

## An Ideological Analysis in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* of the Concept of Love and Fondness

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**Abstract.** *This study employs qualitative research methodology, utilizing a documentary approach to gather data. The data for this brief study consists of selected dialogues and narrative structures. Additionally, gazettes, journals, hypotheses, treatises, other books, and URLs are used as sources of data. An inductive method is employed to analyze the dilemmas, presenting communication of ideas in the analysis from the specific to the general. Paulo Coelho makes the most of his writer's liberation by selecting to commence upon individualism. The stable theme in *The Alchemist* is to follow your dreams by following what your heart yearns. During the young boy's expedition, he learns to listen to the compassion and to follow the sacramental investigation as a process of following your dreams. Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* is a hypnotizing myth about the spiritual journey we must all take to accomplish our dreams and play out our fates. Along the way, we need to learn how to certitude others, to interpret the world for signs of God, to listen to our heart, to make the most of concurrency and good fortune. To sum up, it can be concluded that Paulo Coelho embodies Orientals through the representation of the West and the East.*

**Key words:** *The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho, Ideology, orientalism.*

### Introduction

Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist*, which was published in 1993, is known for its stylish writing. It has become one of the most popular and widely read books globally, with its story being the subject of many essays, books, and studies. The novel follows the journey of a shepherd boy named Santiago as he embarks on a quest to find treasure and encounter a mysterious fiction (Foster : 2002,p17).

During his journey, Santiago met a variety of characters, including the King of Salem, an old gypsy woman, an Englishman (an European/British traveler), an alchemist (a mysterious figure in the desert), and Fatima (a local woman from Egypt) and other local residents. The characters in the novel clearly depict the differences in cultural temperament, style, physical posture, language, religion, culture, and conditions between the East and the West. The rationality, science and sensitivity of Westerners are similar. As mentioned above, the characters in this novel have colorful characteristics. The Englishman who owns this book describes a British man as an educated, rational, ambitious, rational man. The old gypsy woman symbolizes the way Orientals think about their products beyond authenticity and originality. Santiago, with his belief in conquering the problems, represents the young man in the West who want to understand reality and realize their dreams. Fatima is a Middle Eastern woman who represents love, generosity, gratitude and loyalty to Santiago. The alchemist has a mysterious way and has the power to turn stone into gold.( Mohamad ;2014,p32)

The “Merchant of Crystal” helps Santiago after he lost his wealth in Africa. Nevertheless, this novel also portrays in the compendium the presumed meaning of the West's complete underestimation of its Eastern subjects. There are several distinctions in the representation of the West and the East in

the Novel. The above description refers to the fact that the novel still represents the artistic Orientalist dialogue allowed through its characters, plot, and setting. The novel contains a number of socio-artistic headings, such as the dialogue of the stereotyping process against the Oriental case - people, religion, morality, and education. It is engrossing in the search for reasons for the West's superiority over the East. In summary, Edward Said's utilization of the Orientals' concept highlights the underlying theme that Paulo Coelho, the author of *The Alchemist*, inadvertently perpetuates Orientalism and emphasizes the distinctions between the Western and Eastern cultures. Through his work, Coelho demonstrates a fascination from the Western perspective towards the East through various characters. As a Westerner, Coelho portrays the Orient through his characters, echoing the sentiments of many Western scholars who tend to portray the West as superior and the East as inferior. This portrayal also carries ideological implications regarding the issues faced by the East. By delving into Said's analysis in his book "Orientalism," I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the ideological undertones present in Coelho's depiction of the East. (Foster : 2002,p17) .

After analyzing this study, it can be concluded that Paulo Coelho portrays the Orient through a blend of Western and Eastern elements. This aligns with Edward Said's concept of orientalism, which posits that the West views the East as inferior, backward, and subordinate. The author's personal experiences and ideological leanings shape the depiction of the social community in the novel. Coelho's portrayal of the East as a marginalized group reflects Said's idea that the West seeks to define the East based on its own perspective, attempting to homogenize and control it. Through a close examination of the novel, it becomes clear that the representation of the West and the East is intertwined with broader ideological interests. The act of stereotyping the East by Western discourses serves to perpetuate a cycle of interventionism, reinforcing Western authority and potentially leading to the subjugation of the Eastern world(Said;1979,p75) .

### **Literature review**

Understanding of the overall concept of orientalism is crucial, rather than simply debating it. Edward Said's work for orientalism delves into the interpretation of interactions between Western orientalists and the Orient, portraying it as a representation of non-Western communities and their people. Said's success in formulating the orientalism theory is credited to his utilization of Michel Foucault's concept of discourse as a methodological approach, enabling him to analyze orientalism as a textual structure(Brazilian;2016,p42).

Said also uses Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony to illustrate the unequal power dynamic between the West and the East.. Orientalism is a result of the West's dominance and control over the East. This domination is not only achieved through conquest of the east, but also through the creation of a vast body of literature including travel writing, novels, translations, historical documents, and more. This literature serves to shape the perception of the East and is a crucial tool in maintaining Western superiority over the East.

Orientalism is seen as a form of discourse that is produced through literature. The different writings produced about the East, including theories, stories, books, societal depictions, and governmental reports, all play a role in depicting the East as lesser than the West. This reinforces the notion of Western dominance and Eastern insufficiency.

The study of process of stereotyping is crucial due to the power dynamics at play by Western orientalists and various writers, including poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators. These individuals have historically used to perceive differences between the East and West as a foundation for their explanations since the late eighteenth century. Orientalism, broadly defined as an institutionalized approach to the Orient, has been a key tool in shaping perceptions of the East.

Literary scholars and philosophers often focus on literature due to its diverse perspectives and ideological implications. The portrayal of the Orient in literature, travel writings, and oriental fantasies within various institutions like schools, libraries, and foreign services has granted the West authority over the East. Without the Western emphasis on the Orient, the power dynamics between the two regions would be significantly different(Said;1979,p75).

Orientalism's impact would just be another idea in the realm of literature and criticism. It explores the connections between history, textual representation, and society. The cultural significance of the East in the West links orientalism with ideology, politics, and the dynamics of power in literary circles and Western thinking. Since the 18th century, Westerners have actively sought knowledge about the Orient, fueled by colonialism and widespread curiosity. This knowledge is manipulated by sciences, comparative anatomy, and history, and is reflected in literature produced by novelists, poets, translators, and travelers. The West has authority over the East, and orientalism has become a movement or development in many views. In his book, Edward Said delves into the concept of "Orientalism," exploring its roots, key principles, and impact on both Western and Eastern societies. The English and French have always considered themselves Pilgrims when in Oriental lands. Orientalism not only describes the world's geography, but also how it was influenced by European colonization. The pursuit of geographical knowledge was a key aspect of Orientalism. Said also discusses the evolving global political landscape in the 20th century and the shifting perspectives on Orientalism (Das, ;2009,p34)

## Methodology

The main difference is that ancient Orientalists had little interaction with Eastern peoples, while modern Orientalists integrate into their society as if they were part of it. Said's view, Orientalism is a discourse in which Western subjects are systematically opposed to Eastern subjects. The stereotype of Westerners and the dominant approach of Western superiority and Eastern inferiority were designed to justify colonialism with civilizational arguments. Said argues that "the popular Orientalist vision of future world history was essentially the view that relations between the West and non-Westerns would continue to be characterized by widespread divisions and conflicts, in response to the resulting violence and the inevitable and continuing consequences and backlashes." Author: "Colonial History" The above quote makes it clear that Orientalism is the history of the West and the East and a major tool for confronting the future. Orientalism is also a means by which the West explores the East. It can be said that the West wants to create a role for the East, just as the West is in constant opposition to the East.

Orientalism expresses and represents this part culturally and even ideologically, such as the institutions, vocabulary, professions, images, doctrines, and even discursive patterns that supported colonial bureaucracies and colonial methods. Orientalism is the view of the East according to Western standards. There are Western and Eastern themes. There are Western and Eastern themes. However, Orientalists were classified as a subordinate race because they lived outside Europe. In this case, the popularization of Orientalism is an ideal interpretation that may have inspired the ideas put forward by Europeans about the Orient..(www.Goodreads.com)

Santiago's beliefs about love and commitment were instilled in him by his family, who emphasized the importance of taking the time to truly understand someone before making a commitment. However, when Santiago first sees Fatima, he experiences a different kind of connection. As he gazes into her dark eyes and notices the way her lips are poised between a smile and silence, he realizes that he has discovered the universal language of love that transcends all barriers. This moment with

Fatima is a sign that he has been waiting for without even realizing it, a sign that love has finally found him.

Unfortunately, Santiago's encounter with Fatima comes at a challenging time in his life. In his experience, settling down with a wife meant giving up opportunities to pursue his dreams and ambitions. Santiago is currently on a quest to find his Personal Legend, a journey that requires him to make sacrifices and face difficult choices.

In addition to his personal struggles, Santiago is also grappling with the concept of Orientalism. This term refers to a system of representations created by Western powers that portray the Orient as exotic, inferior, and alien. The Orient is constructed in relation to the West, existing solely for the benefit and interest of Western societies. This idea of the Orient as the "other" reinforces a sense of superiority and dominance in Western cultures(Said;1994,p37 ) .

## **Literary Analysis of The Alchemist**

The Alchemist relies heavily on biblical proverbs, multiple belief systems, and mythological elements to allude to its theme of "personal mythology," or the need to pursue the ultimate goal of life or happiness. What the novel suggests is that the child understands the spiritual truth of his personal myth, but is corrupted and lost by outside forces when others impose their expectations or act in ways that undermine this understanding. The conflict in this novel emphasizes the solution. Santiago, the novel's protagonist, is a man of many truths: a person's personal legend can only be achieved through perseverance; This wisdom is acquired through observation and attention; Simple things have extraordinary value and should not be ignored. Existence. The novel's protagonist, Santiago, is a spiritual and cultured young man from Andalusia, Spain. His father was originally going to be a priest, but because of his love of travel he decided to become a pastor, a sign of what was to come. He appears in a mysterious place, an abandoned church, where events unfold when he awakens from disturbing, recurring and uncertain dreams.

From then on, the reader becomes a companion on Santiago's physical and spiritual journey. Santiago describes his adventures and chance encounters, each of which helps us understand the nature of his personal mythology. He first meets a fortune teller who tells him that his dreams are "the language of the soul" and that he will go to the pyramids of Egypt in search of treasure. What this treasure is and whether he can find it constitutes the main conflict of the novel and motivates his obstacle-filled efforts to succeed. (Brazilian;2016,p42).

As Santiago sets out, he meets a quasi-mystical figure in Tarifa who teaches him that people control their own destiny and are therefore responsible for their own circumstances. The old man identifies himself as Melchizedek, king of Salem, and is reminiscent of the biblical figure in the Book of Genesis. Melchizedek explains that man's true desire comes from the "soul of the world" and that one must realize one's destiny in order to be happy. Melchizedek gives Santiago the black and white stones (Urim and Tongmin) from his breastplate. The stones serve as a symbolic reminder that he is in control of his decisions (Said;1979,p75).

### **Purpose of The Alchemist**

"The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho is a timeless classic that has inspired readers around the world. At its core, the novel is about finding purpose and wisdom in life. It tells the story of a shepherd, Santiago, who sets out on a journey to achieve his legend and purpose in life, meeting wise people along the way who teach him valuable life lessons. One of

the book's most significant themes is the language of the universe, which suggests that the universe communicates with us through signs and omens. Santiago's journey is marked by several instances of such signs, emphasizing the importance of paying attention to the universe's messages and trusting the path that it sets us on. The concept of Maktub, which means "it is written" in Arabic, is another essential theme in the book. Coelho suggests that our destinies are predetermined, and everything that happens to us is for a reason. The book encourages readers to have faith in the universe's plan and believe that everything will eventually work out for the best(Brazilian;2016,p42).

Lastly, "The Alchemist" is a must-read for anyone looking for meaning in their lives. Its themes of wisdom, the language of the universe, and Maktub provide readers with valuable insights and lessons that will stick with them long after the last page is turned. "The Alchemist" is an excellent companion for anyone seeking to discover their Personal Legend, whether you're just starting out on your journey or looking for guidance along the way.

### **Conclusion**

The novel presents characters who do not necessarily endorse their views on the East, but rather their portrayal of the West and how the West should be depicted. There are several characteristics in this novel that show the superiority of the West when it encounters the East. One of the characteristics or attitudes of the West is smartness. Not only are the characters portrayed as smart, but as the novel describes, there are books here and there brought by Santiago and the English. As Said describes the superiority of the West, despite the fact that the Western subjects, by virtue of their knowledge, think



of themselves as perfect creatures in this world, most of the Western characters in the novel are able to solve problems, and they always bring books with them wherever they go, consistent with the description of the There is plenty of evidence to support this. Characters like Santiago and the English are smart. The characters in this novel have the ability to tell stories and remember what happened in their sphere boyhood experiences. From his stories, he wants to make others admire him for his knowledge and believes that the person who spoke to him did not know it before. In other words, the person who read the author's book about lions being wild animals happened to meet a lion in the wild (Foster : 2002,p17).

It is the same book Santiago brought with him when he went to Egypt. Indirectly, that book gives him and the English men some suggestions for doing business with strangers and in faraway places.

This suggestion from the writer was trusted by the reader and also caused the writer to create another book of suggestions and guidebooks.

Santiago, as a Westerner, gained a lot of knowledge but always felt a sense of dissatisfaction. This led him to embark on a journey around the world in search of new experiences. Along the way, he heard tales of a land filled with treasures and continued to discover things he had never known before.

Traveling as a Westerner, Santiago encountered many different people, particularly those from the East. The West viewed the East as strange, primitive, and dangerous, but also saw it as a valuable source of knowledge. The English, in particular, were intrigued by the scholarly pursuits of the alchemists in the East.

Through his novel, the writer highlights the Englishman's constant quest for knowledge and his willingness to learn from different cultures. Santiago, like the Englishman, continued to expand his understanding of the world while in the desert, preparing to share his experiences with others.

This demonstrates the presence of Orientalism in the story. Westerners often have a strong thirst for knowledge and strive to excel in order to align with Western ideals, even if it means disregarding non-Western perspectives or beliefs. Rather than seeking to understand others, they prioritize conforming to Western standards. When it comes to literature or discourse, there is usually some underlying ideological agenda at play. Love is a complex subject that manifests differently for each person. The main theme of eternal love is emphasized in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, as it revolves around the personal legends of Santiago and his soul mate Fatima. Despite having different personal legends, both Santiago and Fatima are inspired to follow their dreams and enhance their love for each other. The novel portrays love as a source of inspiration for its characters, reflecting contemporary ideas about love and possession. Santiago, the protagonist, falls in love with two women in the story: Fatima and the merchant's daughter.

As I read, I realized that the novel is set in a much earlier time. Santiago was not initially interested in pursuing a personal legend in order to be with Fatima, because he did not want to be with her. But the alchemist warned him that not following the personal legend would only worsen their relationship as the years went by. To prevent this, Santiago followed his personal legend and encouraged Fatima to go because it was her personal legend to wait for him to return. Coelho suggested the idea of true and eternal love by throwing in the false love Santiago had with the merchant's daughter to reinforce the comparison between Santiago and the merchant's daughter. Rather, we are in love with material things, not with the person. Yet today, our culture is full of people dating and marrying for money. It is contrary to our moral imperative to find true love, but many people mix up the concept of love and wealth because of their materialistic mindset. As one might expect, these relationships usually do not work out and bring stress and depression to both parties. In conclusion, Coelho uses love as a motivating force in "*The Alchemist*" to find the plot and the characters' personal legends. The concept of love in this story has affinities with the concept of love in our culture today. Fear persists throughout Santiago's journey as the main obstacle to his successful achievement of his personal legend. The childhood fear of having his dreams interpreted by a gypsy woman, the material fear of losing his wealth by leaving for Tangier and joining the desert caravan, the physical fear of dying in the battle at Al-Fayoum, the fear of failing to turn himself into wind when the alchemist puts him to the test The physical fear of dying in the battle at al-Fayoum, the mental fear that he would fail to

turn himself into wind when the alchemist tested him, etc. From Melchizedek to the alchemists, Santiago's mentors condemn fear by likening it to materialism, describing it as the product of a misunderstanding of how the universe treats those who pursue their personal legends. If one faithfully pursues his dreams, they suggest, fear should become irrelevant, even in the face of death. Just as those who ignore fear emerge as enlightened individuals, fear dominates the weakest characters in *The Alchemist*. The crystal merchant, in particular, is emblematic of a character whose life has been dominated by fear. He wants to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, which is obligatory for all Muslims, but he fears that once he makes the pilgrimage, he will have no other reason to live. As a result, he remains deeply unhappy, reinforcing the notion that fear is an obstacle to a happy and fulfilling life (Foster : 2002,p17).

### **Implications of this study**

The lesson conveyed in this novel is the significance of chasing after your dreams and striving to achieve your personal legend. Through Santiago's journey, we are taught the valuable lesson of never abandoning our dreams, regardless of the challenges we may face along the way. This novel teaches us that the universe is always working to help us achieve our dreams, and that we should trust in the journey and have faith that everything will work out for the best. Santiago learns to listen to his heart and follow his intuition, which is a powerful lesson about the importance of trusting your own inner voice and making decisions based on your own values and desires. Embrace the journey, not just the destination.<sup>13</sup>

*Alchemist* teaches us that the journey itself is just as important as the destination, and that we should enjoy every moment of the journey and learn from our experiences along the way. The concept of the Soul of the World, as taught by Santiago, emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things in the universe. It reminds us to respect and honor the natural world, recognizing that everything is linked together in a harmonious way.

### **Learned from the novel The Alchemist Lessons**

The novel *The Alchemist* by author Paulo Coelho achieved great international success, as the novel was translated into more than eighty languages, and thus entered the Guinness Book of World Records for the most translated book by a living writer. The novel has sold 210 million copies in more than one hundred and seventy countries. We list for you the most important lessons learned from the novel *The Alchemist*, including:

1. Accept the present and live in it. Do not live in the future or the past. Focus on your present to be happier.
2. Your success will have a double effect. Becoming a better version of yourself means that you will be influential in your family, work, and social surroundings.
3. The ability to make decisions. A well-thought-out decision will always take you to another world that you never dreamed of.
4. The fear of experience is worse than failure. True suffering stems from the fear of experience, adventure, and research. Always after any new experience, there is a great reward that a person obtains on his quest.
5. Everything that is true will always remain; The truth cannot be covered by the scent of smoke, and everything that is real inside you will remain until you arrive.
6. Abandon laziness and monotony. The secret is always to recognize the good things every day to be able to find the bright side in your life.

### **The philosophy of the novel**

The philosophy of the novel *The Alchemist* When we read, we live in another place and live the lives of other people. Novels are not just narratives, letters, and sentences given by their writer. They are his philosophy of life. *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho navigates the wisdom that philosophizes things and pushes us to contemplate them in a way that helps us get along with them and understand their

essence. It is a symbolic novel. It revolves around the story of the young shepherd Santiago on his journey to achieve his dream, which was repeated more than once. Its events revolve around a treasure buried in the pyramids in Egypt. Behind this dream, Santiago went to meet in his journey excitement, adventure, opportunities, humiliation, love and luck, and understands life from another perspective. Soul of the universe.

As well as the concept of personal legend that Santiago heard from the King of Salem, "Jerusalem," who told him: "It is what I always wished you would do." Each of us knows at the beginning of his youth what his personal legend is, and then he explains what he said, "... because there is a great truth in this world: whoever you are and whatever you do, when you sincerely want something, you generate this desire in the soul of the world, that is your message on earth." He tells King Santiago the importance of omens on his journey or in his life for each individual to realize his personal legend.

The idea of the novel is linked to existential philosophy, the human being whose questions express his confusion. It is a philosophical novel par excellence, and wisdom comes as a form that distinguishes this literary work from other literary works.

The novel ends in the place where it began, which indicates that what we are looking for may be in our hands and under our feet, just as the shepherd's treasure is, but we do not see that. The dream occupied our shepherd's mind and he worked hard to interpret it, and it is a message that the writer included as if he was telling us that we must We chase our dreams, or as he calls it, our personal legend, and try to breathe life into these dreams. To be embodied in our reality. The world has a soul and we are all part of the world's soul. It is a soul that sees, hears, decides, runs and manages everything. It has a language in which it addresses us, which is the language of the world or the universe. It comes to us through signs that confront us in life. In reality, the matter is an attempt to consolidate the concepts of inner awareness with energy. Man and his unlimited potential, igniting the ability to know the secrets of the self, starting from within to achieve the self-dream, and defeating all obstacles to achieve the self-myth, with the help of all external forces that will harness themselves to help the dreamer achieve his dream. Paulo Coelho, who made millions of readers dream, made his intellectual mixture from the wisdom of thinkers, and conveyed it to us with greater simplicity and less radicalism, such as when he told us, for example: If you want something, the entire universe is at your service and available to fulfill your desire. Likewise, he said: Whatever his action, A person on the face of the earth has a fundamental role in the history of the world. This person cannot help but achieve fame, especially when he tells his readers that their desire has great power and that they are the center of this universe.

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