

Anthropocentric Analysis Of Paulo Coelho's The Alchemist: Human Identity And Self-Realization

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Abstract. This article deeply analyzes Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist," one of the brilliant examples of world literature, based on a modern anthropocentric approach and philosophical-aesthetic principles. The main purpose of the research is to reveal the inner world, spiritual evolution, and the dramatic and transformational processes in the search for identity of the "human" figure standing at the center of the literary text. The article evaluates the protagonist Santiago's ascent from simple shepherd activity to the level of perceiving the laws of the universe not merely as a geographical journey, but as a cognitive metamorphosis confirming the infinity of human consciousness and potential. During the research, the concept of "Personal Legend" is revealed as a mechanism for giving meaning to human existence, overcoming ontological loneliness, and finding one's place in the world. Furthermore, the functional significance of natural elements (desert, wind, sun) and secondary characters in the novel is scientifically grounded as stages in human spiritual maturation and self-realization. The article highlights issues of the ontological interpretation of the "Soul of the World", concepts of space and time, as well as human will, freedom of choice, and the harmony between love and duty at the intersection of the scientific and philosophical views of thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Henri Bergson, and Carl Gustav Jung.

Keywords: Anthropocentrism, "The Alchemist", Paulo Coelho, personal legend, self-realization, soul of the universe, cognitive metamorphosis, ontological approach, human and existence.

Introduction. Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" is recognized in world literature as a philosophical-allegoric work in which the issues of human and existence, the universe, and personal self-realization occupy a central place. When analyzing the work on the basis of a modern anthropocentric approach, it becomes clearly evident that the center of the text is particularly occupied by the "human" figure, their inner world, spiritual evolution, and dramatic and transformational processes in the search for identity. Anthropocentrism requires studying all phenomena, concepts, and values in existence through the prism of human interests, spiritual maturation, and self-perception. In the novel "The Alchemist," the protagonist Santiago's rise from shepherd-hood to the peaks-that is, from ordinary life perception to the level of understanding the laws of the universe-is not merely a geographical journey, but a purely anthropocentric growth, a cognitive metamorphosis demonstrating the infinity of human conscious and subconscious potential.

Research Methodology and Approaches (Methods). The philosophical foundation of the work is built upon the idea of a human finding their own "Legend of Personal Destiny". From the standpoint of anthropocentric analysis, this concept appears as a mechanism for giving meaning to human existence, overcoming ontological loneliness, and realizing one's place in the world. Coelho depicts a human

not as a passive observer, but as an active creator and subject of their own destiny. Santiago's dreaming and his efforts to interpret them indicate the need of human consciousness to enter into dialogue with the outside world. As emphasized in philosophical literature, a person's realization of self is the process of resolving conflicts between their inner "I" and the external world. Santiago initially imagines his life within the familiar environment of shepherd-hood, but his inner aspirations do not fit into these narrow boundaries. This situation harmonizes with the ideas of German philosopher Martin Heidegger regarding human "thrownness" into the world and the necessity of actualizing one's true potentials. The shepherd boy's setting out on a journey is the first step on the path of a human forsaking social and biological molds to return to their true nature.

Results and Analysis (Results). Nature and the universe are also uncovered in an anthropocentric context within the work. While in an ecocentric approach nature has intrinsic value, in "The Alchemist" the elements of nature and the universe (desert, wind, sun, wilderness) appear as tools, nurturing grounds, and educational fields for a person to understand themselves. As Santiago lives in the desert, he faces not only sand dunes, but also his own inner fears, limitations, and spiritual barriers. Episodes of communicating with the desert wind and addressing the sun show that a person can harmonize with the universe only through their own spiritual maturation. Here, a human as a microcosm reflects the macrocosm within themselves. The idea of "man as the summary of the universe," found in Eastern philosophy, particularly in Sufi literature (in the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi, Farid al-Din Attar), is also clearly noticeable in Paulo Coelho's interpretation. A human is not just a part of the universe, but a supreme entity embodying the laws of the universe. In the process of self-realization, Santiago comes to understand that the entire universe speaks a "Single Language," and this language is harmonious with pure intuition and passions coming from the depths of the human heart.

The character of the Alchemist in the novel appears as an archetype of a mentor and spiritual guide on the path to human self-realization. In anthropocentric analysis, the mentor figure acts as a catalyst awakening the hidden potentials of human consciousness. Santiago is told that the treasure is at the Egyptian pyramids, but during the journey, he realizes that the true treasure is not material wealth, but his life experience and spiritual maturation gained along the way. This situation fully corresponds to the concepts of introspection and personal growth in human psychology. The process of "individuation" described by Carl Gustav Jung—the unification of conscious and unconscious parts of a person to become a whole personality—constitutes the main axis of the plot of "The Alchemist". When Santiago goes to Egypt, the fact that the treasure turns out to be in his original grazing place—the courtyard of the old church in Andalusia—symbolically expresses his return to himself, meaning finding the truth he sought from the outside world within his own inner world. This shows that a person may cross long distances to realize themselves, but ultimately they return to their starting point—their true "Self"—only at a completely new, higher spiritual level.

The issue of human will and freedom of choice also stands at the anthropocentric center of the work. As Coelho emphasizes, a person chooses their own destiny, and every trial serves to temper their will. The shepherd boy's encounter with Fatima and bonds of love pose a choice before him: to stop fighting for love or to carry his Personal Legend through to the end. From an anthropocentric analysis perspective, true human perfection manifests in finding the balance between love and

duty (or a supreme goal). The Alchemist teaches Santiago that the true meaning of love should not hinder the fulfillment of the Personal Legend, but rather give it wings. Here, a synthesis of the human emotional world and rational-spiritual aspirations is observed. If a person lives solely by emotions, they lose their evolutionary potential; if they strive solely for a goal and reject love, they become spiritually impoverished. Coelho harmonizes these two aspects of a person to create a model of a well-rounded personality.

Additionally, secondary characters in the work, such as the crystal merchant or the English scholar, represent various failures and templates on the path of human self-realization. The scholar's character, who wants to understand the world through the English language and books, but does not know how to listen to practical experience and the voice of the heart, shows the one-sidedness of intellectualism. The crystal merchant is the archetype of a person who could not realize their dream due to fear and fears changes. Through these characters, the author further strengthens the anthropocentric idea: a human should not merely be a collector of knowledge or someone who adapts to existing conditions, but a free individual capable of taking risks and listening to their inner voice.

Discussion. Within the framework of the anthropocentric approach, the concepts of space and time in the novel "The Alchemist" also have a completely unique interpretation, appearing as an inner projection of human consciousness. Unlike classical works, geographical points here (Andalusia, Tangier, the desert, the Fayum oasis, the Egyptian pyramids) are not merely backgrounds where events take place, but ontological stages defining the protagonist's stages of spiritual maturity. For Santiago, time is not linear, but appears as a unity where all eras merge through the "Single Language" of the universe. Life and silence in the desert teach a person not the passage of external time, but how important internal time—spiritual evolution—is. This situation is closely connected with 20th-century philosopher Henri Bergson's concept of "duration," showing that a person measures their spiritual experience not by quantitative time, but by conscious moments experienced.

Furthermore, the pigs and the shepherd environment, which are among the symbolic images in the work, reveal a person's routine lifestyle locked in molds and their need to escape from social determinism. Santiago initially thinks his life consists only of satisfying material needs and living within a familiar circle. However, his dreams and inner voice intimate that this lifestyle does not match his true potential. From an anthropocentric perspective, this is the process of a human transitioning from their social role (shepherd-hood) to their ontological essence (seeker of their personal legend). Society often demands that a person obey certain standards and follow a safe and predictable path. Coelho emphasizes that the greatest virtue inherent in a human is the courage to change existing conditions and step into the unknown. The difference between the knowledge the English scholar sought from books but could not find in practice and the wisdom the shepherd boy gained through practical experience also demonstrates the superiority of this human subjectivity.

Another aspect that further enriches the philosophical potential of the work is the concept of the "Soul of the World". At the intersection of anthropocentric and existential philosophy, this concept means that a person is not alone with the universe, but rather in a constant and living connection with it. When Santiago begins to converse with the desert, the wind, and the sun, he perceives nature not as a foreign object outside of himself, but as his extended "Self". According to ideas of ecological anthropocentrism or deep ecology, a human is not the master of nature, but a part of

it. "The Alchemist" elevates this idea to an even higher level: a person does not merely remain a part of nature, but through conscious activity and will is capable of influencing changes in nature, and even overcoming the laws of the universe, such as transforming oneself into the wind. This proves that human capabilities are endless, and the power of their spirit is much broader than the boundaries of the material world.

Conclusion. In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" deeply and multi-facetedly uncovers the problem of human identity and self-realization from the perspective of modern anthropocentric philosophy. The work teaches a person that the greatest force is not the complex laws of the outside world, but their own heart, will, and faith. Santiago's life path is the artistic-philosophical expression of the process where every person finds their inner "I", overcomes the limitations imposed by society and the universe, and rises to the peak of personal perfection. The moment when a person realizes who they are and why they came to this world is philosophically contemplated through this work not only on a personal level, but on a universal scale.

In short, Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" is a fundamental work that artistically and perfectly uncovers the process of actualizing a person's inner potential, realizing their identity, and harmonizing with the universe. Anthropocentric analysis shows that the human at the center of the work is not a passive victim of destiny, but the architect of their own life and the creator of their "Personal Legend". The life path every person traverses, the trials they face, and the choices they make ultimately serve to help them find their true "Self" and understand the deep essence of existence.

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