lies in achieving inner peace rather than being related to material things. The characters in the novel, mainly Santiago, will be examined according to the Archetype theory. The novel highlights that the individual's way to achieve personal legend and happiness results from his/her inner journey to reach that. Thus, the archetypal characters in the novel are symbolic as they represent the challenge and the inner force that face the individuals in their journey towards happiness and self-actualization. The study demonstrates the novel value on the philosophical and psychological levels. It also increases the reader's understanding of finding real happiness and inspires them to strive toward personal legend.



1.1 Introduction

The Alchemist (1988) is considered one of the prominent literary works by the Brazilian author Paulo Coelho. The novel has philosophical and psychological dimensions in presenting the personality of the characters. This study examines the main character, Santiago, to show the difficulties that he faced on his journey to find a treasure in Egypt. All the challenges that he faced during his journey showed his inner strength to achieve his personal myth.

Jungian archetype theory (1910-1920) will be applied in this study to focus on the archetypes and the symbols in the chosen text. Archetypes theory was developed by Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, as a tool that can be used to analyse the characters psychologically and to show the relationship between the consciousness and the unconscious (Vinodini & Avinash, 2023). This theory crossed cultural differences to talk about shared collective symbols, which are known as archetypes.

Paulo Coelho is well known for his numerous fiction where the message and the storyline are always related to our personal lives (Mayer & Maree, 2017). The main core of the novel *The Alchemist* is to offer the readers some educative messages as it tells the spiritual story of Santiago, an Andalusia shepherd boy, who desires to travel in search of a treasure as extravagant as any ever found. When the readers start to read the novel, they learn how Coelho has endowed the book with a deeply allegorical form from the beginning to the end of the novel. By just introducing the main protagonist, Santiago, Coelho tries to pass on a very significant and widely appreciated message: discovering oneself and pursuing our dreams. Also, the message that Coelho is more likely to advocate in *The Alchemist* is the concept of a personal legend. In every part of recognizing and accomplishing what is foreordained, a personal legend is essential from Coelho's point of view towards success.

On the other hand, the theme of happiness is interestingly brought about in the novel between Santiago and other characters. Santiago expects nothing but to live his life, make his personal journey, and accomplish his goal. It is not hard to identify what Coelho likes to connect with the readers through the happiness of Santiago (Onedani & Wahyono, 2018). But happiness, to some extent, is depicted of the start of everything. As Santiago was predestined to go on the journey, Coelho seems to signify that happiness must be present in a person in order to commence the journey of self-discovery. Happiness is the key to initiate a dreamer's dream.



1.2 Background of Paulo Coelho's "*The Alchemist*"

Paulo Coelho, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1947, is one of the bestselling and most influential contemporary authors. He wrote *The Alchemist* in only two weeks in 1987 (Mayer & Maree, 2018). What is interesting about the book is that it wasn't an instant success despite being undeniably deep and captivating. Coelho has said that the work was inspired by his personal, experiential, and philosophical response and represents his endeavour to embody and convey what he perceives as the inherent virtue and capacity of human nature (Hart, 2004). This emphasizes the crucial importance of connectedness and engaging with the world, suggesting that human life, if it is to be meaningful and happy, involves an understanding of one's role within the broader spectrum of nature. It is this expression that acts as a central message in '*The Alchemist*' and acts as a source of inspiration for the hero's endeavours to realise his state of happiness and personal legend within the world of the novel.

1.3 Significance of Personal Legend and Happiness

"*The Alchemist*" focuses on love, personal fulfilment, adventure, and happiness. The characters seek their personal legend and true happiness by following their desires. For the main character Santiago, there is also a lot that can be learned and adapted as the reader is also taken through the journey of personal legend. This is also so much more happiness than with lesser things that were in the way of reaching that happiness. The love for Fatima in "*The Alchemist*" is also a love that does not hold another back while also searching for personal legend. The love depicted in "*The Alchemist*" symbolizes the fulfilment of happiness that one should seek in his/her personal journey, specifically in the context of love that enhances and enriches life. This love extends beyond the physical realm and encompasses profound life experiences and transformative journeys towards one's personal legend. (Raina, 2017). Happiness that results from the fulfilment of personal legend signifies something that is the most worth in life; that is, living life to its utmost rather than holding back for happiness. Also, it is when finding a personal legend that happiness is achieved.

2. Methodology

The research employs a descriptive qualitative method which is taken as the method of analysis, is about discussing, analyzing and finding the reason of Santiago's ways to search for his personal legend in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. By using the descriptive qualitative method, the researcher aimed to overcome the problem by systematically describing the data.

The Archetypes theory will be applied in this study, and through Archetypes, the basic character types of literature have been studied in



depth by writers such as Carl Jung. Based on the theory of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, who coined the phrase "archetypes", archetypal theory in literature will be used to examine the recurring character types and symbols throughout different forms of literature (Simurdic, 2022). Jung thought that important parts of the "collective unconscious" and the deepest level of the psyche comprised material that has been passed down from one generation to another and has been described and portrayed many times in literature from many different times and places. Archetypes can be described as blueprints or models, like a psychologist who describes "types", like the "hero" or the "mother figure" about human behaviour or personality. In literature, archetypes are used as familiar patterns of characters or plots that are recurring (Garry & El-Shamy, 2017). They are the original model forms in which all other things of the same kind are made, representing a perfect example of a particular type of thing. Jung's theory suggests that in doing so and by grouping certain characters together (as archetypes often appear in groups), the minds of the audience can be swayed, for example, to make a character more endearing or to make a villain more hated. This can be applied to the study of literature and media effects.

According to Jungian archetypal theory, the human psyche and the cosmic images that shape our experiences and perceptions are explored in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist* (Naseem et al., 2022). We can look at the main characters presented in the novel, such as Santiago, Fatima, and the crystal merchant, as representative symbols of different aspects of the human psyche, its desire for happiness, and personal myth.

3. Discussion

3.1. The Archetypes and the Quest for Personal Legend and Happiness

As a rich source of models, *The Alchemist* stimulates readers' deep thinking by introducing the main character, Santiago, a young shepherd on his journey of searching for meaning and self-actualisation. He encounters various archetypes, including the Crystal Merchant, the Englishman, and the Gypsy, who teach him valuable life lessons. Through his adventures, Santiago learns to listen to his heart and follow his destiny, ultimately discovering his personal legend and achieving happiness. The archetypal Santiago's Ways of pursuing personal legend and happiness can be shown through some key archetypes in the book as follows:

3.1.1 The Hero

Santiago, the young Andalusian shepherd, embodies the hero archetype and exemplifies many traits of the classic hero archetype, as outlined in Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory (Vogler, 2017). At the beginning of his journey, as he feels dissatisfied with his ordinary life, Santiago hears the 'call to adventure' in his recurring dream of finding treasure in the Egyptian pyramids. He was behind the adventure, "But ever



since he had been a child, he had wanted to know the world, and this was much more important to him than knowing God and learning about man's sins" (Coelho, 19) as the narrator stated.

The narrator explains that Santiago has always known that his purpose in life was to travel despite attending a seminary until the age of sixteen. After Santiago finally finds the courage to confess his dream to his parents, who wish for him to become a priest, his father tries to take him out of a nomadic life. His father gives him three gold coins to buy his flock, hoping that owning his own sheep would keep Santiago home. Readers learn, however, that Santiago chooses to follow his heart and sets off on his quest. He decides to embark on a quest to discover his "personal legend", his destiny and purpose in life. This marks Santiago's separation from his ordinary world as he leaves home and crosses boundaries into unfamiliar lands. During his journey, he faces many challenges and trials. He perseveres through difficult situations, such as surviving in the desert without water. He also encounters helpful guides along the way, such as the crystal merchant and the Englishman, who provide wisdom and advice. The first adventure that he thought of was heading toward Egypt to find the treasure. When Santiago reaches the Egyptian pyramids and finds no treasure, "There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure" (Coelho, 126). In spite of that, he keeps pursuing his dream.

This can be seen as his 'ordeal', the most difficult test he must overcome. Anyhow, he believes that "When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too." (Coelho, 133). The fact that we are all part of a greater collective consciousness comes from the point that the more we raise our vibrations, the more we raise the vibrations of the entire world. Nevertheless, Santiago learns the real treasure is the knowledge and experiences gained during his journey of self-discovery. This lesson transforms him and marks his reward for fulfilling his personal legend. By the end of the story, Santiago has gained wisdom, courage, and character strength by facing adversity. He has achieved a sense of completeness and come to understand his place in the larger scheme of life. In this way, he grows as a person and illustrates the archetypal pattern of separation, initiation, and return, embodying the heroic protagonist who successfully undergoes the monomyth journey (Sadri, 2020).

Overall, through his quest for treasure and life purpose, Santiago fully inhabits the role of the classical hero, facing tests of mettle and emerging transformed with self-realization and personal fulfilment, demonstrating core elements of the hero's journey narrative.



3.1.2 The Mentor

The Alchemist himself serves as the mentor archetype, guiding Santiago along his journey and imparting wisdom and knowledge. In his first meeting with Santiago, Alchemist states “I’m going to guide you across the desert,” (Coelho, 133) as Santiago is at the beginning of his heroic journey and needs guidance.

The Alchemist recognizes Santiago's potential and acts as his teacher/guide. He educates Santiago about important concepts like following his personal legend and understanding the language of the world, “You must understand that love never keeps a man from pursuing his Personal Legend. If he abandons that pursuit, it’s because it wasn’t true love...the love that speaks the Language of the World” (Coelho, 108). He deciphers the omens and symbols that Santiago encounters, helping him interpret dreams and signs. As a mentor figure, he aids the hero in understanding the mysteries of his journey. He believes in Santiago when he doubts himself. He encourages the boy and boosts his confidence to persevere when challenges arise. Mentors support and motivate the hero. He provides strategic advice and puts Santiago in positions where he can learn and grow, such as joining the caravan. Mentors facilitate the lessons that propel the hero forward. While instructing Santiago, the Alchemist allows his agency to make his own choices. He empowers rather than controls the boy's development as a hero.

Ultimately, it is the Alchemist who helps Santiago find his treasure and realize his personal legend. As a mentor, he ensures the hero fulfills his destiny and completes his journey. He states, “On the seventh day, the alchemist decided to make camp earlier than usual. The falcon flew off to find game, and the alchemist offered his water container to the boy. “You are almost at the end of your journey,” said the alchemist. “I congratulate you for having pursued your Personal Legend.” (Coelho, 112)

Santiago is transformed by what he learns from the Alchemist. The mentor figure helps shift him from a boy to a self-actualized man through his teachings and belief in Santiago. So, in all these archetypal ways, the Alchemist perfectly serves as the wise, guiding mentor to young Santiago on his heroic journey of self-discovery.

3.1.3 The Quest

Santiago's quest for his Personal Legend is a central archetype in the story, representing the universal search for purpose and fulfillment (Khadka, 2011). At the beginning of his journey, Santiago feels unfulfilled with his life as a shepherd. He hears the call to embark on a quest when he learns of his recurring dream:

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, but



she wasn't as important as his flock because she did not depend on him. Maybe she didn't even remember him (Coelho, 34).

This dream represents his personal legend and the purpose or destiny that he must discover in his unique life. The quest for one's legend is a universal archetype; the Narrator adds, "People are capable, at any time in their lives, of doing what they dream of" (Coelho, 30). In following the signs to find his treasure in the Egyptian pyramids, Santiago undergoes a transformative heroic journey of self-discovery. This internal search for meaning and outer quest is archetypal components of a mythic hero's journey. Along the way, he perseveres through trials and encounters guides who impart wisdom to help him understand his path. These challenges and aids are part of the archetypal initiation process in searching for one's purpose. When he finds no physical treasure, Santiago realizes his true treasure was the knowledge and experiences gained. This represents the archetypal lesson that true fulfillment comes from within rather than without (Imran, et al., 2022).

By understanding his treasure, Santiago has achieved self-actualization and come into his power. Realizing one's legend is symbolic of reaching full potential and maturity. Santiago's journey serves as a universal myth illustrating how finding meaning and direction in life can transform an individual. It demonstrates the timeless human pursuit of understanding identity and virtue.

Hence, through his quest, Santiago exemplifies the archetypal heroic pattern of seeking purpose, undergoing challenges, gaining wisdom, and representing the innate human desire for significance captured in myths across cultures and time periods. His journey symbolizes the universal search for realizing one's personal legend.

3.1.4 The Oracle

Characters like the crystal merchant and the Englishman represent the archetype of the oracle, offering guidance and insight to Santiago along his journey. In mythology and storytelling, oracles provide prophecy or advice to help heroes on their quests (Mayer, 2017). Their guidance is crucial. Santiago "trusted in the old man, who had said that, when you really want something, the universe always conspires in your favor" (Coelho, 41). When Santiago first encounters the crystal merchant in the souk, the merchant provides insight into Santiago's path by revealing the significance of following his personal legend. The old man tells him "Life really is generous to those who pursue their Personal Legend" (Coelho, 145). Then, the old man "had spoken about signs and omens, and, as the boy was crossing the strait, he had thought about omens" (Coelho, 40).

Through his knowledge of crystal divination, the merchant acts as an oracle by helping validate and direct Santiago's journey. This empowers



him to continue by telling him that “ If God leads the sheep so well, he will also lead a man, he thought, and that made him feel better” (Coelho, 40) Later, the Englishman shares his wisdom when Santiago doubts pursuing his dream. Like oracles, he dispenses advice to bolster the hero's confidence through difficult periods. He tells Santiago “Maybe this is an omen,” said the Englishman, half aloud. “Who told you about omens?” The boy’s interest was increasing by the moment” (Coelho, 68)

Both characters have experienced esoteric knowledge and a communicative gift that gives their counsel credibility and importance. Oracles are distinguished by their expertise, and the Englishman added, “Everything in life is an omen,” said the Englishman, now closing the journal he was reading” (Coelho, 68). Their guidance aligns with Santiago's ultimate lessons and supports his transformation. Oracle predictions point the hero towards fulfillment of their destiny. While the Alchemist serves as the primary mentor, these secondary characters supplement his role by confirming that Santiago is on the right path at pivotal moments.

In mythology, oracles often appear episodically to protagonists, much like the crystal merchant and Englishman do for Santiago. So these supporting figures definitely encompass characteristics of the archetypal oracle who aids the mythic hero's journey through timely prophecy and insightful direction during his quest.

3.1.5 The Soul Mate

Fatima, Santiago's love interest, embodies the soul mate archetype, representing love, connection, and support on his journey. When Santiago first meets Fatima in Tarifa, there is an instant spark and connection between them. This reflects the archetypal nature of soul mates feeling drawn to one another. He declares that “I haven’t thought of other women since I met the merchant’s daughter. Looking at the sun, he calculated that he would reach Tarifa before midday” (Coelho, 21).

Fatima believes in and supports Santiago's quest to find his personal legend from the beginning. As a soul mate would, she understands him on a deep level and boosts his confidence in pursuing his dreams, “Remember that wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure” (Coelho, 105). She joins him on his journey, accompanying Santiago for important parts of his transformation. The soul mate walks side by side with the hero, providing companionship on their mythic quest; the narrator stated, “When we love, we always strive to become better than we are” (Coelho, 133).

Fatima teaches Santiago about following his instincts and introduces him to new perspectives. Soul mates often complement one another, with each partner helping the other grow. Fatimah brings Santiago’s spirit to pursue his happiness and brings him full excitement. “But my heart is agitated,” the boy said. “It has its dreams, it gets emotional, and it has



become passionate over a woman of the desert. It asks things of me, and it keeps me from sleeping many nights when I'm thinking about her” (Coelho, 115).

Their connection is presented as deeply meaningful and special. When they are separated, Santiago misses Fatima greatly. The soul mate bond leads to profound feelings of love, care and intimacy. She sadly says, “Maktub. If I am really a part of your dream, you'll come back one day” (Coelho, 90). The word ‘Maktub’ is quoted from the Arabic language by the author, which denotes ‘pre-decided by God’. Santiago, in his description of Fatima’s beauty, states that “When he looked into her dark eyes, and saw that her lips were poised between a laugh and silence, he learned the most important part of the language that all the world spoke the language that everyone on earth was capable of understanding in their heart. It was love.” (Coelho, 86). Even from afar, Fatima's presence continues to influence Santiago. Her love carries him forward, giving him strength during hard times. The archetypal soul mate inspires and uplifts their partner.

Ultimately, their reunion marks the completion of Santiago's inner transformation and the fulfilment of his legend, a journey that Fatima plays a key role in supporting from start to finish. Santiago keeps telling about his emotions toward Fatima,

So, I love you because the entire universe conspired to help me find you.... “And when two such people encounter each other, and their eyes meet, the past and the future become unimportant. There is only that moment, and the incredible certainty that everything under the sun has been written by one hand only. It is the hand that evokes love, and creates a twin soul for every person in the world. Without such love, one's dreams would have no meaning (Coelho, 87).

So through her love, belief, wisdom and companionship, Fatima epitomizes the soul mate archetype that companions the hero on his mythic quest for meaning and self-actualization.

3.1.6 The Treasure

The idea of the concealed treasure that Santiago seeks denotes the archetype goal or reward that one seeks in life (Adhikary, 2011). Readers can better comprehend the universal themes and messages throughout the story by examining these archetypes in *The Alchemist*. At the story's beginning, Santiago dreams repeatedly of finding treasure in the Egyptian pyramids. This establishes the "treasure" as his ultimate goal and quest. He says “Everyone on earth has a treasure that awaits him” (Coelho, 117). On a surface level, the treasure represents wealth, riches and material gain.

However, archetypally it symbolizes much more - the attainment of wisdom, fulfillment or self-actualization. The boy said “So that everyone will search for his treasure, find it, and then want to be better than he was



in his former life (Coelho, 133). The fact that the treasure is "hidden" adds to its symbolic meaning. It represents an intangible prize that one must undertake a journey and face challenges to find. Santiago tells about his determination to find his treasure, "When someone makes a decision, he is diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision" (Coelho, 66).

Therefore, traits of the archetypal treasure include that it is profoundly valuable or meaningful, life-changing, and often elusive or mysterious until earned through great effort (Miller & Miller, 1994). When Santiago discovers no physical treasure, he realizes its true meaning is the inner growth he achieved. This reveals that the archetypal treasure is really the lessons and self-knowledge gained. His newfound understanding of the significance of personal dreams and omens is revealed as his real reward.

Triumphing results in wisdom and insight.

Attaining the treasure marks the climax and the hero's ultimate success, tying their journey to the archetypal monomyth narrative of the quest. So through its elusiveness, importance and symbolic meaning uncovered, the treasure perfectly represents the archetypal goal driving Santiago's heroic transformation and internal fulfillment through overcoming adversity on his journey.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study helps the reader to have a deeper understanding of a personal myth and pursuing happiness in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* using Jungian archetypal theory as a tool to analyze and interpret the given text. This novel was based on a philosophy we learned through the journey of narrator Santiago, which is that happiness and personal fulfillment are achieved when a person follows his soul and pursues his personal vision.

We found that personal legend refers to the inner journey that an individual takes to discover his true identity and achieve the meaning of life that satisfies his deepest desires. The novel also makes clear that happiness does not lie in material wealth or external success but rather in connecting with the spirit and achieving inner peace.

Applying the Jungian archetypal theory, we find that the characters and events in the novel reflect deep symbols that express the balance and integration of different aspects of the human self. Archetypal characters and symbolic elements appear in *The Alchemist* to represent the inner forces and challenges an individual faces on his journey toward happiness and self-actualization.

It might be interesting in the future to investigate more novels and literary works using Jungian archetypal theory to understand personal myth and happiness more deeply. This research may contribute to inspiring readers and intellectuals to explore and analyze new literary works through



this exemplary approach, enhancing our understanding of humanity and contributing to improving the quality of our personal and social lives.

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