



## Dream and Reality Reflected in Coelho 's The Alchemist: Psychoanalytic Approach

Asset. Lect: Zainab Abdulhasan Ali Al – Musawi  
University of Kufa – College of languages – Persian department  
[zainaba.alsharaa@uokufa.edu.iq](mailto:zainaba.alsharaa@uokufa.edu.iq)

Asset. Lect: Anwar Abbas Merzah  
University of Kufa – College of languages – English department  
[anwara.aljbori@uokufa.edu.iq](mailto:anwara.aljbori@uokufa.edu.iq)

### Abstract

The Alchemist novel by “Paulo Coelho” is one of the most prominent novels that explain everyone's adherence to their dreams and not giving them up. Based on the psychoanalytic approach, the central character in the novel, Santiago, was analyzed. He is the person who followed his own dream, or his personal legend, and struggled to achieve this personal legend, which gives a positive impression in the structure of the novel's character based on the relationships between dreams and the reality that the main character lives. The researcher relied on the information contained in the novel The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho and the vision of the interpreters. Then the researcher analyzed the data using descriptive analysis. The statement of the research problem is to explain the relationships between dreams and reality in the novel using the psychoanalytic approach. The researcher reached two conclusions. The first is based on the structural content such as character description, plot, theme, setting, and language used. The second is based on the theory of psychoanalysis, as Santiago's character affects his reality, which makes the dream a reality. The cooperation between the id, ego, and superego was revealed through the novel.

**Key words:** the Alchemist, Freud, Dream, Reality, Psychology, Paulo Coelho.

### الحلم والواقع في رواية الخيميائي لباولو كويلو: دراسة تحليلية نفسية

م. م. زينب عبد الحسن علي الموسوي

جامعة الكوفة – كلية اللغات – قسم اللغة الفارسية

م. م. أنور عباس مرزة

جامعة الكوفة – كلية اللغات – قسم اللغة الانجليزية

### الملخص

تعد رواية الخيميائي لباولو كويلو من أبرز الروايات التي تفسر تمسك الجميع بأحلامهم وعدم التخلي عنها، وبناء على المنهج التحليلي النفسي تم تحليل الشخصية المركزية في الرواية سانتياغو وهو الشخص الذي اتبع حلمه الخاص، أو أسطوره الشخصية، وناضل من أجل تحقيق هذه الأسطورة الشخصية مما يعطي انطباعاً إيجابياً في تركيب الشخصية الروائية القائمة على العلاقات بين الأحلام وبين الواقع الذي تعيشه الشخصية الرئيسية، واعتمد الباحث على المعلومات الواردة في رواية الخيميائي لباولو كويلو ورؤية المفسرين، ثم قام الباحث بتحليل البيانات باستخدام التحليل الوصفي، بيان مشكلة البحث هو شرح العلاقات بين الحلم وبين



الواقع في الرواية باستخدام النهج التحليلي النفسي، وتوصل الباحث إلى استنتاجين، الأول، يقوم على المضمون الهيكلي، مثل: توصيف الشخصية، الحكمة، الموضوع، الإعداد، اللغة المستخدمة. أما الثاني، فيعتمد على نظرية التحليل النفسي، حيث تؤثر شخصية سانتياغو على واقعه الذي يجعل الحلم حقيقة. وقد تم الكشف عن التعاون بين الهو، والأنا، والأنا الأعلى من خلال الرواية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الخيميائي، فرويد، الحلم، الواقع، علم النفس، باولو كويلو.

## Chapter 1

### 1.1 Introduction

Reality is the true state of affairs that everyone can see when it happens, and reality cannot be avoided but faced. A dream is what a person aspires to achieve or acquire, and a dream does not embody deception or illusion, and that achieving a dream in the future is not impossible if plans are made and efforts are made that make its achievement possible (Hobson, 1998). In other words, a dream occurs when the subconscious mind is in the sleep phase and the content of dreams is not fully understood. And dream interpretations can have many meanings depending on the person's nature and situation in real life. (Hobson, 1998). The Alchemist is an objective novel that deserves reading and attention, as it refers to the relationship between dreams and reality embodied by Santiago's struggle to achieve his dream. The Alchemist also includes many amazing contents such as religion, race, traditions, and the symbol of God. The novel also indicates the moral values that people can learn in order to improve their personality. (Gay, 1995).

According to "Domhoff", a dream reflects the nature of waking life. Dreams affect a person's life, whether they are few or many. Dreams are essentially related to the reality that a person lives, such as the dream that Santiago lived, which made the dream a reality in Paulo Coelho's novel. (Domhoff, 1996, P. 65).

### 1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Many research papers have done some studies on psychological Approach for many literary works, yet few of them were related to The alchemist By Coelho, as thus this research paper Going to adopt Freud psychology more especially his theory of dream and dream Symbols to give new understanding to the play including his believes, Which assumes that the human psyche is divided into three parts: the ego, the id, and the superego. Which develop in different stages according to the nature of the person's life. Based on the central character in the novel, the research problem is that the ego is a part of the self. is "How to reveal the relations between dream and reality experienced by Santiago Reflected in The Alchemist novel".

### 1.3 The Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:



1. What is psychological theory and how it can be deduced in *The Alchemist* by Coelho?

2. What is Santiago's Dream?

#### **1.4 The Aim of The Study**

The study aims to reveal the relationship between the dream he seeks and the reality that Santiago lives, which is reflected in the novel *The Alchemist* by “Paulo Coelho” (1993): The psychoanalytic approach.

#### **1.5 The Significant of the Study**

The writer hopes that this research will provide some benefits to the readers as follows:

1. “Theoretical benefits”: Providing information and contributing to the development of knowledge in the literary aspect about the *Alchemist* novel.
2. “Practical benefits”: Increasing the knowledge and experience of the writer and other student about the *Alchemist* novel.

### **Chapter 2**

#### **2.1 Life of Coelho**

“Paulo Coelho” was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1947. He worked as a theater director, actor, songwriter, and journalist, and wrote lyrics for many Brazilian singers such as Elis Regina. He was interested in spiritual worlds as he traveled the world in search of secret societies and Eastern religions. He published his first book, “*Archives of Hell*”, in 1982. “Paulo Coelho” made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James in Compostela in 1986, which he later documented in his book “*Pilgrimage*”. He then published the novel *The Alchemist* in 1988, which became one of the most important Brazilian novels. His novels are distinguished by their spiritual significance, using characters with special talents, but which are present in everyone. He also relies on real historical events to represent the events of his stories. (Alsayfi , 2011, P. 1).

The turning point in Paulo Coelho's life came when he met a stranger in a café in Amsterdam who advised him to make the traditional Roman Catholic pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. “Paulo Coelho” made the pilgrimage in 1986, walking the (800) kilometer long Santiago de Compostela Road, an ancient highway used by pilgrims for centuries. This experience, in addition to Paulo Coelho's, was a test of self – awareness and spiritual awakening. When he returned from the pilgrimage, he wrote his novel, *The Pilgrimage*, which opened up a new way of writing for him. He wrote his novel, *The Alchemist*. It sold very slowly and his publisher stopped publishing it. “Paulo Coelho” then found another publisher



who had more confidence in his writing and the book became one of the best – selling books of all time. It was translated into (80) languages, reached number one in (18) countries, and sold more than (30) million copies. (Charles, 2007: 150).

## 2.2 Life of Freud

Sigmund Freud, (born May 6, 1856, Freiberg, Moravia, Austrian Empire – died Sept. 23, 1939, London, Eng), The founder of psychoanalysis, Freud trained as a neurologist in Vienna, then went to study in Paris in 1885, with “Jean Martin”, who worked on hysteria, where he came to the conclusion that the mental problem are coming from psychological forces.

Publishing a book entitled The Interpretation of Dreams in 1899, he detailed the complex symbolic processes underlying the formation of dreams, and suggested that dreams were the interpretation that approached the state of persuasion for unconscious desires. In his controversial article Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality in 1905, he identified the complex levels of psychosexual development “oral, anal, phallic” and the formation of the Oedipus complex.

“Freud” published many noteworthy works, most notably: “Totem and Taboo” in 1913, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” in 1920, “The Future of Illusion” in 1927, and “Civilization and Its Discontents” in 1930. Freud traveled England after the Nazis annexed Austria in 1938. He passed away right after that. Despite the challenges that his ideas faced during or after his lifetime, Freud remains one of the most influential figures in contemporary thought. (Jay, 2022, P. 2).

## 2.3 The Alchemist Summary

The Alchemist is about an Andalusian boy named Santiago who decides to go on a journey based on a dream he believes is prophetic. Santiago meets a woman who interprets dreams. She tells him that the dream is prophetic and that he must follow its instructions. However, she cannot locate his treasure. Santiago then meets an old man who seems to be able to read Santiago's mind. The old man introduces “himself as Melchizedek, or the King of Salem. He tells Santiago about good and bad omens, and says that it is the duty of a shepherd boy to follow his destiny after he replaces his tenth sheep with the king. The old man then gives Santiago two stones, or rum and thumim, to interpret the omen. Santiago buys a ticket to Tangier, in North Africa, and travels there by boat”. (Coelho, 1993).

Santiago got mugged and he started searching for some ways to earn money. He worked at crystal shop

He was not sure about the way he wants to go on with his life. Finally, he met well known chemist from England and started listening to his companion. The English



man lived in the desert and that is how he met a girl (Ftima) and fell in love with her. (Wijayanti, 2007, PP.1 – 5).

“The caravan leader gathered the travelers together and told them that tribal war prevented them from continuing their journey. Santiago wandered from the oasis to the desert, saw two falcons fighting in the sky, and in a dream saw an army invading the oasis. Because attacking the oasis was a violation of the rules of the desert, Santiago shared his vision with the chief of the oasis tribe”. A short time later, Santiago encountered a stranger riding a white horse, cloaked in black, and holding a sword. This stranger was the alchemist. The chief armed his men, and they were fully prepared when the oasis was invaded. (Wijayanti, 2007, PP. 1 – 5).

The alchemist offers Santiago passage across the desert. However, the two men get into a violent tribal war and are captured. After Santiago turns into the wind, the entire tribe is afraid, so they eventually allow them to continue their journey. The alchemist tells Santiago that he needs to return to the oasis, and that the rest of the journey is for Santiago to do alone to claim his treasure. Santiago reaches the Egyptian pyramids and begins to dig. He finds nothing buried. Suddenly, two strangers come up to him, beat him up, and steal his money. After Santiago tells them his dream, one of the robbers tells him of his own dream about buried treasure in a cloakroom of an abandoned church. (Oprah, 2017, n.p).

Santiago finally finds his treasure. He finds a chest containing Spanish gold coins, precious stones, and bejeweled stone statues. He will give a tenth of his treasure to a gypsy woman, return to the oases, and marry Fatima. (Riding, 2005, n.p).

## 2.4 Freud Concepts and Ideas

Freud understanding of psychoanalysis relies on the fact that our mind are controlled by the psych which are formed of three parts: id, ego, and superego.

Freud's definition of psychoanalysis is that the human mind can be ruled by the psyche.

The first part, which is the id, deals with our desires, while the third part, superego, focuses on moral features. The second part, ego, is the middle ground between the two parts. It shows the peoples' weak and unwanted self.

Freud shows “the general character of cruelty and ruthlessness displayed by the ideal [of the ego] and its dictatorial power” through his id and ego (Snowden, 2006, PP. 105 – 107 ). In short, based on "Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, the id is the innate, instinctive part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives and memories, the moral conscience is in the superego, and the ego is the realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the superego". (Mcleod, 2019, P. 1).



## Chapter Three

### 3.1 Relation between Dream and Reality

Dreaming is one of the strangest things, because it comes from a person's desire since birth. Sometimes, dreaming in the subconscious affects the daily reality of people. But the person who is able to achieve his dreams is not like that. Most people do not believe in their dreams because they think that dreaming is an irrational or illogical emotional reaction. (Freud ,1900).

The possibility of the dream coming true is slim. No one believed his dream in *The Alchemist*, but Santiago succeeded in making his dream come true. Santiago had precognitive dreams. These are dreams that give a futuristic realization. Santiago had the same dream several times while sleeping in an abandoned church. Hall (1985, P. 57) states that "Santiago dreamed that he found treasure near the pyramid in Egypt. Santiago did not know about his recurring dreams, so he decided to meet the gypsy woman. Santiago did not believe his dream until he got the sign when he met the King of Salem, known as Melchizedek".

Santiago gets some signs from God that show the relationship between dream and reality. He wouldn't get the sign if he didn't believe in his dream. His wish to travel the world had started in his dreams. All the problem he faced in his life seem to reach the end. Those ends comes from his id and superego coming together combined with God's help. (Hall, 1985, P. 57).

### 3.2 Critical Analysis

This novel can be analyzed using Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalytic criticism, as this theory believes that the literary text expresses the unconscious desires and anxieties that form the cognitive structure of the author or reader, and that it is a manifestation of neurosis in the author or reader.

According to Freud's theory, the human mind plays a crucial role in influencing a person's actions. Freud divides the mind into three: "conscious, unconscious, and subconscious". The first refers to our awareness of our own mental processes, such as feelings, thoughts and emotions. The second lies among conscious awareness and the unconscious that can be retrieved or remembered into consciousness. The third is part of the mind that stores all previous experiences that are traumatic or unpleasant. In addition to that, Freud presented a systemic model of human personality.

He studied three main aspects responsible for creating human reactions and classifies human personalities as id, ego, and Super – ego (McLeod, 2015). The id is considered to be the most basic system of personality. It is the personality component or the biological aspect of the character which is made up of



unconscious psychic energy. In other words, the id is instinctual desires, the evolution of which precedes the ego. The id doesn't know anything about right or wrong and good or evil. It knows no morality, because it's just about meeting basic needs the second one is the ego. It deals with reality, trying to meet the wishes of the id in a socially acceptable way. This may mean delaying gratification and helping to get rid of the tension that the id feels if the desire is not fulfilled immediately. It understands that other people also have their own needs, and knowing that being impulsive is equal to being Selfish (Abrahams, 2009, P. 23).

The last is superego, which is the last to develop in the personality System. It operates according to the principle of morality, where it tells us what is right or wrong, good or evil. It is the sociological aspect of personality that becomes the representation of traditional values and ideals of society. Superego is a stopper that controls wild desires, desires, and impulses according to Freud's theory. We can see the id in the Santiago character. The id can be applied when Santiago's desire to travel to pursue his dream of getting to know the world and discovering new things pushed him to become a shepherd because by being a Shepherd, he can travel anywhere. In fact, when he was told to be a priest by his parents, he did not want to because he wanted to be a shepherd who could travel wherever he wanted (Abrahams, 2009, P. 24) "His parents had wanted him to become a priest, and thearchy a source of pride for a simple farm family. They worked hard just to have food and water, like the sheep. He had studied Latin, Spanish, and theolog 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. One afternoon, on a visit to his family, he had summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn't want to become a priest, that he wanted to travel" (p. 19).

Another id shows in the novel when Santiago works in Crystal Merchant, he feels hungry. Therefore, he fulfills his needs to eat. By working in Crystal Merchant, he expects to get wages from the merchant to fulfill his needs, it is eating (Freud, 1923).

"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. The man still said nothing, and the boy sensed that he was going to have to make a decision..." (P. 49).

As for ego, we can see that Santiago has falling in love with Fatima, the desert Woman, and he realized that he loved her before he even knew she existed then she wants him to keep chasing his dreams. Since Santiago had told her about his dream



to find the treasure, he realized to fulfill his responsibility, which is to look for treasure in Egypt although he was sad as he left her in the desert (Freud, 1923).

Moreover, his superego appears in the novel when he was in the plaza reading a book suddenly an old man approached him and sat beside him, wondering about the activities of people in this square. He realized that this old man wanted to talk with him and he wanted to move to another bench immediately. However, when he wants to move, he remembers his father's words that young people must respect their parents. Finally, he decided not to move. Then he answered the old man's conversation and knew that the old Man was a king, named Melchizedek (Freud, 1923).

### 3.3 Discussion

Because of the basic character that is formed from the “id, ego, superego”, we can say that cooperate in forming an ideal in the story, and then build the character system. The character traits depend on how the id and superego work to form the ego.

Throughout *The Alchemist*, Santiago is encountered as the central character throughout his journey "Andalusia to Egypt". Paulo explains Santiago's identity as a world traveler. Santiago rejects his father's advice to become as a "priest", because Santiago's identity was one of travel. Santiago decides to become a shepherd so that he can travel the world as Santiago believes in his dream. Coon (1988) states that "through a sign from the Creator, Santiago meets a man named Melchizedek, known as the King of Salem. He tells him many things that make Santiago believe his dream".

The final sign from God is the meeting of the alchemist with Santiago who teaches him and helps him communicate with nature such as "the desert, the wind, the sun". The last sign is when he sees a man by the pyramid that tell him he had the same dream as he did. The link between reality and dream comes from the combination of “id, ego, and superego”. (Coon, 1988).

Santiago successfully solves the problem he faced. Based on the psychoanalytic approach, the first conflict occurs in Santiago's encounter with Melchizedek who advises Santiago to believe in his dream. Based on "Melchizedek's advice", Santiago's superego tells him that the old man was right, and the ego decides to follow his personal mythology. From this conflict, it can be seen that Santiago's superego is functioning well.

The second conflict occurred when Santiago lost his money in Tangier. He needed to work for food and money to return to Andalusia. Santiago remembered the old man's advice that "the world always helps if you believe and try". Finally, the



superego said that he must research so that he could continue his personal legend. The ego took action to work in the crystal shop. (Erich, 1992, P. 13).

Another conflict has appeared after Santiago's decision choices which are either staying with "Fatima" in the oasis, or his personal myths. Santiago prefers to stay in the oasis. Due to the alchemist's advice, his superego says that the dream cannot be fulfilled if he remains in the oasis. Therefore, Santiago's ego chooses to keep his personal myths, and later return to Fatima after the fulfillment is complete. (Erich, 1992, P. 14).

The last conflict has happened when he sees the " scarab beetle" which is known as a "the symbol of God" Santiago continues to dig when another three men show up and starts to talk. He does talk to them to keep his identity hidden. Those men later on beat Santiago which reminds him of the alchemist's superego which advise him to not tell the truth and nobody will believe him. (Erich, 1992, P. 14).

## Chapter Four

### 4. Conclusion

The story begins when Santiago dreams of finding treasure, and Santiago meets the gypsy woman to interpret the dream. The next scene Santiago meets Melchizedek who tells him many things. Believing Melchizedek's advice, Santiago takes a risk to find his personal legend. The next scene is in Tangier where Santiago has lost his money and is forced to work to make a living. The next chapter Paulo focuses on Santiago's job and strategy at the Crystal Merchant. After he has enough money, Santiago continues his journey and joins the caravan in the desert until they reach the Fayum Oasis and meet Fatima. There is an important person who helps Santiago with his personal legend, and he is the alchemist.

The alchemist teaches Santiago many things where Santiago is able to make nature help him. Based on the psychoanalytic approach, the id is the original personality system from which the ego and superego develop. The ego deals with moral value and the reality principle, while the superego acts as an outlet for the ego. Santiago is described as a person who has a strong desire through his id that makes him able to achieve his dreams.

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