

Narrative Symbolism and Thematic Exploration in Paul Coelho's The Alchemist: A Study of Santiago's Journey

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Abstract: *The paper explores Paulo Coelho's novel the Alchemist through the journey of Santiago, a shepherd boy from Australia, he searches for personal fulfillment and spiritual wisdom. By analyzing key themes such as destiny, personal legend, and the symbolism and the symbolic key themes such as destiny personal legend, and the symbolic elements embedded in the narrative, the study aims to unpack the philosophical and cultural undertones of the novel. The article also explains how universal human emotions and spiritual aspirations are reflected in Santiago's encounters with characters like the old king, the crystal merchant, and the alchemist himself.*

Keywords: Personal legend, spiritual journey, symbolism Paul Coelho, literary analysis.

Before we go into the details of the Alchemist we must first of all know the meaning of it. The Alchemist written by Paulo Coelho's masterpiece tells the mystical story of Santiago, an Andalusia shepherd boy who yearns to travel in reach of worldly treasure. His quest leads him to riches far different and far more satisfying than he ever imagined. The main theme of the novel is an individual singular pursuit in life is to follow his or her dream. The study highlights the relevance of Coelho's message in modern society by drawing connections between literary symbolism and personal development philosophies.

Research Studies

Research studies were done appropriately in accordance with the article and the consequence of the paragraph noted in the article and so nothing is left out.

Prominent Theme

The most prominent theme in the Alchemist is the idea that each person has a "Personal Legend" person can chose. The Alchemist is a work of fiction but the message of the novel is autobiographical in spirit. Author Paulo Coelho explains But I never lost faith in the book or wavered in my vision. He told himself that he would have started reading "Legend is correctly capitalized" suggestion the "Personal Legend" did not surpass the Bible which has been translated into hundreds of languages and remains the most widely distributed book globally.

The boy's name was Santiago ². Dusk was falling as the boy arrived with his herd at an abandoned church. The roof had fallen in long ago and an enormous sycamore had grown on the spot where the sacristy had once stood. He decided to spend the night there. He saw to it that all the sheep entered through the ruined gate, and then laid some planks across it to prevent the flock from wandering away during the night. There were no wolves in the region, but once an animal had strayed during the night, and the boy had to spend the entire next day searching for it. He swept the floor with the jacket and lay down; using the book he had just finished reading as a pillow. He told himself that he would have started reading thicker books they lasted longer, and made of more comfortable pillows. It was still dark when he awoke, and looking up, he would see the stars through the half - destroyed roof. I wanted to sleep a little longer, he thought.

He had the same dream that night a week ago and once awakened before it ended. He arose and taking up his crook, began to awaken the sheep that still slept. He had noticed that, as soon as he awoke, most of the animals began to stir. It was as if some mysterious energy bound the life to that of the sheep, with which he had spent the past two years, leading them through the county side in search of food and water. "They are so used to me that they know my schedule", he muttered. Thinking about that for a moment, he realized that it could be the other way round that it was he who had accustomed to their schedule.

Boy back to the some Village

And now it was only four days before he would be back in that same village. He was excited and at the same time uneasy; may be the girl had already forgotten him. Lots of shepherds passed through, selling their wood. "It doesn't matter", he said to the sheep: I know other girls in other places. But in his heart he knows that it did matter. And he knew that shepherds, like seamen and like traveling salesman, always found a town where there was someone who could make them forget the joys of carefree wandering. The day was dawning and the shepherd urged his sheep in the direction of the sun. They have to make any decisions; he thought maybe that's why they always close to me. The only thing that concerned the sheep was food and water. As long as the boy knew how to find the best pastures in Andalusia, they would be his friends.

Everyone passed through the Village

"People from all over the world have passed through the village, son" said his father. "They come in search of new things, but when they leave they are basically the same people they were when they arrived. The climb the mountain to see the castle, and they wind up thinking that the past was better than what we have now. They have blond hair, or dark skin, but basically they are the same as the people who live right here. "But I would like to see the castles in the towns where they live"; the boy explained "Those people would like to live here forever", his father continued. "Well, I'd like to see their land, and see how they live". Said his son, "The people who came here have a lot of money to spend, so that they can afford to travel", his father said: Amongst us the only ones who travel are the shepherds "Well then, I will be a shepherd. His father said no more. The next day he gave

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his son a pouch that held three ancient Spanish gold coins. I found these one day in the fields. I wanted them to be a part of your inheritance. But use them to buy your flock. Take to the fields and come day you will learn that our countryside is the best, and our women the most beautiful. And he gave the boy his blessing.

The Horizon ³

The horizon was tinged with red, and suddenly the sun appeared. The boy thought back to that conversation with his father and felt happy, he felt happy, he had seen many castles and met many women (but none the equal of the one who waited him several days hence). He owned a jacket, a book that he could trade for another and a flock of sheep. But most important he was able every day to live out his dream. If he were to tire of the Andalusia fields, he could sell his sheep and go to the sea. By the time he had enough of the sea, he would already have known other cities, other women, and other chances to be happy. I could not have found God in the seminary, he thought, as he looked at the sunrise. Whatever he could, he sought out a new road to travel. He had never been to that ruined church before, in spite of having travelled through these parts many times. The world was huge and in exhaustible, he had only to allow his sheep to set the route for a while, and he would discover other interesting things. The problem is that they don't even realize that they were walking a new road every day. They don't see that the fields are new and the seasons change. All they think about is food and water. May be we are all the way, the boy mused. Even me I have not thought of other women since I met the merchant's daughter. Looking at the sun he calculated that he would reach Tarifa before midday. There he could exchange his book for a thicker one, fill his wine bottle, shave, and have a hair cut, he had to prepare himself, for his meeting with the girl, and he did not want to think about the possibility that some other shepherd, with a large flock of sheep had arrived there before him and asked for her hand. It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting, he thought as he looked again to the position of the sun and hurried his pace. He had suddenly remembered that in Tarifa there was an old woman who interpreted dreams.

The Old Woman ⁴

The Old Woman led the boy to a room at the back of her house, it was separated from her living room by a curtain of coloured beads. The room's furnishings consisted of a table, an image of the sacred heart of Jesus, and two chairs. The woman sat down, and told him to be seated as well. Then she took both of his hands in hers and began quickly to pray. It sounded like a Gypsy prayer. The boy already had experience on the road with the Gypsies, they also travelled, but they had no flocks of sheep. People said that Gypsies spent their lives tricking others. It was also said that they had a pact with the devil, and that they kidnapped children and, taking them away to their mysterious camps, made them their slaves. As a child the boy had always been frightened to death and that the boy would be captured by Gypsies, and this childhood fear returned when the old woman took his hands in hers. But she had the sacred heart of Jesus there, he thought, trying to reassure himself. He did not want to begin trembling showing the old woman that he was fearful. He cited on our Father silently. "Very interesting," said the

woman, never taking his eyes from the boy's hands, and then she was silent.

King of Salem ⁵

"I am the King of Salem", the old man had said, "Why would be a king be talking with a shepherd?" The boy asked, awed and embarrassed. For several reasons. But let's say that the most important is that you have succeeded in discovering your destiny. The boy did not know what a person's destiny was. It was what you always want to accomplish. Everyone, when they are young knows what their destiny is. At that point in their lives everything is clear and possible.

The old man looked at the boy and with his hands held together, made several strange gestures over the boy's head. Then taking his sheep, he walked away.

In Tarifa ⁶ there is an old Fort

At the highest point of Tarifa there is an old fort, built by the Moors. From atop the hills, one can catch a glimpse of the wall of the fort that afternoon, and felt the levanter flowing in his face. The sheep fidgeted nearby, uneasy with their new owner and excited by so much change. All they wanted food and water. Melchizedek watched a small ship that was ploughing its way out of the port. He would never again see the boy, just as he had never seen Abraham again after having charged him his one tenth. That was his work. The gods should not have desires, because they do not have destinies. But the king of Salem hoped desperately that the boy would be successful. It is too bad that he quickly going to forget my name, he thought, I should have repeated it for him. Then when he spoke about me he would say that. I am Melchizedek of Salem. He looked to the skies, feeling a bit slashed, and said I know it is the vanities as you said, my Lord. But an old king sometimes has to take pride in himself.

Strange Africa ⁷

The boy was sitting in a bar very much like the other bars he had seen along the narrow streets of Tangier. Some men were smoking from a gigantic pipe that they passed. From one to the other. In just a few hours he had seen men walking hand in hand, women with their faces covered, and priests that climbed to the top of towers and chanted as everyone about him went to their knees and placed their foreheads on the ground. A practice of infidels, he said to himself. As a child in a Church, he had always looked at the image of saint Santiago Matamoros on his white horse, his sword unsheathed, and figures such as these kneeling at his feet. The boy felt ill and terribly alone. The infidels had an evil look about them. Besides this, in the rush of his travels he had forgotten a detail, just one detail which could keep him from his treasure for a long time: only Arabic was spoken in this country. The owner of the bar approached him, and the boy pointed to a drink that had served him at the next table. It turned out to be a better tea. The boy preferred wine. But he did not worry about that right now. What he had to be concerned about was his treasure, and how he was going to go about getting it. The sale of his sheep had left him with enough money in his pouch, and the boy knew that in money there was magic, whosoever has money is never really alone. Before long, may be in just a few days,

he would be at the Pyramids an old man, with a breast plate of gold, would not have had just to acquire six sheep. He opened the pouch to see what was left of his possessions, maybe there was a bit left of the sandwich he had eaten on the ship. But all he found was the heavy book, his jacket, and the two old stones the old man had given him.

The Crystal merchant ⁸

The boy had been working for the crystal merchant for almost a month and he could see that it was not exactly the kind of job that would make him happy. The merchant spent the entire day numbering behind the counter telling the boy to be careful with the pieces and not to break anything.

But he stayed with the job because the merchant although he was an old grouch, treated him fairly the boy received a commission for each place he sold, and had already been able to put some aside. That morning he had done some calculating if he continued to work every day as he had been he would need a whole year to be able to buy some sheep. I would like to build a display case for the crystal the boy said to the merchant. We would place it outside, and attract those people who pass at the bottom of the hill.

Two more months passed and the shelf brought many customers into the crystal shop. The boy estimated that if he worked for six months, he would return to Spain and buy sixty sheep, and yet another sixty. In less than year he would have doubled his flock and he would be able to do business with the Arabs, because he was now able to speak that strange language. Since that morning in the market place, he had never again made use of Urim and Thummim because Egypt was now just as distant a dream as he was Macca for the merchant. Anyway the boy had become happy in his work and thought all the time about the day when he would disembark as Tarifa as a winner. You must always know what is that you want the old king had said. The boy was knew and was now working toward it. May be it was his treasure to have wound up that strange lard met up with a thief and doubled the size of his flock without spending a cent. He was proud of himself. He had learned some important things like how to deal in crystal and about the language without words and about omens. One afternoon he had seen a man at the top of the hill complaining that it was impossible to find a decent place to get something drink after such a climb. The boy accustomed to recognizing omens spoke to the merchant. Let's sell tea to the people who climb up the hill. Lots of places to sell tea around here the merchant said. The men climbed the hill and they were tired when they reached the top. But there they saw a crystal shop that offered refreshing mint tea. They went into drinking the tea which was served in beautiful crystal glasses. Y never thought of this said one and he bought some crystal he was entertaining guests that night and the guests would be impressed by the beauty of the glass ware. The other man remarked the tea was always more delicious when it was served in crystal because the aroma was retained. The third said that it was a tradition in the orient to use crystal glasses because it had magical powers.

Summary

A novel summary provides a concise overview of a books plot, key characters, major events and themes without revealing spoilers or excessive detail. A novel summary should include a brief outline of the main events and turning points of the story, focusing on the narrative arc. It is remarkably being a love story that renounces the idea that romantic love must be the central thing in your life. Each person has a destiny to pursue that exists independently of other people. It is the thing you would do or be, even if you have all the love and money you want.

Story of the theme

A Strange theme is the message woven throughout it, often about important topics such as human nature, life or society. It is deeper than the plot or summary and it can answer questions such as what does it mean to be a family ? or "what are we afraid of ?"

Symbols ⁹

The symbols are as follows: Santiago's sheep, which symbolizes humility. Alchemy or the medieval era idea of transforming one substance into another which symbolizes self development and the value of life. The pyramids of Egypt which symbolize interconnectedness and humility. Fatima is the woman Santiago falls in love with Alchemist. She lets him leave to seek the personal Legend but he plans to come back to her at the end of the novel. Although no official reason was given, some blame a video from 2009 showing Coelho's Iranian Editor, Arash Hezari, trying to save the life of a young woman who was shot in Tehran during post - election demonstrations Coelho had supported him. Scar is introduced in the series as a serial killer who targets alchemists working for the state military from the country of Amestrus in revenge for their insolent in the Ishvalan civil war, which caused the death of several of his comrades.

Plot of the Story ¹⁰

(Plot is the series of events that make up a story, often presented in a specific order and often linked by cause and effect)

In a story, the plot is the sequence of events, or the "What" and "Why" of the narrative, that drives the story forward and keeps the reader engaged. It is the backbone of the story, encompassing the actions, conflicts, and resolutions that unfold.

Purpose of the Novel ¹¹

Plot is the sources of events that make up a story often represented in a specific order and often links by ease and effect. In a story Plot is what keeps the reader interested in finding out what happens next. It creates suspense, tension, and ultimately a sense of closure. It is the backbone of the story encompassing the actions conflicts and resolutions that one unfold.

Message

The message echoed throughout the book is this: When you want something all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.

Theme ¹² of the Story**Themes, Symbolisms characters study and Narrative structure**

The theme of the story is the central element of its narrative. It is the underlying message that the author wants to convey to the reader. Serving as the backbone of a story, the theme of a story ties together all its elements. A theme also works as a catalyst to bring together different narratives in one part.

The Alchemist about God

While the book has many subtle philosophical messages, perhaps the most note worthy is about religion. Through Santiago's experiences, Coelho infers that there is only one God, but men interpret him differently.

The Bible ¹³

It's the Holy scripture of Christianity as is also revealed in Judaism. It has been translated into hundreds of languages. Its first mass produced edition, the Gutenberg Bible is published in various form in 1455. The Bible is central to Christianity and has also influenced literature, philosophy and arts.

Notable Best Sellers

Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse Tung (estimated 900 million copies). The Quran (estimated at 800 million copies), Don Quixote (estimated at least 500 million copies), Xinhua Zidian (estimated 567 million copies), A Tale of two cities (estimated at least 200 million copies), The book of Mormon (estimated 192 million copies).

Harpet Collins ¹⁴ (says it is the most popular noon) which said that reading the Alchemist was like getting up at dawn and seeing the sun rise while the world slept. And little by little, my dream was becoming reality. Ten, a hundred, a thousand a million copies were sold in America. The book has been translated into 61 languages, has sold more than 30 million copies worldwide and people are beginning to ask "what is the secret behind such a huge success ? The only honest response is that I don't know. All I know is that like Santiago, the Shepherd boy, we all need to be aware of our personal calling. What is personal calling? It is God's blessing, it is the path that God chose for you're here on Earth.

Conclusion

The Alchemist remains a timeless that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries. Through Santiago's journey, Paul Coelho crafts a story that speaks to universal experience – The pursuit of faith, and self discovery. The analysis sought to uncover the deeper philosophical and symbolic messages within the novel, encouraging readers to reflect on their personal legends.

References

- [1] The Alchemist
- [2] Santiago
- [3] Horizon
- [4] The Old Woman
- [5] King of Salem
- [6] Tarifa
- [7] Strange Africa
- [8] The Crystal Merchant
- [9] Symbols
- [10] Plot of the Story
- [11] Purpose of the Novel
- [12] Themes, Symbolism, Character Study and Narrative Structure
- [13] The Bible
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