
The Reconciliation Between Material and Spiritual in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*

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Abstract

This research explores the convergence of materialism and spirituality in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, using Reader Response Theory and textual analysis grounded in qualitative methodology. The study investigates how treasure hunting is a metaphor for self-realization, demonstrating that spiritual growth and material pursuits can coexist harmoniously. Central to this research is the character Santiago, whose quest for worldly treasure in the Egyptian desert mirrors an inner journey toward personal enlightenment. Coelho illustrates how the Universe supports those pursuing their true destiny through symbols such as gold, the universe, omens, love, friendship, and the desert. The research highlights that gold, though material, functions not merely as wealth but as a catalyst for transformation, representing knowledge, perseverance, and purpose. The study also underscores the role of love, epitomized by Fatima, as a selfless force that supports Santiago's spiritual evolution. Similarly, friendships and mentors like the King, the Englishman, and the Alchemist help Santiago recognize the divine interconnectedness of all beings. The novel's emphasis on a 'Universal Language' suggests that human experience transcends words and logic, inviting readers to engage with intuitive and metaphysical realities. This analysis also draws upon psychological and philosophical concepts of self-actualization to establish the spiritual dimension of the self. The study affirms that Coelho's work challenges modern materialism by proposing a holistic vision of life in which personal destiny is attainable through spiritual awareness, emotional connection, and active engagement with the world. The research concludes that Coelho's *The Alchemist* celebrates mystical insight and inner transformation and provides a literary framework for readers seeking meaning in both the tangible and transcendent realms of existence.

Introduction

This research examines treasure hunting as a means of self-realization in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist*. It delineates the value of spirituality in our lives. It seeks to find connections among diverse elements in the Universe and their collaboration toward attaining one specific tangible end. Spirituality is the core of religion. Every human being is bound to religion. The present research also attempts to explain the significance and relevance of spirituality in the mundane world. The study seeks to bridge the gap between seemingly antagonistic material things and spiritual self-realization. We live in a world made of complex systems. These complexities influence human thoughts and perceptions of others and the world. A man has become more critical of his surroundings. Unlike his predecessors, he does not have leisure time. He has seen wars, financial crises, and the deceptive nature of humans. As Eliot (1963) has said, modern man has become a 'hollow man' (p.79) and a wastelander, as he termed in *The Waste Land* (p.51). This hollowness has destroyed society. We have achieved a modern, remarkable, mechanized civilization that lacks life. According to modern

and postmodern advocates, thinkers, and writers, this internal rotting can be regulated by returning to one's roots. Life appears far more beautiful and meaningful thanks to writers like T. S. Eliot, Rabindranath Tagore, Rajneesh, and Coelho. Coelho's *The Alchemist*, his magnum opus, tackles universalism, life, self-realization, and the need to appreciate everything within the cosmos. It emphasizes continuous work as an important determinant of success. This research aims to bridge the gap between the materialistic domain and the spiritual aspect of humanity. Pure ingredients of the Universe, love, friendship, and 'Universal Language' are intertwined with a man's life. The study suggests the need for spirituality and purity in a man. It illustrates to the readers how to meet their destinies. It marks the steps by which one can know oneself. *The Alchemist* tells the tale of Santiago, a shepherd who travels to discover his destiny by searching for a hidden treasure in the Egyptian desert. Along the way, he faces numerous challenges that teach him something valuable. While traversing the desert, he discovers the Alchemist, who becomes his mentor guide. He meets the love of his life, Fatima. Santiago first encounters the King, who becomes his first guide in his quest for treasure. Psychologically, the King stays with Santiago as a guide throughout the journey. Santiago learns the secrets of the Universe and the universal language. The shepherd's outward journey is very much the inward journey of his self. His inner self is refined, and he transforms. Instead of just a shepherd, he now owns exquisite material wealth and the treasures of love, alchemy, friendship, and understanding earned over time. He becomes the practical mystic as he can perceive the world and the wordless. He becomes a better man. After every attempt at facing life's challenges with courage, he earns the right to true love that makes him want to live for something much greater than himself. He becomes part of the Universe when he changes himself to the wind. Finally, he realizes his destiny, and so he becomes the Alchemist.

Research Questions

The research focuses on the following research questions:

- i. How does the pursuit of gold contribute to self-actualization, and how is it the motive behind all this fuss?
- ii. What are the important factors, besides gold, that help the protagonist throughout his journey of self-realization?

Literature Review

Self-Realization and Temperament of Coelho

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'self' as a distinguishing person's character traits that differentiate him from others. Furthermore, it reflects that self is the 'type of person you are' ("Self," 2019). It takes 'realization' as an acknowledgment, an act of becoming fully aware of something as a fact. It is asserted that it is 'the process of achieving a particular aim' ("Realization," 2019). The importance of self-actualization or knowing the actual being can be judged by the great Greek philosopher Socrates (470 BC-399 BC) repeatedly emphasizing that true wisdom is a matter of "knowing thyself." He further claims that the 'conception of consciousness as a whole and practical proficiency in self' makes the man who he is (Erdmann, 1890, p. 80). Zahavi, Grunbaum, and Pamas (2004) assert that self-awareness is the process whereby we are acquainted with and familiarize ourselves with our subjectivity rather than an object of experience (p. 54). Daversa (2014) expresses the importance of self-realization and states that self-knowledge is of significant value. If somebody asks why we need to know ourselves, then saying so is unreasonable. Reaching out to the self attempts to integrate various constituents of one's personality while recognizing the significance of biological and environmental factors that go unnoticed at the initial stages of development (p. 34). Coelho is a spiritual writer, and self and personality are crucial to his interests. He appears to be a spiritual healer like T. S. Eliot. His characters are dynamic and make every effort to discover themselves. In *Journey as Purifying Elixir*, an essay on the symbolic role of physical movement in Coelho's *The Alchemist*, Kumar and Sivapriya (2014) hypothesize that the novels of Coelho converge on the issue of self-actualization or spiritual

fulfillment achieved through self-awareness, self-exploration, introspection, and deliberate action. In powerful, realistic narratives, Coelho seeks to morally persuade his audience of how an ordinary lass like the shepherd Santiago, the barmaid Pym, or the prostitute Maria can achieve self-actualization, and the readers cannot (pp. 102-105).

Self-Realization and Psychology

The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology defines actualization as “the realization of the latent potential” (Colman, 2015). Contrary to this explanation, Corsini (2002) offers a more detailed perspective, saying that self-realization is achieving the highest level of one’s potential. It is the understanding of the ‘higher self’ and a central goal in psychodrama and humanistic psychology, as discussed in ‘psychotherapeutic approaches.’ Achieving this goal is a challenging process that begins in middle age during self-realization with the exhibition of ‘archetype’ (p. 879). Horney (2013) proclaims that self-realization occurs in the ‘neurotic’ as well. The neurotic process stems from the need to achieve glory while contending with the seductive temptations of the devil. Spiritual figures, such as Christ and Buddha, have been said to be tempted by Satan but were able to overcome him through the strength of their character (p. 39). Erin Sullivan (2019), in the Britannica, argues that self-actualization is “an organism’s goal,” as stated by 20th-century neuroanatomist Kurt Goldstein, which allows one to reach their full potential. It is argued that all life forms can achieve their full potential, “but only once a certain range of fundamental, underlying needs are fulfilled.” It is apparent from the definition that meeting the needs of one’s earthly life leads to the attainment of the innermost personal goals. It sounds paradoxical that self-understanding requires confronting one’s themes, but psychoanalysts believe dreams and self-knowledge are interdependent. Considered to originate from the unconscious, there is always the possibility that dreams could rouse some buried mysteries or memories we have coveted back into existence. Put differently, dreams can venture into the deepest regions of the human brain. Regions that can only be accessed through meditation and dreams. Norment (2013) notes it is crucial for self-knowledge that “the study of dreams,” as they spring from one’s depths and osier, has myriad levels of consciousness. Metaphors could represent something else. Also, they are progressive; they are not static. In no way can a dream instruct someone to remain stagnant. A dream explores possibilities, either for the future or the present. The journey of self-awareness is progressive, and ‘the relationship portrayed in our dreams’ allows us to gauge where we are on the trip. They can depict human and animal relationships (p. 33).

Works related to Coelho’s *The Alchemist*

Al-Sudeary (2010) interprets *The Alchemist* through the metaphor of alchemy, showing how Coelho links physical and spiritual transformation. He observes that the novel “proposes to act as a catalyst in the transformation of matter from one state to another,” so that on the physical level, Santiago’s quest is the conversion of “base metals into gold.” In contrast, on the spiritual level, it means the purification of the soul by eliminating the ‘base’ material of the self and achieving the gold of enlightenment. Mayer and Maree (2017) use a psychobiographical approach to show how Coelho’s intuition bridges conscious and unconscious realms. They find that Coelho “uses his intuitions as a deeper guidance in life, for decision-making and self-development.” In other words, Coelho’s creative process and characters are guided by inner (spiritual) insight as much as by external circumstances. This suggests that Coelho’s narrative strategy explicitly marries intuitive (spiritual) knowledge with concrete action in the world. In a related psychobiographical study, Mayer and Maree (2018) examine Coelho’s magical thinking, spirituality, and life goals. They note that Coelho’s life and writings are suffused with “magic and magical thinking, spirituality, meaningfulness, and the living of one’s dream.” The authors argue that Coelho integrates these mystical elements positively: his “intertwining of religion and magical thinking” gives readers “deep meaning” that guides his life and creative work. Saravanan and Radah (2019) explore *The Alchemist* as a spiritual quest or mystic’s journey. They emphasize that Santiago’s path is unified: it is a

“journey both spiritual and physical.” Furthermore, every geographic adventure in the novel corresponds to an inner state, i.e., Santiago’s pursuit of worldly treasure is simultaneously a search for self-knowledge and divine union. This analysis underscores the novel’s central message that material voyages and spiritual growth are inseparable, each reflecting the other. Sebastian (2022) conducts a semiotic analysis of *The Alchemist*, showing how Coelho uses symbols to unite the material and spiritual. He observes that the novel’s journey is “physical and psychological simultaneously.” Santiago travels through real deserts while also undergoing inner transformation. In particular, Sebastian notes that *alchemy* symbolizes Santiago’s enlightenment: it involves turning base metals into higher ones, mirroring the “transformation of human consciousness from a lower to a higher level.” Rai (2022) examines Coelho’s novel *Hippie* (2018) to explore similar themes of inner and outer journeys. He frames the narrative as a countercultural “quest of spiritual knowledge.” The protagonist’s travels across continents are set against a backdrop of 1960s idealism, but Rai shows that the story is about achieving “spiritual awakening” at its core. Rai’s analysis of *Hippie* reinforces that Coelho’s fiction consistently blends material adventure with a search for meaning – even as characters move through the physical world, their true progress is measured by inner growth. In another analysis, Sebastian (2023) focuses on the philosophical ideas in *The Alchemist*, particularly fate vs. free flow. He notes that Coelho invokes the Islamic concept of Maktub (predestination) and Taoist “going with the flow,” which initially seems contradictory. As Sebastian puts it, the Taoist ideal of living in the universe’s “flow” clashes with the idea that life is “pre-determined.” This study highlights how Coelho’s narrative reconciles different spiritual philosophies: the material events of the story are imbued with multiple layers of meaning – destiny, chance, plan, and spontaneity – reflecting Coelho’s blending of diverse spiritual perspectives.

Research Methodology

Primary Source

Coelho’s *The Alchemist* is the primary source on which the rest of the research is focused. The novel has bridged the gaps in the research which prior literature ignored. The researchers studied using the Reader Response Theory. They have created a mental map regarding the causal relationships between the various contributing elements to the development of the novel. The researchers have identified critical turning points in the narrative and gathered pertinent excerpts from the original text related to the topic of discussion.

Qualitative Method

The researchers have employed a qualitative method to achieve the objectives and collect non-numerical data. It served as an analysis for explanatory reasoned inquiries, which sought to comprehend the underlying factors, opinions, and motivations for certain issues. Utilizing this approach, the researchers have ventured into the complexity of the issues to seek resolution. In addition, within the scope of the qualitative research method, a grounded theory design was selected so that the researchers could potentially unearth relevant theories from the primary text that align with the style and nature of the research, as well as the research questions. In this case, the grounded theory design enabled the researchers to not approach the primary text with a preconceived notion of any theory but to seek out the theories most pertinent to Coelho’s *The Alchemist*.

Data Collection

In considering the necessary research design criteria, the researchers followed a systematic approach through the text of Coelho’s *The Alchemist*. The text of the novel *The Alchemist* is viewed from varying standpoints to consider the information relevant to the question posed. Snippets from the novel *The Alchemist* have been gathered to analyze and process them further.

Textual Analysis

Data was arranged systematically so that every piece could be analyzed. The researchers painted the picture of the study appropriately to capture the essence of the expert opinions that had been meticulously quoted. Background knowledge was used to enrich the analysis of the novel. The interpretation was made concerning the meaning of the text. The research scholar has tended to elaborate and comprehend the novel at best. He has analyzed the novel based on its context and surrounding ideas to unearth deeper meanings. References and explanatory dictionaries accessible online aided in resolving some vague terms.

Gold as A Tool of Self-realization

In *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, gold is significantly linked to an individual's true essence and the self-realization of dreams. Initially, it is depicted as an old king's gold chest or *The Alchemist's* gold pieces. These drive Santiago to embark on an exhaustingly long journey. A more precise description of what compels him to undertake the obliquitous journey is gold or, rather, the pursuit of gold in his case. To an extent, it is a catalyst that speeds up things, complicating the plot and forcing things toward resolution from the climax. In the novel, gold is a favourable aspect besides its quintessential evil. Santiago's quest is sustained by the treasure, which is the one thing that prevents him from surrendering. It fuels his determination to the point where he no longer cares about the difficulties. Gold, as a materialistic desire, exists within the novel but does not serve as a threat. This desire binds a boy, but it is more constructive than damaging. It enables the boy to undertake the journey throughout the continent, which ultimately helps him gain significant knowledge and an understanding of his potential. It may sometimes look like the boy is after the gold, but he is not. He has left the riches and the oasis. Furthermore, no unusual change in his temperament is observed when he has his treasure. He is preoccupied with worthy considerations, i.e., love. Gold tempts, but not the shepherd, who is far more concerned with his real objectives that must be achieved in life. Ignoring gold completely and regarding it as a mere secondary or even tertiary issue while seeking to achieve primary goals is a challenge to conventional 21st-century notions of materialism, where wealth is considered the key to happiness. Materialism is not a new idea; it is something that has plagued humanity ever since the existence of humankind. Even the first human blood was spilled due to the dispute over a woman, a conflict tied to materialism. Such thinking has been prominent in the modern era since the Industrial Revolution and the onset of Western Imperialism. What is even more striking is how that menace continues to grip, and along with it, how deeply its roots penetrate a person's mind. The mystics and writers who believe in the power of self and the soul resolve this problem to some extent. Santiago sacrifices the wealth he possessed at the time, that is, a herd of sheep, making room for the greater treasure awaiting him. We can never say that Santiago is wholly indifferent to gold, but he does not go out of his way to strive for gold. Of course, in his case, gold serves as a means of surviving and fulfilling his needs. He who desires the accumulation of gold will never become an alchemist, as happens with the Englishman. He spent his entire life trying to turn metals into gold but failed because his approach was too materialistic, devoid of any vision beyond the mere possession of gold. The novel, on the one hand, bound to reality, does not fully discard the value of gold and, on the other hand, seeks to impart a lesson against the excessive desire for it. More so, gold represents the pursuit of knowledge linked to curiosity. Alchemist, as any other learned scholar, is concerned with gold. The golden chest of the King sends Santiago on his journey to find his treasure, i.e., gold. In addition, initially, he seeks an Alchemist because he wants to talk to someone who could change base metals into gold. Later, when he is a few miles away from the pyramids, where he believes his treasure is buried, Santiago asks the Alchemist to turn the gold from lead like him. To which Alchemist says that it is his destiny and that Santiago's destiny is waiting for him (Coelho, 2002, 163). Gold is yet another form of possibility, one of the fundamental elements of the actualization of self. It also works as the traveler's encouragement not to halt their journey. The possibility is never hopeless and is an

essential ingredient of traveling. In Coelho's *The Alchemist*, it is clear that nothing is impossible. Even something scientifically impossible, like converting raw metals into gold, is possible. As an example of what was possible, an alchemist turned lead into gold in front of Santiago (p. 163). This transformation reinforces the notion that achieving his aspirations is indeed possible.

Factors Helping Santiago in His Journey

In *The Alchemist*, multiple tangible and abstract elements help Santiago fulfill his life purpose and, more importantly, realize his dreams. The novel shows the interconnectedness of all aspects of the Universe and their ability to communicate with one another. Maxim, 'Excess of everything is bad' stands true as it is shown in the novel that the materialistic world and the spiritual man can coexist if equilibrium is maintained.

Material World Helping Santiago

Coelho's novel, *The Alchemist*, underscores the importance of the materialistic world. In this case, the material world signifies as humane, unlike the name suggests. Also, the novel presents the material world as much more than the 'selfish' space. This world has a soul that is called the Soul of the World. Within it is a part—an 'individual'—of the greater whole. Being very ancient, it is wise and mysterious. Over time, it has recognized its purpose: assisting people in their destinies and determining if they are ready for the next level. Put another way, it must make a profound impact on human activities. Humans have much to do with the material world because they are encapsulated with the world from all directions. The sky ethereally fills everything above him, while the Earth below him and the air permeates every unoccupied nook. A traveler, alongside his destiny, resides within the fold of civilization. Every component of the world has some value. Recognizing their true sense is all that is needed. Nature demonstrates its importance more vibrantly by taking away things of no substance only to return them later to prove their worth. The desert lacked food, water, and silence for the caravan, but all these things were abundant in the oasis. So, while the caravan traversed through the desert, they learned the true worth of water and talking. It felt like I was returning from the 'spiritual world' (p. 92). Omens or signs, as we know them, are how God represents the sacred reality. There are many examples of this in the world. In the novel, there is an example of a time when it took the form of a hawk and, at another moment in the dead and seemingly lifeless desert, a snake. Hawks send messages, and because they are created by God, they ought to serve a purpose (p. 116). Additionally, anything can serve a purpose so long as it has a source, in this case, God. Hawk conveys the message for Santiago because it wants to preserve the oasis from an attack (p. 166). The eagle has been responsible for delivering an important message and has changed many fates. Alongside being a messenger, the hawk is an element of the material world, representing the Alchemist's presence. *The Alchemist* kept the hawk, which, apart from being a pet, is a symbol that serves a point. He keeps it free rather than in the cage, which is why it has succeeded at its destiny along the Alchemist. The immense desert is evidence of the world outside. It was and will be. It knows how to communicate and manipulate the fates of everybody within its authority. It is wise and old because it has been there for a long time. In addition, the desert is eternal, as demonstrated by the everlasting wind that whistles through it (p. 76). Its mystery and silence stem from these characteristics as well. The inhabitants of the desert, camels, can signal danger because they can sense it. The desert can also convey its messages without letting others sense them (p. 90). The camels know the desert; because of this, they are wise, i.e., a wise thing makes the knower wise. The desert has much to offer. Alchemist is traced in the desert, an oasis – a paradise amidst the sand, is also in the desert, and Fatima is a desert woman. In other words, the desert exceeds expectations. The King gave Santiago Urim and Thummim the stones to seek the truth and the right path. These stones answer in the form of yes and no to objective questions. They are meant to seek the truth and the right path. These stones serve the purpose of interpreting the prophecies (p. 43). Prophecies can belong to the

realms of abstraction, and these two black and white stones ascribe meaning to them. Besides, Urim and Thummim divinely give supporting strength to the King and the shepherd. These serve as the dividers of psychological strength. Santiago remembers the old man because he told him he would be there for him whenever he needed him (p. 68). In addition to these two functions, the precious gemstones that the King extracted from the golden chest continue to restart a traveler's journey. Thus, owing to the stones, Santiago resumed his pursuit of his calling (p. 68). Finally, the stones function as agents of connection. The stones attract one another, and so do the holders. The Englishman and Santiago had met earlier because the stones glued their connection when both showed each other the rocks gifted to them by the King.

Love as an Important Step Towards Self-realization and Its Nature

Love gives meaning to the large, multifaceted Universe. It serves as a glue to preserve the things that would otherwise be scattered. Love is the “master language” spoken and understood by all in the Universe (p. 97). The bonding force makes it possible for a person to approach and understand any other thing. Besides *The Alchemist* written by Coelho, in the novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emile Bronte, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austin, and *Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, love is the integral factor, either directly or indirectly, around which the entire atmosphere of the work seems to revolve. These novels are not just works of fiction but representations of a universe brimming with human emotion, nature, and interconnections. Neither Heathcliff nor Darcy was a fool, nor were their creators, for cherishing the significance of love. 'Soul of World' is composed of love; if one is known, the other can ultimately be reached (p. 156). Apart from being intricately linked, both are bound by something in chemistry, i.e., the components of which these are made. Love is the primary element in this unique context, suggesting that the world embodies love. Humans, being a part of the world, have love as the building material within them. Various monotheistic faiths also believe that God created man out of love. Therefore, understanding love means understanding the world we live in. One could put this another way: a human devoid of knowledge of love will never be able to know himself. Love remains fundamental in self-actualization. Loving is not to be static. In this case, love, as a root cause, changes the Soul of the World. It gives a purpose for existence and allows people to change to a better version of themselves, making the world a better place (pp. 158-159). Through love, the mundane shepherd transforms into a man who, through many tests, has known his real destiny. Moreover, love changes a person's perception of the world, such as sheep, metals, and desert, which he strongly associates with. At the beginning of the novel, there is a boy who is reluctant to pursue his destiny. This powerful agent turned him into a wise and strong man. “Love conquers all things,” says Roman poet Virgil (trans. 2005, p. 32). Nevertheless, can love conquer death, the unfortunate reality of our existence? The answer is yes. Santiago risks his life for love (Fatima) by walking before the tribe's chief. Not only does he sacrifice his life, but he also experiences a strange sense of joy (p. 116). Thus, love is an enigma that can do anything. Love does not anchor people or immobilize them in *The Alchemist* by Coelho. It is more mature, and it is certainly not selfish. It allows and encourages the pursuit of the dream. It is not the love that fears separation. Love sees separation as trustworthy and productive as it helps a traveler reach his dreams. In a logical sense, what would unity mean for a group of people who have not yet experienced the essence of separation? What value does the union of two souls possess if the bitter fruit of separation is unknown? Throughout the novel, separation assesses who deserves unity and who does not. Love is personified in the character of Fatima, who not only permits but urges Santiago to pursue his dreams. Delivered to the dreamer, Fatima lets him go because everything is written, which is her notion of Maktub. She compares her love for him with a desert, which never changes and is always present (p.102).

Fatima is much more than what she represents; she embodies the treasure within her. Santiago sees this. In his words, Fatima will help him find any hidden treasure (p. 99). She is

much more than a mere object of male desire. She is a phenomenon that gives birth to numerous phenomena. She is the source of positive development. A human with an ability to influence positively is a rare quality. This chemistry of power and morality is hard to find. Again, this rare chemistry is essential to self-realization. While the love in this novel concerns human relationships, it does not require the physical presence of the couple because this love is beyond ownership (p 104). Nobody's property of another person. Yes, they are bound to each other, but in a manner that allows for mutual comprehension and appreciation of each other and the world around them. Like all other human beings, they are interdependent but only to the extent that it does not impede their personal and psychological progress. This sense of ownership is important for a person's spiritual growth since too much of it could plunge a person into a physically conceptualized relationship. How do we come to know that one loves another? Actions, perhaps, if these are not clouded over by some evil atmosphere. We have seen how love operates, but the question remains how, exactly. Love is abstract, and for it to be fully expressed, it needs some external support. The heart straightforwardly symbolizes love. It is an organ that, in the sociocultural context, is linked to the high sentimental feelings of affection. When Santiago asks the Alchemist how to comprehend the desert, he says he pays attention to the heart because it is made of the 'Soul of the World.' Additionally, he tells the boy that he should listen to his heart because wherever his heart is, his treasure is hidden (pp.134-135). In this manner, the heart commands actions. It functions as a compass for the wandering man. As a guide, it executes an important and profound act—self-realization. The heart does not come easy on a person. It commands a traveler and locates a route but does so with a great sense of will. Once it saw Fatima, it was not willing to forget her. For Iqbal, the self remains incomplete without love. In fact, for Iqbal, love is the central element that purifies the Soul. Iqbal refers to spiritual love. Coelho illustrated this in Fatima and Santiago's case in *The Alchemist*. Love is free; hence, Fatima and Santiago can break societal norms. Also, the Psychoanalytic Theory of Psychology states that humans are governed by concealed yet potent forces that shape human behavior. In the story, love is the force that drives Santiago, Fatima, and the Alchemist to perform extraordinary feats.

Friendship as the Marker of Development and Connection

Friendship is a phenomenon that is both appreciated and accepted around the world. In the novel, friends help each other and contribute to attaining the same goal. Luckily, Coelho's *The Alchemist* depicts mostly positive friendships. It contains little of the meaner types like Caesar and Brutus. Except for the boy who impersonates a friend and cheats Santiago out of some money, all others are, for their part, true to their words and hearts. King Melchizedek is the very first friend who remains loyal to Santiago. Though he is with Santiago for a very short physical duration, he accompanies him on a journey of lifelong mentorship. He is also with him physically through Urim and Thummim. By entering Santiago's life, the King did not permit him to submit at any time. He was there for him when he sought to abandon the quest. He has taught him selflessness when he asks for nothing in return. In addition, Melchizedek has taught him the realm of omens and how to use the two stones and comprehend the omens. The stones have often helped him select the best of two paths. Santiago has another friend, an Englishman, who travels through the desert to an oasis called Al-Faiyum. Englishman is a definition of perseverance. He has tried for a long time and still never gives up. They have a beneficial relationship, a blend of mutual respect and understanding, where both parties aid one another. Santiago observes nature and tells it to the man, who provides the chance to meet *The Alchemist*, so he organizes the meeting for them. They share a similarity in that both work towards achieving their respective goals. The Englishman, like Santiago, had to make great sacrifices. When he hears of *The Alchemist* in Al-Faiyum, he leaves his responsibilities without a second thought and heads to the desert (p. 69). Both the Englishman and Santiago share wisdom and guiding lessons. Nonetheless, the Englishman brings far less to the table than Santiago. The Englishman was a teacher, but Santiago surpassed him as a student. He could understand things more quickly than the

Englishman. For instance, Santiago understood the books on Alchemy given to him by the Englishman far too easily, much to the Englishman's disappointment (p. 87).

Camel driver is a wise man of the desert. Even though he is illiterate, he knows the desert very well. This type of companionship, such as the one shared with the Englishman, starts in the desert. This also tells that being wise has little to do with bookish knowledge. In contrast with the Englishman, he is more like Santiago's teacher without realizing it (p. 130). He explains to Santiago that the desert is wise and vast, so they must be quiet, as its vastness makes them realize it (p. 76). Santiago, like a camel driver, knows about the sacrifice. Once he has sacrificed his family, his orchard, and his reason to live, he has begun a journey from the start (pp. 1-8). Additionally, the camel driver tells Santiago a notable rule of the desert: once you have entered the desert, there is no going back (p. 80). This rule does not apply only to the desert. It relates to every journey, especially if we take a desert as a symbol of a journey. To understand the self, one must live in the moment; otherwise, one will fall into deep sorrow, melancholy, and even death. The Camel Driver taught him that he must live in the moment, not for the future. He told Santiago he did not worry about the war because it had not yet come. He also tells him that concentrating on the present is the only way to be happy (p. 88). Rationally speaking, if there is no reason to shed tears over spilled milk, it is pointless to shed tears over milk that has not yet been spilled. Also, if milk must spill at any cost, what is the use of lamenting when one thing is destined to be done? In the end, Alchemist is someone who gives and takes. He exposed him to possibilities of life, which Santiago was completely oblivious to. He taught him how there is life in everything, even in the barren desert. He released him from the excruciating agony of the fear of suffering by saying that the fear of suffering is always worse than suffering itself. He told him that every step toward one's destiny is a step toward God and eternity (p. 137). Like a good friend, he urges Santiago not to lose hope in such a dire moment. He encourages him to continue his journey towards the pyramids. He tells him about the Universe's conspiracy and nature's tests (p. 139). Moreover, from another perspective, there is a way through which the two are connected in a bond. We may say that they are both alchemists. They are one. Alchemists are those who have mastered their destinies (p. 87). The Alchemist has achieved his destiny; in the end, Santiago also reaches his treasure. Thus, both have achieved their goals. Moreover, the Alchemist, being the teacher of Santiago, is performing the natural obligation that is owed to him by nature, and Santiago is fulfilling his part by becoming the pupil of a teacher whom he was fated to meet. Everything is explained in 'Maktub' (p. 77). The Englishman said the same thing, that there is no such thing as 'coincidence' (p. 75). Psychology is a friend. Like a friend does, it, in the novel, goes with Santiago throughout his journey. It rarely leaves, and if it does, it returns very quickly. Psychology makes a man out of a boy. Moreover, it could be noted that psychology is associated with willpower. Psychology unites various aspects of nature. Knowledge does not work beyond a certain point. Knowledge and logic ground us to Supreme Reality, but it does not answer every question. Questions like why Noah is believed to have lived a flood or whether Moses would have spoken with God remain unanswered. A well-read Englishman could not look past the broad contours of a singular horizon. He understood various religions, yet none proved useful until he became an alchemist, which was his primary wish (p. 68). In addition, Santiago needed the aid of psychology to sail the seas. Psychology is the science of humans. Man has never parted ways with it. It urges him not to give up on annihilating adversities. The King in *The Alchemist* is the King's strongest psychological prop and support. The King told Santiago he was always with those who wanted to realize their destinies (p. 68). Remarkably, in this case, the novel's main character works tirelessly to fulfill his destiny. Therefore, in this scenario, psychology has not abandoned Santiago. In Iqbal's case, the self is social. Self needs socializing because the body is in the world, and the mind needs constructive conversation to relax and flourish. As we have seen from the above explanation, friendship is a psychological help that concerns the human psyche. Moreover, if deep within the unconscious mind, friendship is embedded,

which it is, then from the perspective of Psychoanalytic Theory, it can be called the subject of forces, pieces of evidence of active force, not passive forces.

Language Bridges the Diversity of the Universe

Languages are the spoken and unspoken words we use to converse and deliver our messages easily. Language, which is understood without words, is referred to as ‘Universal Language’ by Coelho in *The Alchemist*. The primary factors that enable the importance of universal language are simplicity and decision. Everything is planned, and there is no coincidence, as everything has a Universal premise (p. 73). It may seem paradoxical, but the universal language is there, even if it is forgotten (pp 72-73). In this case, a language is forgotten when an individual does not mind it. One has to put some effort into grasping the concept of the universal language. Navigating the learning process itself is an endeavor. Language without words, one that the God himself speaks, is nobler than the one that is subordinate to the words. Such language comprises pure life, and that kind of existence is impossible to capture in physical and visible words (p. 91). The Universal language is the language of God, which binds existence together. This unification occurs as the language encompasses the past, present, and future. People must immerse themselves in the present moment, and they may access any desired timeline as it exists within the Maktub (p. 77).

Universe as a Whole and As an Agent of Positive Conspiracy

The Universe remains one of the enigmas that people from all professions, such as poets, physicists, and even astronomers, have attempted to solve. The actual form of the Universe is still a highly controversial issue. For some, it stands as a void; for others, it is an unexplored world of knowledge. For some, it helps conquer divinity; for others, it acts as a beholder, elevating their brain and imagination. The fate that determines to what degree every human being is connected, such as what was and is yet to come, stands as the abode of gods. It acts as an instance of what is predestined for one's future and determines one's identity. The Universe is associated with God because it is his creation. Our humane understanding provides our perception of a sense of infinity and grandeur tied to divinity. The Universe is a scheme of conspiracy against humans. Was that not the ‘King of mortals, who successfully manipulated Tess of the D’Urberville just to have fun? The universal game ended with Oedipus, a great king—who blinded himself after the realization that he had committed the unthinkable atrocities of incest and patricide. In *The Alchemist*, the Universe conspires as well. The Universe had implanted the seed of finding the treasure deep within the shepherd's heart. If one truly craves something, he is bound to say the whole universe ‘conspires’ to fabricate the plan. Indeed, the Universe goes to great lengths to ensure that a man gets what he genuinely longs for (p. 23). However, the Universe in *The Alchemist*, although it does conspire, does so positively. The conspiracy of the world works as a test to measure whether an individual is truly prepared to access the following level. One may conclude that conspiracy and the Universe are nature’s way of justifying her actions and balancing her scales of justice. As Iqbal states, the self is nurtured and polished by confrontation, and struggle relies on rigor: a diamond never sparkles until cut, and the self never shines until assessed. The conspiracy of the Universe is compelling, as it is structured differently. Unlike being random and flat, it is organized and complex. It can offer readily available answers to a man's question if devised properly. Santiago’s mind has said that his life’s purpose is to travel. Initially, he chooses the path that lands him at his intended destination because of the Principle of Favorability or Beginner’s Luck (p. 30). Beginner's Luck is a motivator that further enhances the seeker's interest. Drugs, once tasted, become an addiction. Once the achiever has tasted winning and accomplishment, stopping becomes difficult. The Universe conspires through signs. Omens are the best part of nature and act as powerful weapons. These compelling, strong signs ensure that a seeker or traveler will not cease to continue. They function as alerts, reminding humankind that overdue tasks must be done. They are tenacious in their duty, but when we choose not to listen, they exit and abandon us forever.

Nature's might is unbending, and so are omens. The abandoning of omens is destructive because this signifies the abandoning of nature. Omens are divine and are not limited only to educated individuals. These are the signs that God has left for a pedestrian. The traveler could hear His voice. They are placed to hint to the concerned what should be done at a given place (p. 93). Logically interlinked and meaningful, omens show themselves to everyone.

Conclusion

This research focuses on Reader Response Theory and textual analysis as permitted by Grounded Theory. The analysis of Coelho's *The Alchemist* seeks to uncover underlying factors and consequences of the protagonist's seemingly simple pursuit of gold alongside the greater obelisk of self-actualization. In this context, self-actualization is framed not only as an abstract psychological state but as a spiritual phenomenon that unites the material and metaphysical. Coelho's work is defended as a celebration of transformational change beyond the confines of religion, rooted in the individual's inherent capabilities and profound spirit. This research situates Coelho within the lineage of those like T. S. Eliot, capturing the modern revival of interest in spirituality and presenting *The Alchemist* as a work that reshapes and elevates discourse around the notion of individual and collective purpose. Focusing on characters like Santiago, the Alchemist, Fatima, and the Englishman, the study documents the innate human battle of internal strife versus external endeavors against one's destiny. While traveling on their journeys, each character symbolizes the myriad paths through which virtue and the clarity of spirit triumph over the entanglements of materialism. The research argues that authentic love, which fosters personal growth, rests at the epicenter of constructive spiritual energy and that spirituality is significant in a seemingly materialistic world. It is found that in the overarching paradigm of the Universe, everything, including all happenings, people, and experiences, is fundamentally valuable. Factors like gold, love, friends and friendship, stones, the universe, birds, and animals help Santiago realize his true dream. The study found that Santiago's outward travel represents his internal journey.

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