



## The Intersection of Destiny and Free Will in Paulo Coelho's 'Alchemist': A Jungian Psychological Approach

<sup>1</sup>Fawad Ali, <sup>2</sup>Sana ul Adil Ali & <sup>3</sup>Hadia Ahmad Khan

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Gomal University, D. I. Khan, Pakistan  
[fawad.lohani@gu.edu.pk](mailto:fawad.lohani@gu.edu.pk)

<sup>2</sup>M. Phil Scholar, Department of English Language & Literature, Gomal University, D. I. Khan, Pakistan  
[adillohani1@gmail.com](mailto:adillohani1@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>English Teacher, Allied Public School & College, D. I. Khan  
[hadiakhan597@gmail.com](mailto:hadiakhan597@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

#### **Article History:**

Received: Dec 22, 2025  
Revised: Jan 11, 2026  
Accepted: Feb 25, 2026  
Available Online: March 30, 2026

**Keywords:** Paulo Coelho; The Alchemist; Jungian Psychology; Destiny; Free Will; Individuation; Synchronicity

#### **Funding:**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

This paper analyzes The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho using the Jungian psychology approach in the connection between fate and free will in the story of Santiago. Based on the ideas of Jung that came to mind during his work in terms of the Self, archetypes, individuation, and synchronicity, the study holds the view that the novel forms the idea of destiny not as something external and predetermined, but as a psychological calling. The discussion is done through qualitative, interpretive textual analysis which reveals how the repeated dream and the concept on the Personal Legend imagined by Santiago can be interpreted as the teleological attraction of the Self to completeness. Certain people like Melchizedek and the alchemist are perceived as archetypes of Wise Old Man, and ordeals, bleak moments, fright etc are interpreted as having to confront the Shadow. It is also shown in the analysis that the move of Santiago is based on the conscious decisions that are risky which proves that free will is the active execution of the ego to cooperate with the Self instead of its denial. The article concludes that The Alchemist puts a spin on individuation as the place where destiny and free will meet, and it is implied that Jungian reading complements an already existing spiritual and motivational interpretations by placing the novel in a psychology model of inner evolution.

© 2022 The Authors, Published by CISSMP. This is an Open Access article under the Creative Common Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0

**Corresponding Author's Email:** [fawad.lohani@gu.edu.pk](mailto:fawad.lohani@gu.edu.pk)

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.61503/ciissmp.v5i1.403>

**Citation:** Ali, F., Ali, S. U. A., & Khan, H. A. (2026). The Intersection of Destiny and Free Will in Paulo Coelho's 'Alchemist': A Jungian Psychological Approach. *Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences and Management Practices*, 5(1), 208-220.

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho is commonly referred to as a philosophical book, the storytelling of which is rendered with simple elements to present symbolic and reflective concepts. The main idea of the novel is the search of Santiago to his Personal Legend, which is something that comprises not only fate and purpose, but also inner orientation. The story always goes back to these two powers that define the course of Santiago: a feeling of fate that appears to be calling him and personal decisions he has to make in every stage in the turn. The fact that Coelho includes dreams, omens, and mentors in this quest makes the novel ponder the topic of human choices and the manner, in which they interact with forces that seem to be bigger than the individual.

### **1.2 Rationale**

This novel is specifically appropriate to a Jungian psychology interpretation. The work of Jung studies the symbols, the unconscious, the development of self of which Santiago is deeply involved. The archetypes, Self, individuation, and synchronicity are some of the concepts that provide a systematic approach to comprehending how the novel offers an internal directing force of destiny and not an external command. The use of intentional development and significant coincidence by Jung is very similar to what Coelho describes in his omens and intuitive direction. Application of this framework enables psychological explanation of what is usually considered as a mystical or inspirational thing.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Most of the surrounding critique of The Alchemist centers around the spiritual themes of the book, or the book's inspirational nature. Although these tricks help to grasp the general popularity of the novel, they tend to ignore the fact that the tension between destiny and free will has certain psychological aspects. Not many studies subject the symbolic language used by Coelho to a discussion about the Jungian theory and the little that exists in relation to the novel addresses how the fate and choice of the story can be conceived in terms of the dialogue between the ego and the unconscious. This creates a blank in the literature where a psychological analysis can be used to shed more light.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This paper will be an attempt to find the connection of how The Alchemist is an allegory of destiny and free will as seen through Jungian psychology. It attempts to explain how the novel explores the idea of destiny as the Self, the aspect by which Santiago makes ego decisions, and how archetypes and synchronicity are applied in the book.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. How does the *Alchemist* depict destiny according to Jungian theory of the Self.
2. How does Santiago exercise free will in conformance to or effort to oppose individuation?
3. What are the Jungian archetypes and synchronicity useful in telling why there is an intersection point between destiny and free will?

### **1.6 Thesis Statement**

With Jungian perspective of psychology, The Alchemist introduces destiny as an

archetypal call of the Self, and free will as the active participation of the ego in the call. Indeed, as the novel indicates, individuation can only be attained when these two forces work in unison implying that the mental development requires the inner force as well as the conscious choice.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Alchemist has been the subject of a number of scholarly works**

The works about *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho frequently focus on the symbolism used and its concepts of attaining personal change. Researchers usually refer to the novel as a contemporary fable according to which the life of Santiago is defined as the quest of meaning and internalization. Numerous pieces of research indicate that the novel has a spiritual color and suggests self-discovery by dreams, omens, and intuition (Dwyer, 2011; Kurniawan, 2018). This literary tradition has been inclined to treat the "Personal Legend" as the metaphor of self-actualization and destiny tends to appear as a good agent which leads people to course of accomplishment.

Critical work is largely concerned with symbolism. They observe Coelho trying to symbolize inner development and the search of meaning using desert, the pyramids, alchemical metaphors, and so on (Almeida, 2019; Singh, 2015). These interpretations normally interpret the signs and coincidences in the novel using spiritual or mystics analysis. Certain critics find parallels with the story of Coelho and mystical narratives seen in Christianity and Sufism, noting that the novel can make people open-minded to working mystically (Al-Kawari, 2016; Subramaniam, 2020).

An even less extensive yet important scholarly literature deems a psychological interpretation to the novel. The scholars of this field remark that the choice, anxieties, and experiences of Santiago represent a spiritual process, but the overwhelming majority of the literature mentions general psychoanalytic theories, but not Jungian ones in particular (Farooq and Qureshi, 2021). Critics do not even dwell on how Coelho treats the omens, dreams and coincidences when in connection with Jung interpretation of archetypes, Self and synchronicity. Such is vacuitiotic on a more formal Jungian interpretation.

### **2.2 Jungian Literary Analysis the Scholarship**

The Jungian psychology has contributed to the subject of literary studies in particular to the research on symbolic narratives and transformative journeys. Early Jungian literature criticism talks of the role of an archetype like the Hero, Shadow, Wise Old Man and Anima/Animus, and places individuation on a handy framework of analyzing character development (Frye, 1957; Stevens, 1994). The psychoanalytic idea of the psyche as organized due to universal configurations is what has rendered Jung attractive to the imaginative interests of scholars of myths, spirituals, and psychological fiction.

The theory introduced by Jung is still being used in contemporary studies where applications are made to literature text that involve symbolic journeys, and interaction with guide figures. As an illustration, Jungian interpretations of *Heart of Darkness*, *Siddhartha* and *Sons and Lovers* help focus on how the archetypal pattern influences the development of the main characters and how the unconscious expresses through dreams and significant coincidences (Guerin et al.,

2011; Singer, 1994; Walker, 2002). These works demonstrate how Jungian criticism can be applied to describe moments in narratives when characters experience an internal struggle, when they find symbolic mentors on their way or when they have to do with the shadow in themselves.

Despite the established use of Jungian analysis, it has hardly been thoroughly done on *The Alchemist*. Some authors prove the existence of archetypal characters in the novel like the Hero archetype in Santiago or the Wise Old Man in the *Alchemist*, but such sources are usually short-term and not based on a thorough theoretical exposition (Rahman, 2020). Few studies investigate how the Self, individuation, or synchronicity can be used as determination in explaining interest in destiny and choice evident in the novel. Consequently, there is not much exploration of the story in terms of Jungian depth psychology.

### **2.3 Destiny and Free Will Studies in Literature**

The theme of destiny and free will has been a traditional one in literature studies. The studies of classical and contemporary literature are often research on how the characters negotiate their personal agency in the situations determined by greater or invisible forces. Classical works characterize destiny as a force outside of the human, the elemental, and often the frozen, e.g. in Greek tragedy, where human beings are under the control of oracles that circumscribe or restrict the action of their human will (Segal, 2001). Contemporary literature tends to redefine this conflict in the form of a psychological or existential approach where the inner struggle, desires and motives define the nature of fate phenomenon (Kundera, 1995; Taylor, 2012).

Fate-free will However, studies that examine the fate-free will dynamic focus on the interaction between inner drives and outer forces. Researchers believe that what seems to be the fate can have a strong connection with the reasons of unconsciousness or archetypal instincts that are not fully comprehended by characters (Heller, 2014). This methodistic orientation fits the concept proposed by Jung when he says that the unconscious element of the psyche succeeds in creating a directional pull, which determines the decisions people conclude upon even when they assume that they are making their choices independently.

Studies on *The Alchemist* have frequently concerned its optimistic claim that the universe works in their favor in that all people who are pursuing their inner desires are encouraged. Critics often go about this concept as spiritual support, which stresses faith, stamina, and receptiveness to indications (Subramaniam, 2020; Dwyer, 2011). Nevertheless, this conflict is infrequently explained in these studies as a psychological negotiation of the internal purpose and conscious choice. Not many people think of the fact that the destiny described by Coelho can also be regarded as the manifestation of the Self or that the free will can display the interaction of the ego with the inner sense of direction.

### **2.4 Synthesis**

There are three evident gaps brought about by the existing literature. To begin with, it is likely that scholarship on *The Alchemist* offers more emphasis on the spiritual or inspirational reading, and little emphasis on the psychological explanation. Second, in spite of the popular use of Jungian criticism as the instrument to analyze symbolic and transformative stories, the approach has never been applied to the Coelho novel in a systematic manner. Third, on fates and free will,

the literature covers these topics with great attention but hardly refers to it in terms of Jungian theory of the Self, the archetypes, and dynamism as synchronicity. This paper will fill in this gap by combining the Jungian and Coelho symbolic stories to demonstrate how destiny and free will are complementary to each other in the individuation process of Santiago.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework Jungian Psychology**

### **2.5.1 The Self and Individuation**

The main idea of the Jungian depth psychology is the Self. According to Jung it is the centralizing center of the psyche both conscious and unconscious. It is a complete sum of the psychological potential that one has and a guiding framework that promotes movement towards completeness. The Self usually speaks using symbolic images, intuitions or even dreams which give an indication that the individual is headed somewhere he/she does not necessarily engage in knowing. According to Jung, this instinct to integrate is called as teleological or the mysteriously directed drive in the psyche toward integration despite the fact the conscious mind does not know how this integrating happens.

The gradual process by which the ego is gradually merged with the Self is known as individuation and is how someone grows to be aware of and assimilate unknown elements of self. It is not something that simply happens. According to Jung, individuation is not an easy process that can be attained effortlessly without conscious efforts, reflection, and readiness to interact with the unknown parts of the psyche. It is usually initiated by the inner prompt disrupting regular life, e.g., a dream in which he or she has to pay attention to it or an experience where he or she discovers deeper conflicts. These are points of entry to the egos where the ego is driven towards developmental journey which otherwise would be overlooked. Notably, individuation does not eliminate the ego; on the contrary, it perfects it and it makes the ego adopt a more conscious and balanced communication with the unconscious.

### **2.5.2 Archetypes**

The basic patterns in the collective unconscious are archetypes which define how people think and behave. Although they are universal, they take a specific expression in the life of every individual in symbols, images, and constant emotional moments. The archetypes are structures of the psychological content that will emerge in time of transition or crisis, an archetype will be embraced by literature since narratives reflect the internal human process.

The Hero archetype is the adventurous striving portion of the psyche, which strives to be grown by challenge. The Hero cannot stay at his or her normal existence but has to face challenges and emerge as one who is changed. This type portrays how the ego is ready to deal with the unfamiliar. The Wise Old Man archetype also known as the Sage or Mentor is seen as an archetype of youth where the elder may give out some kind of wisdom that the ego cannot comprehend at its present state of knowledge. This character symbolizes the greater cognition of the unconscious, which comes at the points when the Hero requires some guidance to continue.

Shadow archetype comprises of unwelcome attributes which the ego repudiates or fear-like tendencies, which are weakness, anger, inadequacy and unresolved desires. These aspects are in the unconscious state till the situations will make the person face them. In fiction, the clash with

antagonists or failure or inner struggle is the result of the confrontation of a Hero with the Shadow. The battle against the Shadow is a necessary step to growth since this makes the ego less defensive and broadens self-awareness.

Archetypes make the interpretation of the narratives richer as they demonstrate how the characters are internal psychic movements. These give a language of perceiving symbolic incidences, mentors, challenges and turn-taking moments as manifestations of the efforts of psyche to steer the person towards the state of wholeness.

### **2.5.3 Synchronicity**

Coincidences that Jung calls synchronicity make a psychological experience to seem meaningful as they correlate a psychological experience with an external phenomenon. Jung claims that synchronicities take place when the ego is open to the unconscious messages. These instances are not caused those but rather come out as symbolic affirmations that the person is working in a psychologically aligned direction.

Synchronicity is a mediator between the inner and outer world. With focusing attention of a person, even meeting with the right helper at the right time or seeing some symbol that one sees repeatedly, with the conscious mind will not bring one a complete articulation of the deeper patterns that such an event can trigger. Jung felt that synchronicities are likely to manifest themselves in a time of transition or enhanced self-exploration - when the unconscious was making vigorous efforts to push into consciousness.

In symbolic stories synchronicity assists about plotting instances that appear to be directed or intentional. It does not represent them as supernatural interventions but psychological manifestations of identification with the Self and the ego. When the characters react against such events, they either demonstrate the cooperation or resistance in the individuation process.

### **2.5.4 Awakening Tension and Subconscious Tension**

One of the central assumptions in Jungian psychology is constant negotiation of the conscious ego and unconscious psyche. The ego indicates rationality, choice, and identity that an individual makes. It enables individuals to make choices, strategise and lead the daily lives. Nevertheless, the ego has all its limitations with the range of conscious awareness and tends substantially to overestimate autonomy.

The unconscious is a host to symbolic content, emotional remnants, archetypal tendencies plus impulses which affect behaviour even without being known. Jung concludes that when one does not acknowledge the unconscious, the two consequences are stagnation, repetitive errors or psychological unbalance. Excessive ego control results in rigidity and excessive unconscious impact disrupts the self-image. The two then need to engage in a dialogue which in turn is the key to psychological health.

This polarity brings a structure of comprehending destiny and the free will in Jungian terms. The predetermined fate is not determination but the psychological vocation of the Self, the direction the unconscious is orienting the people to. The ego is involved in an act called free will which shapes the way to react to that calling. Jung believes that, true freedom occurs when the ego collaborates with the unconscious impulses and not repressing these impulses. When people decide

intelligently, they are conscious to the purpose that that Self has.

The framework enables one to interpret stories subtly when intuition, coincidence, inner struggle and external mentoring contact. It reveals how characters may be seemingly going with the flow of fate and at the same time be fitting the agency, as the development demands the combination of open mind and choice.

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The present study embraces the qualitative research design, which is based on the interpretive literary analysis. Qualitative methods are the most suitable as the focus is on the abstract phenomena, including the discussion of destiny, free will, archetypes, and individuation in the context of a symbolic story. In this way, it will be possible to study narrative patterns, character development, symbolic structure and psychological theme closely as they manifest themselves throughout the text. It is not aimed at measuring the variables or testing the hypotheses but interpreting the meaning of the novel in a certain theoretical manner. The paper thus applies Jungian psychology as a point of analysis in assessing the way *The Alchemist* has depicted internal and external forces that influenced the journey of Santiago.

#### **3.2 Approach**

Close reading is the major technique of this research. This is through a close examination of some of the passages in which Santiago has dreams, met with teachers and received challenges symbolically, and made important decisions. The focus is put on the way these scenes demonstrate Jungian principles archetypes, Self, shadow confrontation and synchronicity. The discussion addresses the theme of narration, which demonstrates tension between subconscious direction and free will, and the symbolic manifestations of the case in the novel showing the character growth in terms of psychology.

It is also the study that takes into account the greater framework of the novel, bearing in mind that Coelho focuses much of his narration on storytelling which is largely based on allegory and metaphor. Cases of oracles, divinations and symbolic experiences are viewed as psychologically significant phenomena and not necessarily spiritual or supernatural situations. This is an interpretive methodology, as it is based on the assumption, derived out of Jungian theory, that symbolic narrative is indicative of internal psychic movements and developmental processes.

#### **3.3 Framework Justification**

The Jungian psychology offers an appropriate model to examine this study due to various reasons. To begin with, the ideas of Jung provide a systematic language of the analysis of the symbolic texts, which make special emphasis on inner change. Such archetypal characters, dream, omens, and significant coincidences in *The Alchemist* are of course in line with the studies of Jung regarding unconscious and their manifestations. Second, the varied analysis of the notions of destiny and free will under the prerogative of unwanted oppositional terms can be viewed through the prism of Jung in terms of complementarity rather than contrary concepts. This is especially applicable to the novel where destiny is represented as a calling and free will as active involvement of a person with the said calling.

Lastly, individuation as a concept offers a definite interpretation channel in the process of developing Santiago. The novel experience of leaving the comfort behind, facing something scary, noticing some sort of symbolic guidance and incorporating new knowledge reflects the stages Jung distinguishes in the individuation process. The use of the Jungian theory thus makes the novel have a deeper meaning in the sense that the symbolical language used by Coelho conforms to a psychological theory of development, sense-making, and self-realization.

#### **4.0 Findings and Results**

##### **4.1 Destiny A Calling in Archetypes**

###### **4.1.1 The message of the unconscious through Santiago in the form of a dream**

The trip of Santiago starts with another dream, a reoccurring one in which he is taken in his dream to the Egyptian pyramids by some kind of child who assures him of a treasure. According to Jung, such imagery in a dream is a direct message by the unconscious. Jung assumes that dreams have symbolic contents that are yet to be assimilated by the ego. The dream of Santiago works in such a manner: he is not able to live his usual life as a shepherd anymore and the dream serves as an indicator that there is another psychological orientation. This persistence of the dream argues that the Self is trying to lure Santiago to a direction that is going to broaden his consciousness and identity. This is what the destiny seems to look like; it is an inner call and not a command.

###### **4.1.2 Melchizedek as the old Sage-type Wizard**

Meeting Melchizedek, king of Salem, Santiago meets with one of the brightest examples of the Wise Old Man archetypal. According to Jung, it is a symbolic outline of the greater wisdom which emanates out of the subconscious. Melchizedek gives Santiago information that even the boy is not at a position to comprehend. He elaborates on the concept of a Personal Legend and identifies the dream that Santiago had as something meaningful and not menial. It is his direction that makes Santiago begin to consciously respond to the Self calling. Melchizedek therefore acts as an intermediary between the unconscious and the ego, which explains the invitation that the dream embarks.

###### **4.1.3 The Teleological pull of the Self by the Personal Legend**

The idea of the Personal Legend is similar to the Jung thought on Self as a teleological which pulls a person to psychological wholeness. Coelho illustrates the Personal Legend as a calling that is special and an individual has to follow it to accomplish his purpose. This is in line with what Jungian people refer to as the Self bringing the psyche together to integrate meaning. The feeling of destiny in Santiago is thus not accidental and imposed by the outside factors, but it a sense of inner guidance which appears due to the inner layers of mind. The theme destiny in the novel is archetypal in its characteristic of being a symbolic image of the natural course of development of the Self.

##### **4.2 Free Will in Conscious Choice of the Ego**

###### **4.2.1 Making choices that are beyond the comfort and fear.**

Jung focuses more on the role played by the ego in the process of individuation since unconscious drives are insufficient to accomplish the individuals. Santiago is forced to make tough decisions again and again that involve making efforts, sacrifices, and readiness to deal with

uncertainty. Taking the life of his shepherd, selling his flock and giving himself to an unknown journey are the examples of the active involvement of the ego. Every choice is also a time of trying when free will could be either in line with or opposing the direction of the Self. The initial trepidation of Santiago is the inherent fear of the unknown and his decisions afterward depict the egotist happening to comply with the unconscious granting.

#### **4.2.2 Free will is a matter of taking risks**

Santiago chooses consciously throughout the story to guide his life: by taking up the crystal shop, deciding to go across the desert, and to follow his instinct in his moments of crisis. The latter actions highlight the fact that Jung argues individuation requires conscious activity. His risk-taking would be voluntary and Santiago could not have gone on with his journey. The plot of the crystal merchant serves as a warning example: a man who gets the same inner voice but does not want to do it. The occasion that this opposition promotes the notion that free will makes the potential of the Self-actualized or not.

#### **4.2.3 The theme that Coelho puts out is that decisions determine fate**

Coelho is always demonstrating how destiny does not happen automatically. Whenever Santiago hesitates in staying true or even thinking about dropping his course, the story reiterates that not doing anything can hamper the achievement of a Personal Legend. This is in line with the argument by Jung that the ego needs to collaborate with the unconscious in order to promote psychological development. Fate in *The Alchemist* is not something definite, but possible. It is based on the conscious choices and it demonstrates that the free will is described as the tool according to which the call of the Self is made real.

#### **4.3 Cosmic coincidences as Jungian Synchronicity**

The omens are abundant in the novel, sudden signs which apparently mean something to Santiago. These coincidences of the occurrence of the flight of birds or even of mere happening of some kinds of events seem to be symbolically inclined coincidences. The way Jung explained this narration pattern is through his concept of synchronicity. Synchronicities are occurrences that coincide with what is going on in the external environment to produce togetherness in the state of the individual that reflects a psychological reality. The fact that Santiago is able to notice the omens proves that he is becoming more and more responsible to the unconscious. The closer he is to his Personal Legend the more receptive he becomes to the symbolic messages of the world.

##### **4.3.1 When there is intent there is purpose, synchronicities will happen**

According to Jung, synchronicities usually happen when the ego gets into a congruence with the Self. At all times in the novel, there is an escalation of synchronicities when Santiago makes a more ardent commitment to his quest. As an example, encountering the Englishman, finding out about the presence of the alchemist, and getting the right guidance in time in the desert all coincide with the moments of sanity or rededication. Such occurrences indicate how the psyche has been supporting the individuation process of Santiago. Instead of eliminating his duty to make a choice, they signify the fact that psychological alignment is accompanied by meaningful coincidences.

##### **4.3.2 The psyche working together as the universe conspires**

Often used words by Coelho about the world conspires to make a person realize his or her Personal Legend can have a symbolic meaning with the application of Jungian psychology. Rather than meaning intervention of supernatural forces then this word can signify the automatic urge of the psyche to favour individuation. The external world seems to make more sense and is integrated when the Self is being listened to by the ego. This replay changes way of looking upon the universe as a magical power to the metaphorical reflection of the psychological harmony of inner purpose and outer experience. This all makes synchronicity the process which makes destiny and free will seem to work together.

#### **4.4 Individuation as the Encounter of Destiny and Free Will**

##### **4.4.1 Trials that bring Santiago to change in identity**

Santiago suffers trials of loss of money, betrayal, Pinacol and Pinacol in the desert which are symbolic trials. These trials can be described as a conflict with the Jungian Shadow, the part of the psyche that can be characterized as fearful, doubtful and vulnerable. Santiago has to endure these experiences to incorporate these traits that he did not have before. The process resembles individuation whereby the ego should experience and assimilate disowned ego parts so as to be integrated.

##### **4.4.2 Combination of spontaneity and doing**

Through the development of the story, Santiago comes to acquire the ability to balance between intuition (unconscious direction), as well as action (ego involvement). He puts his faith in his dream, sees signs, heeds his mentors and consciously makes decisions even when they were not sure. The interaction has a reflection of the Jung model whereby mental maturation occurs when ego works in cooperation with the unconscious. The novel portrays that the forces of fate and free will are never enough; individuation is achieved through both receiving and making choices.

##### **4.4.3 The last discovery as oneness in the symbol**

The fact that Santiago understands that the treasure is where his journey has started serves as a symbolism. The external search takes him to the beginning point whereby he has a new knowledge of himself. Jung opines that individuation can mostly be done as a voyage outward which finally comes back to him as a unity of the psyche. The treasure that Santiago has is a symbol of integrated knowledge: the discovery of the meaning not produced by the outer object but the inner process of development that comes because of the adventure. Here is the collision of destiny and free will and it proves that the call of Self and ego efforts result in psychological integrity .

#### **5.0 Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper has analyzed the Alchemist by Paulo Coelho using the Jungian psychology framework with specific consideration to the connection between destiny and free will. The interpretation reveals that the phrase Personal Legend that Santiago employs to describe his life may be viewed as a narrational reenactment of the Jungian concept of the Self: an inner ordering centre, which guides the person to a state of psychological integrity. The dreams that Santiago keeps on dreaming about, his meeting with Melchizedek and the constant urge to follow his treasure are rather a manifestation of an archetypical summons, not a fate imposed on him by anyone.

Meanwhile, the novel always supports the significance of the conscious choice. The action of Santiago is based on the fact that he has to make a choice, to forego a sense of security, and take the risk. The sale of his flock, the abandonment of the crystal shop, the desert, and then the precedence after failure or disappointment are instances at which his ego is energetically reacting to the appeal of the Self. This is contrasted by the one of the crystal merchants who at this point declines taking up action on similar inner desire, which helps to further the notion that destiny is still reliant on human action in the novel.

The analysis of unexplainable coincidences and omens as the examples of the synchronicity helps understand further the intersection of free will and destination. In times where Santiago has his intentions in line with his sense of inner purpose, he feels that the outer world is overloaded with meaning. The repetitive assertion made by Coelho that the universe is conspiring with the followers of their Personal Legend can be construed Jungian-wise as a story enactment of the psyche psychologically supporting individuation after the ego has joined forces with The Self. Individuation therefore becomes the location where destiny (pull of the Self) and free will (activity of the ego) works concurrently.

### **5.1 Implications**

The application of *The Alchemist* into the Jungian psychology has a number of ways that can be used to understand the novel. First, it transpires the concept of destiny out of a spiritual or metaphysical to a psychological concept. The inner orientation of the Self is Destiny and is not a predetermined script. The free will, in its turn is not opposed to the destiny as the way of its fulfilment or denial but rather in the way of this inner disposition being fulfilled or opposed to it.

Second, a Jungian approach explains the role of major elements of the narrative. Tribulations, scribes, oracles can be perceived as some sort of archetypal patterns and unconscious events, and not solely as the means of inspirational fiction. Melchizedak and the alchemist may be regarded as the figures of Wise Old Man, the failures of Santiago may be regarded as the meetings with the Shadow, and the adventure is a long process of individuation. This reading places the work by Coelho within a larger context of psychologically psychological oriented narratives and assists in understanding the continued appeal of the work to the reader who sees in it his or her struggles with purpose and choice.

Lastly, this point of view shows that the use of spiritual language in the novel can also be in tandem with the psychological interpretation. The way the text can be read can be kinetic to a variety of religious or philosophical background, since the processes described in it are not specific to any given tradition but show more general principles of inner development.

### **5.2 Future Research Recommendation**

This analysis results in a number of opportunities of investigation. The comparative work would be one of the directions where *The Alchemist* is housed next to other quest novels frequently analysed according to the Jungian theory, like *Siddhartha* or the choice of magical realist novels. Comparisons of this sort might help to explain the way in which various cultural and literary backgrounds influence the imagery of the Self, fate and free will.

The second aspect of inquiry might be narrowed down to alchemical symbolism. Jung

continued work on alchemy as a metaphor of psychic transformation gives it a very fruitful background to the discussion of how Coelho uses images and language of alchemy. Perhaps, a closer examination of the parallels and differences between the works written by Jung on alchemy and the story Coelho wrote can provide some additional clarification of how the transformation is conceptualized in both texts.

Lastly, future comparative studies could apply the similar reader-response or reception research area to investigate how modern readers comprehend the destiny and free will in *The Alchemist*, and whether the Jungian paradigm fits their explanations, or refutes or complicates them. This type of work would further apply the current study by connecting theoretical examination to the actual evidence regarding the way in which the novel is reader and utilized, in an academic, and a more comprehensive cultural real-life.

### **Contribution**

**Fawad Ali:** Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework

**Hadia Ahmad Khan:** Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

**Sana ul Adil Ali:** Methodology and Revision

### **Conflict of Interests/Disclosures**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest in this article's research, authorship, and publication.

### **References**

- Abthaheer, S. K., & Arunachalam, M. (2021). Finding the quest: The self-actualization way of Paulo Coelho in *The Alchemist*. *Journal of language and linguistic studies*, 17(3), 2189-2194. (JLLS)
- Bushra, M. (2025). A critique of the application of symbolism in the *Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(1). Al-Kindi Publishers.
- Cloud Tech. (2021). Synchronicity Meaningful coincidences in parapsychology. <https://transpersonal-psychology.iresearchnet.com>
- Coelho, P. (1993). *The magician* (A. R. Clarke, Trans.).
- Fate Vs. free will in fiction. (n.d.). EBSCO Research Starters: Literature/ Writing. (EBSCO)
- Imran, M., Awan, N., & Farooq, S. A. (2022). Individuation as a means of psychoanalysis: *The alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. *NUML journal. Critical inquiry*, 20(1), 49-60. <https://doi.org/10.52015/numljci.v20i1.220> (JCI)
- Jung, C. G. (1968). *The archetypes, the collective unconscious* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.; 2nd ed.). Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1973). *Synchronicity: A connecting principle* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton University Press. It was published in 1952 (Initial creation by 1952), (Wasabi Technologies).
- Maheswari, M. K. U., & Aishwarya, S. (2025). Travel of self-knowledge the alchemist - Paulo Coelho. *Integral Research*, 2 (9), 132-134. <https://doi.org/10.57067/ir.v2.i9.414>
- Makwana, K. (2018). In the *Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, there is symbolism. *Research Directions*, 6(7), 196-199.
- Nawaz, M., & Rasheed, K. (2025). Know thyself: Philosophy of the self-realization in *The Alchemist* by Paul Coelho. *American Journal of Development Studies*, 3: 2. 10.54536/ajds.v3i2.5746 (E-Palli Journals).
- Rao, Y. V. S. (2019). Fate and freewill. Granthaalayah Publication, *International Journal of Research*, V, no.3, p. 80-85. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo>.

Rowland, S. (2018). *Literary criticism Jungian literary criticism: The essential guide*. Routledge. (Routledge)

Sabir, H., & Akmal, H. (2025). The process of self-discovery: the works of the Alchemist as authored by Paulo Coelho. *Al-Iman Research Journal*, 3: 2, 37-41.

Stevens, A. (1982). *Archetype: An archetype history of self*. Routledge. [Doi.org/10.4324/9780203753842](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203753842) (Routledge)

Theory, practice and applications Jungian Psychology Handbook. (2006). In R. K. Papadopoulos (Ed.). Routledge. ([dondeg.files.wordpress.com](http://dondeg.files.wordpress.com))

Y. V. S. Rao. (2019). Fate and freewill. *International Journal of Research- Granthaalayah*, 7(3).