

METHODS OF TRANSLATING

Title:	<i>The Alchemist (O Alquimista)</i>
Author:	Paulo Coelho
Publication date:	1988
Publication place:	Brazil
Language:	Portuguese
Type:	Novel
Plot:	An Andalusian shepherd Santiago embarks himself on a journey accross North Africa to the Egyptian Pyramids after he dreams of finding a treasure there.

TRANSLATING LANGUAGE

The Alchemist is one of the most translated books of the world, it was adapted to approximatively 80 languages.

Is it because of the universality of its message?

The style is very simple, straightforward and unembellished, making the content very accessible. The allegorical novel contains many metaphors that can be freely interpreted by the reader.

desert	gold
pyramids	stars
wind	books
crystal	well
stones	oasis
sheeps	hawk
shepherd	falcon
caravan	cobra

TRANSLATING CONTEXTS

We could reimagine *The Alchemist* in an environment that contrasts starkly with its original setting: in the Alps, for example.

The protagonist would be a shepherd, leaving his valley to pursue a vision he’s had of Mont Blanc, a place that appeared to him in his dreams. As he climbs peaks and traverses mountain ranges, he meets other mountaineers and alpinists, each encounter bringing him new insights. He finally reaches the tumultuous Mont Blanc massif, only to realize that the true treasure he sought was back in his original valley.

SAHARA	—————→	ALPS
Andalusia	—————→	small valley
Shepherd	—————→	shepherd
Sheeps	—————→	sheeps
Oasis	—————→	shelter
Stars	—————→	stars
Pyramids	—————→	Mont-Blanc
Sand	—————→	snow

TRANSLATING CONTEXTS

We could imagine that the deserts of the Sahara transform into the urban chaos of a large metropolis like Paris..

The protagonist, in search of inspiration, would be convinced that he would find it in the heart of the capital. He would venture from Boulogne to the most cultural neighborhoods of Paris, navigating the metro, the bustling cobblestone streets of the city. Ultimately, he would realize that his best inspiration was right in Boulogne, highlighting the idea that sometimes the greatest creativity lies in the familiar places we take for granted.

SAHARA	—————→	PARIS
Andalusia	—————→	Boulogne-Billancourt
Shepherd	—————→	Artist
Sheeps	—————→	Familiar tools
Oasis	—————→	Parc Monceau,
Stars	—————→	Building lights
Pyramids	—————→	Tour Eiffel, Sacré Coeur?

TRANSLATING MEDIUMS

#1 : figurative animation

The Alchemist shares an itinerary, a true journey. The protagonist progresses in his personal legend through the landscapes, experiences, and encounters he moves through.

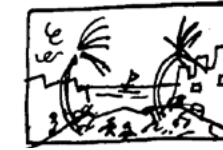
2D animation would be an intriguing way to visually translate the imagery of the story and the sense of movement that defines it.

Key stages of Santiago's journey:

- Andalusia, Spain: valleys, green hills, olive trees
Mediterranean environment
- Tarifa: port city, seaview, boarder
- Tangier, Morocco: chaotic markets, noisy and crowded streets
- Sahara Desert: immensity, sand dunes, heat, wind, stars
- Oasis: date palms, green, well
- Egyptian pyramids: massive geometric structures



ANDALUSIA



TARIFA
wind
sea
crowd



TANGIER



SAHARA DESERT



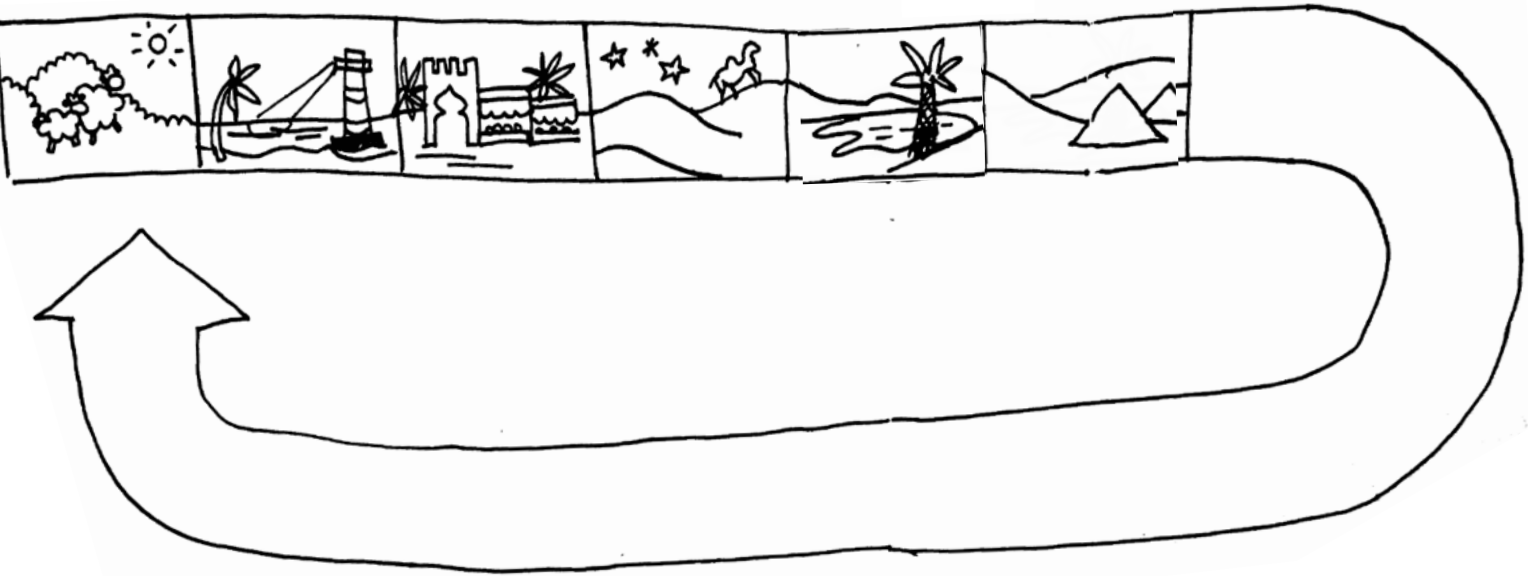
EGYPTIAN
PYRAMIDS

TRANSLATING MEDIUMS

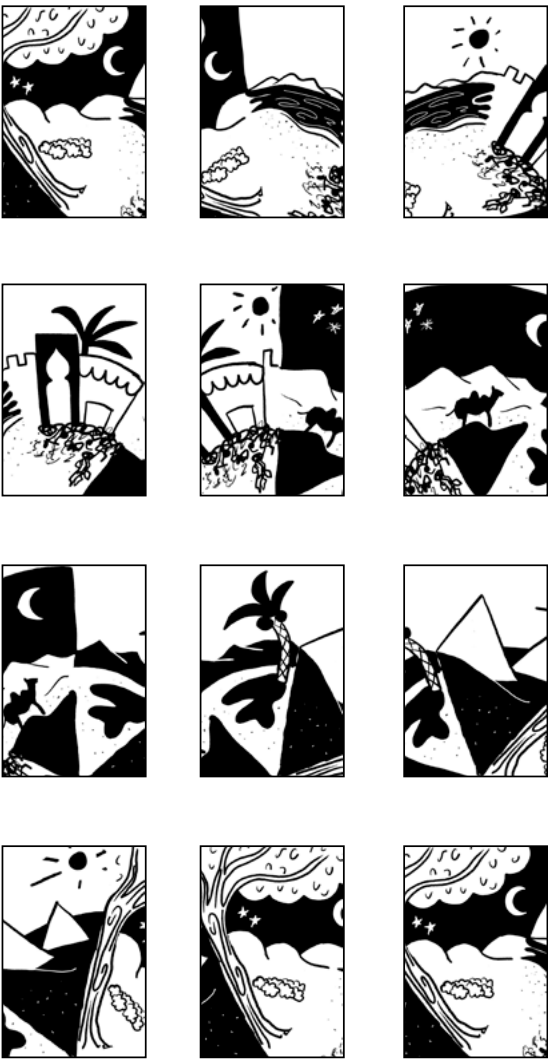
#1 : figurative animation

My purpose here is to translate the description of the places given in the book into illustrations.

Also, I attempted several ways to express the circular narrative of the book: the story ends at the starting point of the itinerary.



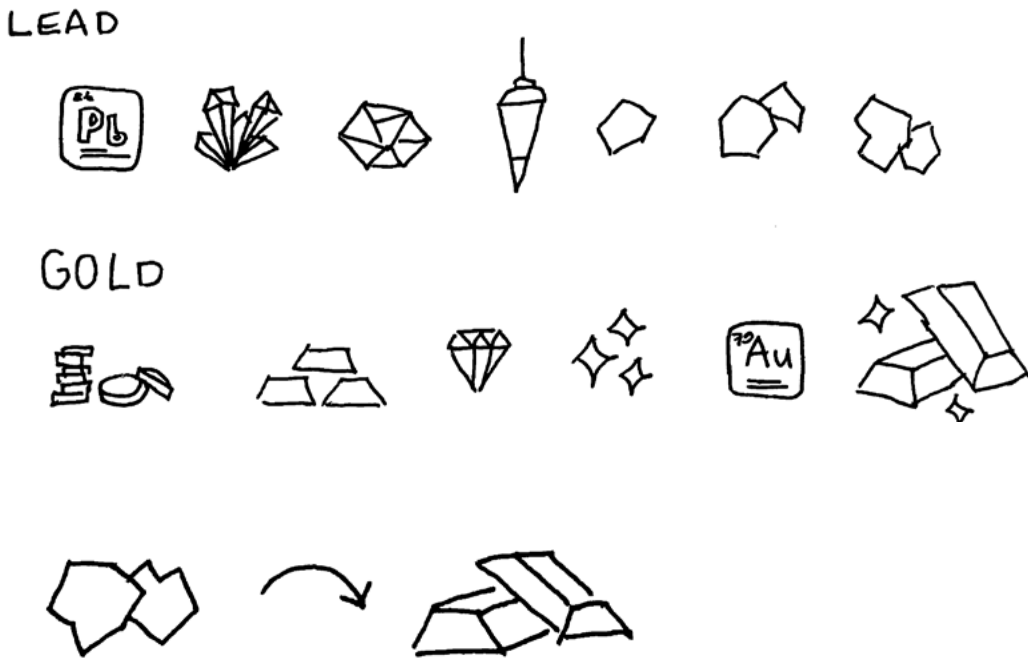
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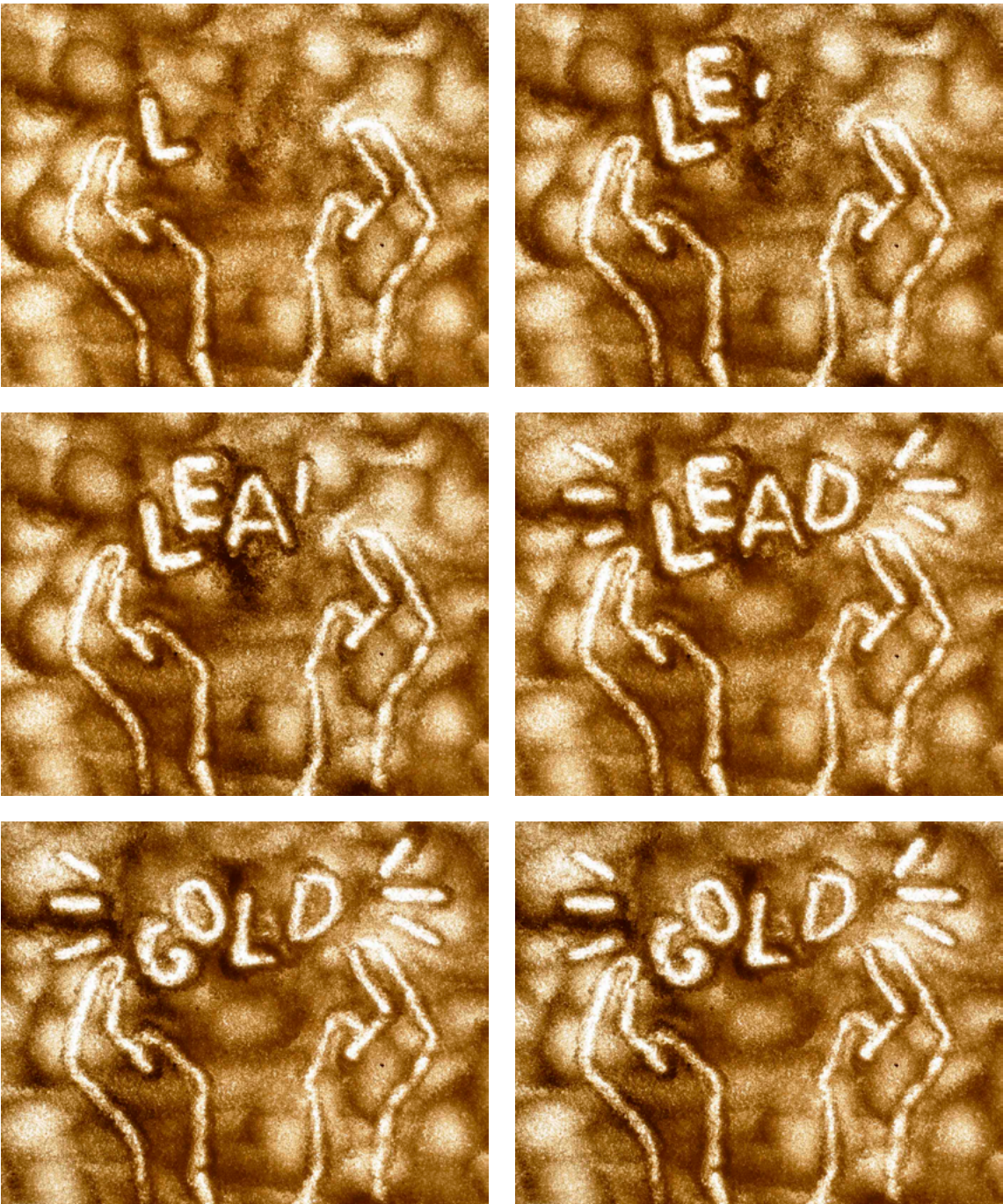
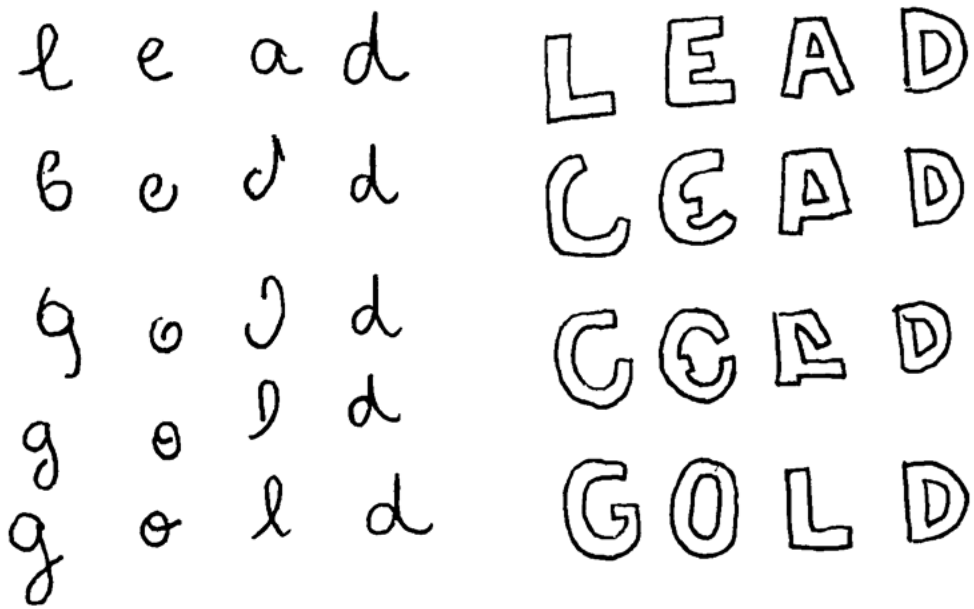
TRANSLATING MEDIUMS

#2 : symbolic animation

THE
ALCHEMIST
KNOWS
HOW TO TURN
LEAD INTO
GOLD☆☆



As I realized illustrating the whole book in one animation was ambitious, I tried focusing this experiment on one quote that summarizes well the moral of the book in my opinion. Not satisfied with the symbols that could translate it, I used words instead, merging the two key terms of the quote.



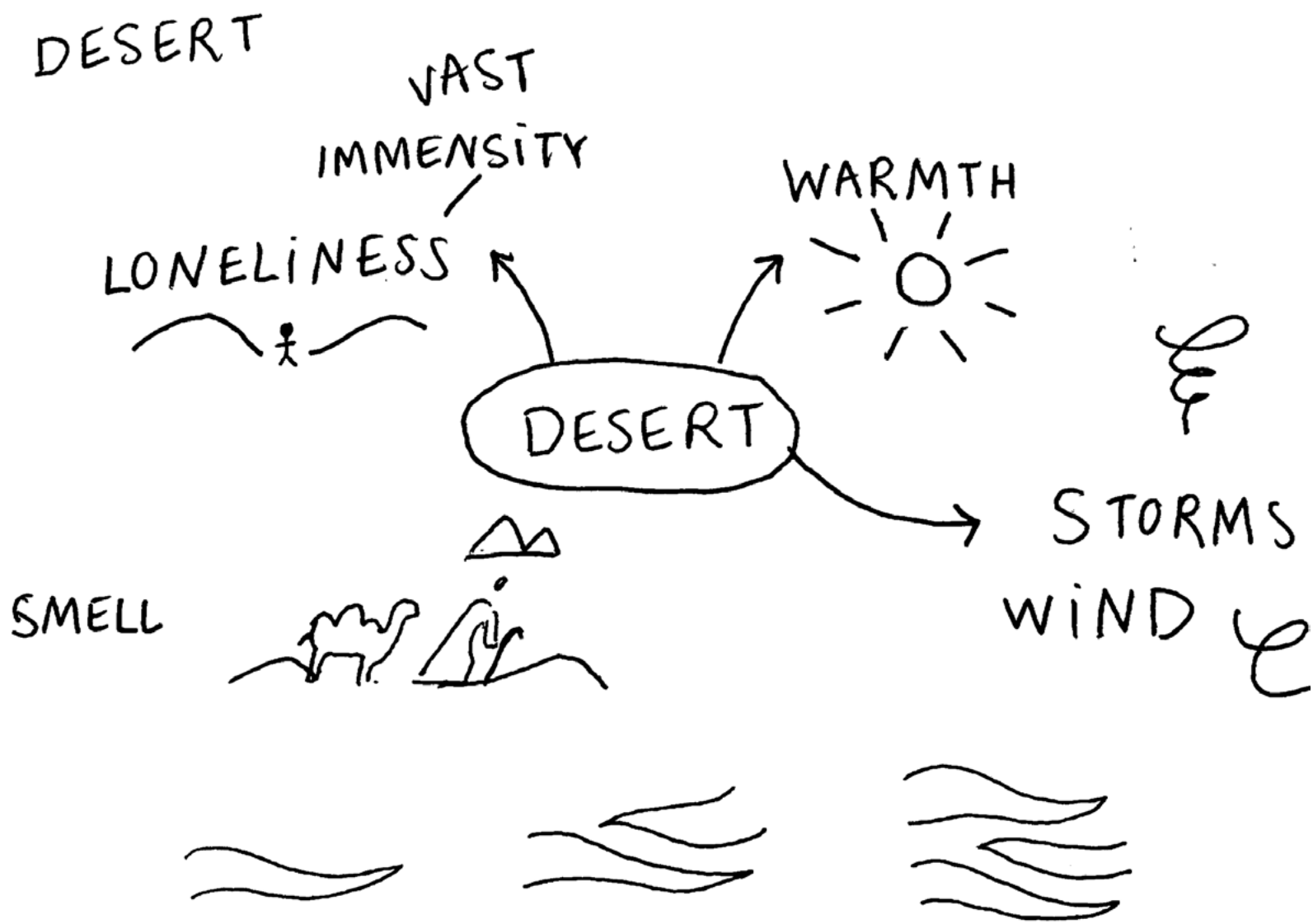
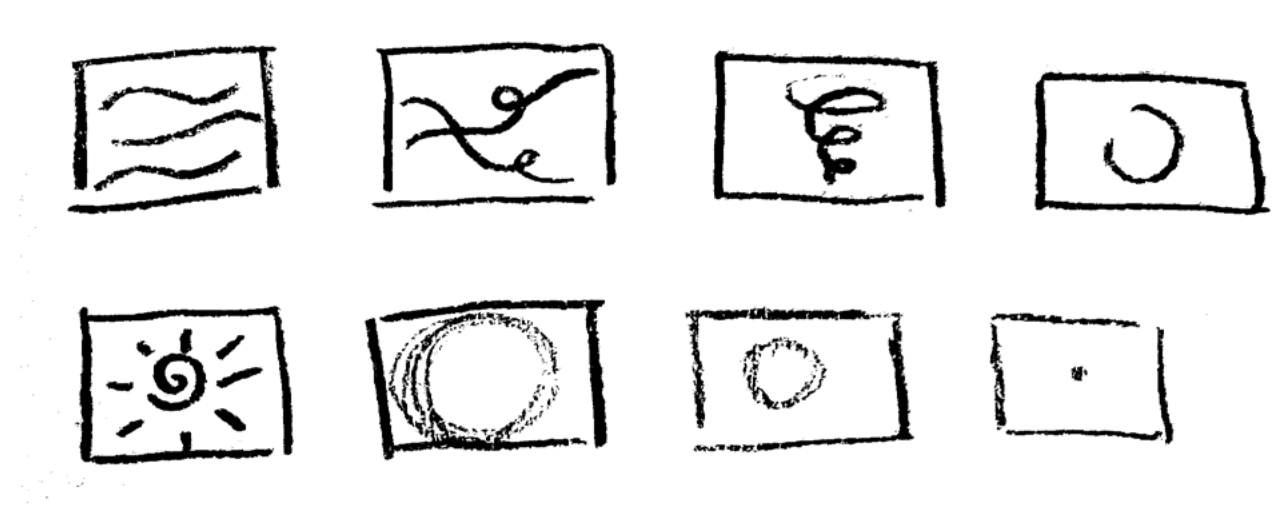
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TRANSLATING MEDIUMS

#3 : conceptual animation

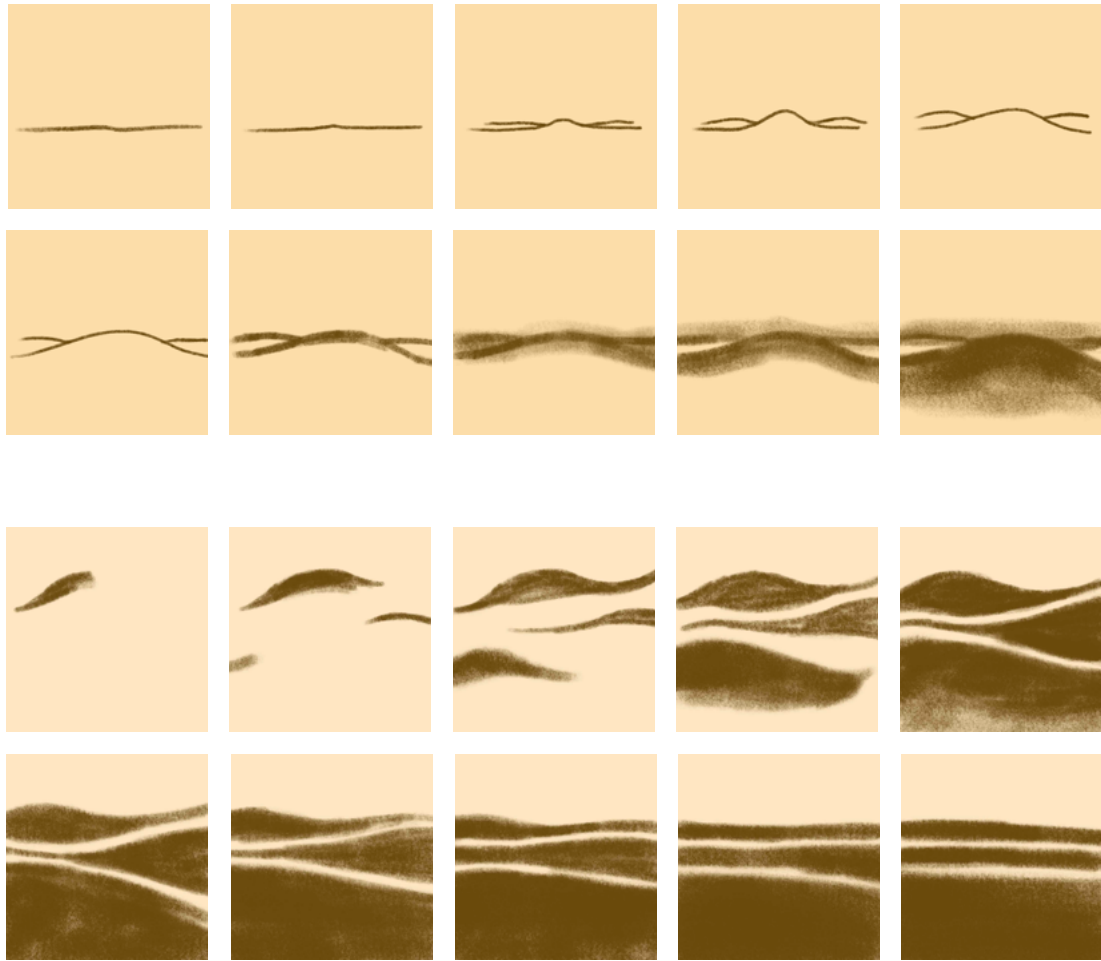
I sought a way to preserve the universal significance of *The Alchemist*. I would like my adaptation of the text to suggest a vision of the alchemist, but not impose it on the audience, allowing them to continue interpreting the symbols freely.

Thus, I chose to focus on the character's journey through the desert, which I consider to be the central allegory of the book: it represents the inner journey, with its challenges and realizations.

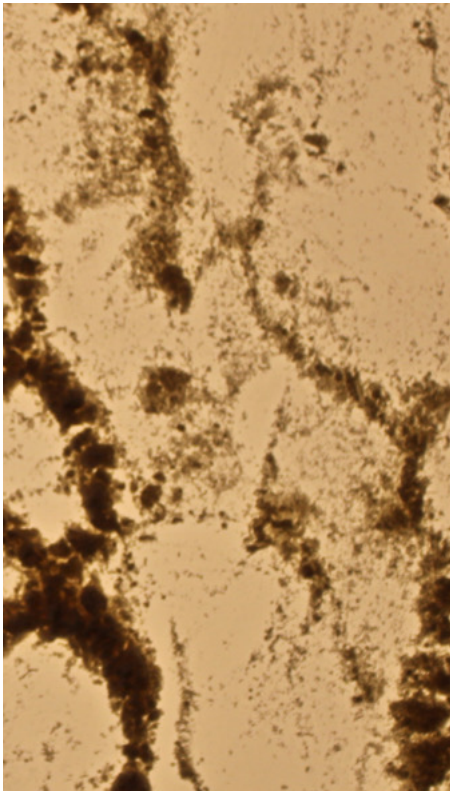
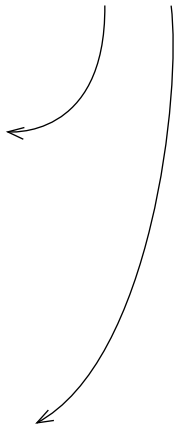


TRANSLATING MEDIUMS

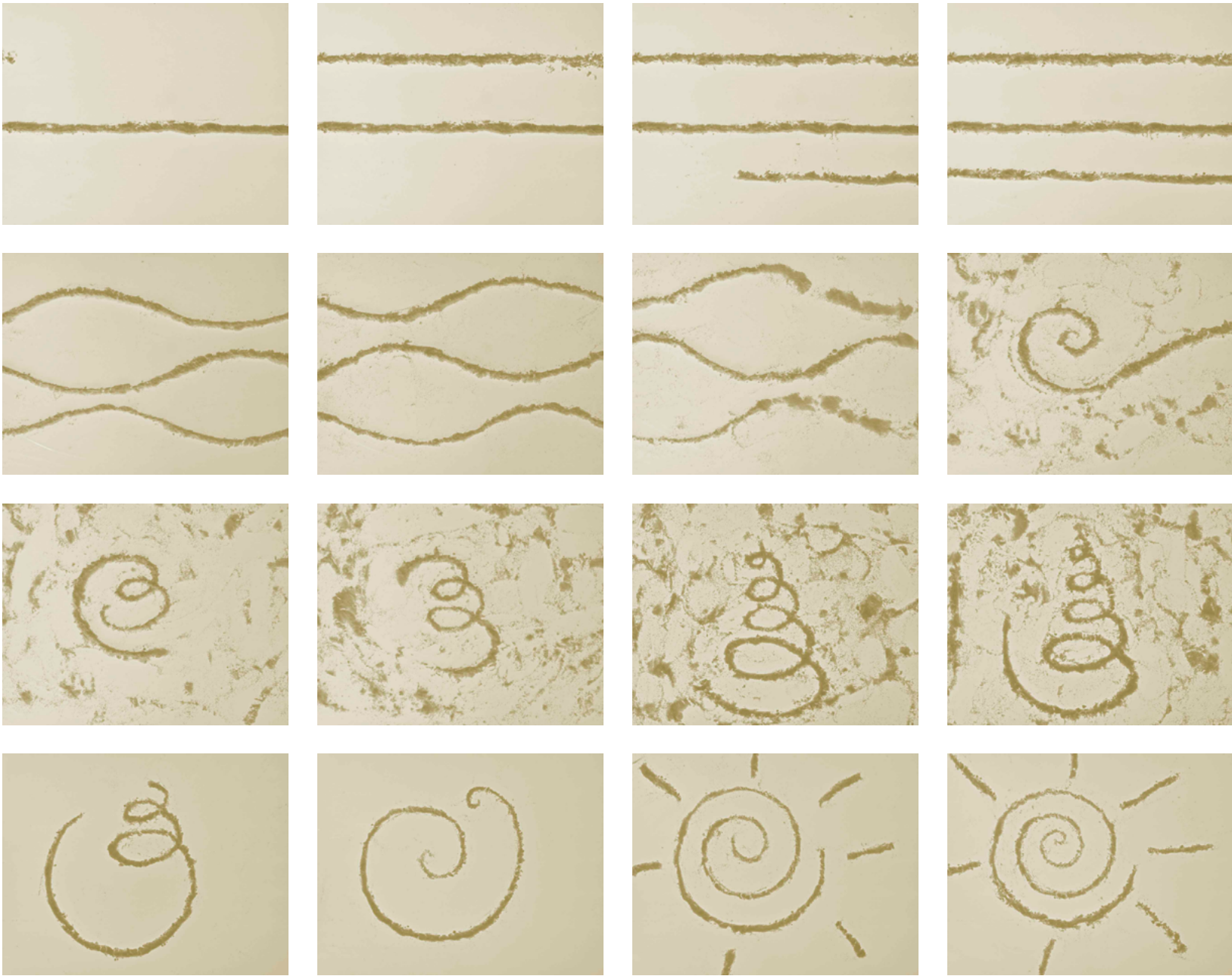
#3 : conceptual animation



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ANIMATIONS](#)



The desert is suggested here through almost abstract shapes and the texture of sand, initially worked digitally before being physically recreated with flour. The goal is to get as close as possible to the sensations of the desert and to embrace the imprecision of the sand in order to maintain the universal reach of the book.



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	INTENTIONS	CONSTANTS	GAINS	LOSSES
#1 FIGURATIVE ANIMATION	- Translating the description of the places into illustration - Highlight the circular narrative of the novel	- stages of the journey - moral of the story	- accessibility, immediacy, immersivity - visibility, clarity - dynamism, movement, circularity	- free interpretation, imagination - details, narration
#2 SYMBOLIC ANIMATION	Illustrating the following quote from the Alchemist: «The alchemist knows how to turn lead into gold»	- setting of the desert - itinerary (linear trace) - literality	- accessibility, immediacy, immersivity - dynamism, movement - lisibility	what value does it add? Is it just paraphrasing the text?
#3 CONCEPTUAL ANIMATION	Suggesting the allegory of the desert through animation	- setting of the desert - itinerary (linear trace) - universality	- accessibility, immediacy, immersivity - dynamism, movement - free interpretation, abstraction - materiality	- narration - precision