

**THE SEMIOTICS OF SALVATION:
A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY IN
THE SELECTED WORKS OF PAULO COELHO**

**Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Submitted by
SAILAJA A K.**

**RESEARCH CENTRE FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
MERCY COLLEGE, PALAKKAD**

2013

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, **THE SEMIOTICS OF SALVATION: A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF PAULO COELHO**, Submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of bona fide research carried out by Smt. Sailaja A K., under my supervision and guidance. No part of the thesis has been submitted earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

Place :
Date :

Dr.T.C. BrindhaKumari
Associate Professor and Head,
Research Centre for Comparative Studies,
Postgraduate Department of English
Mercy College, Palakkad.

DECLARATION

I, Sailaja A K., Part time Research Scholar at the Research Centre for Comparative Studies, Mercy College, Palakkad, affiliated to the University of Calicut hereby declare that the thesis entitled, **THE SEMIOTICS OF SALVATION: A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF PAULO COELHO**, which is submitted to the University of Calicut, for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a bona fide record of research done by me, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

Research Centre for Comparative Studies
Mercy College
Palakkad

Sailaja A K.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Sri. K.P. Satheesan and Smt. A.K. Vilasakumari who inspired me to read books.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I Wish to place on record my gratitude to all well-wishers and friends who have helped me in this endeavour of completing the research programme.

This thesis would not have been a reality if I had not received encouragement and invaluable support from my Research guide, Dr.T.C. Brindha Kumari, H.O.D of English, P.G. Research Centre for Comparative Studies, Mercy College, Palakkad. I thank her for her timely guidance and inspiration.

I express my words of gratitude to other members of Mercy College, especially Dr. Sr. Kripa (former Principal) and Dr.Sr. Sheela (late) for providing me with a chance to utilise the facilities of this Research Centre.

I also thank Smt. Reena, the library assistant of the department library of Mercy College for extending a helping hand. I also remember the staff of Mohamed Koya library and IFLU, Hyderabad for rendering help in locating all books and secondary sources during my visit to these libraries. I also thank Mr.Sreeni, who helped me with typing work from the comfort of my home.

I owe a special thanks to my husband Sri.V. Gopinathan and my children for the moral support they have offered me during the last phase of my research work.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS

- Confessions* - *Confessions of a Pilgrim*
- A Glossary* - *A Glossary of Literary Terms*
- The Hero* - *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*
- The Witch* - *The Witch of Portobello*
- By River Pedra* - *By River Pedra I Sat Down and Wept*
- Magic Ritual* - *Magic Ritual and Witchcraft*
- Occult Revival* - *The Periodic Culture of Occult Revival*
- WCS* - *The Search for a Woman Centred Spirituality*
- Western Esotericism* - *Western Esotericism: A Concise History*
- Languages and voices* - *Languages and Voices in Brazilian Literature*
- Neo-Paganism* - *Neo-Paganism and the Great Mother Goddess.*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Latin American literary experience which occupies a multi-cultural poly-lingual space, is about a human condition, an image of life, a quest through time and space. The quest for the meaning of life, one's own identity, culture and nation liberates the writer from his labyrinthine experience. The new fiction of the nation is the artistic phenomenon which has heralded the region's appropriation of the west's attention in the late twentieth century. The history of Latin America is both the history of frustration, newness repeatedly repressed in the weary literary aspiration. The master narratives turn to be the collective myth, memory and interpretation of the trajectory of the nation. All reality and all experience are labyrinthine in the consciousness of the nation.

In Brazil, the 'nexus of three sad races,' Native American Indians, Portuguese settlers and African slaves who inhabit the nation paved for the nation's cultural diversity. Since the Brazilian culture is an infant one, the writers of the nation create a true aesthetic capable of delineating the heart and soul of the nation. The Brazilian literature, 'the loving flower of three sad races' reveals two discrete concepts - the multi-racial nature of Brazil and the sadness inherent in it. The theme of sadness deeply embedded in the consciousness of the nation attributes to an existential sense of suffering, exile and loss. Much of the Brazilian narratives reflect the multi-racial cultural diversity with a desperate urge for a viable and cohesive national

identity. The microcosmic patterns of culture inherent in the narrative tradition of Brazil are conditioned solely by the milieu.

In the mythic space of Brazil, Caramuru and Paraguacu represent the symbolic parent couple and the narratives of the nation replete with their descendants pointing a continuity between Brazil and the Portuguese settlers. The myth establishes the origin of Brazil and the story of Caramuru (Diogo Alvares who resided in Bahia and married Paraguacu in France), one of Brazil's first white inhabitants and it is a recurring theme of Brazilian historiography, literature and imagination. The myth also dramatizes some of the fundamental historic and symbolic experiences of Brazil and Portugal. By 1950, Caramuru, popular in carnivalesque tradition is related to the discovery, settling and the presence of the 'three sad races.' The oral tradition of the nation has woven the myth of Caramuru with imagination and desires. Within the context of interplay of individual pride and national despair, Brazilian literature provides a prejudice-based cultural definition of race as explained by Carl Degler, a mode of "mulatto escape hatch." Brazil remains a nation with hyphenated ethnicity struggling with metaphysical angst, an omnipresent quality that can be noticed even in a day in Salo Paulo. Both the Italian neighbourhood and the Jewish enclaves consider ethnicity as a popular motif of Brazil.

A system of racial categories equally founded upon a prejudice towards non-white people make the complex Brazilian system operate in a unique way. The consciousness of miscegenation results in a prejudice based value system in the society of Brazil, as it has been the creature of the elite-structured, more

or less over the cultured ones. The literature turns to be an assimilation of Portuguese settlers, the virtual disappearance of the Indian and the abolition of African slavery. The creation of a literary text in turn proves to be an aristocratic act- a ritualistic declaration of whiteness and elite status. The lack of a cohesive self image and the linguistic alienation caused in Brazilian literature can be attributed to Portugal with an uncertainty and self-doubt prevailed through the pages of its literature. This adoption of white identity denies Brazil, the reality of nationhood and the paradox is really the creative crisis of the nation's adolescence. Thus writers as victims of personal misery and marginality have to play a central, vital, heroic role in the formation of new identity and fuse their individual creative crisis with the psychological crisis of the nation, to provide possible solutions to the 'paradox' of the nation. Hence it is better to identify the different possible images of the nation's past, present and future as a relative paradigm of history.

The initial phase of nineteenth century notices the beginning of fiction with *O Filho do Pescador* by Antonio Goncalves. But serious fiction emerges with Jose de Alencar whose novel *O Guarani* delineates the Republican Brazil. For him, the Indian world is the cradle of Brazilian nationhood. Hence the three nativist novels by Alencar, *The Guarani Indian*, *Iracema* and *Ubirajara* project a historical vision of Middle Ages and gain popularity for the frank portrayal of Indian- Portuguese miscegenation.

In Brazil, two remarkable writers Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis and Sousandrade turn to be note worthy of the generation. There is a virtual credo in Assis that his portrayal of the conflicting passions create curious spatializing

of action in fiction. Many consider *Dom Casmurro* (1899) as the revelation of the split identity of the narrator. Assis is a writer of great acclaim whose satire and cynicism expose the vapidness of nineteenth century Brazilian bourgeoisie through his novels, *Epitaph of a Small Winner* and *Philosophy or Dog* that receive positive response even from American critical arena. Though modern in his experiments, he delineates the *entrelugar* (intersections) depicting the common situation of Brazilian fiction. Assis's genius depicts the abnormalities of alienation, perversion and the domination of Brazilian milieu in an archaic fashion. The novelist analyses the complex and problematic symbiosis of the double self that moves through time. Because of his subtle skill, the self-conscious style of discontinuity, fragmentation and graphic innovation, he is the invaluable precursor of 'new novel' His major stylistic innovation is to replace the serious by an openly unreliable sardonic voice.

Other writers of Assis's generation like Aluisio Azavedo and Sao Luis imbibe naturalistic fiction using graphic realism by making fiction positive in outlook. The Brazilian novelists of the nineteenth century lure their readers into a reading public by evoking traces of residual orality as a narrative strategy. Writers project hybrid fiction affected by linguistic diversity and the plurality of voices.

The regionalist movement in Brazil grows up as a reaction against the extreme academic literary scenario. The writers feel an urge to sever all connections with Portuguese diction and rhetoric. 'The Semana de Arte Moderna' (Modern Art Week) held in Sao Paulo in July 1922 with its cultural affinity to the nation marks wave of renewal through 'The Movimento

Modernista' or Modernism in Brazil. Oswald de Andrade and Mario de Andrade were the initiators of the movement with their radical and reformist notions. Mario de Andrade, the poet and critic initiates the move realizing the need for resurgence. Mario's contributes to the concept of multiple racial identities that exist as a continuum. His cultural presence is felt in his language and allusions, his poetics and evolution of ideas about Brazil. His only novel and rhapsodic text *Macunaima* (1928) recreates the whole of Brazilian folklore focusing on the different possibilities of language, making fiction a mythopoeic creation. The novel projects the international culture, indigenous myth and cannibalistic imagery. The image of Macunaima turns to be a 'hero without a character' and it metaphorically represents the image of Brazil devouring its own people. It is the multiplicity of time that reveals the multiplicity of the universe. Mario de Andrade, who recognizes the "blues of a difficult writer" emphasizes his cultural presence as a writer and tries to unify Brazil linguistically. *Macunaima* thus sums up the non-white tradition of the Edenic metaphor. Jorge Louis Borges from Buenos Aires contributes to the movement with his *Ficcions*, which is an imprint of the labyrinth of possibilities, parallel times and alternative pasts.

The 'Modernismo' in the twenties makes a particular sense, highlights the Brazilian independence from Portugal through the incorporation of indigenous foreign words and creolisation of divergent structural features. Brazil ends up with a more defined Black mulatto culture, a highly romanticized exotic vision of it can be perceived in the writings of Jorge Amado. Brazil has become an adult out of the cultural parentage imposed by France with a curious syncretic mixture of Christian and African tradition. By

1920s and 1930s a reaction against the avant-garde elements of modernism sets in with writers who are influenced by paternalism and a nostalgia for a relatively simple past. This can be noticed in the works of Gilberto Freyre's *The Masters and the Slaves* and Rego's *Plantation Boy* - the novels that project man's struggle for new *ufanismo*, a real cultural fusion of the three genetically equal races.

New fiction with a discerning pattern emerges by 1960s and it is also influenced by the Modernism of Faulkner and that of James Joyce. Latin American reality assimilates the influence of Joyce in its literature because of factors like cosmopolitanism that restores unity in the Ulyssian textual consciousness. Catholicism that delineates the ambiguous relations of Joyce with religion influence writers namely Amado, Rosa, Carpentier, Asturias and Andrade. The writers are inspired by the attitude of Joyce who is culturally dependent on imperial tongue even if alternate options are possible. A radically polarized dialectic of antinomies –a set of opposites can be noted in Latin-American context- ‘the centripetal movement’ is associated with aesthetic categories as endogenous culture, the countryside, tradition and nationalism and ‘the centrifugal movement’ to intercultural relations, the exotic, French influence and internationalism. An examination of the socio-cultural implications of the racial diversity is essential for the search of a viable and cohesive national identity that has been the concern of the writers of the nation. The emptiness of hope reduplicates the black hole of social ethos of the nation. Writers have lost their contact with reality and the fiction turns to be a historical parody. Hence the strength of Brazilian fiction comes out of the introspections of a writer.

In the case of Brazilian literature, modernism has a strong impact and Calinescu's position as a post-modern writer seems valid for *The Great-Great-Grandson of the King and Free*, a revision of the historical past of Portuguese colonization with the provision of a most comprehensive view of post-modernism. Through 'Grandson,' post-modernism abandons the modernist innovative nature, uses parody, irony and satire to reconstruct the Brazilian past which results in a duplicity of complexity and enjoyment. This leads to the hybridity and blurring boundaries in the fictional space of Brazil.

The 'Boom' and 'The New Novel' are the new trends that reflect the kind of Latin American experience in the international context. The boom is related to any explosion of literary activity and the new novel encompasses any reaction that rejects traditional realism. According to critic Steven Boldy, the novels of the Boom are the hail of cobblestones against the gendarmerie of moral, vital and verbal automatism and conformity. The Boom, a break with tradition is largely socio-realistic, observes reality as observable, comprehensible and gives way to fragmented fantastic forms imbibing the incongruous. The new novel explains that fiction shall abandon its pretensions of mimesis and adopt vivid techniques to express a complex vision of reality. Against the re-evaluated values, belief systems and the stylistic patterns that lie at the root of traditional realism, the newness of Latin American fiction turns to be its 'form.' By 1960, there occurs an apparent explosion of creativity in Spanish American novel that brought Latin America to the international context. As a result, a succession of writers like – Cortazar, Fuentes, Vargas Llosa and Marquez rose to prominence. The realistic novel of

Vargas Llosa *La Casa Verde* is published in a fragmentary form. Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* provides a conventional portrayal of Mexican society. Thus what makes the new novel 'new' is the way it looks.

With the emergence of Post-modernism in Brazil in 1980, Brazilian literature imbibes 'the language game principle' that rejects the totalizing theory concept. Latin American writers discover the technical and formal possibilities of the novel with their experimentation in form, which is almost like a theme or character in the novel. The Brazilian critic, Silviano Santiago comments that the post-modern narrator knows that the real and the authentic are linguistic constructions (*Languages and Voices* 201). It implies sequence without a radical break and permits the preservation of cultural context with deconstructive strategies. The movement also designs the existence of an assertive self without annihilating the 'other.' Roquette Pinto, the Brazilian ethnographer identifies the split of a strong cultural tradition in Brazil characterized by racial, ethnic and religious plurality-a kind of unity in diversity. There is art / commodity confluence in the cultural relativism of Brazil in the interplay of popular culture, modern culture and post-modern culture. Calinescu interprets the concept of Post-modernism in a comprehensive manner when he equates it with the face of modernity especially its questioning nature. Post-modernism is perhaps the quizzical, skeptical and the ironic one. Calinescu's *The Great-Great-Great-Grandson of the King* depicts inescapable links with modernism with its techniques of subversion. Post-modernism is interpreted as a hybrid project with blurring boundaries that lead to the indeterminacy and undecidability of form and content. As precursors of post-modern movement, writers like Borges problematise representation and

transcend reality with a fusion of existential and metaphysical giving shape to the new novel. He explores the nature of literary language. The most influential stories of Borges *Garden of the Forking Paths* and *Pierre Menard* make intertextuality possible. The influence of the same can be noted in Coelho's narrative strategy. The Mexican novels of this genre include Pacheco's *You Will Die in a Distant Land*, Elizondo's *Farabeuf*, and Vargas Llosa's *Aunt Julia and the Script Writer*. Vargas Llosa comments on the form of Latin American novels of the sixties "which is almost like a theme or character in the novel" (*The Boom Twenty Years Later* 201). The socio-political approach carries the inevitable implication of the new novel as not particularly 'new.' The major writers of the early phase, Borges and Sabato are not political whereas the 'Big Four' - Cortazar, Fuentes, Marquez and Vargas Llosa can hardly be considered as unpolitical. Spanish American writers Fuentes and Marquez were influenced by Joyce. When Asturias highlights the surrealist impact of fiction on novelists, Fuentes's novels are the harbinger of the boom. Argentinian Julio Cortazar synthesises the twin traditions of Joycism and Surrealism along with the inspirational influence of Borges through the innovative endeavour, *Hopscotch*, published in 1960. Julio Cortazar's work invokes nature and explores the obscure and the sinister behind the frivolous. Asturias explains Stream of Consciousness in *Men of Maize*. The trajectory of the different influences leads to the culmination of the 'New Novel.' The whole history of the new novel as 'a riddle of contradictions' imbibe the fictional space of Brazil. The contemporary novel projects issues of identity and themes of life as a series of choices or crossroads.

The relative significance of metafiction in postmodernism can be perceived in the self-reflexive Brazilian fiction. Postmodernism's relationship to self-consciousness, by extension to metafiction is emphatic. The ideological subtext has been predominantly political in Brazil and all cultural practices are ideological. In the contemporary context, the Brazilian "metafiction" dismantles implacable obstacles and boundaries challenging forms of authority and opens newer and free vistas. With the specific self-conscious relationship with this technique of narration, writers tend to link the aesthetic with the ideological. As the ideological subtext turns political, many of the Brazilian novelists consider metafiction as a venue for exposing the sub-text. A self-conscious resistance to all diverse forms of authority is eventually made possible through fiction connecting the nation's socio-political, cultural and religious contexts. The genre of narration intrepidly imbibes the shape of the nation's sense of entropy, the dilemma caused by the chaotic and complex rhythms of power. The narrative operates and functions with the freedom of exposing illusion by demystifying it and creating a willing suspension of disbelief in literature. Brazilian Metafictional writers self-consciously use their imaginative or inventive ways to engage themselves with narcissist narration. From this stance, they question value systems, rigid institutions and power structures of Brazil's everyday life. Through demystification of ideas, these writers want to reduce the distance between art and life. The Aesthetics of metafiction accounts for a subversive impulse in Brazilian literature in conjunction with the socio-political, religious and cultural contexts and the sub-texts that determine the possibility of meaning.

Clarice Lispector is interested in exploring the linguistic dimensions in the depths of language as against the homogenous law of single meaning. Both Lispector and Guimaraes Rosa are daring writers at the level of language, of plot and of the moral and emotional situations. They initiate new dimensions in prose writing and have provided inspiration for younger writers. The most prominent Latin American Writers who draw upon metafiction are Ivan Anjelo Silviano Santiago, Sergio Sant' Anna, and Rubem Fonesca. They challenge all forms of authority, especially the meta literary devices like self-referential narrators, self –reflexive irony and meta-language etc. Sergio Sant Anna and Rubern Fonesca resort to pastiche, and narrative forms that reflect the international polemics of postmodernism.

The focus on the subjective consciousness and the mind, a conspicuous characteristic of Brazilian modern writing can be related to the fiction of Machado Assis and Joao da Cruz e Sousa. The trajectory of Brazilian fiction turns into a quest from despair to modernism that results in an escape from the wide spread sense of despair and disillusionment through post-modern expressions. The ontological dilemma of the quest is the characteristic quality of fiction in a Brazilian narrative. Sant Anna's *Confissoes deRalfo* and Fonesca's *Bufo & Spallanzani* can be regarded as metafictional for their self-conscious attempts. They endorse Robert Alter's words, "A self-conscious novel, briefly, is a novel that flaunts its own condition of artifice and that by so doing probes into the problematic relationship between real seeming artifice and reality" (*Metafiction* 586).

In the diasporic space of diverse cultures in Brazil, alternate spirituality provides a life-force that makes it possible for the coherence of the transitory and the spiritual worlds. The key element of alternate spirituality appears to be the notion of spiritual evolution. As a repository of wisdom, Brazilian spiritualism proves to be an ontological harmony and coherence of life. There is a hunger for expressive spirituality in Brazil which expects emotional worship, a new experience of the Holy Spirit. Spirit worship adopts two forms – one is lower spiritism of the African slaves related to superstitions and myths. The other involves reincarnation and deals with spirits and talking with the dead. The development of goddess religion as reawakening in the modern context emphasizes that one can recover his primal birthright, the sheer, intoxicating joy of being alive through women's spirituality, and it is related to the different modes of quest, forms of rituals practiced in society. Brazil, a land of diverse, indigenous cultures expresses a tolerance of the spiritual world with all the magic that manifests through music, dance and poetry. There is no hiatus between the sacred and profane in Brazil and the divine enters into the profane culminating into a magic of reality creating a ubiquitous presence. That is why Brazilians accept spirit and all experiences impregnate with spirituality.

Alternate spirituality turns indigenous when literary tradition analyses the profound cosmic relationship between man and nature. Indigenous spirituality is most often articulated, directly experienced with the re-affirming relationship with Mother - Earth. Alternate spirituality is a form of Goddess spirituality in the novels of Coelho where ritual becomes a way of life-a process deliberately carried out in order to participate in the reality of Goddess. Alternate spirituality is goddess consciousness, which is traversal and which

speaks of the language of myth and legend in Coelho's novels. There is a shifting awareness across the 'kaleidoscope of being' that emerges from the process of building a relationship with the ecstatic mystical experience. Coelho eulogises on female principle through the revival of Mother Goddess. The esoteric terrains of the female protagonists instantly incorporate themselves with 'wild woman concept' in the process of characterization. Coelho demystifies history and tradition to penetrate into the alternate condition of spirituality. This demystification is a new awareness of history located not only in the past but in the self-consciousness of the present creating an 'internal other' through the characters. The androgynous vision of the author, the rich corpus of cultural milieu, the historical themes, the unusually privileged set of community brought through magic realism and the Ulyssean conjecture perceived out of it make Brazilian consciousness refreshed and enlightened in the novels of Coelho.

Juan Arias's biography *Confessions of a Pilgrim* (1999) unravels the enigmatic persona Paulo Coelho, the Brazilian novelist, who is more of a writer, a versatile philosopher and a non-conformist, who unleashes the conflicting passions of a writer in unbreakable bonds through fiction with his philosophical renderings and anecdotes. Speaking of his vocation as a writer, Coelho expresses the incessant need to be at the 'centre' a word which depicts the soul of the world-the mystery, the dark mysterious zone, the realm of the sea of life. For Coelho, when the 'Dark night of Faith' (*Brida*) exists in the tradition of the Moon, human beings are like the images of a tarot Pack and like the classic alchemic formula, they sum up in dissolving and coagulating. The author's biographer, Arias comments on Coelho as a writer who likes to

immerse in life, peer at it and read the secret alphabet of the universe and omens that are sent to men in the form of coded messages. During that interview, Coelho recollects how he developed a devotion for St. Theresa. The biography also indicates how he shows an exceptional ability to touch the souls of men and women across boundaries and help them realize their dreams, in his role of a powerful ‘messiah.’

In his formative years, Coelho familiarizes himself with Marx, Engels and Hegel. He has experimented with all religions, infatuated by the Hippy Movement and an atheist after a terrible experience of black magic. Bouts of insanity takes him to an asylum in Brazil. Later a composition of sixty-five song lyrics for Raul Seixas makes him affluent and rich. Being a victim of Guerilla activity, he is imprisoned for six years. Thus the tempestuous early years replaced into an infinitely calmer persona of the author in his later years.

Paulo Coelho, an icon of quest narratives creates epiphany through fiction with the skill of a conjurer. He creates a fictional world that encompasses the primitive mother earth filled with sensuousness. Coelho’s spiritual theme and its conception and introspective pragmatic mysticism emanate through the pages of his novels. He emphasizes mind or consciousness as a sacrificial urn experiencing knowledge of God through unifying love. The text *Confessions of a Pilgrim* quotes:

Religion as a group of people who find a collective way to worship fusing with paradigms of most profound arcane mystery. The concept of dogmas is something beyond rites. The

important thing is to create a large empty space within oneself, get rid of the superfluous, know how to live the essential, always be on the way. (*Confessions* 11-15)

The search for the unknown and the infinite can be regarded as the imminent impulse evident in Coelho who believes in the adventure of quest. He explicates experiential reality as a catalyzing incendiary element which leads the seeker to embrace the unique destiny without a feel of isolation. This search for mystery is a search for great freedom. Coelho who is enticed by the adventure of quest says, “human beings are masters, warriors of the light, the new spiritual adventure” (21). The novels project his image as a warrior of light and as a pilgrim who travels an endless path of life-in search of the unknown. The *Manual of the Warrior of Light* explains: ‘the moment that he begins to walk along it, the warrior of light recognizes the path’ (*Manual of the Warrior of Light* 32). The text explains the attributes of the warrior as one who appreciates the miracle of being alive and as one whose quest leads him to become the person he wants to be. It fuses with the paradigms of most profound arcane mystery, connecting people with it, making them feel united. The narratives of Coelho mark a trail through the dark labyrinth of the occult. The metaphor of quest moves through the uncharted territory of his fiction. Fernando Morais, the renowned biographer of Latin America, addresses Coelho ‘as an Alchemist of words’ (*A Warrior’s Life* 2008). The text, *A Warrior’s Life* narrates the journey of Coelho’s decision to visit Santiago with Toninho as his assistant. The first novel *Pilgrimage* reveals the mystery behind the journey as:

Some 150 kilometres from Santiago at the side of a road, he came across a solitary lamb, unsteady on its feet. Paulo followed the lamb until it reached a little old church built beside a small cemetery. He took a train to Pyrenees ‘a fiesta in town’ with Basque music in the distance. In the Spanish city of Cebrero, he found the sword and the mysterious moment is explained as an occasion when Coelho met his guru who was holding the sword relating the Sacred Psalm. From Retiro park, author receives the first omen of inspiration. (*A Warrior’s Life* 345-47)

The pilgrimage to Santiago is related as the most intense experience of life that initiated in him, a contemporary quest for ancient wisdom and absolute truth. Coelho comments; “I consider myself a magus because I’m a person who tries to develop his talents and power” (*Confessions of a Pilgrim* 103). As a magus, he differentiates the signifier ‘magic’ from ‘magical’- magic as the tool and magical, the product of the tool. Magic is the space with which he establishes a spiritual tradition in his novels. The influence of Indian Cosmogony, the diverse experiences related to Indian mythology, initiate him into the labrynth and mysteries of life.

The author is also interested in revealing the popular notion of mysticism as magic, occult and esoteric phenomena, the hidden inner meaning of certain tropes. Basically, mystical experiences fall into two categories-those in which experience is noetic and cognitive. The two general religious tendencies in the west are to regard god as transcendent out side the soul or to consider god as dwelling with in. As an introspective mystic, Coelho believes

that the self of the author becomes a dwelling for the divine and conceives the soul with the longing of a lover. The mystic in Coelho, experiences the knowledge of god through the unifying love. Most of the characters of Coelho experience the same fate of the author in their archetypal quests.

The Brazilian Writer Coelho, born in Rio de Janeiro, is conscious of the religious transit and appearance of ecological spirituality that blooms and shapes Latin America. Because of his belief in Indian concepts of reincarnation as Karmic cycle of cause and effect, Coelho, a spiritual realist imbibes human spiritualism, seeks union with God through realization of personal legend and dreams. The concept of salvation is individual in the fictional space of Coelho. The contours of salvation as religious metaphor, quest motif, occult tradition and indigenous signifier create a mythical pattern in the world of Paulo Coelho. In the oeuvre of fictional world, the mystic in Coelho experiences natural knowledge of God through unifying love, at times through conjugal love. The text *Confessions of a Pilgrim* quotes: “The spiritual search is a personal responsibility that you can’t transfer or entrust to others” (*Confessions of a Pilgrim* 11).

Salvation, as a paradigm of ethereal, has different connotations in various religions. Salvation, an orderly process of Hinduism, is Nirvana or a state of nothingness in Buddhism. It is faith, repentance, baptism and the receipt of Holy Ghost in Christianity. Salvation is synonymous with eternal life- the fusion of human soul with divine consciousness - Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Sadhana, Dharma, Satori (Judaic, Hindu, Islamic). Theopedia, an encyclopedia of biblical Christianity explains salvation as the act of god’s grace in

delivering his people from bondage to sin and contemplation transferring them to the kingdom of his beloved son and giving them eternal life (Col.73) (Rom. 6.23). Salvation, a sacred word, compounds with signals like allegory, myth, hallucination, dream, magic and esoteric elements in literature. As a term of spiritual awakening, salvation is both individual and universal which comes out of faith, the receipt of the Holy Ghost. German philosopher Martin Heidegger uses the word Being as synonymous with the Inner light, that illumines our consciousness-man must seek himself in the ground of life, the Urgrund, ‘the being of beings’ the paradigm also indicates the deliverance and liberation from impurities associated with life. Salvation implies communion with God, for the human nature and its transfiguration and exaltation at the level of uncreated divine life by making divine his own human nature. Christ opens salvation by deification to all -the spiritual power of the over-soul. The oriental concept of ‘Parakayapravesham’ –transmigration of souls practiced by ascetics like Adi Sankara too inspired Coelho.

As Paulo Coelho is concerned with man’s spiritual quest, he analyses the different possibilities of quest and salvation through his novels. Being a writer of great passions, he has a sincere desire to help others in finding their personal destiny. In an interview with Juan Arias, his biographer, Coelho says, “I am all the characters in my books. The only person I am not is The Alchemist. The Alchemist knows everything” (*Confessions of a Pilgrim* 172).

For him, all writers are pilgrims ‘with a need to be in motion.’ In the biography, *The Confessions of a Pilgrim*, Coelho cites a journey towards Rio de Janeiro as momentous in moulding his career of which he recollects in the

first novel, *The Pilgrimage* (1987). The pilgrimage to Santiago is a radical experience for Coelho that enables him to establish a deeper appreciation of life and an urge for realizing the personal legend. Coelho, using the metaphor of journey, looks at life as a caravan. Spiritual search is explained as a search for 'total consciousness' and as a Hegelian he believes in the purgative force of religion that will trigger sane revolution. Coelho believes in the symbolic significance of 'journey' in people's lives and the biography *Confessions of a Pilgrim* quotes: "When you travel you are no longer yourself, you have to be open" (*Confessions* 197). Journey in the fictive realm of Coelho is a kinetic signifier that provides an engrossing enriching experience. The Journey motif in the novels interprets the symbolic significance of the quest and the unending nature of life. The novelist remarks: "When I am travelling, I am in a state of constant expansion, of constant fluidity" (61).

Instead of projecting the bleak vision of reality through fiction, Coelho projects a glorified version of it, the need for realizing one's own dream which inevitably leads to salvation. He preaches a kind of pragmatic, materialistic philosophy adopting esoteric modes of apprehension. Characters seek individual salvation and responds to divine grace which appears in the form of dream, listening to their own heart. Coelho, the spiritual realist imbibes human spiritualism and seeks union with god through the realization of dreams. The artistic realm of his replete with a perfect fusion of magic, ritual and witchcraft.

The novels of Coelho realize an esoteric apprehension of reality, through the quest motif. Esotericism is an attitude of mind, an ensemble of different

forms of spirituality with the identifiable characteristics. Though the term occurred as early as 1792, “the nebula appears semantically extendable and permeable, encompassing a group of disparate ideas, images, themes and motifs such as ontological androgyny, the Philosophers’s stone, the lost word, the soul of the world, the magic book and so on as suggested by Antoine Faivre” (*Western Esotericism* 2). Esoteric tendencies prevail in the pages of Coelho, as diverse forms of alchemy, sexuality, Kabbalah, and the occult. Esotericism is vibrant and variegated in connoting secret knowledge, secret science and it is an archaic discipline in Coelho. The term alludes to knowledge which emanates out of the spiritual centre only after transcending everything in the novels of Coelho. In novels like *Brida*, *By River Pedra I Sat down and Wept*, the novelist intends to derive an occult poetics of his own, that can be related to the 16th century Hermeticism, Christian kabbalah and ‘Philosophia Occulta,’ a different form of esoteric religion, which turns to be cosmological than metaphysical. With these influences esotericism developed over the centuries. (“Esoteric and Exoteric Modes of Apprehension” 185-206) Nature with its occult signatures and the mystery inherent in it get embedded in the esoteric philosophy explicated by Coelho. In his fiction, this discipline of knowledge associated with a notion of religious marginality provides a distinction between various forms of gnosis, through traditions and constituted religions. The quest for the primordial is also posited as esoteric knowledge in the realm of Coelho’s fiction. The analysis of esotericism in the novels is a ‘form of thought’ as identified by Antoine Faivre as the six intrinsic components of esotericism which include: Symbolic and real correspondences, Living Nature, imagination and mediations, the experience of transmutations, the praxis of concordance,

and transmission. In Coelho, this shell of esoteric knowledge explicated by Faivre is rafted out through occult texts like *The Witch of Portobello*, *Brida* and *The Devil and Miss Prym* and *Aleph*. The Occult as the Latin “Occulere” indicates a concealed form of knowledge -a specific term for things magical and mystical – a kind of esoteric knowledge. The occult tradition includes magic, witchcraft binding the hidden secrets together and creates a unique tradition in the novels of Coelho. Occultism most often creates an alternative, imaginary space in the fictional poetics of Coelho, who considers occultism as nothing but a wild return to archaic forms of belief, a sinister concentration on superstitions which have been thought buried. Occultism refers to the manifestation of the soul in action in novels like *Brida* and *The Witch of Portobello*. Occultism can be related to the weird but sophisticated system of esoteric practice in Coelho’s world. The influence of Tantric Buddhist tradition that remains esoteric undergoes numerous initiations in esoteric world of Coelho whose androgynous vision dismantles the binary forces of the universe. The biography of Coelho details the author’s membership in one of the RAM-tradition, very old spiritual tradition. As a writer, Coelho wants to subvert demonization of witches through the revival of women’s sexuality and the repressed feminine practice of witchcraft through his mystical novels. Like W.B.Yeats, the novelist tries to develop occult tradition as explained by Alex Owen and emphasizes the attractive element in new occultism as a spiritual alternative to religious orthodoxy. Owen affirms that “The new occultism with its magical operations, initiation rituals and theories of the nature of mind and soul contributed to a newly conceptualized subjectivity” (*Occult Revival* 3). The establishment of Theosophical Society by Russian thinker Blavatsky

explains the need of the sociability of occult spaces in cultural and socially experimented areas like gender, body, sexuality, self and religion. “From a sociological point of view, occult phenomenon can be the possible index of fluctuation in religious beliefs and sociological dislocations” (*Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion* 376). In Coelho, occult is an answer to the disenchanted universe. Historically, the cult of Diana and witchcraft can be related to the major persecutions, to the devil of Christian theology, and to the specific social conditions of the middle ages. Similar conditions of witchcraft and shamanism are often portrayed in the novels of Coelho as an attempt to foreground similar instances of erasure of paganism from the mainstream. Witchery and the spirit world is all embracing in Coelho, when the pages of literature abound in creations like Ovid’s Medea, the greatest witch of classical mythology and Canidia, Horace’s witch invoking powers of night, Hecate, the queen of spirits. Selene, Hecate, Diana, Medea and Circe are also related to seduction and enchantment. The quintessence of witchcraft can be related to different parts of the world. “The Greeks believed that Thessaly had a large population of witches who were embodied with a power over natural forces i.e. they can convert themselves into animals, birds and flies. Witches with poetic incantations and invocations make them powerful characters with enigmatic personalities. The world of witches appear passionate with Medea who engaged her self in the world of desire” (*The World of Witches* 33). As witchcraft has an eternal life in the isolated societies of Brazil, Witches are active members in Maori societies of New Zealand and Barotse of Africa, Quiche of Gautemala. Similar to gypsies in England, Voodoo in Africa and Macumba happen to be an interesting cult that exists in Brazil where the ceremony of witches takes

place in an open pavilion accompanied by dance, song, drumming and shaking of musical instruments like encantados. Codo, a town in Brazil is known as the witchcraft capital of Brazil. The crux of the different episodes in Coelho's *The Witch of the Portobello* and *Brida* are based on the popularity of witchcraft in Brazil. The Brazilian witchcraft portrayed by Coelho can also be associated to Macumba which resembles the worship of African gods through possession and magic especially black magic. Most often witches bear a close relation with nature-bodies of water, forests, animals and birds. Brazil the land of landscapes and hills has another form of worship-Iemanja goddess of sea. Brazilians believe that all who die in sea will go to her luxurious palace (*Mythica – Witchcraft* 73). As Reginaldo prandi observes, seeking a religion in search of magica - religious assistance has become a common practice in Brazil and that can be perceived in the differing situations of the narratives. Thus Brazilian spiritualism proves to be a philosophy of all things, with ontological harmony and coherence in the fictional space of Coelho. Novels resonate with the spiritual realism of the New Age and the occult symbols relate a universal harmony and convey a mystical state with a quality of ineffability, transience, passivity and timelessness. Both the malign and benign forces culminate in the creative space of witchcraft depicted in the novels of Coelho.

Magic realism is the bridge that links regionalism and social realism within the fantastic worlds of fiction in Coelho. The paradigm shot a trouble in the intellectual sphere of post-expressionism with Franz Roh's interpretation of the term as an indicator of the demise of expressionism. The different coinages of the term and the use of it as a 'conduit metaphor' as 'alteration,' 'revelation,' 'radiation of magic,' 'the throbbing phenomenal reality' create a

richness in the usage of the genre in Coelho. The technique of narration in Coelho, acknowledges the magic inherent in reality and perceives in the ordinary, a defamiliarization of the real, creating a heightened perception of reality, using oneiric optic form of narration. Thus it provides a privileged version of reality. In magic realist fiction, accumulation, amplification and other tropes serve to represent a world in which the quotidian and the extraordinary indeed co-exist. As identified by William Spindler, magic realism perceived in the novels turn to be both metaphysical and ontological – meta physical that it creates a sense of estrangement, ontological as it creates inexplicable events. What Wendy B. Faris has formulated as the characteristics of magic-realism turn to be the specific features of magic realism in Coelho’s fictional world and it represents any kind of innovation indicating the re-emergence of submerged narrative tradition. In Faris’s investigation of the nature and cultural work of magic realism in fiction, the mode of narration embodies the following characteristics:

First, the text contains the irreducible element of magic; second, the descriptions detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in an effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms. (*Ordinary Enchantments* 7)

In the fictional space of the novels of Coelho, magic realism as a blend of magic and real, re -discovers the charm of the object to revivify the sense of the real as in Clarice Lispector’s *The Smallest Woman in the World*. Most

often magic realistic context of the novels engage with the reader's consciousness with relativity, diversity, variety and with challenging versions of reality. Coelho uses magic realism as it has a close affinity with the heightened world of perception in the novels.

As a post-modernist, Coelho uses magic realism, combining it with the folkloric myth of tradition- unraveling the mysterious truth of life and fiction. In magic realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle, to discover what is mysterious-to seize 'the mystery that breathes behind things.' As in all Post-modern contexts, the occult in Coelho creates a weird vision of reality, making it an illusion. A purposive, self-conscious effort from the part of the writer, conscious of the 'act of writing' proves to be the focus of his fictional world.

The narrativity of a text is always culture-bound. The fiction of Paulo Coelho is a restructuring of the culture system of signs which result in a different encoding of text. Within the simulacrum of Brazilian culture, Coelho encodes and decodes the signs/ words in such a way that the entire fiction culminates into an epigrammatic style of semiotics. Coelho assigns a note of divinity to signs and he comments. "I explain that signs are extremely personal language that we develop throughout our lives, by trial and error, until we begin to understand that God is guiding us" (*Aleph* 34). The reader can analyse the novels of quest as varied interpretations of the quibble of words used by the author while explaining quest as a means of salvation and as the road to spirituality. In the depth of playfulness of signs employed by Coelho, one can recollect both metonymic, metaphoric and pragmatic relations that impregnate

with a philosophy of life. Hence it is possible to analyse the words used as signs - a cluster of iconic and symbolic ones as suggested by the linguist C.S. Peirce. Icons gain a recognition because of their association with appropriate circumstances in the fictional space of Coelho. The narrator's cultural knowledge of Brazil calls for quest as an iconic expression in the novels. Coelho is a writer who uses intertextual contacts to enchain the words that carry a semantic burden. Most often myths function as 'intertextual' frames in the milieu of fiction. The notion of salvation can be interpreted as a textual riddle disambiguated by means of intertextual information. Like the myth of Caramuru of Brazil, the myth of Hagia Sophia, the myth of Narcissus, Mother Goddess with eco feminine renderings, the myth of shamans and other mythic traditions serve the purpose of framing. This framing device enables the reader to borrow from his own treasure of intertextuality. The novelist demystifies history and tradition, debunks myths and the novels help the reader to get lost in the winding corridors and spiral stairways of the labyrinth of occultism and alternate spirituality.

The Semiotic reading of a text is possible only through a context. Coelho's fictional world project a host of natural signs /words which are non-intentional at the primary level. The signifier salvation, in its paradigmatic level, turns into a connotation of different semantic levels in the texts. Salvation, the arboreal sign can be equated with the metaphorical pattern of the novel, the semiotics of the paradigm bifurcates into differing group of signs intended to be analysed in the study. The different signs that unravel the intertextuality of the novels spread in the mythopoeia of narration with an all inclusiveness. For example, the language used by Coelho turns into a definite

system of signs. Ordinary natural words are used as signs by Coelho in varying functional situations. Every sign exists in its code as part of the paradigm in Coelho, and hence the referential nature of signs prove to be significant in the analysis of the present study. Signs/words in Coelho act as kinetic signifiers (related to movement), associative signifiers (in relation to meaning), Quali-signs (a sign of quality), and legi- sign (a word of norm, habit), and sin signs (actual event). The syntactic, semantic and pragmatic codes in the novels provide a better connotation of salvation.

Signs are ‘negatively’ relational in the novels of Coelho and within the relational nature of signs, their dissociative nature is also implied. For example, Salvation is a paradigmatic signifier in the alternative notions of spirituality. Salvation explains new spirituality, the transcendental signified promoted by the writer, making it conspicuous like the world of reality. With this difference, both occur in oppositional positions, thereby enhancing the beauty of paradoxical relations.

The purpose of the study is to analyse the Semiotics of Salvation in the select works of Paulo Coelho. As ‘an Alchemist of words,’ the novelist has fourteen novels, a collection of short stories and reflections of life entitled *Like the Flowing River* and some anecdotes to his credit. A great story teller, the pragmatic mystic in Coelho realizes the immanence of the temporal in the eternal. The vivid and vicarious knowledge gathered out of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela initiates him to publish the first novel *The Pilgrimage (Diary Of a Magus)* in 1987. The journey proves to be an initiatory experience for the rest of his creative endeavour as a writer. The present study

takes into consideration the four novels – *The Alchemist*, *Brida*, *The Witch of Portobello* and *Aleph*-the fictional background of which takes up ‘quest for salvation’ as the imminent impulse of life.

The Alchemist, published in 1988 is the widely translated novel (in 72 languages), that relates the fable of Santiago who seeks Salvation through his dreams. Dreams connote divine language in the narrative arc of Coelho. The entire alchemy or science of the motif of Salvation is explained through the signs of quest, dream and the realization of the personal legend. Within the veil of the diverse Brazilian cultures, the novelist unveils a pattern of alternate notions of spirituality through the quibbling nature of signs employed in the novel. The Magic realist narrative strategy makes the fable a fantastic reality with interesting characters like the Gypsy woman, the King of Spain, and *The Alchemist*, who follow the seamless fabric of quest in their unique fashion. The post-modernist aesthetics of playfulness with its innate strategies of subversion and prolixity can be perceived in the background of the narrative.

The Witch of Portobello written in 2007 delineates the attempts of Sherine Khalil /Athena, the adopted daughter who seeks *matrilineage* in the gypsy tradition. The polyphonic narration and the multi-voiced point of view create an otherness of the self of the heroine in Hagia Sophia. The bouts of revelations describe the fusion of imaginary and the hallucinatory in the experiences of trance projected. As Mother Goddess, Athena tries to seek her alter-ego and projects the qualities of a female shaman. A de-mystification of the myth and the revival of witchcraft make the novel a subverted attempt. The indigenous spirituality portrayed reflects the cosmic vision of life. The

creation of a witch through Athena is an act of empowerment and the revival of pagan tradition. The revival of female principle in the novel has evolved into the notion of salvation as an intrinsic search.

Brida, published in 2008 speculates on the travails and temptations of an Irish girl, caught in the mysterious life of wilderness affected by magic. The frail serene indomitable self of Brida O' Fern seeks *The Tradition of the Sun* and *The Tradition of the Moon* and challenges icons of knowledge and religion in her Faustian quest. The Wicca tradition is introduced with the quality of clairvoyance to initiate the heroine to indigenous spirituality. Magus leads the woman in *Brida* to the Female principle thereby fusing the visible with the invisible worlds of reality. The novel depicts the existential angst of the heroine between love and magic and between physicality and spirituality. With a deeper penetration into occult, witchcraft, the erased tradition is sought through magic, myth and history. The narrative proves to be perfect amalgamation of diverse paradigms with a supernatural spin of quest, love, magic and mystery of reincarnation as the purpose of life. The occult milieu in *Brida*, projects the uncanny irreducible element making it a novel of magic realistic tradition.

Aleph, the semi-autobiographical novel (2011) is the spiritual union of the persona of the author with the philosophy of reincarnation. The material quest of *The Alchemist* culminates in the ontological quest of Coelho in *Aleph* through an epiphany of revelation. The myth of the shamanic tradition reveals the unknown recesses of historic past and the memories of the self of the author. The indigene is explained through the esoteric, drifting spirituality to

a material plane. The transcendental signifier salvation goes beyond the experience of man and reaches the ultimate. The novelist rethinks on his own spiritual growth and renewal through rebirth and reincarnation.

The analysis of the four novels of Coelho – *The Alchemist*, *The Witch of Portobello*, *Brida* and *Aleph* will be the ground work of this thesis. The scheme of the study focuses on theories like Semiotics in relation to the classification of signs and their connotative significance in the novels. The narrative technique of magic realism in the postmodern context of the fictive realm is also intended to be interpreted. Related paradigms like Goddess spirituality, Occult Tradition, Esotericism and the relevance of these concepts in the literary space of Coelho will be the main focus of the present study.

CHAPTER II

TRANSCENDENTAL SUBLIME IN *THE ALCHEMIST*

Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* is primarily a quest narrative that encompasses the individual, mystical and spiritual notions of the self. Salvation, an experience in the narrative which connects collective unconsciousness to a pattern of transcendentalism turns into a pragmatic sign. The novelist is consistent in his own personal quest and views man in search of identity through his magnum opus, *The Alchemist* (*O Alquimista*) published

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in 1988. The widely popular and translated work, recounts the fable of Santiago an Andulasian shepherd boy, who follows the dream of finding a treasure in the pyramids of Egypt. Santiago is invoked by the divine and the element of divinity makes his material quest a transcendental one. The theme of *The Alchemist* based on wanderlust and the urge for salvation is outlined as a universal motif of adventure and transformation that runs virtually through entire literary tradition.

The quest is represented in *The Alchemist* as a process to achieve salvation, which acts like an arboreal metaphor, that spreads like a tree in the varying connotations of Genesis. The quest of salvation in the text is a meaningful journey through time and space which reflects the message that existence cannot escape consciousness and the quest is endlessly fascinating. The novel testifies Coelho's comment on his own search for spirituality: "My great search has always been the spiritual one -that is why this quest is always present in my books. The truth that we continue to be is mysterious" (*Confessions* 150).

I look at life, using the metaphor of journey,
As a caravan: I know neither whence it
Came nor where it's going... the total consciousness of every
thing... that is what life gives to me. (*Confessions* 190)

The mystical and spiritual notions about salvation provide the multifaceted nature of it in the possibilities of explaining the semiotic variations of it as quest, dream, alchemy and as the personal legend of both the narrator and the characters. The etymological roots of salvation are embedded

in the subsoil of different religions and cultural spaces. Salvation connotes with quest as an orderly process to achieve the goal. The narrative reflects the tendency towards increasing introspection, an indicator of the metaphysical anxiety of characters which is a prominent feature of Brazilian fiction.

Semiotically, salvation, a transcendental signifier can be construed as a communion with God. As the multifaceted interpretation of salvation is possible, the paradigm salvation in *The Alchemist* functions as signifiers of quest, dream, alchemy and personal legend. Salvation, a signification of spirituality becomes a personal motif and signifier in *The Alchemist*. The narrator posits the theme of salvation as 'transcendental personal signifier' as the story unravels the subjective self of the protagonist in his realization of dreams and personal legend. Salvation, the signifier connotes with the signified quest as an alchemical paradigm in the narrative structure of *The Alchemist*. The term 'Alchemy' is more of a tradition than a science, a means of exploring our inner spaces and the layers which wrap the precious essence of our inner most soul. Alchemy has two intertwined goals- first the creation of the philosopher's stone, a substance that enables the transmutation of common metals into gold. The second is the creation of universal panacea for all diseases. The narrative explains the metamorphosis of Santiago to a transcendental being and it can be explained as an alchemical process as the title evokes the same notion. As explained by C.G.Jung, 'the unconscious is universal which predates the individual, a repository of all religious, spiritual and mythological symbols and experiences. In literature, the power of imagination is related to the original alchemical function. For Coleridge, "the role of *The Alchemist* is transposed into that of a poet who diffuses and blends

matter into a reconciliation of opposites” (*Ethereal Chemicals* 3). In Coelho’s *The Alchemist*, a proper utilization of all the alchemical knowledge both at a physical and ethereal level as mentioned by Jung and Coleridge can be perceived.

In a folkloric fashion, Coelho describes the adventure of Santiago, as a quest of personal legend. The reader finds panoramic interlocking patterns of urge for quest among the characters of the narrative like the crystal merchant who plans to make a journey to Mecca, the English man in search of an Alchemist, Fatima in search of her true love and the Alchemist in search of the real knowledge of alchemy. The characters search for something consciously with their actions, thoughts and goals centred round the goal of completing the quest. The quest motif or signifier is identified with the search for self-identity. Santiago’s adventure is based on two aspects of quest -a physical quest after the treasure and the other a spiritual one. Santiago’s genuine passion for quest shares a romantic view that the value of a goal is comparatively less when compared to the journey of the self. The setting of the novel is pastoral with a ‘veritable time warp’ and magical with a dream land with its treasure hidden under the pyramids as the visible sign of mysterious transmutation. Campbell refers to the hero’s quest as a pageant of marvels in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. In the novel, Santiago’s life appears like the parade of the fantastic, a show-case of the unbelievable. He carries out a successful quest such as that defined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* – “answering the call to adventure, refusal of the call, crossing the threshold into the unknown, facing various trials, finding the reward, returning to the city” (*The Hero* 319). Santiago’s departure from the ordinary world is initiated

and activated by the recurring nature of dream. In the first section of the narrative, the image of a sycamore tree recurs as an instance of fore-shadowing and it appears repeatedly in Santiago's dreams. One night when he seeks shelter in an abandoned church, the dream recurs.

Santiago dreams the same dream twice, for which he requires an interpretation. He visits Tarifa, the gypsy woman and explains, "The child went on playing with my sheep for quite a while and transported me to the Egyptian pyramids with the promise of a hidden treasure" (13). As a response to the dream, Tarifa explains: "It's a dream in the language of the world, I can interpret it, but the interpretation is very difficult" (14). Santiago is not satisfied with the interpretation of the dream and the old woman in the novel explains: "And dreams are the language of God. When he speaks in our language, I can interpret what he has said. But if he speaks in the language of the soul, it is only you who can understand. But whichever it is I am going to charge you" (12).

As he waits at a plaza, an old man appears before him by the exchange of the one-tenth of the sheep, he is ready to reveal the location of the treasure. He continues the sharing of knowledge in a philosophical tone. The text quotes, "Not always in this way, but I always appear in one form or another. Sometimes I appear in the form of solution, or a good idea at other times, at a crucial moment. I make it easier for things to happen" (22).

The archetypal lore in *The Alchemist* follows the pastoral tradition. The story of a shepherd who seeks a personal legend through dreams, symbols,

signs and adventure follow like echoes and signs of ancient wisdom in the novel that combines an atmosphere of medieval mysticism with the song of the desert. Following the interpretations of the gypsy woman and Melchizedek, the King of Spain, Santiago the Andalusian boy undertakes a journey through the markets of Tangiers and Egyptian deserts until he meets the Alchemist. The text relates what the Alchemist reveals to Santiago, ‘the alchemy of life,’ the language of the ‘soul of the world.’ “He learns how important it is to listen, to see and read all the omens that are encounters along life’s path” (120-26). He advises the boy to master the lessons that he learns out of life. The Alchemist asserts: “Every search begins with beginner’s luck. And every luck ends with the victor’s being severely tested” (127). In the *Confessions*, Coelho comments, “Omens are a language. It’s the alphabet we develop to speak to the world’s soul” (*Confessions* 6). In the narrative space, omens, ‘the iconic signs’ reach a level of perceptive signification, with which Santiago perceives an unimaginable universe which inspires him to pursue the search. The seamless textual fabric of *The Alchemist* patterns the quest as a ‘kinetic signifier’ in unison with dreams and as the sign of movement. The novel explains, “Dreams are explained as god’s language, the language of the Soul” (12).

Santiago undertakes a pursuit of exploration that appears to be a constant metaphorical sign. It reveals a positive philosophy which sounds like the over simplified version of the new age philosophy and states ‘simple things are the most valuable only wise people appreciate them’ (14).

Santiago is adamant in following his dream. The urge for quest focuses obliquely upon a dream, the signifier which acts both as qualisign and legisign

in the novel as identified through a phenomenological category by C.S.Pierce. His analysis of every thought as sign is very conspicuous for the purpose of the study. The grouping qualisign, sinsign, legisign; iconic, indexical and symbolic are relevant for the analysis. The qualisign can be related to quality or appearance. Sinsign is an individual object or event. It presupposes a qualisign "A legi-sign is a norm, habit and rule" (Semiosis and Semiotics¹⁵). A sign can be iconic through its resemblance, symbolic signs are conventional whereas indexical ones are directly related to the natural. (Semiotics 36-7)

Dream and the associative quest- motif are a part of Santiago's manifested experience of reality. They fuse the real and the unreal worlds into a unique and autonomous world of magic realism. Both signifiers dream and quest serve the purpose of quali sign and legisign. These signs are interfused into the magic realistic tradition of the novel. Coelho's pervasive use of dream in the narrative is something unique. When Santiago in the narrative requires an interpretation and advice for pursuing his personal legend, the gypsy woman acts as a signifier of clairvoyance in the narrative. The dream vision performs exactly the function of apocryphal exposition as it recurs and at the same time appears relatively obscure creating a confused indecisive effect on the psyche of the dreamer. The hero accepts the call and seeks the help of a supernatural aid for the journey ahead. In the narrative, the dreamy vision initiates the grail quest in the hero who is fascinated by 'the image of child God.' There occurs an alchemical transmutation in the character of the protagonist, when he realizes his transcendental immanent self with which he is able to know and converse with the over soul. The dream suspends time or exists with the temporality of nature that results in the synthesis of the personal

and the natural. The novelist explains the search of Santiago as ‘an encounter with god’ (*The Alchemist* 125). The transcendental sublime achieved by Santiago synchronizes with what the Upanishad says, “He became knowledge and ignorance, he became the truth and the falsehood. He became whatsoever that is” (*Taittiriya Upanishad* 11.6). The meaning of the salvation as semiotic signifier of spirituality becomes complete and organic in this context. The Journey motif, the kinetic signifier leads to the progressive nature of fabula (story) transforming it to an interesting Sjujet (plot pattern) and the concept of salvation culminates into a secondary level in the universal significance of the quest. The mythic background of Narcissus creates a second order of signification that results in the deeper significance of quest- motif. The mythopoeia weaves a mythic pattern out of the intertextuality of the narrative. As compared to the experience of Gawain in Malory’s *Morte d’ Arthur*, Santiago gathers the universal truth out of his meeting with an old man. Melchizedek, the old man helps him for an exchange of his sheep and money and out of the inscriptions he reminds the boy about the realization of destiny. He appreciates Santiago for his consultation with the gypsy-woman. Melchizedek, affirms in the narrative: “Everything in life has its price. This is what the Warriors of Light try to teach” (24). The old man’s warning intensifies the conflict between the two passions- the love for his sheep and the love towards the merchant’s daughter. Santiago’s trials take different forms- the trickster who cheats him for his money, the warring tribes and his relationship with Fatima At the town of Tangiers, he is robbed by a person who pretends to help him.

As the dream vision is apocryphal, Santiago's mental state merges into transcendental reality which gets translated into dream-terms. It is as explained by Northrop Frye: "the search of the libido or the desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of a reality but will still contain that reality" (*Anatomy of Criticism* 193). The metaphysical self urges the male self to seek transcendence through Santiago and this reveals Coelho's insistence on the ineffability of true identity. The old man expresses his religious nature in his directions to Santiago, echoing the character of Tiresias, the archetypal quester in T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land.' He reminds Santiago to watch over the omens and listen to 'the Soul of the World' establishing the spiritual importance of his mission. In the midst of their conversation, 'a butterfly appears' and flutters between him and the old man as a good omen, the kinetic signifier in the narrative which acts as an omen of luck, movement and happiness. The signs and the language of omens are of great significance in the fictional space of *The Alchemist*. The Wandershaft of the quester increases and the hero of the fictional world of *The Alchemist* turns archetypal by nature. He wanders in a romantic world, at the same time operates in an anthropocentric world. The butterfly metaphorically indicates the fleeting nature of life. A second order of the semiotic system of signs emerge out of the archetypal pattern of quest in Santiago. Santiago believes in omens and in its language. Coelho explains the same vision in his biography, "omens are an alphabet you develop to talk to the world's soul" (*Confessions* 1).

As a writer, Coelho reads the secret alphabet of the universe and decodes the message of omens. That is why the language of omens and dreams play a definite role in the developing nature of character. The English man in

the narrative who recounts his experiences to Santiago says, “he would like to write a huge encyclopaedia just about words ‘luck and coincidence.’ It is with those words that universal language is written” (*The Alchemist* 67). Luck and coincidence act as qualisigns with connotative associations.

Coelho experiments with what we call ‘jitanjafora’-a kind of wordplay and he deviates from the traditional path of creating sense in *The Alchemist*. Hence Coelho’s post-modernism creates a new critique of culture, religion and ontology through language. Prolixity and playfulness, the attributes of post-modernism can be perceived in the quibbling nature of signs and word-play used by the novelist in the narrative. A kind of linguistic magic emanates out of the cluster of quali-signs used in the novel like Omens, Beginner’s luck, emerald tablet, Makhtub, Alchemy, wind, and butterflies in the novel. The use of signs regains a depth of signification revealing the semiotics of the connotative use of language in the novel.

Kinetic signifiers are lucid traditional expressions of ‘becoming’ in the narrative. Santiago who inhabits the world of *The Alchemist* is a frequent wanderer and in the use of these kinetic signifiers, Coelho transforms him to an archetypal symbol of man’s capacity for ‘becoming’ with the personification of his yearning for life. Thus the romantic motif of quest is given a poetic, cultural as well as a literary signification in the novel. In the initial phases of the novel, the protagonist has a name which he loses in the latter phases of the narrative and that moulds him into a mythical character. The protagonist thus falls into the category of an archetypal hero as the journey progresses with the

halo of a myth. The epic fashion of a fairy tale and the kind of the character's nature make the novel, a meta- narrative, a post-modern archetypal fiction.

Santiago's momentous year in the crystal merchant's shop enables him to have reflection of his own life-a mirror stage in which he comprehends the principle of favorability, a beginner's luck. The sign crystal as a quali- sign of purity can be related to the signified-the transcendental self. The reflection of the self is gathered out of the pure self of the protagonist, with the purgative impact of it on the crystal merchant. Santiago clears the doubts of the crystal merchant who is obfuscated by the thoughts of future. The conversation between the protagonist and the merchant reveal the pragmatic materialistic philosophy of the narrative. The pilgrims who drink tea from the crystal glass imbibe positive energy. Santiago's cleaning of the glasses with his only possession which is his 'Jacket' is another symbolic act of signification- a cleansing act for the soul of the crystal-merchant. Friendship with the merchant results in the progress of his business and in the added confidence Santiago emphasises the significance of *Maktub* that alludes to fate or what is written. *Maktub*, an Arabic word is used in the novel to explain the universe as school, teaching lessons of fate and luck. When *Maktub* relates itself to the universal philosophy of life, the act of signification of Salvation in the narrative revolves around merchant and *Maktub* and turns into a universal signifier.

When the novel progresses, the signifier salvation is emphatic as it reveals the semiotics of language used in the novel. As the novelist is so particular about the magic created out of word-play, many words function as quali signs indicating quality. The narrative infused with quali-signs provides

added metaphorical signification to the narrative. The linguistic magic of the narrative questions the reigning ideology of language and substantiate the concepts through real life situations.

The technique of magic realism in the narrative is employed to add the beauty of the narrative which is activated through dreams and omens communicated through the language of enthusiasm. The reader can perceive the translucent presence of the old king who inspires the boy with the following words. "When you want something, all the universe conspires to help you achieve it" (59). The old crystal seller says "I am afraid that great disappointment awaits me and so I prefer to dream" (53). The narrative tradition is in the magic realistic pattern, when the entire crux of plot moves around a dream, creating two disparate worlds of reality, the real and the dream-like, the one merging with the other. An ineffability evolves out of phenomenal world and the magical images or events glow in the realistic matrix highlighting the metaphysical angst of the characters in the novel.

Collecting the wealth in a pouch, Santiago resumes his journey to Egypt as a member of caravan that moves towards the desert. The English man who is erudite explains the soul of the world as the principle that governs all things and as the principle of Alchemy. Both the Englishman and Santiago pursue their real search of the Alchemist. As a final solution, Santiago meets Fatima who can speak the pure language of the world and the language of love. She informs him about a man who knows all the secrets of the world and is able to communicate with genies of desert, the gift of the desert. The narrative elaborates that with her qualities of the desert women, Fatima allows him 'to

wander as free as the wind, become part of the clouds, the fauna and flora of the desert.’ In her attributes of love, Fatima embodies a fusion of all the signs perceived in the novel. Coelho posits love as the perfection of consciousness and believes in life-divine emphasized through self-realization.

Coelho employs caravan as another kinetic signifier, for activating the story element. The caravan moving towards the desert acts as a kinetic signifier and depicts the flow of life and the movement of the plot pattern. The passage of time reveals the oral tradition inherent in spirituality. Santiago remarks “People become fascinated with pictures and words and wind up forgetting the language of the world” (83). The narrator employs olfactory signs (code of scents) in the path of quest intended by Santiago. The strong wind, Levanter acts upon the boy as an olfactory sign, as a signalling system inflicting its freedom that makes him jealous. When the wind is introduced as an immediate perceptible sign in the narrative, what Roman Jakobson says about the ancient perception of a sign as Signans (signifier) and Signatum (signified) relating to the indissolubility of signs can be applied in the strength of the wind that influences the daring nature of Santiago. Like Azaro in Ben Okri’s in *The Famished Road*, the visions of Santiago in the latter part of the narrative include different things that create the natural and supernatural in a non disjunctive way. All the visions of the protagonist intensify the magic realist atmosphere of the narrative. The text elucidates:

He saw that omens were scattered throughout the earth and in space and that there was no reason or significance attached to their appearance... But that hand had a reason for all of this,

and that only the hand could perform miracles and transform the sea into a desert ... And that he, a boy could perform miracles. (145)

“The flashing dive of the hawks across the sky produces a vision in Santiago which is a premonition of war” (95-6). Meanwhile, the strange horseman dressed in black appears before him and questions him for making such a reading of the omens. Santiago emphatically stresses the point that he wants to save the birds. For the strange man, only Allah can decide about such matters. Santiago remarks, ‘Allah taught me the language of birds.’ Everything has been written by the same hand (106). This statement reveals the semiotics of universal language, the infinitude of it. The prophecy falls into dumb ears and the next morning reveals the scattered images of the dead tribesmen around Al-Fayoum. The quest of Santiago turns into a vision quest and he imbibes ‘the soul of the world.’ The tribal chieftain rewards the boy with fifty pieces of gold.

With the arrival of the Alchemist, Santiago seeks shelter in his company. In the midst of their journey, Santiago’s horse senses the presence of life in the desert, identified in the form of a snake. In another space of magic, the Alchemist allows the cobra to relax further instigating the hero to continue his search of treasure. The text quotes: “You must understand that love never keeps a man from pursuing his destiny. If he abandons that pursuit, it’s because it wasn’t true love... the love that speaks the language of the world” (115). Constantly subjected to tests of persistence and courage, Santiago has adopted slow, calculative steps in his quest. Coelho interprets Emerald Tablet as a

signifier of salvation and the text quotes: “The Emerald Tablet is a direct passage to the Soul of the world” (121). The Alchemist attracts Santiago towards the marvelous creation of the universe, its perfection through visible objects and spiritual teachings. He advises Santiago to listen to the heart in order to know ‘the soul of the world.’ There is shift towards mysticism and ontological magic realism at this point of the narrative.

For Santiago, denying a dream is like denying God. There is godly presence in the alchemical knowledge shared by the character Alchemist who educates Santiago about the liquid and solid states of alchemy- That is the elixir of life and the philosopher’s stone. The alchemical formula of the novel establishes the pantheistic philosophy of –‘god as one big soul’ - the soul of the world giving emphasis to the ecumenist theme- spirituality has become a euphemism for the ‘caring inner self.’ “Everything on earth is being continuously transformed because the earth is alive and it has a soul” (82). Salvation becomes an alchemical process in *The Alchemist*, in the semiotics of religious metaphor and transforms into a quest motif which is the real mode of pursuit in the narrative. In Santiago’s dialogue with the soul of the world, illumination, a characteristic of mystical consciousness becomes perceptible. The mystic in Coelho awakens in Santiago, a spiritual consciousness of the Absolute. The Soul of the World reveals visions of absolute plenitude. Spiritual life that depicts in the narrative reveals God, the soul and the relationship between God and the Soul. Alchemy in the narrative functions as catharsis which leads to the pruning and purgation of Santiago’s soul towards transcendence. Salvation connotes with transcendence and it is a painful descent into the world of illumination. Santiago’s awakening to the

consciousness of the Absolute reveals the sense of divine presence. Such a consciousness is exocentric, a lifting of the consciousness from a 'self-centred' to 'God-centred world' as explained by Evelyn Underhill in *Mysticism*.

The lucid vision of the world enables both the Alchemist and Santiago to have the sense of 'divine presence.' To see God in nature is to attain a radiant consciousness of the otherness of natural things – the simplest form of Nature-mysticism. Santiago engages himself with a contemplation of nature, when his self stretches towards transcendental truth and the pantheistic reveries. The psyche of the protagonist loosens his frenzied grip from the obvious magical world of reality and moves to a deeper, richer universalized reality of coherence and completeness.

The quest for ultimate truth is endlessly fascinating and the end of the Alchemist's life is to reach spirituality. In the preface of *Confessions*, Coelho recollects how he discovers the symbolic language which annoys and confuses him though it is the only way to reach the soul of the world. Santiago goes deep into the transience of life to find out the truth of the soul and the soul of the world. Carl Jung in his work *Psychology and Alchemy* analyzes a direct parallel between the alchemical search and the quest of the divine. In the novel, The Alchemist explains that he wants to seek the knowledge of the science of alchemy and instigates Santiago to learn it both as a chemical science and as the alchemy of words. With 'the Semiotics of signs,' he converses with 'the soul of the world.' In the process of alchemical conjunction, Santiago transforms himself into an archetypal image and an undivided self. As an archetypal quester, Santiago's character embodies all the traits suggested by

Carl Jung in *Archetypes of Literature*. Jung explains an “archetype as a priori type which is inherent in the collective unconscious and thus beyond individual birth and death.” Santiago with his archetypal attributes creates an eternal presence in the narrative and the archetypal patterns of the narrative transforms itself into a lore of oneness, wholeness revealing the semiotics of spirituality.

The term archetype is derived out of Greek *arche* meaning original and *typos* meaning ‘form or model.’ Archetypes are also ‘psychic instincts of the human species’ as identified by Edinger in the fictional world. (*A Glossary* 12-3) When Santiago, the archetypal hero undertakes adventures and the gypsy woman, Melchizedek, the old man and the Alchemist act as key agents of actions in the formulation and the effect of alchemy on Santiago he overcomes the challenges of his life. In the novel, the archetype expresses the elemental relationship between man and nature. The use of archetypes in the narrative reveals the development of presenting the pure fantasy of a dream to a character archetype and then to the universal archetype. Hence the development of archetypes follows a tri-modal structure in the organic nature of characterization.

In the prologue of the narrative, a retelling of the myth of narcissus occurs with a new version of the story as the lake weeping over the loss of the hero, Narcissus. This episode acts as a second order of signification even if it serves the purpose of introducing the magical tone of the novel. When the narrator fictionalizes the protagonist against an abandoned church, the reader can perceive a dream of the poor shepherd boy begetting into an incomprehensible reality. An associative meaning of the quest motif is related

to the gypsy-vagabond tradition of the narrative, which is purely a nomadic one associating wanderlust to the quest. An associative level of the signifier 'Quest' emerges out of the signifieds - the metaphor of journey (signified) and the gypsy tradition (signified). Towards sunset, Santiago wanders through the oasis listening to the wind and feeling the stone under his feet. He becomes close to nature, conscious of its movements. 'The hawks drifting on the wind' is another kinetic signifier which reveals the language of the world. Noticing the hawks flashing and fighting against each other, another omen in the narrative, Santiago interprets a vision of war to the tribesmen. The acquaintance of a seer who is capable of interpreting future through the science of twigs instigates the protagonist. Thus magic realism in the novel becomes an attitude on the part of the character towards the world or towards nature.

The middle of the narrative introduces the mysterious character, the Alchemist who resides at Al-Fayoum Oasis. He appears omnipotent, when he unravels the thread of the narrative -the transformative power of Alchemy. 'The relevant experience in one's life' prophesied by the Alchemist indirectly transforms the character of Santiago.

Where all magical forces culminate in Santiago, he becomes close and inseparable from the Great Mother, the primitive, protective and sheltering aspect of nature. Santiago is engaged in a dialogue with the desert, the wind, sun and the soul of fauna and flora. The narrator describes that words fail while communicating with the soul of world. The Alchemist shared the omnipresence of mysticism with Santiago. The text quotes, "Everything is written in the Soul of the world and there it will stay forever" (*The Alchemist*

118). The physical, emotional and spiritual quests are fused and embedded in the journey of Santiago through the desert. It becomes the meta-physical quest in the circular mode of narration of the novel. Coelho employs stream of consciousness narration to render the consciousness of Santiago. This involves the descriptions of sensations, memories, fancies, visions and insights of the protagonist. Similar experience of human consciousness initially narrated by Thomas Mann in *Magic Mountain* discusses the metaphysical quest of the protagonist. When Santiago completes the Karmic cycle of destiny, an introspection into both the alchemy of the soul of world and into the psyche of Santiago is possible. Santiago becomes an archetypal quester who seeks knowledge from the book of nature-a real archetype, a repeated pattern that recurs in the literature of every age.

The quest motif in *The Alchemist* transforms itself into a universal signifier. Coelho fills the novel with his verbosity and poetic vision of spirituality- a concern for the inner self through dream, love and realization of destiny- Paulo Coelho's oeuvre designates 'what the novel does best.' It gets human condition better than any other genre of literary creativity. Santiago, the Brazilian spiritual wanderer, reaches the soul of the world, meets the stranger who happens to be the Alchemist. Santiago expresses his wish to stay in the oasis and be with Fatima, who is described 'as a woman of the desert.' The magic realistic atmosphere of the novel emerges into restrained romanticism full of intense adoration of nature and of poetic content. Through the love of Santiago towards Fatima, "Love speaks the language of the world" (115). The Alchemist explains the mystery of the desert when Santiago stays

with him for seven days, revealing the mystery of experiential knowledge. The text explains the significance of Emerald tablet with a code.

The Emerald tablet is a direct passage to the soul of the world. In Alchemical texts, the Emerald tablet is the prima material for alchemical initiation. Embedded within this brief gem is the process to initiate the inner circulation which was described in details by Taoist *The Alchemist*... Alchemy is something that penetrates into the Soul of the world, discovering the treasure that has been reserved for every one. (121-22)

The protagonist follows the path of the Alchemist listening to his wise counsels which helps him to listen to his own voice, to the voice of his own heart. The natural world is interpreted as an image and a copy of paradise and the spiritual teachings as the marvels of god's wisdom. The text quotes, "the world is only the visible aspect of God. And that what alchemy does is to bring spiritual perfection into contact with the material plane" (136). The signifiers 'Emerald Tablet' and 'Alchemy' act as associative ones revealing the depth of salvation.

The transgressive nature of wanderings enables Santiago to perceive the world- the soul of the world. Both the desert and the simple grain of sand reflect the marvels of creation. In the narrative, Santiago pursues his journey by listening the voice of the heart, in return the heart converses with him about the dangers. When tribesmen take Santiago and the Alchemist as captives, a metaphysical world of reality is created. The Alchemist is introduced as one who understands nature and the world, a man capable of transforming himself

into wind. These scenes of transformations create a fantastic world of reality, making what is mentioned as 'lo Real Marvellosmo' as marvelous reality, the basic trait of magic realism. For him the fear of failure is always a hindrance to the realization of a dream. With an interpretation of the alchemy of life, he expounds the philosophy of salvation. The 'Speaking Mirror' of the language of narration in the magic realist text alludes to transcendence. Paulo Coelho's gives a comment to Elizabeth Day "everyday I try to be in communication with the universe in an unconscious way" (13 June, 2005).

In the narrative, the image of the Alchemist carrying a falcon over his shoulder in his tumultuous quest through the desert describes the wild imagination of Santiago that turns ecstatic. The desert compares Santiago's love to a falcon's flight which is ecstatic in appearance the text quotes, "That is what love is it is what makes the game become the falcon, the falcon becomes man and man in his turn the desert. It is what turns lead into gold and makes the gold return to the earth" (*The Alchemist* 138). The significations of salvation that depict the associative signifieds of transitory images even reveal the transcendence of the metaphors inherent in the narrative. Here the religious metaphor of falcon and falconer as images of divine love as in W.B. Yeats's 'Second Coming' is echoed and salvation or transmutation of the soul through alchemy is repeated. In the soaring imagination, that move like the flight of birds, the narrator uses another kinetic signifier through the sign of birds. Santiago's journey becomes everyone's pursuit of life's goal with the realization of 'over-soul' through the external world of reality as 'aham brahmasmi,' the Sanskrit sutra which explains ultimate reality as the root and

ground of the universe, the source of all that exists. The writer's comment "we have the same soul," becomes prophetic. (140)

The Alchemist bids farewell to Santiago and resumes his journey towards the pyramids and the narrative ends with a positive note of Santiago procuring gold coins from the base of Sycamore and living happily with Fatima. The shepherd boy who follows an array of omens is able to understand the language of the world – the whole semiotics of language.

As a Brazilian writer of diverse cultures, Coelho applies the post-modern technique of 'magic realism' as a narrative strategy in the novel combining it with archetypal quest as the magic realist fiction is about "transgressing boundaries and multiple worlds" (*Magical Realism* 3-4). In the novel, magic realism, indicates opposed worlds of reality with the magic inherent in reality, perceives extraordinary in the ordinary by defamiliarising the real. Santiago's dream, an ordinary event is an ongoing metaphor and signifier of quest creating a strange magic of worlds and events. "The ordinary lore of the shepherd boy undergoes transformations, transmuting everyday experience into the fantastic and mysterious. Thus magic realism in the narrative constitutes the conjunction of two worlds" (*Magical Realism* 83). A temporal composite world of reality is projected through the experiences beyond time and space in *The Alchemist*. As Arnason writes on Magic Realism the magic realists create mystery and the marvelous through juxtapositions. Magic realism reorders reality by creating, transmuting and translating every day experience into a mysterious dream in *The Alchemist*. With a deeper perception of reality, the fantastic and fabulous elements are combined in the

narrative and they provide a reliable tone of description to the phantasmagoria of reality. In the text, magic realism combines with postmodern, creates an aesthetics of meta-fiction. With a plurality of forms and a meta-fictional insistence on the arbitrariness of the text's power to signify, the narrative unveils the mystery and illusion of the transcendental signifier- salvation.

Latin American Luis Leal, the Mexican critic explains magic realism as an attitude on the part of the characters in the novel towards the world or towards nature. Alego Carpentier uses the term "IO REAL MARAVILLOSO" to mean marvelous reality and the movement influences writers of Latin American Boom. As a magic realist, Coelho tries to convince the readers that extra ordinary things are possible in the realm of novel. As Coelho, adopts folkloric fashion of a fairy tale in *The Alchemist*, it captured the soul of his readers and the novel is selected as one among the top ten Brazilian novels. (Top Ten Brazilian Novels 90). As a Magic realist novel, *The Alchemist* turns into a surrealist one when day to day events carry overtones of fantasy or wonder. Magic Realists try to convince us that extra ordinary things are possible by simply painting them as if they existed. For example, in the narrative of the text, Coelho transforms an ordinary event - a dream as the core and crux of the plot pattern, weaving magic out of signifiers like dream and personal legend which act as significations of salvation. The narrative of the novel describes magic events so as to intensify the world of fantasy with the inclusion of Emerald Tablet, Urim and Thumim, the precious stones with magic potentialities, the protagonist listening to the voice of the wind, the chest of Spanish gold coins thereby subverting the paradigm of salvation as a correlative of material realization. As Stephen Slemon writes, "in the language

of a magic realist text, a battle between two oppositional systems takes place in the novel, each working towards the creation of a fictional world from the other” (*Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse* 9-24).

Like Saleem in Salman Rushdie’s *The Midnight’s Children* Santiago reaches a level of improbability when he displays certain fantastic attributes like levitation, flight, telepathy and telekinesis, the different practices of the literary strategies of the genre- Magic Realism. *The Alchemist* occasionally creates a sense of stillness there by emphasizing a latitude of psychological effects especially in the differing conversations between Santiago and Sun, Santiago and Wind, Santiago and the soul of the world.

The transgressive and subversive qualities of magic realism gain prominence in the narrative. The novel fruitfully deploys two styles of narration- both antique and modern. For example, the prologue of *The Alchemist* which retells the lore of Narcissus, the selfish handsome man and the lake weeping over his fate foregrounds the story element. The subversion of the myth of Narcissus takes place when the novelist attributes human traits to the inanimate through magic realism. The narrator derives the crux of the novel from the myth of Narcissus and the narrative mode is set against the magic realist background. The subversive nature of the myth foregrounds the concept of salvation as related to personal realization of the ‘Word of the soul.’ The story element of narcissus intensifies the milieu of magic and highlights the real problem of the novel that it is possible to pursue salvation by following the personal legend. The end of the novel encourages such a possibility making the myth apt and effective, simultaneously providing a new reading of the myth

of Narcissus and that of the sign salvation. Thus the novel displays a characteristic attribute of Brazilian meta fiction in its freedom of exposing the illusion of the myth by demystifying it. The narrative carries the newness of the 'New novel' in Brazil, in its focus on the existential angst of Santiago. The towering influence of Borges's existentialism can be speculated at this juncture. The quibble of signs/words reveal the complex psyche of the narrator who is affected by the labyrinth of experiences.

The Alchemist projects the transgressive nature of a magic realist novel when personal quest reaches archetypal heights. Santiago leaves for Africa and the journey becomes metaphysical in the innate myth unravelled-the quest of the self for salvation. The character encounters perplexities in the ongoing journey of the self which exhibits the pattern of ontological magic realism in the narrative. Most often magic realism originates from the literal and cultural context of a writer. Ontological magic realism that derives its elements from mythology, cultural beliefs and folklore is used by the narrator, as a tool to seek a highly individualized personal sense of identity for his characters. Santiago, Brida, Athena, and Veronica adopt the mode of quest related to their own existential problems. This view of magic realism is imported by Wendy Faris, "when she identifies magic realism with Post-modernism in its paradoxical mixing of seeming opposites" (*Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction* 163). In *The Alchemist* Coelho explicates the theme of dream making it deep and meaningful, especially in its interpretation. The metaphor of dream acts as a pivotal force in creating a turning point in the life of the protagonist. Magic realism attains a level of ontological altitude, when the readers get confronted with ontological questions of 'being and becoming' in *The*

Alchemist. The reader can perceive the daring moves of Santiago's psyche haunted by the recurring patterns of dream – the lotus pattern of labyrinthine memories. In his flight of imagination, Santiago enters into a conversation with the wind and the desert both representing the kinetic and static states of existence. Knowing the magical potentialities of the wind – 'wind converting itself into a sand storm, blotting the sun' Santiago envisions heaven, the wind whips Santiago and disappears and appears on the other side of the camp. Sun advises Santiago 'to speak to the hand that wrote all' (144). The transcendental prayer of the narrative is said without words or pleas. The novelist comments:

“Every Second of the search is an encounter with God,” the boy told his heart When I have been truly searching for my treasure, every day has been luminous because I have known that every hour was a part of the dream that I would find it. When I have been truly searching for my treasure, I have discovered things along the way that I never would have seen had I not the courage to try things that seemed impossible for a shepherd to achieve. (125)

The text explicates instances of mystic experience, the omnipresence of the language of omens, an indication of the symbolic growth of the protagonist. The fictional milieu of the novel shares an imprint of mysterious aura when the character, the Alchemist comments on the world as, “the visible aspect of God and that what alchemy does is to bring spiritual perfection into contact with the material plane” (136). Perceiving the divine presence of Master's work in all modes of creation, Santiago senses the interfusion of the soul of

the world with the soul of god. The individual soul becomes over soul-Santiago transforms himself into a motif of miracle – the embodiment of an entire miraculous universe, reaffirms the notion of salvation, as transcendental signifier. The milieu of the novel turns transcendental to the core, the soul of the world fuses with nature, reaches catharsis – the totality of purgation. The essence of alchemy moves through the pages of the narrative as a ‘Signifier Continuum’ in the process of salvation. An allusive, mystical universe of the narrative emphasizes the timeless need of spirituality. The novel also explains the absolute as all inclusive as it follows every perception, every object, everything in the universe. Every fragment of the universe is self-transcendental and it is alchemy that unites everything in the world.

The Alchemist initiates Santiago to the magic of alchemy even if there is a perfect contrast between him and the Alchemist. The Alchemist relates the Soul of the world with religion and spirituality and the whole quest pertains to the level of the eternal. The boy in his admiration of horizon, enjoys the sight of mountains, rocks and plants. The imaginary conversation between Santiago and the desert alludes to the progressive continuous homogenous pattern behind the large signifier life. Following the magic realist tradition, a phenomenal world is purposely created by the author to intensify the magical element of the novel.

The plot of the novel creates scenes of magic intertwined with reality. Santiago meets the old man who provides him with two stones-urim, the white one and Thumim, the black, symbolic of the negative and positive forces of life. “When Thumim fell out of his pouch, he learnt to recognize Omens and

follow them” (*The Alchemist* 39). It is just like Aladdin who consults his ‘magic lantern’ in dire necessity. The narrative space places the two stones with a note of divinity as the priests carry them in a golden plate, the only form of divination permitted by god. The bridging function of magic realism as a literary technique in the textual poetics of *The Alchemist*, the narrator encodes the ineffable through magic realist signifiers *Umum* and *Thumim* imbricating the extraordinary with the ordinary.

Salvation can be related to a transcendental thought when Santiago asks the wind “just teach me to the wind for a few moments” (*The Alchemist* 140). The wind, aware of its own limitations guides Santiago to Sun who explains the theory of transcendence. Sun enquires Santiago ‘to speak to the hand that wrote all.’ The stranded significance of omens in one’s universe, in space, the divine hand performing miracles, the magical potentialities of the boy who turns himself into the wind creates the magic realist atmosphere in the narrative thus infusing the reliable portraiture of events with a visionary power. The novel projects a phenomenal world including intriguing magical details. With magic that acts as a ‘rite of contiguity’ Santiago imbibes the qualities of the wind that creates concrete impersonal representations enhancing the fantastic world of reality. On the one hand realistic descriptions create a fictional world in the narrative. Similarly, magical events of the novel share an equal fictional space with the real ones. But the unmediated way that blurs the boundary between fact and fiction is another charm that locates the magic realism of *The Alchemist* within post-modern context.

The Alchemist reveals the quest of unity and wholeness as ‘the goal of alchemical procedure’ and the narrative turns to be the hermeneutics of the signs of salvation. The protagonist changes to an alchemical archetype and as in the science of alchemy, the internal is reflected in the external nature and matter getting perfected out of nature as well as out of the self of the character. The narrative moves beyond the ordinary human consciousness creating an ineffable in between in the space of narration of the novel. The encounter between Santiago and wind and the imaginary conversation between him and sun present a co-existence of the magic and realism in the space of the narrative, like the ‘flying horses’ and the ‘invisible cloaks’ in Arabian Nights. The mythic patterns of the narrative space of *The Alchemist* emerge as magical elements. Santiago in the role of an adventurous performer echoes the characteristic quality of Sindbad the sailor, from “The Thousand and One Nights.” The dream like quality of the narrative enlivens the individual and the spiritual growth of the protagonist make the science of alchemy, *The Alchemist* and Santiago as universal signifiers of salvation.

The narrative creates an air of inter textual strategy from its initial inception which provides a depth to the signifier Salvation. The allusive nature of the mythic space allows the novelist to take one item from one context, shifting it to another context to make it more enigmatic. Out of the mosaic pattern of fictional space emerges fiction and fantasy with a special variety of literalization and it makes the verbal real. The re-reading of the myth creates linguistic magic, which is an important aspect of inter textual bricolage of post-modern writing.

Within the trope of magic realism, the text feigns to understand the self and other in Santiago as binary dichotomies. Identity and otherness are related to each other in him what points itself to an object of consciousness. The existential urge for salvation reaches a metaphysical mode of reality in Santiago and he even shows ability to change shape thus creating a sense of 'the marvelous real' in the ordinary. The end of the narrative reflects on 'Good omen' when the protagonist is at the point of finding his treasure. The text quotes: "the scarab Beetles are a symbol of God" (153). And the narrative permeates with philosophical renderings revealing the essence of alchemy as to bring spiritual perfection to materiality. The text quotes, "The closer one gets to realizing his destiny, the more that destiny becomes his true reason for being" (69). The narrative describes the entire evolution of the universe especially the days of creation and ends with a unique philosophy that "each thing has to transform itself into something better, and to acquire a new destiny, until, someday, the Soul of the World becomes one thing only" (143). Within the symbolic realm of the novel, Coelho states that human beings should not avoid their destinies, and urges people to follow their dreams, to find the personal myth, the ultimate purpose of creation. Thus the narrative explicates what Von Hugel called 'a sense of eternal life.'

Both the technique of magic realism and strategies of post modernism reach coherence at the end of the narrative. Santiago, with his erudition of alchemy, learns many secrets of the universe and bears with him powers of wind, ocean and desert- everything created by 'the same hand.' When Santiago asks the wind to shower on him its powers, the episode reflects the daring nature of the protagonist and expresses the true nature of the men of desert. As

Fernanda in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Santiago becomes the wind with his technique of levitation. The Sun shines brightly and the wind blows heavily and in the role of kinetic signifiers, they reveal the essence of alchemy. The boy comments: "This is why alchemy exists," "So that everyone will search for his treasure, find it, and then want to be better than he was in his former life" (143). When the wind blows, Santiago realizes the Soul of God as his own soul, reaching the level of immanence and transcendentalism in the role of the perfect disciple of The Alchemist who understands the glory of god.

Both Santiago and The Alchemist reach the Coptic monastery. In the kitchen of the monastery, the real chemistry of alchemy takes place with the conversion of lead to gold. The graphic description of the magic of alchemy is concluded with a philosophy and the text repeats: "Everything that happens twice will surely happen a third time" (148). When they resume the journey, The Alchemist relates the story of the dream of a good man who lived at the time of Emperor Tiberius. The text quotes:

An angel appears before him with a prophecy of his elder son. But in future, the second son, in the role of a centurion becomes immortal by seeking help from a rabbi... the second son wants to meet a rabbi who can cure diseases. Finally he is converted to the faith of a Roman Centurion. (149-50)

Through the story, The Alchemist plays the role of a focal character relating the positive philosophy of life in Coelho. "Every person on earth plays a central role in the history of the world" (148). The presence of magical events

and the confrontations between different worlds and the philosophical worlds of the discourse align the narrative with post-modernism. The plurality of forms and a meta-fictional insistence on the arbitrariness of the textual power to signify and to unveil the illusion of the transcendental signifier salvation.

Salvation is an arboreal metaphor in the fictional space of *The Alchemist*, the metaphorical significance is encompassive with in the realm of the novel. The semiotics of the paradigm convey differing signs and a host of signifiers unraveling the intertextuality of the text. The whole narrative can be seen as an exercise in salvation, through the cultural lens of both East and West. Be it Jung, Upanishads, or the Christian teachings of salvation, the plot is unlocked through a series of symbols, both auditory and visual. The kinetic signifiers glorify the essence of quest and occasionally the Signifier –Signified nexus debunk the notions of spirituality through the aura created by imagism. Salvation, the iconic sign of spirituality, journey, quest and dream converge into the texture of magic realism. Paulo Coelho creates an alchemic paradigm of alternate religion in the meta-narrative of the text that appears as a sacrificial urn of intrinsic mysticism.

CHAPTER III

**THE INDIGENOUS ALTERNATIVES IN
*THE WITCH OF PORTOBELLO***

In conception and narrative form, *The Witch of Portobello* falls within the category of magic realism, communicating the experience of shamanic tradition by choosing to present extraordinary reality with its fusion of the real and the imaginary. The semiotic interpretation of the personal emotional quest in the narrative adopts the path of occult tradition, through the transition of the protagonist. The neo-baroque writing with its literary inventiveness in the narrative absorbs the cultural context of Brazil, the mulatto one, the kind of individual, social and spiritual alienation suffered by its inhabitants. The history of the pagan tradition is infused into the myth of Mother Goddess in the novel, where the character and incident complete the liberty of literary imagination reaching the ultimate signification of indigenous spirituality. Within the sporadic references of gypsy tradition, the narrative reaches epic dimensions, transfiguring people and events placing them in a legendary space beyond myth and history. The peculiarity of multiple narration makes the novel a postmodern meta-fiction reflecting the Woman's spiritual quest –a kind of woman's awakening to the depths of her soul and her position in the society.

Paulo Coelho's fictive realm permeates with indigenous spirituality popular in feminist Latin American liberation theologies, which captured ancestral spirituality to oust the mantle of religious colonial gender operations. Catholicism promotes indigenous traditions that have a distinct cosmo vision and cosmology making spirituality transversal. The indigenous women writers

of Latin America reject the mainstream catholic perspective where as Coelho suggests an alternate spirituality which revives the mythic pagan religious traditions along with the acceptance of the divine energy of the cosmos.

Paulo Coelho expounds indigenous spirituality in *The Witch of Portobello*, published in 2007 recollecting the frantic attempts of Athena or Sherine with an estranged identity in search of her matrilineage. (“biological mother”) Athena, the young woman of miracles, the child of a gypsy woman Liliana, born in Romania, raised in Beirut grew up into a witch, performing miracles in Portobello, a street in London. Coelho projects the differing shades of Athena’s character in the mode of biographical reports through the collective memory of characters and begins the narrative with Heron Ryan, the journalist, reporting the murder of Athena. The polyphonic nature of characterization provides a kaleidoscopic view of the protagonist emphasizing the dramatic element of the novel.

The discourse of *The Witch of Portobello* is polyphonic or dialogic by nature in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play within individual speaking subjects. In *The Witch of Portobello*, Athena, the witch creates a new chronotype of spirituality, and the narrative turns dialogic absorbing different consciousness. The plurality of consciousness and polyphony make the dialogic of the narrative more objective and realistic. In the narrative, the murder of Athena, a single realistic situation is depicted as it appears to different characters. The action of the novel is set in the mind of the characters. The focalization of various characters aim at the projection of Athena’s nature, without attempting a direct presentation of her character in the

earlier part of the narrative. The character appears as a poly-functional sign in the semiotics of witchcraft delineated. The multi-voiced narration of the novel keeps the narration relational creating time both circular and arbitrary rather than linear.

In the semiotic analysis of salvation the sign ‘salvation’ moves as a pragmatic signifier creating a liminal space between the chronotype of spirituality and occult signs. The life of Athena is both a physical and metaphysical quest of salvation- after her own existence, after Hagia Sophia, the mother goddess of wisdom and creative energy. Athena can transform herself into Hagia Sophia in her bouts of revelation finding her alter ego, realizing her identity as goddess Hagia Sophia. The awakening and the quest for selfhood is spiritual liberation in Athena. Athena is described as a girl of nineteen, conscious of the immensely rich world that is embodied in human souls. Lella tainant, a numerologist in the novel comments on Athena “she is careful not to let herself be affected by negative vibration, excessive ambition, intolerance, abuse of power, extravagance” (17). Thus Athena is described as a priestess who understood the forces of nature- the Female Principle –but she ends up being transformed into the forces she thought she mastered. Throughout the narrative, the protagonist transforms herself into Hagia Sophia. Religious texts on Mother Goddess explain the concept of Hagia Sophia as:

Hagia Sophia is the shrine of Holy wisdom where images of Virgin Mary are seen prominently in Mosaics. This Byzantine Mary is clad in a robe of Lapis Lazuli. (*Sacred Places of Goddess Destinations* 108)

Many thought of wisdom as masculine. When not recognized as Mother Goddess, the feminine Divine lived as wisdom or the Holy Spirit until wisdom later became associated as Logos or Jesus. Wisdom started out as feminine in Hebrew word Bokhma or the Greek word Sophia. Goddess worship dates back to Paleolithic times. Many anthropologists speculate the first god as feminine. The creative principle is also associated with the mother-goddess. (*The Goddess* 1)

Athena as Hagia Sophia is related to Mother Goddess - the creative principle. The quester strives for wholeness revealing the vision of women's culture and celebrates women's connection with nature. There is a mystical awakening in Athena that arise out of nothingness of life. Though a mother, Athena fails to play the creative role of a woman. In the narrative the association of Athena with Hagia Sophia remains apt in her consciousness of absent mother figure and she seeks the immensely rich world embodied in souls. Later in the story when she becomes a mother, she turns into a vagabond in search of her matrilineage. Both the myths of Athena and Hagia Sophia act as parallel paradigmatic signifiers, one contributing to the development of the other- The self of Athena as the other can be perceived in Hagia Sophia. Though alienated from religion, the protagonist is provided with a chance to create a new connotation of the female self- a new naming of the self. The drive for wholeness, the integration of spiritual and social quest are part of the nomenclature. With an extraordinary interest in mystical objects, she is able to create a harmonious halo around her. Her forte is the vivid re-creation of mystical experience. Thus the signifier Hagia Sophia gains form and meaning with all its richness and sensory reality through Athena who eventually turns

into the total signifier of occult tradition which is the tri- dimensional pattern of signs in the novels-the signifier, the signified and the sign that culminate in the fusion. The myth as a semiological system proves to be a mode of signification. Myths are often used in several ways in the novel -as a central structural device, as a digression, to illumine certain characters, motifs and situations. In the episodic narration of *The Witch of Portobello*, the myth of Hagia Sophia, illumines the quality of Athena's split persona on one side but on the other explains the trances experienced as authentic presentations. The powers of magic resident in the character are a key to her revelations which enables her to recognize her body both as a revelation and incarnation of great powers of life and death. In this way, the dexterity of Coelho incorporates the myth of Hagia Sophia into the self of the protagonist to create the other of Athena. The self and the other are mirror images of each other in the novel and as Kearney explains that each difference as the labyrinth of looking glasses. The marvellous in the magic heightens the depth of myth in the narrative. The dimensions of otherness appear elaborate in the postmodern context and it seems quite natural to accept otherness as part of the 'self.' Moreover postmodernism designs the assertion of self without annihilating the 'other.'

Coelho posits love as pivotal of Athena's life in the narrative of *The Witch of Portobello*. The energy of love created by the Great Mother can never be lost and it spreads in the heart of Athena as well as in the other characters of the novel making them realize the powerful, pivotal, expressive aspects of love. The narrative introduces Athena as the embodiment of love and it reads her nature as:

No one lights a lamp in order to hide it behind the door

No one sacrifices the most important thing she possesses; love.

No one places her dreams in the hands of those who might destroy them.

No one, that is, but Athena. (*The Witch of Portobello* 2-3)

Heron, the journalist who wants to unravel the mystery of Athena's murder recalls that he meets Athena at Transylvania where she is tracking down her biological mother. The love for Athena instigates Heron to experience rituals and trance which he never had in his transitory world. For Heron, the magical world of trance, created by Athena, appears as a beautiful mansion, part of Heron dancing in the wandering space along with the soul of Athena – the perfect dancer who can dance according to the melody of music and rhythm of life there by realizing the aura of divine energy.

The sense of self compels Athena to seek the salvation of life and its quest becomes a motif of Athena's destiny which appears as the *modus operandi* of Coelho's characterization. While revealing the character's quest-motif, the concept of salvation reaches esoteric levels when love is explained as commitment or debt through the tradition of Hagia Sophia. The text remarks:

The soul, blood and body of the Great mother. Love is compared to that of the exiled souls who love each other when they meet in the middle of the desert. The energy of love can never be lost-It is more powerful than anything and shows itself in many ways.

(310)

The narrative explains, “love energises one to fill in the blank spaces,” fulfilling the mission of life. Contrary to the personal view explained by Coelho in *Confessions* as “the important thing is to create a large empty space within yourself” (*Confessions*15). Love is both Romantic and spiritual in Athena and Heron – the souls of lovers celebrate the union at some point in space. Most often it is believed that spirituality and materiality are dichotomous binary oppositions. But as Meredith B Macguire, the ethnologist argues for ‘Lived religion,’ Paulo Coelho’s “spirituality is closely linked with material human bodies-how people make sense of the world includes the myriad ways in which people practice spirituality” (*Why Bodies Matter* 1-18). Coelho ideal is to divinize the human, immortalize the mortal and, spiritualise the material. He identifies both matter and spirit as real by repudiating all forms of dualism.

The novel emphasizes creativity of Athena, when she revives the tradition of Mother goddess through her experiences of resurgence, the renaissance of a pagan. Coelho makes use of the ineffable identity of Athena to ponder the depth of her soul and unweave the spontaneous self. The mysterious nature of human consciousness is depicted with fecund dimensionality through the mystical setting of the narrative. As reported by Andrea McCain, 32, an actress in the novel, who loved Heron, Athena appears like a strange woman with a power to awaken the dormant-in people, a spiritual quester with expectations, who wants to intoxicate people adding a spiritual gloss to her search. When she starts a conversation on “Third Rite”-on sexual energy, she preaches esotericism-and becomes a character who is conscious of her own charisma. Here salvation emerges as an ‘associative signifier’ through

the paradigmatic relationships that operate on the level of the signifier and the level of the signified.

Paulo Coelho eulogises on Divine Energy and describes in the midst of the narrative:

Earth is sacred and we should celebrate every moment one should use the skill to bring pleasure and to spread the energy of the mother-the inherent creative power embodied in each and every individual soul. (14-15)

The text explains that “Athena brought to the surface the immensely rich world we all carry in our souls, without realizing that people aren’t yet ready to accept their own powers” (15). The narrative employs stream of consciousness narration, a point in which one is aware of human experience when the psychic life of the individual character is taken into consideration. The character’s consciousness renders emphatically the interior monologues, visions and the different bouts of revelations. The inner thoughts and emotions are quite dichotomous and reflect the split identity of the protagonist. The character’s consciousness marks the psychic changes emphatically.

The novel emphasizes the kind of indigenous spirituality that compliments on nature. Edda comments on her pupil Athena as a woman of 22nd century, living in the twenty first. Following indigenous tradition, Edda justifies the plight of a woman who follows ‘The Wicca Tradition,’ according to which four classic archetypes prevail in Wicca-the indigenous faith of the author explains Athena as unification of all -a traditional feminine archetype of

Wicca. Every woman can make use of the 'four Rings of Revelation' – The virgin, the saint, the martyr, and the witch. (*Brida* 81) The Wicca tradition explained in the narrative gains significance in echoing Starhawk who interprets witchcraft as:

As a religion, not of the masses, but as one originated before Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. It is closer to native American tradition that is derived out of nature. With the decline of the temple of Europe, witchcraft began and gifted Shamans could attune themselves to the spirit of the herds realizing the pulsating rhythms of life and were engaged themselves in Spiral dance, the dance of Being. In the East, Goddess was embodied with a gift of abundance and was carved with holding a Bison horn which appeared like crescent moon. (*Spiral Dance* 26-40)

The narrative substantiates the concept of Wicca as explained by Linda Jencson as neo-paganism, a revival of pre-Christian pagan Gods and goddesses and spirits, a practice that involves shamanic states of trance induced by dancing, chanting, percussion and meditation. The knowledge of Wiccan tradition as goddess spirituality later developed by feminists becomes authentic in the transformation of Athena as Hagia. In 1950s a British folklorist and a curator of a museum of witchcraft and magic published two books. *The Meaning of Witchcraft* (1959) and *Witchcraft Today* (1958) introduce the same idea to the media. (Neo-paganism 2-4) The Wiccan religion has a long pedigree that can be traced back to Hellenic Egypt. Following Jencson's point of view,

the novel traces both the tradition of Wicca and Goddess spirituality as ‘paired signifiers’ that lead the reader to the deep connotative structure of the text- ie to the notion of alternate spirituality.

Witchcraft in the narrative can be related to the major persecutions, to the devil of Christian theology, and to the specific social conditions of the middle ages. Various theories of magic propounded by anthropologists too contribute to the situation. Death is frequently the result of witchery. The spirit world of the narrative is all embracing and the pages of literature abound in creations like Ovid’s Medea, the greatest witch of classical mythology and Canidia, Horace’s witch invoking powers of night, Hecate, the queen of spirits. Selene, Hecate, Diana, Medea and Circe are also related to seduction and enchantment. The pages of literary history related to witchcraft establish women as the archetypes of tragic female capable of evoking evil forces out of nature. The quintessence of witchcraft can be related to different parts of the world. “The Greeks believed that Thessaly had a large population of witches who were embodied with a power over natural forces i.e. they can convert themselves into animals, birds and flies. Witches with poetic incantations and invocations make them powerful characters with enigmatic personalities. The world of witches appears passionate with Medea who engaged herself in the world of desire” (*The World of Witches* 33).

With the history of witchcraft cited, it will be helpful to recollect Mello E Souza’s “The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross” who emphasizes the centrality of witchcraft in the daily life of Brazil. Most often witchcraft is a magnifying glass for revealing the social tensions. The various spirit possession

groups are classified according to colour, white, mixed and black -as Macumba, Candombie, Xango, that are of African origin. Landes, Lima, Riberio, Mesa Branca popular in North Eastern Brazil.

What Arias, the biographer of Paulo Coelho recollected as the comments on “the feminine” in *Confessions of a Pilgrim* is also remarkable for the analysis of Wicca tradition utilized in the novel. Coelho reinstates his belief in female energy as:

All my life has been governed by feminine energy, by women. The truth is my whole life has been ruled in some way by feminine energy, by women The Feminine is explained as collective unconscious. Coelho relates his books to a mysterious creative process that has much of the feminine in it. (177)

The novelist’s belief in the potentialities of a woman compels him to create witches out of them – to make them more powerful, energized rather than demonized. The woman Athena is both a saint and a performer of witchcraft in the novel. In the world of witchcraft, Coelho dismantles the traditional notion of a woman in the ideological patriarchy. The pagan tradition in the *Witch* is an internalization of otherness in Athena, a kind of de-bunking the otherness of others The hegemonic literary tradition explains woman as nullity, double cipher, a presumptuous creature, as in the opinion of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the American feminists who questions the portrayal of woman either as an angel or as a witch. Like Ibsen who has empowered Nora in *Doll’s House*, the female protagonists of Coelho in the novel were

purposely created as witches as a revival of the Pagan tradition. Pagans close to nature, are part of nature. The lost tradition of the pagan is re inscribed in the revival of Female principle and spirituality has become a harmonious search for ‘the equilibrium within.’ The narrative popularizes the ubiquitous nature of Goddess worship which is dual by nature. The novel reflects on the cosmic vision of life- the dual unity of feminine and masculine, the fusion of feminine and masculine in one bipolar principle is fundamental to it. In Natural culture, this dual god / goddess is called Ometeotl from ome, meaning “two” teotl meaning “god,” the word altogether connotes dignity of duality. Duality can be considered as an essential attribute of Universe and is reflected in the ordering of time. In the narrative Athena reflects woman’s body, a fluid and a permeable corporeality, conflated with earth as sacred place. Thus everything is ruled by the concept of duality, the anima – animus certainly the men and women.

Lella Tainat, a numerologist in the narrative describes Athena as a priestess who delved deep into the forces of nature in her differing roles of a checkout girl, a Bank employee and a property dealer In the novel, Samira R. Khalil, the foster mother of Sherine adopts her daughter when she is only three months old and names her Athena after the Greek goddess of war and wisdom. As a child of strong religious convictions, she has childhood fantasies in which angels and saints often visit her. Her parents discover the inclination to religion in her. Due to civil war, the family fled to London where Athena meets Lukas Peterson to whom she spoke about her “bouts of revelation”:

The divine spark is in every soul and is never extinguished. I feel as if I were vibrating along with the whole universe. And I know things then that I don't know, as if God were guiding my steps. There are moments when I feel that every-thing is being revealed to me. (34)

The hallucinations of the protagonist emerge into trance, move as the plot- pattern of the novel and it makes every situation both imaginary and real. A confrontation between Athena's mechanic life and her insight about the realization of the inner persona. Her mechanical life is symbolized by her child who is exterior to her consciousness. The interior thoughts and emotions are quite separate and reflect the split identity and the angst of the protagonist in the existential world.

The character of Athena intrigues Father Fontana who compares the trance-like experiences of Athena with that of St. Therese of Lisieux. Trance is a kind of possession by the sacred and Athena possesses a 'Big Soul.' She, who is able to spent long hours in deep contemplation, immerses herself in ecstasy while singing Hymns of praise on Holy Virgin. Father Fontana too shares the same magic moments of music, sweetness and unexpected prayer. He comments in a mystical vein:

In the voice of that young woman, in the morning flooding everything, I understood once again the grandeur of God reveals itself through simple things. (*Witch* 40)

Athena acclimatises herself with the creative energy accepting the life growing in her. With the birth of Viorel, the mother in Athena revives her lost childhood, which resulted in her estranged relationship with Lucas. Coelho projects Athena as symbolic of motherhood and love, making her an archetype of Virgin Mary. Coelho explains Virgin Mary as one who understands god's love and the mystery of total surrender. And having loved and suffered, she provides freedom from pain and sin. In *The Witch of Portobello*, Holy Communion is denied to Athena as she happens to be a divorcee. Athena exhibits the characteristic gifts of a heroine. The Myth of Greek goddess and her son Erichthonius is beautifully incorporated into the third person-narrative and it provides the reader with the vibrant nature of the protagonist. Through the reportage of events, a new genre is employed by Coelho to create an 'inclusive present,' that depicts the multitudinous thoughts and feelings that meander through his characters adopting stream of consciousness technique.

The narrative of the novel reaches the zenith of esotericism, when 'salvation,' the signifier is related to signifieds like 'dance and calligraphy' which act as *kinetic signifiers* in the narrative pattern of the novel. A form of community mysticism is strongly reinforced in the ecstatic song and dance. Pavel Podbielski introduces Athena to music, the rhythm of life. When she dances, she becomes a free spirit who travelled through the universe, transforming it into pure energy. The text quotes Athena's soliloquy:

When I dance, I'm a free woman, or, rather, a free spirit who can travel through the universe, contemplate the present, divine the future, and be transformed into pure energy. And that gives me

enormous pleasure, a joy that always goes far beyond everything I've experienced or will experience in my lifetime. (*Witch* 61-64)

Athena gains authentic knowledge of the light – the Divine light emanating from the Vertex-from our heart. Dance, the vibrant rhythm of life, brings the dancer into contact with the light. Through dance, the dancer gathers a kind of energy from “the ghosts of the past.” When Athena is appointed as a Bank employee, she introduces dance as a technique behind the secret of Rejuvenation. Athena relates the esoteric dance practiced by her for getting the real energy that comes out of the Vortex. Thus she is able to instil positive attitude among her colleagues. The light of the vortex told Athena to continue her dance. She comments: “Dance to the point of exhaustion, as if you were a mountaineer climbing a hill, a sacred mountain. Dance until you are so out of breath ...you will begin to see a light that comes from within, a light that answers your questions and develops your hidden powers” (64).

Esoteric practices of the narrative can be related to Vajrayana Buddhism that incorporated ‘Bon religion,’ “a mixture of shamanism, magic and primitive nature worship” (*The Kingdom of Cults* 313). The tradition is infused with advanced meditative techniques namely Yoga, special Mudras, spells, a fusion of the doctrine of tantric cults. The word ‘tantra’ can be related to ‘loom’ – things interwoven into ultimate reality, a doctrine based on esotericism. Tantric religions believe in the two energies that reside in both male and Female aspects corresponding to one’s spirituality with a close affinity to magic. (314)

Athena learns both calligraphy and dance in order to fill in the ‘blank spaces’ of herself. Nabil Alaini, who teaches calligraphy to Athena informs her how she can make use of dance for establishing a communion with Allah. Nabil’s intention is to transfer the philosophy of calligraphy –the notion of salvation as realization of God’s word. In the semiological construct of salvation as transcendental signifier, it is the power of realization of the over-soul through a means-whether it be calligraphy or dance that contains a soul with which one realizes the over-soul. ‘Even a brush that traces a letter reveal the intentions of the soul’ (66). The comment proves to be a vivid recreation of mystic experience of the protagonist. Pavel Podtielski, the owner of Athena’s apartment, advises Athena to care and feel the rhythm of Nature: “Nature creating its own rhythms and adapting itself to each moment” (66). Coelho explains the quest of salvation as semiotics of ecstasy regained through music and dance which creates an esoteric signification in the novel. The narrator uses Qualia (sense perceptions including colors, tastes, sounds and the like) following the magic realist tradition.

In the narrative space of *The Witch of Portobello*, ecstasy is explained as ‘the ability to stand outside yourself’ (70). Through ecstasy, Coelho reiterates the element of tradition in each individual. The narrator establishes what the French Feminist Irigaray explains as “ecstasy which is outside the patriarchal binary order. Ecstasy, transports us beyond ourselves, beyond the limits of self and ego, bringing us in touch with another of being, the ecstatic/mystical of Goddess consciousness” (“Goddess Consciousness” 5). The concept of Mother Goddess, the female goddess of creation, prominent in cultures throughout history has been revoked here. In the pages of history, Goddess worship is

wiped out by the killing of women as witches during the middle ages. Adopting the concept of alternate spirituality in the 'Witch,' Coelho believes in reviving Goddess worship and in the empowerment of the feminine. It is not the witch-like quality but the energizes woman in the form of witch. This perception of the novelist is like the re-reading the Myth of Medusa by Helene Cixous and that of Lazarus by Sylvia Plath. The magic realist atmosphere of the novel highlights the attempt of the novelist to bring the marginalized tradition to the main stream through the ideology of alternate indigenous spirituality.

The text explains the indigenous tradition, the energy carved out of the tradition through the semiotics of language and relates it to the energy released out of the creative principle. The text evokes:

A single letter requires us to distil in it all the energy it contains, as if we were carving out its meaning. When sacred texts are written, they contain the soul of the man who served as an instrument to spread them throughout the world. And that doesn't apply only to sacred texts, but to every mark we place on paper. Because the hand that draws each line reflects the soul of the person making that line. (91)

Through this report Coelho identifies as a writer, one in harmony with the word and is reminded of Borges who named the word as *ALEPH*.

He explains the word Aleph in *Confessions*:

ALEPH is a Hebrew word, from the KABBALAH, the first letter of the alphabet. It is the point that embraces all things at once the writer in Coelho feels a need to connect with the centre of energy in order to write – which forms the seminal philosophy of his writing. (*Confessions* 145)

In pursuit of the functionality of signs in *The Witch of Portobello*, many traits of magic realism—a combination of mythology, spiritual tradition, Characters with potentials of magic, witches and ghosts can be perceived in the novel. Coelho includes the love of nature, mythical world, accumulation of nightmares and totemic phantasms following the Latin American magic realist tradition. The hybrid nature of magic realism combines realism and the fantastic so that a marvelous world of reality that seems to outgrow organically within the ordinary events of the novel. The inquisitive nature of Athena imbibes the ephemeral knowledge of Mother Goddess and aspires to be one like her creating a mesmerized impact on other characters of the narrative. The hybridity of magic realism turns cultural as it exemplifies the problematic relations of the self and the other in the protagonist. The consciousness of absent mother-figure instigates the quest of matri lineage, the alienated self seeks the other in Hagia Sophia. The different episodes of Athena as goddess/witch create a surrealist world of reality enriching the magic realistic milieu of the novel. The spiritual liberation of Athena celebrates her power as the ‘other.’ The whole scene turns ritualistic and reaffirms the grounding of woman’s power in nature. What Wendy Faris elucidates as five primary characteristics of magic realism (*Ordinary Enchantments* 7) can be perceived as the traits of *The Witch* as a magic realistic novel. The initial aspect identified

by her is the irreducible element of fiction-- which cannot be explained through logic, familiar knowledge or received belief. The element of magic and the occult milieu or events glow allusively in the realistic matrix of the novel often highlighting the central issues of the text- identity crisis and the split persona of the heroine and the soft spirituality of Brazil. By employing the parable of Hagia Sophia as the crux of the novel, and Athena transforming herself into bouts of revelation prove to be the uncanny, irreducible element of the novel that instils unsettling doubts in the reader, and it turns to be another characteristic aspect of magic realism. When the trance-like experiences of Athena create a phenomenal world, the semiotic subversion of Goddess myth occurs resulting in the debunking nature of it. In Greek mythology Goddess Athena inspires Ulysses in his adventurous endeavours. But in the narrative, Athena's trance-like experiences create a de-mystifying effect.

The gypsy tradition in the narrative creates a phenomenal / ephemeral world and Liliana, the gypsy-mother of Athena, an objectified form of wanderlust, has to leave her child in an adoption centre. A voice that comes out of the trunk of a tree pacifies her. When both mother and daughter share the moments of silence, the reader gets eco-spiritual trappings through the arrival of storm. The gypsy tradition of the mother and the daughter's quest urge for matrilineage culminate in nature, in the effective analysis of the storm in the novel. Thus the real and the imaginary culminate in the juxtaposed world of the humane and the pagan. Coelho uses Qualia sign (Sense perceptions, colors, tastes, sounds) and the like in the narrative. Following magic tradition, in a metafictional gloss, the rhetoric blurs the distinction between the marvelous and the transitory. The text describes the storm: "Like all storms, it brings

destruction, but at the same time, it soaks the fields, and the wisdom of the heavens falls with the rain. The gypsy woman thanked god for she has learned to weather storms” (138). The externalization of storm indicates the tension of the atmosphere.

Coelho establishes his position as an androgyne and analyzes the emotional psyche of his characters, both the anima and animus in them, detailing the presence of a phenomenal world. Thus the novel unlocks the mystery of two different realms by adopting a magic realistic fashion. The method of ‘framing devices’ adopted by metafictional novels establishes itself as the intertextual element of the plot of the novel. The myth of Hagia Sophia is the framing device intended by the writer to create ‘the other’ of Athena. The magic realistic atmosphere of the narrative adds the beauty of the myth. The metaphysic of the self in Athena urges the female self to reach transcendence or immanence. Coelho’s insistence on the ineffability of true identity makes him suggest the depth of the mysterious inexpressible spontaneous self. When the story is set in the mind of the character, the protagonist meanders through dismantled notions of selfhood, the narrative creates both weird and fantastic spaces simultaneously.

The narrative elucidates indigenous spirituality as a meaningful sign and signifier through the historical documentation of Goddess religion by Antoine Locadour, who narrates the Pagan tradition through the legend of Sarah-la-Kali of noble lineage. Coelho explains Great Mother as goddess creation pointing to the conflicting dualism of male and female gods intending

to popularize pagan tradition / spirituality. Spiritual search has become inevitable in a rigorous religious context. The text reads:

The report of Antoine relates pagan tradition to Nature worship. The new tradition emphasized the ability of man to live without institutionalized religion. We adore god mother and conduct rituals to satisfy female soul. Goddess has become part of the world. (*Witch* 168-70)

Ryan also relates the story of goddess worshipped by gypsies- Sarah a gypsy who helps Mary Salome who flees out of persecution is converted into Christianity. Later their dead bodies are excavated in order to bless the multitudes of gypsies who came for a celebration. They celebrate her death anointing Sarah as Goddess of gypsies.

The analysis of pagan tradition with its trappings of eco-feminist spirituality, indigenous by nature offers paganism as a powerful organic metaphor for nature. Closest to most pagan beliefs is the notion that nature and women have an intrinsic affinity. This can be related to what Charlene Spatnack puts as views on eco- feminist spirituality:

The experiences inherent in women's sexuality are expressions of the essential holistic nature of life on earth; they are body parables of profound oneness and inter connectedness of all matter / energy. ("Towards an Eco Feminist Spirituality" 129)

In the narrative, Athena becomes close to nature and retreats to an area of personal sensitivity. Being the daughter of a gypsy woman, Athena immerses herself in the wilderness of nature, most often revealing the mystery of gypsy tradition and trying to make the signifier of female quest meaningful. Time does not exist for the gypsies. Only Space is meaningful for them. They abide and live by nature's law and believe that the Earth possesses them, consider god as universe. God is the all protective woman, who saves the tradition from dangers. A Gypsy's ritual is being with people, celebrating everything in nature- the rolling greens of the park, the lush vegetation, the sky, the water in the lake. Liliana, the gypsy-mother celebrated a ritual for her daughter, the miracle of being alive together, immersed in the love of 'Great Mother.' They adore the universe for its communion with creation. Carol Christ explains the Great Goddess as a female deity and the movement, Goddess Spirituality wants to restore what is common in all ancient cultures.

Athena, the daughter realizes the void of her 'empty spaces' being filled and transformed into 'pauses.' But whether all gypsies believe in the Great Mother tradition is left unanswered by Liliana. The narrator focuses on woman spirituality / female principle which centers on esoteric terrains incorporating the pagan tradition with the wild woman concept. The character of Athena revives both the wild woman and Goddess as alignment of paired signifiers that can be identified as the deep structure, 'the culture code' of the text. The Structuralist Roland Barthes has explained all codes as cultural. This notion equalizes with what Scholar Helen Berger cites as, "The Technology of the self as a major concern of the pagan project; both transformation and discovery of the self." Like feminists, pagans claim the interconnection between the

personal and political. Pagan tradition explains goddess spirituality as a feminist Matriarchal Myth - a state of spirituality that is utopian in its philosophy. Jennifer Madden analysed, “how pagans employ ritual practice, performative modes and play both as artistic creations and political statements” (*Theory as Variation* 126).

The pagan tradition of the text can also be related to Dianic tradition which analyses women’s spirituality as the feminine side of religion. Zsuzanna Budapest is regarded as the birth mother of Dianic Wicca- Women’s Goddess spirituality. Dianic tradition originated with an urge of salvation and freedom of soul and mind. Dianic tradition also celebrates female relationships, woman bonding and emphasizes women’s centered, earth based denomination of Wicca religion. In the modern context pagans use spiritual practices as a form of protest which result in the alternate practices of spirituality. The modern paganism exists outside the realm of social norms with its different or alternate vision of the world. But for Starhawk “to link with her (the Goddess) is to engage actively with the world and its problems” (*The Spiral Dance* 218). The inspiring influence of the Dianic tradition, the Goddess Spirituality of Starhawk can be assimilated in the alternate spirituality focused in the Wicca tradition. The valuable insight of witchcraft, shared by many earth - based religions, is that polarities are in balance, not at war.

The above mentioned aspects of Goddess Spirituality as revival of paganism are found to be applicable in the evolution of Athena’s character as a multidimensional persona. The recollection of Gaia Tradition, the Greeks who address the cult of Great Mother as Gaia, in the novel speaks of indigenous

spirituality where people use spiritual search for achieving their personal ends. The interpretation of dance as a means of enjoying the luxury of 'being created' projects the identity of Athena as a lesbian. The encounter between Macain and Athena appears mysterious where Coelho explains the cult of the Great Mother—the Gaia Tradition. The text quotes:

Gaia born out of Chaos accompanied by Eros, God of Love. Then she gave birth to the Sea and the Sky progeny can occur out of the process parthenogenesis. In the pages of history Gaia was forgotten and replaced by Zeus, Aris, Apollo and that emphasises goddess worship as the dire need of the hour (*Witch* 179).

The text emphasis that in eco-spirituality everything should be considered as worship. One should act like a silent flowing river exposing oneself to the great positive energy. The Mother's river of life flows through the Veins of human being. Edda, the teacher provides notes of meditation on eco-spirituality and Coelho becomes 'the apostle of positive outlook on life.'

The text elaborates his philosophy:

If you can find nothing on which to focus your mind, concentrate on your breathing. The Mother's river of light is flowing in through your nose. Listen to your heart beating, follow the thoughts you can't control, control your desire to get up at once and to do something "useful." Sit for a few minutes each day, doing nothing, getting as much as you can out of that time. (181)

“We will only understand the miracle of life fully when we allow the unexpected to happen” (*By River Pedra* 8). Both men and women are explained as manifestation of divine unity. Womanhood craving for witch craft is expressed as the best way of recovering one’s lost identity. Woman’s spiritual liberation in Athena provides a new vision of the self, a new naming of the self. Thus the awakening of the protagonist reveals the mystic experience of the quest of the soul.

Deidre O’neill, known as Edda acts as the focaliser of the narrative and provides her own connotations of faith in the narrative:

Faith is not desire. Faith is will. Desires are things that need to be satisfied, whereas will is a force. Will changes the space around us, as you did with your work at the bank. But for that, you also need Desire. Please, concentrate on the candle! (159)

Edda illumines Athena with the light of Faith. Like magus, she affirms Athena on the correct path and pleads her to teach on the Revelation of Mother Goddess. The rest of the narration of the reports of Heron Ryan and Antoine Locadour, a historian brims with Goddess Spirituality. The journalist’s creation of an article on Female Divinity which depicts the picturesque background of the occult tradition. The historical tradition of occult is as follows:

The Occult etymologically comes out of Latin ‘Occulere,’ meaning to conceal in a specific term for things magical and mystical - a kind of esoteric knowledge. The occult includes magic, witchcraft binding the hidden secrets together. The Frankfurt school Philosopher Theodor Adorno describes

occultism as the metaphysics of dopes. (*Magic, ritual* 104) Occultists most often creates an alternative, imaginary space that is not affected by the increasing disenchantment of daily reality. Late 13th century Kabbalah claims to be esoteric and creates a concept of Jewish self hood and identity. During late Victorian period, spiritualism vanished, theosophical movement emerged, encompassing an enduring synthesis of western esotericism and Eastern religions. James Webb analyses the history of nineteenth and twentieth centuries and creates new perspectives on occultism and modernity through *The Occult Establishment* and *The Occult Underground*. He views “occultism as nothing but a wild return to archaic forms of belief and among the intelligentsia a sinister concentration on superstitions which had been thought buried” (*The Modernity of Occultism* 62). Mark S.Morrison argues on the spiritual practices of occultism as an intersection that marks their debt to modernity and modern periodic culture. The ethos of occult revival turns esoteric in vogue and the occult periodicals of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveal the culture of modernity. A major aspect of occult revival occurs with an increasing interest in Hermetism, ritual, magic and other esoteric knowledge. (*Occult Revival* 1-6) The group works in secret, a kind of exoteric outside the frame work of an established church that often takes on the tropes of Christian evangelicalism. The ethos of occult owes much to the evocations of the past – of Egypt, Greece, Judea, Arabia, India, Tibet, and China. The historian Alex Owen explains that they are daringly modern and emphasize the attractive element of new occultism as it acts as a spiritual alternative to religious orthodoxy operating without the requirement of faith. Owen affirms that “The new occultism with its magical operations, initiation rituals and theories of

the nature of mind and soul contribute to a newly conceptualised subjectivity” (*Occult Revival* 3). “The establishment of Theosophical Society by Russian thinker Blavatsky explains the need of the sociability of occult spaces in cultural and socially experimented areas like gender, body, sexuality, self and religion. From a sociological point of view, occult phenomenon can be the possible index of fluctuation in religious beliefs and sociological dislocations” (*Magic, Witchcraft and Religion* 376).

Occultism questions the nature of the spiritual in modern subjectivity as in the episode of Athena, a quest after the indigenous gypsy tradition--the metaphysic of the self in Athena seeks the mysterious, unknown, inexpressible spontaneous self. The physical landscape of the novel emphasizes the otherness of the character through the varied occult passages. The realm of fiction in the witch of Portobello is a post- modern attempt as it challenges icons, authority and notions of religion. The narration of the novel is de-constructed in order to reconstruct reality making the novel an open-ended text there by debunking the western notion of salvation. When the quest of the heroine reaches trans-personal level, salvation transits into an occult signifier.

The death of self, the characteristic quality of a post modern text occurs when characters move through dismantled notions of the selfhood as in Athena’s multiple and fragmented nature. A Kaleidoscopic self of Athena defines itself through a multiple voiced discourse of the novel. The delineation of circular and arbitrary nature of the narration creates fantasy and surrealistic landscape making the novel a mimetic representation of occult reality. Post-

modernism extends modernist uncertainty in *The Witch of Portobello* through language that dilenates the occult as a quality of otherness.

Like all Post- modern novels, there is playfulness in the language of narration, the milieu of the novel analyses words like ‘dance and ecstasy’ as terms of equivalence with salvation challenging the icons, authority and notions of religion. The basic concept of salvation is de-bunked when it is set against Brazilian context of soft- spirituality .There is a tenuous link between Coelho and the Brazilian heritage. Coelho’s cultural space is a heterogenous notion, an in- between spirituality and physicality, a zone of occult instability. By means of language, structure and theme the narrator projects the nationality of Brazil. By recollecting the heterogeneity of an imagined community, the witches he accepts the Brazilian quality of syncreticism and rewrites the myth of Brazilian spirituality. Unlike the portrayal of culture, as a social construct, culture is depicted as a subjective element in the novel.

From the post-modern point of view, *The Witch of Portobello* is an attempt to re-write the parable of Athena which is brilliantly lampooned. The possession scenes of Athena as Hagia Sophia, the other are subversive deployment of mythic narration. The outcome of biological quest creates a dejection in Athena which diverts her from the normal pattern of life. The narrative thus creates a new chronotope of spirituality. The paradigm chronotope determines the shape of a narrative and the narrative creates a weird version of reality.

In the projection of Athena as a hypnotic trance dancer, she becomes the modern woman as femme fatale- a woman with a fresh head and full of adventurous fantasies. Being witch like, Athena receives malicious joy in dominating other characters and their lives in the novel. The occult atmosphere of the novel uses darkness and music to trick participants in a Séance. Following the tradition of metafiction, creation of overt frames like visions, dreams, hallucinatory states and pictorial representations are also made possible in the fragmentary nature of the narrative.

Athena becomes the new liberated woman, an expressive dancer who uses freedom of motion to convey freedom of thought and through hypnotism allures her masculine audience, casting a spell over them. Influenced by the depth of gypsy tradition, Athena reveals the mission of life to her foster – mother Sameera. She realizes the celebration of life and nature analyzing the mystery through dance. The reader perceives the mesmerized protagonist in the “Woman’s face full of compassion smiling at her,” a recollection of the past, a reverie of her childhood – “woman in white” (*Witch* 151). Athena appears to be a positive woman whose impressionistic consciousness comments on the flow of life. “Life flows on, and everyone is caught up in that flow” (*Witch*153). In another trance-like scene, Edda compels the heroine for a better world of reality which provided answers for the paradox of life ending in the interpolation of universal desire. In the narrative space of the novel,

A candle light illumines the world of Athena, she moves to a world of trance with Edda’s lesson. Regaining repose, there occurs a clear distinction between Faith and Desire, two

incomparable elements, reflecting the ideal of soft spirituality. In the *Confessions* of the protagonist the incessant urge for the quest of the ontological self remains and she should learn the revelation of Mother Goddess. Athena's unique persona is born "for a different kind of life" (*Witch* 162).

The trance - like behavior of Athena impresses Heron with her reluctance to accompany him on the occasion of a commissioned assignment i.e. to make a report of a gypsy tradition. The detailed celebrations in the gypsy Mecca of the narrative helps Antoine Locadour, to publish a detailed article on Sarah-the gypsy and it explains Female principle as that focuses on Goddess spirituality. The narrative explains the tradition as:

Sarah was a gypsy who happened to be living in a small seaside town when Jesus's aunt, Mary Salome along with other refugees, arrived there fleeing persecution by the Romans. Sarah helped them and in the end converted to Christianity... For Sarah was never been canonized by the Vatican. (*Witch* 166)

The four gypsies celebrate their meeting with Sarah. In woman-centered spirituality, Van Dyke connotes Goddess-spirituality as "female principle in which spiritual center is that force which creates, nourishes and transmutes everything on earth and in the universe." (*WCS* 4) Many feminist writers explain female – principle as a force in which everything is connected – life and death – and replace fiction and poetry in the place of sacred texts in their search for spirituality. As Dale argues in *Beyond God the Father* that

woman's revolution as spiritual revolution a sparking creative action in and towards transcendence (WCS 5) in the ritualistic tradition of *The Witch of Portobello*. The novelist Coelho adopts the same pattern of feminist theology to flesh out female principle.

In the memories of Andrea McCain, the actress who wants to put on a play on the female face of God, Athena appears to adopt the role of a teacher on esoteric spirituality, who teaches three enigmatic paradigms-sacred, earth, centre while answering the different queries of her enticed crowd. The sole aim is 'to make a gesture for centre' (*Witch* 199). The historian relates the story of a Greek temple which housed a marble stone called 'the navel-the conic navel' (*Witch* 201). Paulo Coelho expresses his knowledge of Indian oriental tradition that navel is explained as a symbol of rebirth and Lord Vishnu's navel defined as the abode of Brahma, the crux of Kundalini which yogis stimulate through meditation. The secret of life is grace or blessing and in the process of seeking it, witches reach the zenith of hysteria. Edda, the magus woman, captures the attention of Athena to a reflected image of a snake eating its own tail - an image of alchemy, revealing the secrets of unconditioned love.

The indigenous spirituality of the narrative elaborates itself through the female principle or the creative principle hidden in earthly forces which require love and rituals as the generating force. The various trance-like sessions of the narrative end in Athena's realization of Hagia Sophia- "By touching the river that flows through her soul she had come to contact with the Mother" (*Witch* 232) through her own rhythm. Athena's soul reacts to the sound of music that

enters the realm of rhythm less dance envisioning the 'Divine Aura- a kind of blanket between the physical and the spiritual. (*Witch* 235) The occult tradition interprets ghosts as transparent forms mixed up with human auras.

The narrative abounds in miracles, with magic trances of Athena and her identity as Hagia Sophia who teaches universal wisdom to the masses, gives sermons before the end of rituals. Athena explains herself as Hagia Sophia, the reflection of a beautiful mosque in the narrative in a self-expressive manner Hagia Sophia is also explained as the female face of god. The narrativity of the novel reveals the hallucinated self of Athena. The text pictures:

Fire whether divine or malign emanated out of her eyes, a devouring flame capable of engulfing, consuming fire-begotten flames came out of her, infinite silence circled around Athena while she regained a divine spark. (*Witch* 236-46)

In a session of trance with the actress who approaches Athena for lessons on Female energy, by exposing her physical self, which results in the latter's realization of her own sexuality - the creative impulse of energy through her relationship with Heron Ryan. The trance is a kind of ritual that reveals the quest of Athena towards new identity in relation to the past and in relation to questions of self, the ultimate value of life. Both Athena and Hagia are one or else and both of them represent 'all the people in the world.'

Athena remarks in the narrative:

I am one and everyone, the spark that emerges when I go into a trance gives me very precise instructions. I remain semi-conscious throughout, of course, but I am saying things that come from some unknown part of myself, as if I were drinking the milk of Mother. (242)

Despite the endearments of love, Andrea seeks her vocation. Thus the entire milieu of the narrative is rampant with the invocations of Hagia Sophia that happened during all Mondays in the midst of enticed masses. The awakening of the meaning of love – ‘the soul, blood and body of the Great Mother’ – the joy of being alive where everything is a miracle or a revelation. Hagia Sophia is explained as ‘the female face of god’ with a spark instilled in Athena that can be evoked through silence. Hagia Sophia as Starhawk, explains is the Goddess the ‘power – from- within’ – the power of immanence – the awareness of the world and everything in it as alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting and infused with moving energies: a living being, a weaving dance. (WCS 86)

In Athena’s equations with the Goddess Hagia Sophia, she is the embodiment of Female – principle. Feminist spirituality in the narrative proclaims wholeness, healing love and spiritual power as the power for ennobling power. Though Woman’s image does not represent ‘the other of the divine’ in religious scriptures, in her creative life-giving power, Hagia-Sophia is the revival of the Catholic cult of Mary who provides us with the tradition of female language and imagery to speak of the divine. The myth of the female power in the novel provides a positive formulation of feminist spirituality – a

kind of 'metanoia,' a new orientation in the life power of the spirit. Woman's spiritual quest in Athena emerges out of a kind of awakening which requires anew naming of the self in the identity of Hagia Sophia. Like Feminist writers who have found sources of powerful female symbolism in traditions of witchcraft the narrative provides a new vision of a spirituality rooted in body and nature.

Edda, the Magus woman acted as the accomplice of Athena in conducting the rites and rituals of witchcraft making the presences of Mother become conspicuous popularizing Athena as *The Witch of Portobello*. The unraveling of the myth of Hagia Sophia celebrates the popularity of witchcraft as an alternate mode of realising esoteric spirituality. The transcript of Ryan concludes the probabilities of Athena's murder and the finding of the murderer but the mission of the occult as a tradition continues in the fictitive world of Coelho.

In the semiotic analysis of the signifier of Salvation as an interplay of paired signifieds, the reader can perceive salvation as a pragmatic sign thereby creating a unique space of alternate spirituality in the narrative. Despite the fragmentary nature of narration, the mythic consciousness of the protagonist created a modern equivalent of the Grail search. Simultaneously, by bringing connotations of Mother Goddess, occult tradition and Eco-spirituality, the multi-voiced narration projects the split –persona of Athena, her futile search to attain a coherent persona. Thus the alienated self of the hyphenated protagonist emerges into the status of other. The connotation of the name Athena becomes an 'absent- signifier.' This negation reflects the characteristic

quality of post-modernism. The de-construction of the myth of Hagia Sophia, the unique interpretation of salvation as alternate spirituality, the presence of esotericism and occult are the clear indications of the inextricable connectivity between soft spirituality of Brazilian culture and the pragmatic philosophy of the narrator. Creating a weird fictional space, Magic Realism, the postmodern technique of narration reflects a bizarre nemesis of a nonchalant woman. The irreducible elements and the narrative technique compose a defocalised narrative of magic realism-‘an esthetic of opposition.’ In the fictional space, Paulo Coelho conflates an alternate spiritual tradition ennobling Athena to transcend borders of time and space.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESOTERIC TERRAINS IN *BRIDA*

Paulo Coelho has hewn a compelling esoteric narrative in *Brida* (2008) that recounts the tale of an Irish girl's quest for a ritualistic tradition – 'The Tradition of the Sun and the Tradition of the Moon.' Coelho revises occult tropes and mythic traditions to create the liberated psyche of a woman in the narrative. As a post-modernist, the author makes use of a mythic method as a way of controlling, ordering, giving shape to esoteric spirituality through his fiction. *Brida*, a contemplative act on esoteric spirituality and the sense of being. The story is narrated to the author by Brida O'Fern, a young girl of nineteen, who is fascinated by the Sacred road to Rome. The myths of the narrative crystallize into a world of reality with a mixture of magic realism, myth, magic and witchcraft. The reading of the *Awakening of Magus* by Louis Pauwel and Jacques Bergier influence the persona of the writer and he undertakes a spiritual quest following the occult tradition in *Brida*. The novelist analyses 'The Tradition of the Moon,' as one of the practices of RAM, a specific one that requires experience and practice. Spiritual salvation takes the mode of occult with a deep penetration into the dark abyss of evil that occurs in the narrative. The mythic frame of the Tradition of the Sun and the Tradition of Moon and the occult tropes create an associative signification of salvation in the novel.

The allegorical tale reflects the unending quest of a young girl who is on a mission to fulfill 'a mystic call' and her faustian wish for imbibing

knowledge. Brida makes a prophetic statement “I want to learn about magic - how to travel back into the past and forward into the future” (*Brida* 9). The statement of the protagonist can be designated as a sign that creates an antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. Brida receives the first lesson from her teacher Magus, who explains “the tradition of the sun as constantly revealing eternal knowledge to each individual, - a revelation created by a Spanish mystic, St. John” (*Brida* 18). The initial lesson makes her conscious of the omnipresence of God which instills in her an intoxicated faith. Following the eco-feminist spiritual tradition, nature portrayed in the novel depicts the third law ‘nature knows best’ Spirituality indicates the unity of power and meaning in the depth of a person’s ‘being’ in the character of the protagonist. As explained by Tillich, the systemic theologian, the concept of eco-spirituality in *Brida* can be viewed as an interconnectedness with the natural order - a covenantal relationship between man and nature in the narrative. The whole narrative pattern is infused with eco-spiritual trappings – symbols of nature ‘dark forest’ and salvation acts as interfused metaphors of spirituality and occult in the imaginary soliloquy of Brida in ‘the dark forest.’ The description of nature is used as a backdrop followed by a cryptic comment on human situation. Though the narrativity of *Brida* subordinates realism to the operation of fantasy, the narrative abounds in nature mysticism.

The cosmological tradition in *Brida* acts as a definite force and sign of eco-spirituality. In her contemplations, the protagonist explains salvation as the search of god, as Dark Night, explicating every moment in life as an act of faith. Against the wilderness of nature, Brida, the protagonist becomes close to nature- dark nature, that depicts the psyche of hers. The text explains the night

as just a part of the day. Therefore she can feel as safe in the dark as she did in the light. It is darkness that makes her aware of that protective presence. She must trust it and it connotes with Faith. 'No one could ever understand Faith, but Faith is what she is experiencing now, an inexplicable immersion in blackest night.' The text establishes, "Faith is explained as an inexplicable immersion in Black night" (*Brida* 23). The text describes the pensive ruminations of Brida through her conversations with the 'silent forest' which explicates "faith as an inexplicable immersion in blackest night." *Brida* comments:

I learned about the 'Dark Night,' she said to the silent forest... 'I learned that the search for God is a Dark Night, that faith is a Dark Night. And that's hardly a surprise really, because for us each day is a dark night. None of us know what might happen even the next minute, and yet still we go forwards. Because we trust. Because we have Faith' (*Brida* 25).

'Dark Night' in a mystic's terminology can be related to a period of purgation for the soul with which all ties with the conventional world were broken. The experience of the dark night of the soul is well expressed in the mystic's epigram, "if you desire to possess everything, desire to have nothing" (*Mysticism* 127).

The above connotations of Faith denote the spiritual significations of quest in the Irish girl. As a contrast to the connotation of faith as light, here in the narrative, faith the sign is reciprocated with 'darkness' interpreting the

otherness of that idea. As a post-modern, the novelist postulates a complete disconnection between the signifier 'faith' and signified 'darkness'. The sign faith is an 'empty signifier' which "is variously defined as a signifier with a vague, highly variable, unspecifiable or non-existent signified" (*Semiotics* 78). In the definition of faith as dark, Coelho wants to explain the spiritual quest of Brida as a quality of 'otherness.' Otherness in the novel forebears the attributes of both esoteric and eco-spiritual domains which portray the heroine as a woman of unaccepted aspirations. Faith connotes with esotericism as explained by Antonie Faivre, as a quest for the primordial tradition and the magic book within the thematic background of the narrative. Esoteric notions present in the form of initiations and sublime knowledge can be related to the occult milieu of the novel. What Bailey explains as magic, a system that comprehends the entire world through its rites, rituals, taboos that elevate human beings to a higher level of consciousness and allows them to perceive the occult aspects of nature, enters into the preternatural domain of Brida. Human bodies become inscribed with meaning and power through magic. As Emile Durkheim posits, magic in *Brida* consists of "primarily of private acts carried out for individual gain" (*The Meanings of Magic* 3).

The signifier salvation in *Brida* explains the esoteric level of religion as occult. Events progress in the bosom of nature. The woods that are archetypal in a Jungian literary sense constitute the collective unconscious of Brida- the archetypal symbols of life's origin reveal the anguished psyche of her. Earth the great mother is often symbolized as a womb and nature as a place to create a feeling of foreboding at the beginning of the story. Nature is a passion for Brida. But the mystery of nature is not a panacea for her mental anguish and

conflict consumes the protagonist, giving no solutions to her innate doubts. But the solitude of the night creates a protective presence of the guardian angel. The loneliness of night and the wilderness of nature provide dark transcendence to the protagonist which is similar to that of Dionysian mystics who imbibe the truth of all apprehensions of God, through the mystery of darkness.

The eco-spiritual terrains in *Brida* manifest the cosmological relationship between human and god through Magus the teacher when they reach the top of the hill, Magus eulogises on his own purpose of life. He contemplates, “I have taught everything I needed to teach I have given back to humanity what it gave to me. Now I want to be alone, to climb mountains, tend plants and commune with God” (12). The Magus responds in the narrative, “Everything in the world is sacred, and a grain of sand can be a bridge through the invisible.” Brida supports the comment that by adding her own notion ‘at this moment though, the bridge to the invisible is my Soulmate’ (194). The narrative discusses the alchemical union of individual consciousness/individuation through the characters Brida and Magus. The ecumenist theme of salvation in the narrative is related to self, the most important religious archetype and the synthesis of the self as explained by C.G JUNG in the *Conjunctio Oppositorum*.

In the musings of nature, the hermeneutic code depicts the enigma of Brida’s character. The endless sequence of thoughts in *Brida* and the conflicting passions of her psyche focus on the constant struggle to discover a path of Faith. Thus the protagonist’s curiosity in magic, the primary signification in the novel relates itself to a model of secondary significations

like *The Tradition of Sun* and *The Tradition of Moon*, the realization of the soulmate and an androgynous principle evolves out of these linking significations. For Magus, *Brida* is a signifier of passion and many passages in the narrative reveal her romantic yearning for the Soulmate. The pre-historic scenes permeate through the pages of the narrative with the quest of the hero through the jungles and deserts before finding the beloved. Brida turns into the image of a quester who inadvertently stumbles upon in her mission and therefore appears as one ejected out of the mythic landscape.

The protagonist eventually expresses her interest in occult books during her visit to a book-shop. The conflicting passions of the protagonist and her constant struggle to discover a path simultaneously result in the experience of faith. As she is able to provide a correct connotation of magic to the shop-keeper, she receives the phone number of Wicca. Brida projects a divided self with a soul deeply split in its inclinations, so checked and inhibited by its variety of imagination. Following Latin American *Tellurism (role of earth)*, an imperative role of earth that occurs in the life of a human being with a strong presence like the role of a literary character. Wicca initiates Brida to a world of trance through her strange language, she invokes the tarots, sought card number twenty-three, a king of clubs and another one, a woman opening the mouth of a lion reflecting the Wicca tradition of the narrative. The occult element derives a poetics of its own out of the quali-signs Wicca, Tarot, and trance which function as powerful associative signifiers in the novel. As in African and Laguna cultures, language and words embody a mystical power in the narrative that reveal the semiotics of quest.

Eco-feminist spirituality, a real reflection of earth based spirituality can be equated with goddess worship, a kind of paganism explained through the 'Wicca Tradition' in the novel. Wicca or Wicce is interpreted as the covens which preserves the knowledge of the subtle forces, with the Anglo- Saxon root word-meaning "to bend or shape" (*The Spiral Dance* 29). Wicca can be further interpreted as a category of neo-paganism, where they call themselves as witches. Central to Wiccan belief is the Goddess. The actions of the goddess and the Horned God are linked to the seasonal cycle of the year celebrated as Wiccan holidays. (*Neopaganism*²) Common to the Wiccan tradition in the narrative, the itinerant protagonist Brida meets Wicca, the mother of occult knowledge against a picturesque back ground. Brida explains her insatiable thirst for magic and Wicca introduces Brida to the tarot pack of cards, the number twenty-three of the cards, the king of clubs- a picture of a dark man naming him, as the 'Soulmate.' Usually a tarot card deck with a mysterious origin consists of seventy-eight cards of clairvoyance or fortune telling. Mystics analyse the card as a road to life which begins with '*fool card*' and ends with the world. The clergy considers the card as leading to hell and devil. But in the narrative, Wicca, warns Brida not to use the cards for clairvoyance. She comments, "Only the present has power over our lives"... "When you read the future in the cards, you are bringing the future into the present, and that can cause serious harm. The present could confuse your future" (*Brida* 122). As a 'metaphorical conjure woman,' Wicca, the mother of occult in the novel explains the eternity of all manifestations, speaks the language of mystery and esoteric spirituality. The perennial philosophy of esoteric has an element of permanence in the tarot pack of cards in the novel. Tarots, an integral part of

Quabbalistic Symbolism, used by Brida reveal the visions and the secrets of the world. These pack of cards that gains popularity with the images of tarot, evocative of esotericism in popular culture, are associated with clairvoyance resembling the Indian tradition of reading future with the aid of parrots and the pack of cards.

The protagonist enters into a futile attempt of reading the Tarots, a 'qualisign' of the novel and attends a telephonic call 'at the other end.' Wicca provides a litany of complaints about plumbers in order to hasten the level of concentration in the trance-like world of Brida. The occult philosophy in the narrative tries to define the various states of consciousness in the protagonist. As in a dream, she listens to a mysterious voice from 'within'-the inner psyche. The world of Tarots unravel certain images of fantasy in the narrative:

Giant heads of fish, swift flashing clouds, boy in medieval clothes and temples carved out of rocks. The clouds raced across the sky, as if everything were moving faster than normal, and the scene shifted abruptly to a square, surrounded by grand buildings, where a few old men were urgently telling secrets to a group of young boys... (*Brida* 63)

A sensual somnambulism takes place in the novel when an otherness of reality is created through these images. The trance experiences a reading of the altered experience of reality which yield useful insights into the character's nature. There is a continuum of experiences which make imagination real and

creates an exotic world of reality. Trance in the novel is a kind of invocation of both God and Goddess in ecstatic union. It simulates visionary imagination and new modes of creativity. Brida learns trance, which is an 'act of changing consciousness at will.' Trance, a state of ecstatic anaesthesia emerges out of the fictional milieu. In *Brida*, Wicca the mother of occult tradition teaches the protagonist the esoteric principle behind the realization of a Soulmate. Wicca explains,

The Soulmate is the first thing people learn about when they want to follow the tradition of the Moon. She said, only by understanding the Soulmate can we understand how knowledge can be transmitted over time...

We are eternal because we are all manifestations of God. That is why we go through many lives and many deaths, emerging out of some unknown place and going towards another equally unknown place. You must get used to the fact that there are many things in magic which are not and never will be explained. God decided to do certain things in a certain way and why He did this is a secret known only to Him. (*Brida* 36-37)

The concept of the Soulmate, a unique aspect of theory as explained by C.G.Jung's collective unconscious is based on the belief that each one of us miss something at the sub-conscious level the anima or the animus. In the novel, Wicca explains Reincarnation through the principle of *Anima Mundi*, the

soul of the world, the search of which is possible through love. Wicca continues her explanation in the following words:

So it is with souls. Human beings are on interlinked, like the cards in this deck. In each life, we feel a mysterious obligation to find at least one of those Soulmates. The Greater Love that separated them feels pleased with the Love that brings them together again... (38)

Wicca defines the path of magic as mysterious during their visit to the South of Dublin and in their meanderings through the grove of trees. The protagonist imbibes reincarnation as the bridge between the visible and invisible worlds of reality. A kind of teleesthesia occurs between Wicca and Brida that results into a transference of thoughts, feelings and sensations. The occult atmosphere recurs as a kind of mystical revival and the self of the heroine which is a de-centered, split and fragmented one is projected at the beginning of the narrative. Brida finds remedy in occultism as an answer to her disenchantment.

The Quartz Crystal functions as a kinetic quali-signifier providing an impetus to the mythic realization of Brida. With the imagined help of an Amethyst, Brida is guided to a vast cathedral in the midst of the forest. Her entry to 'the gothic cathedral, made of dark stone, with stained glass windows and spiral staircase leading down' the text creates a weird atmosphere of reality. Wicca makes reincarnation possible for the heroine and the narrative thereby depicts the characteristic quality of Brazilian fiction –a visit to reincarnated lives and the world of spirits.

In the narrative of *Brida*, the girl decides to learn meditation as a preliminary step towards her initiation into the world of magic. The entire narrative strategy appeared as a trance - like experience of Brida. The novel offers a complex extensive range of signifieds which create an associative sign through the process of signification, which is explained as an unending process by Roland Barthes in *Mythologies*. (131) The path of salvation, the connotative signifier is taught through the Great Mother, her philosophy of reincarnations - the binary divisions of souls into crystals, stars, cells and plants. Wicca comments, "our soul divides in two, and those new souls are in turn transformed into two and so, within a few generations, we are scattered over a large part of Earth" (*Brida* 37).

The narrative space creeps into magic realistic tradition in the perfect fusion of trance, the occult and the notions of esotericism and eco-spirituality. Ventriloquism, a technique of magic realism is employed through the appropriation of the voice of Wicca to speak on the androgynous vision of spirituality. When the text accommodates the female voice of the shaman, magic realism is used as a supportive system to support notions of occult tradition, a mode of alternate spirituality.

The narrative resembles the vision of a modern shaman in Magus who enacts the journey of the soul through the sacred space of time and space. The shamanic activity reveals the cultural context of the text. The text employs Oneiric optic, a merging of the past and present form of narration to heighten the mystic quality of the magic realist fiction. Through the engrossing Loni - Talbo episode, the dreams of the protagonist are properly delineated and Loni

embraces a sacrificial death for the sake of catholic faith. Reincarnation recurs through meaningful death and leads to the rebirth of Loni as Brida. Brida is able to revive her past, she embraces a sacrificial death for the sake of catholic faith. In the middle of 'voices' in the narrative, tradition survives through people. Brida perceives strange incomprehensible dream about 'cathedrals floating in the air and libraries crammed with books.' The narrative explains through Loni 'a conversation with voices,' another characteristic quality of magic realist fiction. The text explains that "the Cathar Church is the true church"... "We have achieved the communion with god. We do not need to be incarnated. We do not need to return to the kingdom of the other god" (75).

The surrealist atmosphere intensifies the mode of phenomenal reality. The voices kept talking, "in her life every woman can make use of the Four Rings of Revelation. You have used only one, the wrong one" (81). Brida realises that 'the ring of the Martyr was shining invisibly on her finger'(82). And the context creates a mode of perception with hyperbolic reality. The text as a 'dream and occult,' experience seems to mean more than thought can apprehend. The signifier dream acts as a trope of the memory of past, a recollection in the case of Brida, the perpetual process of digging the fragments of the past. Brida, the focal character reveals the faith of the narrator and thereby emphasises the need for Reincarnation. In the occult poetics of the narrative, the technique of Magic realism articulates an experience that reveals the darker side of human nature. The macabre in the novel explores both the richness and peril of it with a modern rejuvenation. When events anchored in everyday reality carry overtones of fantasy, awe and wonder a surrealist atmosphere is forcefully created in the narrative. The thread of

Goddess religion displays a sense of delight in the natural world with a connection to the magical. The text creates cosmic openness and wilderness simultaneously enhancing the magic realist element. Magic realism is operational when the narrative fuses apparently incompatible systems of signifiers and signifieds. As Chanady argues, the text presents an antimony, the simultaneous presence of two conflicting codes. Ontologically the text integrates both the real and reincarnated lives of Brida. The mystical experience of the heroine reveals the awakened self that seeks wholeness. She is not transported to a world of transcendence but to an extremely physical and sensual world.

Wicca explains 'the Tradition of the Moon' with the help of *Book of Shadows* and initiates the heroine into the first mysteries of witchcraft. According to her, the witches awaken their innate gift to serve the world. Wicca tells Brida:

She must always listen to the sound of the world...This noise- which is like a vibration- is the Soul of the World. Transforming itself and travelling towards the light...

Wicca repeats: We are responsible for the Universe because we are the universe. (117-9)

Wicca advises Brida to reserve an unreserved corner with a candle burning day and night for the purpose of invocation. For Brida, invocation itself is a breakthrough into a new awareness in which she comes to recognize the limitations of subjectivity and opens herself to a wider perspective of

reality. She interprets the symbolic relevance of the tradition of the Moon as that “contained the earth of the Wick, the water of the paraffin, the fire that burned, the air that allowed the fire to burn” (118). Hence guidance is given to her to be cautious of the rhythm, the sound of the universe, the vibration of the soul of the world transforming and travelling toward the light. Witches have a definite role to play in the journey. The dualistic philosophy of Masculine /feminine, Sun/Moon, Anima/Animus reveals the dualistic cosmology that influences pagan theology and the alternate religion of the novel. Following Wicca tradition, canonization with the Soulmate is a path for Brida to realize the tradition of the Sun in the narrative.

With a wooden spoon, that acts as an icon of witchcraft a quali- signifier wicca creates an assembly of women who realize the importance of Virgin Mary and conducts a prayer as follows:

May the Virgin Mary remind us always that we were burned and persecuted because we preached the Religion of Love. (129) The spoon symbolizes the ancestor’s martyrdom. As they bore the flames of ancestors, the act of witchery remains completed and she throws the spoon into the fire. Brida resumes her path of magic designed by wicca and is asked to discard clothes “with bad aura.” “Brida feels meddling with clothes that resembles her way of meddling with being” When Brida became too conscious of the ‘voice,’ it repeats “What is outside is harder to change than what is inside” (135).

Surrendering her soul, the protagonist imbibes the voice of incarnations. The sign 'reincarnation' acts as a quali-sign- creating a beautiful and weird sense of reality in the lyricism of the narrative. Wicca explicates the profound oneness in the tradition of the Moon and the tradition of Sun as it appears evocative of sol and Luna myth in Hermetic philosophy where sol and Luna can be defined as

Sol- Soul/Sun/Man

Luna - Body/ Moon/ Woman

The association of sun and moon can be related to the androgynous nature of characterisation in the novel—the cosmic androgyny of the universe, the *Ardhanariswara concept*. Coelho employs magic realism for delineating the world of fantasy and witch craft in *Brida*. Following the genre in the fictitive world of Louis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the writer acknowledges the magic inherent in reality, perceives the ordinary by de familiarizing the real, fusing dream and witchcraft. The fabric of narration in *Brida* uses mythical symbolism like C.S .Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia. Coelho transforms the Myth of Luna and Sol as the very crux of his fictitious narrative making it a connotative sign.

The vision of cosmic androgyny and the tradition in the narrative represent the individuation of Brida as a process where the mortal becomes the immortal- the male moves to cosmic consciousness, the female, the inside of existence finally reaching the glorious illumination of spirituality. Sun, Moon and Star are also pointers or iconic signs of the psychological states of

characters in the novel. Thus the multilayered nature of significations of the narrative leads to a higher level of perception. Like Aurobindo, Coelho uses symbols of cosmic forces to penetrate into the psyche of his characters. The mystic in the novelist provides a glorious illumination of spirituality through these notions.

The Wicca tradition identifies earth as a living entity, a feeling body. In Wicca tradition, both the witches and pagans practice magic as the art of changing consciousness at will. Thus the conflicting tradition of Wicca explicates the coherence of the myth of the Moon and the Sun making it a potent signifier moving itself as an extended signified of occult organized through a cluster of tarot cards, Witches' s dance, Sabbath Day and the voices heard and visions seen by Brida. The structural pattern of the novel unravels the developing nature of thoughts in the protagonist. Wicca's voice at the telephonic end merge with hidden voice of the self of Brida, who later moves into the world of trance. The Mystic teachings of Vedanta influence Coelho who considers spiritual search as a personal responsibility. (*Confessions* 11) When Wicca explains the eternity of god, human as manifestation of god, there is an engulfment between the visible and the invisible in the novel, making salvation an occult signifier, 'a signified of otherness.' Magic, the kinetic signifier in *Brida* emphasises the freedom of individual imagination-the freedom to imagine an alternate path in the mode of quest (*The New Novel in Latin America* 12) and projects the after math of the Boom and beyond in Latin America. Brida has undertaken a quest through a famished road. Simultaneously, her narrative voice revitalizes the tradition of Sun and the

tradition of moon and her otherness project the characteristic quality of esotericism as occult.

Coelho utilizes the concept of time fantasy as a kinetic signifier when he relates the real world of Brida to the invisible world of magic, vision, dream, sleep, and the experiences of reincarnation. In the Loni-Talbo episode (*Brida* 70), an immersion into the unconsciousness-the archetype of anima of Brida can be perceived in the narrative. As interpreted by C.G.Jung, one can re-discover one's own self by realizing the passions and anxieties of anima. (*Psychology of Jung*, 127) The narrative space of the novel projects the different manifestations of anima/animus archetypes-Magus, book-shop owner and Wicca, the embodiment of Mother figure, the earliest form of anima .In the pages of psychology, each archetype represents an unknown realm which can be encountered by the individual through images of dreams and fantasies.

Brida's stay with Lorenz provides an insight into the confused psyche that remains perplexed about reincarnation. Brida recollects the childhood lessons from her own father. The antique grandfather clock of her living room reminds her that 'even a stopped clock is right twice a day' (99). The novel depicts the vision of death and incarnation in Brida who folds the dazzling deep blue darkness, her own death and the other world. The entire episode as a real recollection of voices reveal the 'Wicca Lesson' in the narrative as:

The four rings of Revelation –the Virgin, the Saint, Martyr and the Witch, in the narrative Wicca advised Brida to remain a witch out of her successive incarnation. Wicca interpreted path of

magic as one of mystery, like incision into the dark night and Soulmate as the great secret of magic. Wicca initiates Brida into the strange mysteries of Witchcraft and emphasizes the Female Principle with her remark. (*Brida*)

The text explains witchcraft as:

We are them. And suddenly we understand everything that we learned in our past lives, and everything that the great sages left written on the Universe. Jesus said: “The Kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. We are responsible for the universe, we are the universe. (*Brida* 119)

As Starhawk explains, Wicca, the individual witch, either male or female, is “a ‘shaper,’ a creator who bends the unseen into form, and so becomes one of the Wise, one whose life is infused with magic” (*Spiral Dance* 7). In the narrative, Wicca, the witch explains the complexities of the tradition of Moon, how ancients speak a symbolic language, how witches use daggers as the prolonged energetic aspect of their body. The narrative explains the lessons of witchcraft in relation to the secrets of nature that reveal the dogma of eco-spirituality, as everything bore the signature of God.

Magus guides Brida to the ‘hunter’s cabin’ to teach the Tradition of the Sun through physicality. The animal images and hunting display characteristics of quali-signs, setting the emotions of the protagonist gallop.

Even emotions with its fleeting moments reach a kinetic level of signification depicting the esoteric in the narrative. Nature and its tranquil moments are explained as possible alternatives to control the emotions. The narrative interprets the tradition of the Sun as a lesson taught through time and space with a deep penetration into Reincarnation. The esoteric spirituality of the novel is obvious in the wish of Brida to establish a personal relationship with Magus. Brida ponders:

The Magus was right. The Tradition of the Sun was the path of all men, and it was there so that it could be deciphered who knew how to pray and be patient and who wanted to learn what it had to teach. The more she immersed herself in the Tradition of the Moon, the more she understood and admired the Tradition of the Sun. (158)

For Brida, Magus who seeks indelible love in her remains an invincible power. *Brida* changes into an allegorical tale that reflects the unending quest of a girl after the esoteric modes of salvation. Goddess consciousness that speaks the language of myth is explained through ecstatic mystical experience of love. This involves loosening of subjectivity and a shifting awareness of the being in the heroine. The experiences inherent in women's sexuality express the essential holistic nature of life on earth. The narrative thus reveals the affinity between the heroine and nature in the element of paganism.

Brida in her close observations on nature, notices the sea-gulls drifting about the clouds. Nature embodies itself with the Semiotics of Language-

God's signature. Nature with occult signatures explicates the invisible relationship between stars and plants. One can decipher the mysteries of the hidden god or esoteric god from the occult philosophy. "The quest for magic/occult correlates itself with the quest for the primordial traditions emphasizing the esoteric in the novel" (*Western Esotericism* 2). The 'whole of nature' in the narrative is a living organism, a person, with a history connected with the human being and with the divine world. The narrative explains the identity of spirit and nature as a living net work of correspondences. The novel provides notions of eco-spirituality in its nature mysticism that is described in the kaleidoscope of earth based religion of witchcraft. Witchcraft explicates Goddess as the Moon and the Earth.

From the very beginning of the narrative, Brida explains her identity as one who belongs to the tradition of the Moon. With the knowledge of the Tradition of the Sun, the protagonist prepares herself for the celebration of Equinox. Wicca reminds Brida about the mystery of the divine force. Over a dish of Sashimi, Wicca comments, "We are all sailors on an unknown sea; may He make us brave enough to accept this mystery" (170). Wicca interprets 'God as the Great Architect of the Universe.' She recollects that "the main objective of the great Architect of the Universe is known to Him alone, and to no one else" (171). While accepting the mystery of the universe, human beings are plunged into the 'Dark Night' with faith, in order to fulfill the personal legend by surrendering fully to each moment. Her contemplations on nature- both the fauna and flora are filled with Magus. From the self-revelations of Magus, the reader imbibes a picture of the transition of Magus to a Soul-mate. Passion becomes a blind force in the midst of his life, which throws him into a

mysterious web of emotions. The implacable nature of Tradition of the Moon and how the initiates use black magic to influence human emotions are delineated in the narrative.

Magus the Soulmate of Brida acts as a time traveler and remains a dispassionate observer in the anointing of Brida as witch. The affinity and the abiding relationship between Brida and Magus create a perfect balance between the primary and secondary worlds of reality interfusing the visible in the invisible. Coelho creates a world of magic realism in the trance – like experiences of Brida where she receives voices from Magus. “The voices will teach you the mysteries of the world, the mysteries that are imprisoned in time” (147). When she hears the voices she realizes her identity as one who belongs to the mysterious tradition. Thus the narrative belongs to the tradition of magic realist stories with a strong narrative drive in which elements of dream and reality, a combination of magic realism and archetypal patterns make the novel irreducible. The fairytale and the mythology combine itself with everyday often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence in the narrative.

Brida is convinced of her mission of life as trust in the tradition of the moon while Magus warns her to be cautious of words and reminds her of the importance of prayer in the tradition of Sun, which is the only means of communion with God. For him prayer is more powerful than any other ritual and the nature of desire which comes from the fount of eternal wisdom shall be accepted and the soulmates shall pray for the gratification of those wishes. The soulmate and the teacher in Magus advises the protagonist ‘to make use of

time's memory to discover the particular light above the left shoulder of the soulmate, which was really a recurring experience in different reincarnations' (112-3).

As a modern fantasy *Brida* envisages time as a linear continuum in which characters experience more than one time. Time and space dimensions are composite entities in the conjunctio of Sun and Moon. Both Brida and Magus travel through time and space-through two traditions. They reach the Elysian Fields where the enlightened souls lived. The text quotes:

Brida saw meadows full of flowers, animals she had only read about in books, mysterious castles and cities that seemed to float on clouds of light... there was a temple with women all in white dancing before the temple's vast door... the man by her side was trying to show her everything he had learned over the years. (196-7)

Brida attains enlightenment, a feeling bound up with a colour like thousands of rainbow as the novel delves into esoteric plains. The dream like quality of the narrative results in the entry of Brida to a world of spirits. The pictorial language embellish the narrative of the novel with a poetic quality enmeshed with subtle emotions. Man-cosmos relationship creates a mythic consciousness in the novel. The narrative dissipates a peculiar mode of human relationships in *Brida* in an unconventional way. Coelho uses the paradoxical aspect of magic realism, with his claim of the magical aspect of the novel through occult interpretations.

The trance- like experiences of Magus and the Soulmate in the novel recall the primal experience of the flaming passion of love and ecstasy and draw from its source a sustenance for life. There is a constant renewal of life's energy through a deeper contact with mysteries of life, getting into a charmed circle in the midst of trance. The trance in the novel reflects on - something like a Mandala -a complex pattern that belongs to thantra or occultism, whose nature is that of a metaphysical one as explained by C.G.Jung. It also denotes the magic circle or ritual used in Lamaism and Yantra in Tantric Yoga. The Trance- walking in the narrative explains the real character of Magus with an iconic link between spirituality and domesticity in the novel. The cosmic and the quotidian are interwoven in the shamanic world of the narrative and the notion is explained in the text as, "The Magus watched Brida's aura change many times and hoped she was taking the right path. He understood the storms and earthquakes shaking the soul of his Soulmate, but knew that this was in the nature of transformations" (*Brida* 192-3).

The text elaborates the ecstasy as: both walked through the Wheatfield, which was transformed by the moonlight into a silver sea. Magus explained, "Everything in this world is sacred, and a grain of sand can be a bridge to the invisible" (*Brida* 194). While Brida invokes the magical forces of nature, the trance of the narrative results in the emergence of the whole circle filled with light, a mysterious light which illuminates 'nothing.' The shamanic vision fuses with the enlightened - realm of Brida revealing the technique of magic realism in Coelho. The irreducible element of it creates a shamanic experience with in an ordinary world of reality, projects the shaman's journey through Time and space, the signifier 'Magus' connoting shamanism. The shamanic act

extends into the cultural code of the novel and it is linked to the de-colonised Brazilian culture resulting in a process of trans- curation . With the creation of a mysterious spirit, a ‘hallucinogenic creation of an anti-self’ in the narrative occurs through the character of Magus. The shamanic healing - power of wildness stems from the strange reversal. Evaluated as a sign, the Magus is attributed with qualities of shamanism thus the sign undergoes ‘semiotic subversion.’ Trance walking, a magical encounter with eternal life helps Brida to walk through the Elysian fields, where the ‘enlightened souls’ live. The magical hallucinatory narrative creates a shift from concrete reality into the mystically rising spirit worlds of Magus and Brida. The deeper levels of trance open the paranormal senses of the heroine and creates an altered awareness, a continuum of experiences in her.

In the analysis of the esoteric spirituality of the narrative, the predominance of erotic motif in Paulo Coelho can be ascertained in the narrative. In the romantic yearning of the eternal woman, the pre- historic scenes can be gathered in which the hero Magus moves through jungles and deserts before finding his beloved. Magus becomes the lover of Brida making the erotic theme obvious. Coelho pursues the quest of salvation in the realm of inwardness exposing Brida as the prototype of Medusa and Magus as a Dionysian image in the over-world of myth.

The Witches’s Sabbath, the eight points with which witches connect the inner and outer cycles – the seasonal, celestial, the communal, creative and personal was most often used to arouse the power ‘within.’ Wicca demonstrates her ability to organize a ‘Sabbath’ which is employed by Coelho to unleash the

conflict between the pagan and the Christian beliefs. In the narrative space of the novel, Sabbath invokes the power of the Tradition of the Moon, the dangerous power embodied in the witches. The poetics of Magic Realism in the novel conflates both physical and occult worlds of reality. With the presence of spirit, Coelho defocalizes the narrative discourse with extra ordinary perceptions of life which moves the reader 'go beyond.' Through the relationship of Magus, the Shaman and Brida the witch, the writer attempts to link the world of spirits to that of nature, to the conflicting social order of Brazil. This detachment from present sensory reality permits an incursion of variety of otherness.

Magic Realism in *Brida* can be noted both as a primitive aesthetic and as a manifestation of a perennial cultural need. In order to understand the cultural significance of magic realism, it should be differentiated from Shamanic performances which often happened in a culturally hybrid situation. But a Magic Realist narrative resembles a Shamanic performance as both created a 'space' where unusual magical manifestations of physicality takes place revealing the power of magic realism. Following magic realist tradition, the narrative pattern is defocalised and it creates a kind of indeterminacy out of the conflicting perceptive worlds. Though the occult images are not empirically verifiable, defocalisation creates a narrative space of the ineffable in-between and its perspective cannot be explained, it can only be experienced. The significations of the trance scene results in the lyrical narrative voice of fiction. The interweaving of reality with magic produces an eerie shimmer in the fictional milieu of the narrative.

Initially the varied episodes of trance are portrayed as visions by the protagonist. Most of the events, endowed with magic creates an aura of unknowability and mystery. The defocalised nature of magic realism includes non-verifiable data like the magical love of Magus and Brida, the paradigm of Soulmate, the trance-walking and the culmination of Brida into a 'witch.' The nemesis of heroine's quest into witchcraft transforms her into an anti-heroine foregrounding the irreducible element of the narrative.

Coelho employs Oneiric optic to merge past and present in the novel. Usually in all types of fantasy, the surface of the fantastic tale appears unreal resulting in the suspended nature of law. But the depth of fantasy in *Brida* is real with authentic details like magical items-rings, stones, Witches's dance, Trance-walking, the celebration of Sabbath and the use of tarot cards. The reader do not feel the occult world as unreal even when it emphasises the power of evil. A strange macabre atmosphere emerges out of the realm of Brida with the nemesis of Brida as witch. As a contrast to Santiago in *The Alchemist*, Brida changes as a wanderer in spirit lands.

The signifier Salvation in *Brida* emerges as occult paradigm connoting itself to an evil force and witch craft. Magus, the wise man becomes an instigator of black magic, a shaman – 'a hallucinogenic creation of an anti-self.' The Signifier salvation connotes with the occult in relation to the nemesis of protagonist. The shift in the meaning of the paradigm religion and spirituality into paganism can be opted as a suggestion of alternate religion. Out of the conflicting contradictory worlds of magic and love, paganism and Christianity, a third space of witchcraft is created through Brida. The

unexpected denouement creates a puzzle providing an answer through the technique of magic realism. The *fabula* which emerges out of a myth traces the semiotic feminine and the symbolic masculine through the traditions explicated in the narrative. The esoteric tale turns into a dynamic model of signification insisting on its productivity to make meaning. Thus the Phenotext of magic converts the fictional tale into a genotext emphasizing the materialist theory of signification as in Bakhtin.

Characterisation in Paulo Coelho never reaches its rotundity even if the reader notices a kind of progression in the character's nature. Most often a retrospective pattern of narration is followed by the Brazilian story teller. Characters are questers with an endless quest for personal salvation- the ultimate meaning of the kabbalistic tradition going beyond signs and semiotics dominate the pages of the narrative. Their quest suggests Goddess spirituality. The faustian quest of Brida projects an androgynous vision of the coherence of life. The tale of esoteric spirituality frames a tradition which is both pantheistic and pagan. The super natural twist of the narrative occurs out of the nemesis of Brida enhances the beauty and depth of magic realism.

The narrative wrought on female principle and esoteric terrains incorporate the Wild woman concept and witch with the otherness of religion. The alternate concept focused through the text reflects not only the personal but the social and cultural fluctuations of Brazil.

CHAPTER V
THE BLURRING ONTOLOGY
IN *ALEPH*

Paulo Coelho's *Aleph*, published in 2011, is really a spiritual conjoining of the persona of the writer in the philosophy of Reincarnation. The narrative erupts a volcano of emotions out of a dejected psyche of the author making him realize the ecstasy of love as 'the river of life.' The narrative projects the ontological quest of the subjective self of the author when he unravels a mystic journey through space and time. The urge for the 'ring of fire' gains coherence in the karmic cycle' of reincarnation, in the development of the spiritual consciousness of the author. The visionary power and trance depicted in the narrative reveal the shamanic performance as a primordial act uniting physicality and spirituality. This spiritual unleashing results in the phenomenal world of reality adding both a magic realistic and meta fictional

gloss to the novel. The narrative proves how a writer like Coelho makes use of meta fiction self-consciously to engage himself with narcissist narration.

The Subjectivity of Coelho is correlated to the creative side of writing with the emotional bearing of the self projected through the story. The writer who is the protagonist is confessional to the core in the narrative and projects the subjective self as a series of images symbols and icons that envelop both the conscious and unconscious of the individual. The subjectivity of the narrator in *Aleph* can be defined as a stable unit of ontological individuation making the novel a dissonant structure between the elusive self and the pursued self knowledge. When placed in the modern context, the subjectivity of *Aleph* is foregrounded in the inevitability of fate-the meaning of the fictional text through techniques like the stream of consciousness. The various forms of subjectivity related to the private consciousness of the hero, the synonymous patterns of the word, language or *Aleph* and the symbolic order.

The subject is positioned by means of traces of 'I' that can be related to the subject-position of the author and the verbal disclosure of the text is evocative of the deep sub-conscious creative subject/ persona of the author. Subjectivity, a relative paradigm of the self connotes with the confessional / autobiographical in Paulo Coelho's *Aleph*. The novel provides an analysis of the writer's concept of the quest of life as destiny- the real complexities of the author in his quest of identity or spiritual odyssey that the author has undertaken through the psychic realms of his characters in varying fictitious situations making the notion of subjectivity problematic as it questions the essence of spiritual quest as a reaction of the author's split persona. The nature

of human self questions the notion of organic self in the narrative. Aleph creates a parallel between subjectivity and the projections of the author's personal life.

In autobiographical narratives like *Aleph*, the function of narration is carried out by the subject. Autobiographical nature of the novel makes use of mythology both at a static and personal level. A realm of hallucination / transcendental thought is cultivated through the relationship of the author narrator with Hilal, the Violinist who accompanies him during his journey. A mythical self is carved out of the individualism of the autobiography, though the esoteric spirituality depicted in the novel is wholly routed in the physical.

The chapter 'Tea Leaves' in the novel unravels the meaning of Aleph as something that exists outside the individual-a point that one can locate anywhere. In the narrative, shamans face an easy task in having such visions of Aleph-an intoxicating symbol of the novel. The text connotes:

The Aleph is outside us. If we are talking of human tradition, people who are in love can at certain very special moments, experience the Whole. In real life, we tend to see ourselves as separate beings, but the universe is only one thing, one soul. However, to invoke the aleph, something very powerful has to happen. (*Aleph* 173)

The narrative further explicates Aleph 'as a thing of rare beauty, a space of special energy, a word inextricably related to experience.' Aleph emerges as a space of spatio - temporal convergence recollecting the introspective

experience. 'A word with Paulo Coelho' published by Julie Bosman projects the opinion that "Aleph is the story of his own epiphany with the comment of the author himself. I see this book as my journey myself, not as a fiction book but as a non-fiction book" (A Word with Coelho). The protagonist's urge to restore his 'kingdom of words' for providing a space for new-age spirituality, the transcendental signifier and signified can be realized in the fictional space.

The fictive opus considers regeneration as a possibility through reincarnation, dreams of antiquity, magical perception and self-quest. Indigenous and metropolitan ideas of spirituality fuse into a quest of paradisaic harmony. Aleph, a space of spatio-temporal convergence, provides expression to the introspective journey, a quest for the unity of being. The image that the protagonist seeks can be his wife, mistress, the female lover or a shaman whom he has met in his seven incarnations. The author recollects his image as writer of fourteenth century and weaves a web of nostalgic memories, a platform for the demystification of Witchcraft and the revival of the pagan tradition.

The narrative examines the futility of spiritual quest undertaken by the protagonist, the author and Hilal who represent both the mythic patterns of quest. For the author, the myth of quest is used as a vehicle for paired constructions of masculinity as transcendent subjectivity and femininity as otherness making Aleph as montage of otherness. Coelho envisions himself as 'the king of his own kingdom' analyzing the harsh reality of the becoming world. He creates an awareness of realities both visible and invisible which reminds the futility of his own quest that he has taken in the past.

In *Aleph*, the reader acquaints himself with the ritualistic tradition when the author and Mr. J perform rituals around the oak tree that alludes to the triadic pattern of life. The utterance of a Sufi prayer by J. in the beginning of the novel connotes the omnipresence of God. The author is engaged with two months of pilgrimage through the African city of Tunis. An emphatic statement of the narrative pronounces the relevance of semiotics when he explains ‘Signs as extremely personal language that we develop throughout our lives. ‘With his usual prayer to Lady’s protection at chapel Barbazan-Debat,’ the subjective self in the midst of interminable silence, becomes one with ‘Aleph’ and he further explains that ‘signs are words –tears that have been written down.’ The narrative voice identifies himself with language. The form in which language expresses itself defines the subjectivity of the writer. Unlike the fictional heroines of Coelho, Hilal, the violinist whom he meets on the way, accompanies him to light the sacred fire. Coelho pursues his journey to his own kingdom realizing the futility of spiritual quest of his past. The railway station Moscow creates in him many idiotic fantasies related to the meaning of life. The narrative unravels the nature of the subject-position as a born pilgrim who wants to make use of most of the time for fulfilling the Journey motif. ‘Time is here and now’ in *Aleph*.

Yao, the Chinese translator, a refugee in Brazil, is the focal character who explains the etymological significance of his name as ‘very distant.’ The narrative introduces the indigenous tradition of Brazil, the creative principle of life in the mystery of existence balancing the spiritual with the physical world- What Yao calls as ‘qi’ is Aleph in the shamanic tradition. The narrative highlights how the pages of civilization result in the erasure of female

religions. The narrator who wants to know the intensive drifting nature of spirituality visits the sacred island of shamans in the company of Yao. The pages of the narrative replete with shamanism when Coelho creates a symbiotic relationship between the ceremonial space of shamanic traditions of the novel and the indigenous spirituality of Brazil. Individually Coelho experiences the trance in the special attire of anorak, gloves, thick woolen hat and scarf up to the eyes. He kneels before the shaman and relates the shamanic knowledge as follows:

The shaman is lighting a fire in a hollow dug in the ground to protect the flames from the wind that continues to blow. The text explains the Shamanic tradition as one originated in Siberia and follows the same rituals as paje in the Amazonian jungle Candomble in Africa, aborigines in Australia. Charismatics in the Catholic church, Mormons in Utah. (*Aleph* 243)

The text explicates shamanism as follows:

There were two dominant figures in the tribe-the leader, the bravest member of the tribe who was able to defeat any challenges and intelligent enough to foil any conspiracies. The matter of natural selection turns to corruption and it centers on the perpetuation of power. He further explains the first shamans are women-the source of life. In the case of female shamans, the legend of tradition transferred to those who were able, who lived alone, isolated and were usually virgins. They were able to

balance the spiritual world with the physical using trance. With the passage of time, notions of power replaced those natural attributes and it was organized into the social structure. In a sarcastic tone, the author comments: “Female religions were erased from the history of civilization; we know only that the most ancient magical objects so far uncovered by archaeologists as images of goddesses” (*Aleph* 240).

The shamanic tradition posits the existence of a primordial tradition and is a form of esotericism. The narrator also identifies the eternal spiritual conflict among the various traditions. The Shamans act as mediators in their culture, believes in axis mundi which communicates with the spirits, assisting the retrieval of the soul. This notion of shamanism as Edward Tylor comments is the elementary form of worship as spirit worship or animism. When religion can be interpreted as belief in spiritual beings, What Frazer interprets ‘magic’ as a prelude to religion and science become truism related to this primordial form of thought. Freud too supports the view while he explains dangerous reality as a form of perverse libido. Shamanism’s popularity in the liminal culture of Brazil is focused on cultic milieu and occult tradition revealed in the narrative. In the shamanic dreams, Coelho’s history is psychohistory. There is a memory of nature that reveals events and symbols of distant centuries. The text explains: “The sacred island of shamans has its own spirit. It is dark and we can never be sure that we are putting our feet in the right place” (250). The narrator feels excited and is enticed by the sight of the shaman in the midst of flickering flames and the stillness of time. The influence of Indian shamanism, the *piaga* or shaman playing a vital role in the poetic world is assimilated in the

milieu of *Aleph*. Shamanism in the narrative indicates Indianism as the cradle of Brazilian culture and civilization. With the omnipotent powers of a priest and a medicine man, the shaman is able to control his state of trance and to use his altered state of consciousness. Even in the midst of a performance, he retains his conscious memory and the unconscious brings back scenes from mythology. The shaman projects divine ecstasy, its theology and its philosophy depending on the spiritual value. In the narrative of *Aleph*, the Shaman is the projection of the author's repressed psyche, which occasionally acts as the alter-ego. Through shamanism, Coelho foregrounds the gaps and silences of the dispossessed. The absence of such a tradition, thereby revives the tradition to the foreground and echoes the problems of Brazilian spirituality.

The trance invokes the Eagle of Baikal out of the flickering flames casting strange shadows over the face of the Shaman. The Shaman prophesies that the Eagle of Baikal will definitely show the lake to his soul. The text quotes:

The shaman repeats: Someone who is your friend is also a friend of the eagle of Baikal. Nothing special will happen tonight; you will have no visions, no magical experiences or trances that bring you into contact with the living or the dead. (249)

The narrator recollects, "I open my eyes and notice that the shaman is holding a few feathers in one hand – possibly from some rare local bird. According to traditions throughout the world, birds are messengers of the gods. They help the shaman rise up and speak with the spirits" (*Aleph* 249-50). The

shaman creates a sacred space and lights a ritualistic fire. In the midst of wild dancing flames and beating drums, the shaman invokes spirits letting the drum open to let in spirits, enters into an ecstasy and appears in an impervious state. In the midst of shamanic performance, the shaman traces a shape on the ground that appears undecipherable. Coelho recognizes the shaman who appears younger, he accompanies the shaman across the sky in order to grasp the unexpected moment- the *qi*. Through Yao, the shaman enquires about the mission of the quest of Coelho. Yao justifies to the shaman that the narrator wants to share the contemplation of the mystery. The shamanic realism of the novel projects the Shaman not only as a person with curing attributes but as an individual with commitment to the community and its well-being. The ability of the shaman is explained as a “special and particular relationship with the elements, the creatures of nature, and the spirits from the unseen world make the shaman an invaluable member of his or her social net work” (Shaman: The Wounded Healer 15). In the shamanic performance, Coelho allows his spirit to ‘go stroll in,’ to have a repertoire of past experiences. The shaman has succeeded in traversing the realms of chaos without being overwhelmed and has come back to relate the tale. After the performance, the shaman appears before the reader as an old man. The shamanic performance creates serenity in the novelist. The totality of the consciousness of shamanism has made the narrative as an act of contemplation of mysticism.

The paradigm Shamanism in the narrative is an ‘interpretant sign’ as it is understood by the effect of it on the mind of the reader which is explained as ‘quasi- mind.’ The semiotic effect of the sign occurs from obscurity to clarity. The signifier is metaphorical when it reveals the urge in Coelho to portray

what Brazilian culture lacks. In his attributes of spiritual power, Shaman, the mirror –image of the protagonist transforms as the alter-ego. The writer who strives for the real struggle for liberation and cultural survival emphasize Indigenous spirituality which claims to be earth-based. The mythology and cosmology of shamanism evoke the pagan tradition in the narrative. The mythopoeia of shamanism as a ‘framing device’ of Post-modernist technique fuses the cosmic with the quotidian within the frame work of inter textuality. The existential angst of the narrator leads to an urge for a harmonious ontological self. The magically real explicated through shamanism provides a verbal analogue to the concept of Reincarnation in the narrative. The host of nostalgic memories unraveled through reincarnation add beauty to the plot-pattern of the narrative. Memory is used as a linkage between past and present restructuring the harmonious self of the author- narrator. In the novel, memory revises and resignifies the imagined experience of reality. Memory, the useful narrative device of autobiographical fiction acts as a panacea for solving the existential alienation suffered by Coelho in *Aleph*. When the novel becomes profuse with recollected memorial reveries, this cognitive experience reconstructs the past for accommodating the present purpose of the novel. The text explains the relevance of memories as:

We can never wound the soul, just as we can never wound God, but become imprisoned by our memories, and that makes our life wretched, even when we have everything we need in order to be happy. If only we could be entirely here, as if we had just woken up on planet Earth and found inside a golden temple, but we can't. (166)

As in Harold Bloom's theory, the narrator suffers from the anxiety of influence emanated out of the impact of memory. The repository of memories enable him 'to remember and dismember what is lost.' For Hilal, memory is an act of reconciliation with her song of forgiveness in the presence of spirits. Instead of pain and resentment related to the misfortunes of the past, the novelist is able to choose understanding and compassion. Accompanied by the song of victory, Cock appears as a quali-sign heralding a new beginning making Coelho pursue the hope of salvation into the realm of inwardness, with the moment of salvation affecting the individual soul alone. As Dean Inge, the Christian scholar suggests, "the religious mysticism in Aleph is an attempt to realize living God in the soul and in Nature" (*Christian Mysticism* 5). The introspective mystic in the novelist recognizes the self as matrix, the centre of intense activity by which the individual hopes to understand and conquer. Hilal, in the middle of her conversion, repeats in Turkish *korkmaz git* which means 'he goes and is not afraid.'

The text quotes on the symbolic relevance of shaman and his island: "The sacred island of shaman has its own spirit; it is dark and we can never be sure that we are putting our feet in the right place" (250). Thus the image of shaman is both a quali-sign, and a legi-sign in the semiotics of salvation, which is a quality of otherness gratified through the fictional space of the novel. The shamanic tradition and the history that documents it in the narrative reveal that these techniques of trance move beyond the limits of the socially conditioned mind to a deep seated human need. Trance is portrayed as an altered state of awareness in the various consciousness depicted in the novel. It

creates a continuum of experience making imagination appear real reflecting the reality of the underlying energy currents that shape the universe.

From a semiotic point of view, the text of Coelho changes its status in the poly system of signs. The shamanic culture attains the quality of ‘episteme’ as it stands in relation to the Brazilian culture as Pierce’s interpretant interprets a given culture adopted by the socio-cultural system. The shamanic culture is a meta-semiotic system that describes the signifying practices and ideologies of the specific social –semiotic community. (*Intertextuality and Culture Text* 816) The shamanism in the narrative creates a seamless web of connections between the real and the magical, between realism and fantasy. As Stephen Slemon claims “in the language of narration in a magic realist text, a battle between two oppositional system takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other”(*Ordinary Enchantment* 120). As in *Beloved*, magic circulates through ordinary events in the narrative.

Aleph explains the disparate forms of travel and mobility that Coelho experiences and reconstructs through his ‘kingdom.’ The ‘journey’ as one of the most important topoi of contemporary fiction can be deciphered from the pages of the narrative. The text explains “Travel is never a matter of money, but of courage” (*Aleph* 10). Here the reason for adopting travel resides in the colonial past of Brazil. Geographic territoriality and temporality translated through the narrative depict a remapping of the liminality of culture. The ‘I’ of the narrative seeks wisdom, peace and an awareness of realities both visible and invisible through the quest. Both the narrator and the master place their

hands on the trunk of the sacred oak following a ritualistic tradition. J's prayer reverberates with eco-spiritual terrains and eulogizes 'the omnipresence of Supreme power.' These two characters appear as binary oppositions in the semiotics of spirituality. As a contrast to the master's belief in the 'now,' which is like the force of 'karma' (*Aleph* 8) the narrator, appears immersed in the past and in the lives of Reincarnation. With a mad passion for the pursuit of travel, the narrator comments:

Our life is a constant journey, from birth to death. The landscape changes, the people change, our needs change, but the train keeps moving. Life is the train, not the station. And what you are doing now isn't travelling, it's just changing countries, which is completely different. (10 -11)

The subjective self of the authorial persona comments on Journey as 'a paired signifier of quest' in its connotation of subjectivity. The text elaborates: "No two leaves are alike. And no two journeys along the same path are alike" (43). In *Confessions of a Pilgrim*, the narrator already formulates the same notion. The text quotes: "I look at life using the metaphor of the journey, as a caravan: I know neither whence it came nor where it's going" (*Confessions* 190). The journey as the recurring pattern and motif of the fictional world inter relates and disseminates various pursuits that culminate in the act of writing. The fascination for magical tradition compels him to visit a Moroccan clairvoyant who predicted and warned about the accident of Veronique. The narrator explains how tragedy radically changes a person's life creating a space to begin something 'new.' The visit to the little chapel in Barbazan Debat enables

him to live according to his own personal legend. Coelho establishes his role as a pilgrim. The text quotes:

To live is to experience things, not to sit around pondering the meaning of life. I am a born pilgrim. Even when I'm feeling really lazy or I'm missing home, indeed take only one step to be carried away by the excitement of the journey. (66)

As a narrator, Coelho recollects the opinion that he has mentioned in *Confessions*. All writers need to be in motion, at least internally. Journey is the metaphor of birth and death, the great journey we all have to make. Even the nomenclature of characters follow 'the theory of Semiotics as the meaning of signs and significations in Aleph.' Yao is explained as very distant, Coelho as little rock. They are set on a sail in search of Mare ignotum. Vengeance is interpreted as an essential aspect of human condition and the translator of the author emphasizes the role of aikido in resolving conflicts. The text establishes Aikido not only as a mode of fighting but a way to calm one's agitated spirit. There is an element of rejuvenation as it prevents a person from wasting energy for the judgement of others.

The narrative connotes the subjective self of the author with the signifier Chinese Bamboo that apparently spends five years as a little shoot, using that time to develop its root system. With the onset of the fifth year, the self of author gets ready for development through 'others.' The long cherished adolescent dream of crossing the whole of Russia provokes him to reach the city of Tunisia.

The middle-aged man reveals the magnificence of Barbazan- Debat a chapel that acts as a connotative signifier of divinity, infinite peace and silence. The joy of living is expressed through silence and emotion. Here Coelho uses words as 'paired signifiers' of tears. The Semiotics of the signifier aleph is possible through these associative signifiers-'music and tears.' The emotive significance of words, especially "the joy of living in silence and emotion" explained by Coelho in the following words:

Words are tears that have been written down. Tears are words that need to be shed. Without them, joy loses all its brilliance and sadness has no end. Thank you, then, for your tears. (36)

Samil, one of the avid readers of Coelho, accompanies him to a beautiful building explaining the relevance of crime, its universality and usefulness. This incident proves to be an initiation for the narrator to have a 'Dejavu' moment – a leap into the past- into his own reincarnation. The path of salvation, the connotative signifier is taught through Samil, the focalized narrator of the story. With an admixture of euphoria and curiosity, the narrator enquires about the Islamic notion of the same. Samil quotes some verse from Koran as "Allah will cause you to die and then he will bring you back to life again, and you will return to him once more" (*Aleph* 41). The lantern, another kinetic signifier of this narrative of quest reflects on the hidden light of the soul. Coelho has his first experience of reincarnation through his conversation with Samil. The text explicates:

Suddenly everything vanishes- the palace, the street, the city Africa .I take a gigantic leap into the dark and enter a tunnel that emerges into a dungeon...I'm standing before J. in one of my many previous lives. (38)

In the textual poetics of *Salvation*, esoteric notions explain itself through the erotic relations between the author and Hilal. The signifier *Salvation* in the novel attains the status of a portmanteau sign and a conduit metaphor- connoting religion, the sacred, magic, spirituality, love and mysticism. The presence of Hilal, whom the protagonist meets at the Moscow hotel, creates a Romantic halo making him uneasy with thoughts of love and death. The rest of the experience reveal the depth of relations between Coelho and Hilal who explains the simplicity and profundity of love towards him. In the midst of ecstatic love, the novel reveals the image of a fifteen year old girl who is led to the pyre near the city of Cordoba .Through that episode, the novel reports the menace of Witchhunt and Witchburning. Hilal is portrayed as a futile hapless quester and the pleadings of Coelho never change her mind.

The differential nature of experience creates an imperceptible change in him with the meditations of 'the present moment.' In the nostalgic moments that Coelho shares with Hilal, the novelist relives time. Conscious of the present moment, he comments, "I am reliving that time" (256). The sound of water, an olfactory sign, functions as the symbol of faith in the narrative which lures him to divinity. These binary experiences of past and present- the technique of Oneiric optic in the novel serves the purpose of giving depth to signifiers thereby preparing the psyche of the self to have perfection from

monotonous routine experiences that keep him like a blacksmith who works with a hammer with differing intensity. This type of self-reflexivity in a Post-modern text itself is the paradox of *Aleph* which pulls the narrative apart making the novel a narcissistic narrative. Simultaneously, the use of oneiric optic creates a magic realistic halo in the process of narration.

The chapter *Sharing Souls* pronounces the entry of Hilal, who comes to light the sacred fire—a ritual repeated in the novel. As a violinist, she exhibits hallucinated behaviour which projects her being synonymous with the instrument with her music occasionally ending in palpable silence. The narrative reads the music as ‘Every note leaves in each of us a memory.’ The signifier Hilal is explained as new moon in Turkish. In an autobiographical mode, Hilal narrates the sufferings of childhood, making journey as the essence of life. The narrative depicts how the presence of Hilal is initially evaded by a wad of notes by the friend of the narrator. In the picturesque description of the trip towards Siberia, the effect of the civil war and how it erupts the communist regime are picturesquely described.

When Hilal shows the photograph of cloud, another kinetic signifier is employed by the narrator. She remarks on the cloud: “We are being accompanied on this journey” (*Aleph* 79). Here ‘the subjective I’ transforms into ‘the objective eye’ of *Aleph* and the text connotes on *aleph* as the point at which ‘everything is in the same place at the same time’ (79). A hallucinated mesmerized world of reality is created through the presence of associative signifiers—light and Sacred place, carving an aesthetic place of spirituality. A plethora of signifiers emerge out of past, out of the reincarnated world. Out of

aleph emanated the language comprehensible only to souls. Unspoken signs reveal the exalted and suffocated feelings. Hallucinations invade the mind of the narrator but unable to resist them, in a self-conscious way he transforms himself- into a reincarnated self. Exploration of the past reveal a tunnel of images, secrets, strange dancers, images of goddess with a final shamanic vision of the writer's persona holding a quill pen in one of the hands. The vision testifies another form of archetypal reality –the realization of the soul-mate of several incarnations in Hilal as in the case of Brida and Magus episode. The violet-eyes of Hilal open the doors of tradition and the experiences of the abyss haunt the narrator. These vicarious experiences emphasize the motif of Journey which creates a repetitive mirrored framework as a narrative principle of magic realist texts. For example, in the narrative it influences the life –force of Hilal, Yao, Titiana and the narrator- characters who are engaged with one or other form of quest.

The narrative space elevates itself into the appearance of a confession by the author as the story element progresses. The novel establishes the fact that it is quite natural for a person to appear distant at the same time and to 'feel trapped in the past.' But for Yao, begging will refine a person to broad mindedness of Takuhastu- the Zen Buddhist practice of begging. The fictional space of Aleph reflects on one of the typical elements of 'magic realism'- a constant crossing of thresholds and frontiers: from conscious to unconscious, from wakefulness to dream, from familiar to unfamiliar. The journey to Ekaterinburg exposes the third city of Russia which is rich in minerals and the house of Ipatiev. The narrative pattern do not over-emphasise the linear and chronological time simultaneously, explicating both the meaning and mission

of a writer's vocation. According to Coelho, the world is full of stories that need to be told and repeated. The text quotes:

The writer, the singer, the gardener, the translator, we are all a mirror of our time. We all pour our love into our work. He further explains writing not as different from any other activity done with joy and enthusiasm (89).

The narrator provides two connotations of *Aleph* in the narrative. In the magical tradition, Aleph is explained,

as a point in the universe that contains all other points., present and past, large and small. You normally come across it by chance, as we did on the train. For this to happen, the person, or persons has to be in the actual place where the Aleph exists. We call that a small Aleph. (103)

The second connotation explains:

The great Aleph occurs when two or more people with a very strong affinity happen to find themselves in the small Aleph. Their two energies complete each other and provoke a chain reaction their two energies are the positive and negative poles you get in any battery. (105)

The novelist also interprets Aleph as the cardinality of infinite sets from a mathematical point of view. Thus a thematic subversion of both the notion

and signification of Aleph takes place when it is employed as a connotative signifier and is related to the universal nature of signification. The existence of aleph in magic tradition is differentiated from that of human tradition. In this way, Aleph, the sign plays the role of an associative signifier- the point of convergence of all energy, the coherence of the varied aspects of life. For Coelho, the signifier Aleph reaches an experiential level, when it is related to the cohesion or organic unity of experiences that can be completed through reincarnated births. Yao's evocative note 'Dreamers can never be tamed' attracts Coelho to the perceived world of spiritual reality. The narrative projects Hilal as a female shaman thereby creating the hybrid quality of magic realism. The incessant music from Hilal's violin carries him away to a long deep tunnel of nothingness, into heavy dreamless sleep with the realization of the omnipresence of her soul in every note and in every chord. During an interview with publishers, the narrator reveals the goal of his pursuit as the realization of an adolescent dream. Here Aleph imbibes the pattern of Karma Yoga practiced in oriental philosophy. The binding unfolding nature of love felt by Coelho creates an esoteric flair for the entire aspect of narration of the novel. Salvation has become both the means and end of life's destiny. The protagonist comments: God is neither the subject nor the object, he is the verb, the action and salvation becomes possible through reincarnated experiences.

The chapter 'Like Tears in the Rain' exemplifies the necessity of divine energy. The text establishes 'the present moment.' Coelho remarks: "Time neither moves nor is it stationary. Time changes we occupy one point in that constantly mutating time- our Aleph" (124). Nothing disappears. Everything is stored up in time. The text explains the spatiality of love as it is explained as

something that moves out of time or rather, “both as time and space, but all focused on one single constantly evolving point”(Aleph 125).

The text uniquely situates Reincarnation as an actual ritual encoding both subject and object from a single point of view. Reincarnation, a religious signifier and a trope that occurs cross-culturally and trans-historically in the narrative of Aleph, makes the narrative a historiographic intertextual fiction with a sense of otherness, often willful and sometimes perverse making the novel ‘a Montage of otherness deferred.’ This narcissistic narrative creates a shape of disordered experience, challenging the ordered texts and unified discourses. The narrator becomes too conscious of the ontological status of the self and reveals the insidious nature of the socio-political condition of Brazil. In the reincarnated world of reality in the narrative, death is interpreted not as an enclosure, but just a door into another dimension and love is interpreted as imperishable deviating the attention of the reader from the fluid state of energy. The text elaborates thus: “We talk with the living, with those we believed dead, with those who live in another dimension and with ourselves, with people we once were and the people” (125-6). A kind of introverted semiosis occurs in the interpretation of reincarnation when the consciousness of authorial voice frames the fictionality of the plot which changes from figure to ground resulting in the perception of subject-self as an ‘absent signifier.’ The philosophy of Reincarnation which explains the role of man’s life, infuses the reliable portrayal of life with visionary power.

The magical nature endows it with a large imaginative charge and thereby leads the reader to a phenomenal world that resembles the real world

in the narrative. The experience of Reincarnation along with the shamanic performance provides a tunnel of evocative memories of the past making an ineffable in-between the past and present, an aura of the unknown and mystery transfuse into the narrative. The narrative celebrates the myth and metaphor of reincarnation. Since the metaphor brings together remote, non-contiguous semantic fields as ‘the letter written in the fourteenth century,’ thereby abolishing the distance that separates the chain of events. The symbolism of these two myths – reincarnation and salvation unfolded through shamanism mediate between the known and the unknown, conscious and the unconscious, light and the dark. Thus the fictional space cancels the border between the metaphorical and real making the magic realist context of the text, a reality. The aura of mystery transfuses the narrative of Aleph, the camouflaged voice creates a metafictional attribute through the defocalised nature of narration that projected ‘a sense of the ineffable’ as pointed out by Wendy Faris as the prominent feature of magic realism. Defocalisation provides a dual perspective for all characters except the shaman who is not indulged in evocative memory. This perceived world of reality cannot be explained but only ‘experienced’ through the narrative.

Magic realism’s generic heritage of primitive culture and indigenous tradition in the novel provide the ecstasy of sublime experience for Coelho. Sublime is both an experience of pain, guilt and transgression blurring the nature of ontological quest. With the irreducible element of plot, the novel demarcates the point of transgression in the protagonist. On the one hand, the narrator repeats the purpose of the quest as the realization of both the magic and extraordinary in life. “That is what makes life interesting- believing in

treasures and in miracles” (*Aleph* 281). But on the other, the narrative imbricates the use of shamanic knowledge to provide an example of the magic realist adaptation of historical usages of the sublime.

The narrator introduces Female shamanism through Titiana, an engineer, by profession who transforms every brushstroke into a state of visual meditation. The shamanic performance, initiated by Tatiana brings Hilal closer to the world of spirits and the goddess is transformed into a spirit. The text reveals the shamanic tradition as: “She wanted to do something magical but it turned out to be a cliché, and yet the cliché was transformed into magic because Tatiana was capable of transmuting that energy into something sacred” (139). The experience ends in an esoteric tone in relation to the erotic expressions of desire in the novel. The vision quest in the narrative thus turns to be the principal character of the ecstasy of shamanism. Like Fredrik Barth, who walked on Baktaman tribe of New Guinea (*Torment of Secrecy* 216).

Coelho himself received numerous esoteric initiations of the unknown when he joined the cult of *R-A-M* in his anti-catholic days, under the influence of Aleister Crowley, who establishes an alternate society. (*Confessions* 114-5)

The Romantic primitivism of Brazil enables Coelho to accept the usable, natural, indigenous past. The realms of myth, unconscious and trance create a surrealistic atmosphere, a privileged version of reality, the marvelous / occult growing rich in the world of reality. The hybrid nature of magic realism has been instrumental in alleviating the hiatus between contemporaneity and

tradition- the stillness of time in 'Aleph.' The narrative mode of magical realism appropriates the voice of a Shaman ...“as part of ventriloquism i.e. ‘appropriating a new voice’ to represent the elements of a vanishing or emergent culture...” (*Ordinary Enchantment* 141). As discussed by Wendy Faris, The narrative transmits a shifting focalization that is sometimes more “primitive” belonging to a pagan era. The narrative ventriloquism of Aleph creates a two way cultural bridge by validating shamanism through real descriptions within the textual fabric... magic realist narrative’s “--hallucinogenic creation of the anti-self”- is the creation of a mysterious presence of spirit within the body of realistic fiction...(*Ordinary Enchantment* 157). This equates with the fictive realm suggesting the possibility of reincarnation through shamanism. The hallucinatory mode turns shamanic and Coelho employs oneiric optic to merge the reincarnated hallucinatory world with the world of shamans. Witches appear and disappear in the different inquisition scenes for which the narrator describes himself as an eye-witness. As commented by Edward Tylor, the elementary form of worship is spirit worship or animism, the minimal definition of religion is the belief in spiritual beings as in the case of Coelho. The protagonist seeks a progressive inevitable enlightenment in the peculiar nature of salvation projected.

The conflicting emotions like physical desires and an urge for peace merge in the narrator. In the midst of Aikido, the writer’s imagination turns wild, plunging himself to eroticism. The mystic in Coelho connotes the signifier The Path to Peace both as a metaphor and a symbol:

The Path to Peace flows like a river and because it resists nothing, it has won even before it has begun. The art of peace is unbeatable... if you conquer your self, then you will conquer the world.

In the re-discovery of the path, Life and Death lose their meaning, there are only challenges to be met with joy and overcome with tranquility.

The search for Peace is a form of prayer that generates light and heat. Forget about yourself for a while and understand that in that light lies wisdom and in that heat lies compassion.
(*Aleph* 141-9)

In the role of a pilgrim, the narrator seeks the spiritual fire in The Ring of Fire. The Text explains: “The Ring of Fire is not of this world. One cannot reject it” (*Aleph*154). Conscious of the Golden light emanating out of the Ring and by sheer dint of imagination the protagonist can easily get back to his past- discover the mysteries of past – The consciousness of the spin of the ring - the vibration and reverberation of reincarnation. The ring reflects the passion of the author for women. With the image of the fifth woman, imagination clipped of its wings, the novelist is able to conceive the contents of a letter that was written in July 1492. *Ad extirpanda* reveals how Pope innocent IV gave torture the seal of approval. In this lore of Reincarnation, Coelho is too conscious of the heresy of witches and the nature of eternal damnation. Through the letter, the narrator recollects how the court of inquisition follow cruelty in punishment. For him fear is something necessary for soul and war is

that necessitates peace. In the reveries of the past, Coelho perceives the images of five witches on whom were imposed cruelty, torture and death. Following Starhawk, who explains Wicca, as goddess religion, which focused on life, on the oneness of Self, the narrator aims at an alternate condition of spirituality with emphasis on the reawakening of witchcraft and resurgence of pagan tradition.

From the Ring emerges the image of a church which changes the meaning of signifier 'quest' into a mysterious signified- not as a disentanglement from life but as a progressive knotting to life and spirituality. This is explained as the paradox of subjectivity by David Carr as the difference between being aware of oneself as a causally determined known subject, the limit of the world becomes true here. ("Transcendental Subjectivity and Metaphysics" 104) Quest, the kinetic signifier merges into the lucid expression of becoming. In the ruminations of the novelist regarding the essence of signs/words, he realizes his mission as to lead the heroine to 'grace' and 'truth.' The text explains the insufficiency of words as they are often illusive in appearance. As words cannot fully interpret the destiny of man, in a reflective sense, the icon of the 'Warrior of Light' replenishes the vocation of a writer. In the midst of the journey the novelist realizes the pleasure of his co-passengers and reveals the extraordinary moments of reincarnation that he has with Hilal - the meaning of eternal time that leads to the revelation of the persona as the writer of mid-nineteenth century France. During that trip to Russia both of them realize the past, present and future of lives – the changing frequency of time in Aleph.

The visit reveals the intention of the questers to reach a shore about two hundred metres from their place. The end of the quest in the narrative moves to Vladivostok. When he treads towards the whole length of the train, there is enough satiety in the narrator as he recollected the words of Shaman, 'when I asked, I received.' The Ring of exercise reveals a small town outside 'Cordoba' where he imagines himself as a spectator/witness who has heard the verdict pronounced on the witches. The episode recollects the atrocities shown against the witches in referring to the narrator's role in the act. The chapter re-emphasises the intention of the pursuit-i.e. to be the king of his own world. Author do not want to consider himself as Santiago, the first inspiring character of his widely translated work *The Alchemist*. In the present ruminations, 'a spiritual conjoining of the quester with Aleph' takes place. A total cohesion and fusion of two signifiers 'Salvation' and 'Aleph' occur in the metamorphosis of the transcendental subjective signifier to a reincarnated level. The novel images Coelho as

Pilgrim who travels an endless path. Like the pilgrim who knows of the existence of a treasure, who sees that treasure guided by omens, like the shepherd in *The Alchemist*. For him it is important to arrive at a treasure...(Confessions 29)

The Narrative highlights how darkness reveals the mystery of Aleph with the reappearance of the narrator in a reverie of reincarnation. Undue emphasis on past lives completes the odyssey of the writer. With the song of forgiveness, the narrator is able to foster courage to confront the obstacles of life. The constant urge for a new life, a fresh leash of life haunts the persona

with the flickering fire of quest that remains in the ember of his soul forever. The text concludes the quest as follows:

Sometimes you have to travel a long way in order to find what is near when the rain returns to earth, it brings with it the things of the air. The magical and the extraordinary are with me and with everyone in the universe all the time, but sometimes we forget that and need to be reminded, even if we have to cross the largest continent in the world from one side to the other... that's what makes life interesting- believing in treasures and in miracles.
(*Aleph* 281)

Aleph unravels the mystic journey of the narrator-persona through time and space, through past and present employing an oneiric optic to merge past and present of events. The narrator quester turns into a mythological hero and here the kingdom of God lies 'within.' Thus the sjuzet of the narrative emerges as both intrinsic and extrinsic quest towards salvation.

As argued by the historian, Alex Owen, the 'new occultism' highlights through *Aleph* offers a spiritual alternative, a new occultism in the religious orthodoxy prevailed in Brazil, but one that ostensibly operates without the requirement of faith. New occultism, with its magical operations, initiation rituals and theories of the nature of mind and soul contribute a newly conceptualized subjectivity – marking the innovative sense of the self as '*fin de Siecle*' occultism can be perceived in the narrative space of *Aleph*. Salvation, the signifier complies with occult tradition as a mode of 'new occultism' as

it offers a better alternative. Paulo Coelho, with his suggestions of alternate spirituality through occultism positions himself as a member of the clan of modern occultists. The narrative proves to be efficient in portraying the shamanic tradition that belongs to the hidden and silent voices of tradition. Dreams, legends, myths, created by the shamanic performance attribute to the fantastic atmosphere of the fictitious world. The textual poetics of magic realism in *Aleph* reveal the simultaneous use of magic and myth. Following the developmental pattern, the reader can notice second person omniscient point of view in the alternate titled chapters of the narrative. The erosion of paganism by power in the narrative result in the combination of something amazingly new - for the impossibly old whether it be 'Goddess Religion,' 'Tradition of sun and the Tradition of Moon,' Shamanism, Wicca tradition, the work creates a postmodern and a Semiotic master piece out of *Aleph*. The defocalised nature of magic realism creates a de-colonizing effect subverting notions of salvation and subjectivity. Magic realism begins its cultural work in Latin America and as Fredric Jameson in his essay 'Modernism and Imperialism' has formulated "Latin American literature since the boom has today become perhaps the principal player on the scene of world culture, and has had an unavoidable and inescapable influence, not merely on other Third World cultures as such, but on First World literature and culture as well" (Qtd. in *Ordinary Enchantment* 39).

The 'buried belief' of the Brazilian context, the practice of visiting the dead, the reincarnated past lives happen to be a recurrent motif of Brazilian fiction. It is as Beloved's appearance in Sethe's life in Toni Morrison's *The Beloved*. Like Marquez, Toni Morrison and Fuentes, Coelho has successfully used magic realism to re-imagine history, to envision his own re-incarnated

lives by bringing it forward magically in *Aleph* the quality that aligns him with other magic realistic writers. The real confrontation between the narrator and the shaman in the fictional world orchestrates the narrator's own alienation from religious beliefs that reflect the liminality of the culture of Brazil. Re-imagining or de-focalising of history and tradition is really a move to destabilize established notions of religion and spirituality. As Rushdie and Marques consider both history and fiction as human constructs, Coelho develops alternate sources of salvation through occult references. In due course, the signifier 'salvation' correlates itself to the signified occult/ other in the entire process of narration. Thus the self and other are ontological and mirror images in the case of this narcissist narrative. The meaning of the self gets completed with the presence of the 'other.' As explained by Psychoanalysts, at an intra-personal level, the persona of the 'other' can assume his own unconscious message. The semiotics of the text reveals the ontological otherness of the self of the author reflected through the confessional narrative. As in Burges's short story, *The Aleph*, the novel creates a sublime mode out of the ontological transgressions and spiritual consciousness of the narrative-persona.

The female domestic and public space of the narrative open up the realm of atrocities featured in history through witch hunt and the burning of witches. The different episodes of cruelty recollected in *Aleph* indicate the heightened consciousness of the writer regarding the erasure of female witches and their creativity. The tone of magic realism enables the writer to envision the female more curative occasionally suggesting the 'androgynous' philosophy of the universe through the novel.

As Toni Morrison affirms, the quality of magic realism in the narrative of *Aleph* “provides another way of knowing things” (Evans342). The self-reflexive tone of the novel relates the use of both metaphysical and ontological types of magic realism. Alejo carpentier who reiterated them notices the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural milieu as conducive for the sense of the magical real in everyday life. Even Marquez has taken the position of a magic realist with his belief in Latin American Mythology. The social, political, cultural and geographic milieu of Brazil culminate in the nexus of ‘alternate spirituality’ that is focused through the shamanic tradition of the novel. The energy released out of the ‘Ring of Fire,’ a primordial one naturally purges the soul and helps the persona of the writer to realize his Soul-mate. In the midst of consciousness of time, especially the present moment, the narrative pattern moves out of time and space moulding a magic realistic temporality. As the narrator emphasizes the need of salvation through reincarnated lives, the magic realistic conflation of the narrative emanates out of the myths, the cultural context in which the fiction is set. This results in the ontological aspect of phenomenal reality of the fictional world.

The transgressive and subversive qualities of magic realist tradition culminate in this narrative. The textual context relates on what the Indian critic Kum Kum Sangari points out as the magic realist attack on the dominant culture as it provides a new and more comprehensive mode of referentiality of *Aleph*. Shamanism elucidates an occult world of reality with a new connotation of the signifier ‘salvation,’ subverting notions of spirituality. Simultaneously, Journey, the kinetic signifier creates both a transgressive atmosphere and the politics of travel that focuses on the role of identity. As a

post-modern text, the metaphor of travel is subverted to create a notion of otherness, exoticism and it answers questions of identity.

The possession scenes reveal the esoteric knowledge of the writer. There is a Noah's Ark approach which enables the scholar in Coelho, to preserve and highlight ancient traditions in the face of the modern world. As analysed by Antoine Faivre, the fifth meaning of esotericism as quest for the primordial tradition becomes evocative when Coelho posits the existence of the same through the shamanic tradition. The protagonist becomes too conscious of nature with its occult signatures in the experience of trance along with Yao thus interpreting esotericism 'as the mystery in things themselves.' The use of qualia signs when both the shaman and the narrator react to the effect of trance create a magic realistic milieu to the novel. After the trance, the shaman changes himself into an 'old man' revealing the experience of transmutation, another conspicuous element of esotericism.

The narrative analyses 'life' as an important symbolic sign and in the waters of Lake Baikal, Coelho is as happy as a child, he feels as if enfolded in an energy that is not part of him. The biography *Confessions of a Pilgrim* quotes: "Water is one of the most symbolic things, being one of the basic elements of life and creation" (*Confessions* 149). The confessional novel 'Aleph' recollects how identity and otherness are related to each other in Coelho. The scrappy identity of the author also provides duplicity of Brazilian identity - the doubleness of the diverse culture of Brazil. The self-conscious narrativity of the novel reflects on the artistic development of the writer who questions his own subject position through this imaginary tale. The very mode

of confession as a genre is subverted when it stands between the demoralizing and rebellious tendencies of the novel. Confession leads to self questioning reflecting the tendency of the post modern poetics of genre 'novel.' Self revelation as a cardinal axis of the confessional narrative offers both meaning and subjectivity in Aleph. The subject-position of Coelho is at stake when Brazil poses as a heterogenous nation with cultural, racial and ethnic make-up. That is why Homibhaba noticed an in-between space in Latin- American literature as a place of hybridity where cultural meaning is produced and repeated as a collective process. As the cultural ontopology of Brazil creates a liminal signifying space, an analysis of the specific semiotic system operating in the novels of Coelho will be beneficial. Coelho's pervasive use of myth as one of the structuring elements establish vision-quest as the main feature of ecstatic shamanism which is projected through the novel.

The narrative provides insights of New age spirituality the most important cultural vector shaping the world of Coelho. The novelist imbibes it as his personal philosophy, with a pristine beauty of prayer and a craving for divine love.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A semiotic reading of salvation in the novels of Paulo Coelho – *The Alchemist*, *Brida*, *The Witch of Portobello*, and *Aleph* result in the analysis of these works as Postmodern attempts to project the spiritual quest of the persona of the author and his protagonists who were set against the liminality of Brazilian culture. With a sense of irony, the narrator creates a facsimile of his subjective self and the position of the ‘other’ with an emphasis to alternate spiritual connotations. Notions of Alternate spirituality emerge as a correlative

paradigm of occult tradition, esotericism and the revival of Goddess spirituality in the magic realist fictional space of these novels. The quibbling nature of the diverse signifiers employed in the narratives proves to be a nexus of these traditions. A new reading and a revival of the Shamanic traditions, pagan practices and the community of witches is made possible by Coelho. The Brazilian writer mired by the permanent liminality noticed in the 'lost traditions,' intends to erase their marginalized positions. It is not the 'Byronic cry of wilderness' that the reader notices among the female protagonists of his fiction who enact witchcraft as an act of empowerment that is reflected in their individual and spiritual quests.

Incorporating Oneiric optic and Ontological magic realism, the novels of Coelho depict an iconic link between spirituality and materiality. There is perfect fusion of the quotidian and the fantastic in the coterminous worlds of reality projected in the novels. When characters Santiago, Brida, Athena and the narrator protagonist in *Aleph* move like transgressive itineraries, the stream of signification transcends the closed semiotic boundaries, creating a hetroclite and hetrotopic space of ambiguity with the beauty of signs and words. This makes the analysis of signifiers meaningful and revealing. The study identifies salvation as an 'associative signifier' with diverse interpretations of alternate spirituality. *The Alchemist* (1998) that pivots dream as the core and crux of the central motif of quest create a fantastic world of realty subverting the paradigm of 'Salvation' as an indication of the realization of a personal legend, as something related to the materiality of life. The transgressive and subversive qualities of magic realism gain prominence as the quest pertains to a dream-like quality and the narrative fuses two styles of

narration- the epigrammatic and the folkloric modes. The metaphor of journey acts as a quest motif creating both a structural and a circular plot pattern of the novel. While the novel focuses on magic realistic attributes such as tellurism, levitation, telekinesis, the functionality of these techniques gain relevance through the host of kinetic signifiers used in the narrative. The foregrounding function of the myth of Narcissus interprets salvation as personal, simultaneously providing the metaphysical innate nature of it. Santiago in *The Alchemist* reaches archetypal heights in his engagements with ontological questions related to the transcendental signifier salvation. The essence of alchemy as transmutation of souls permeate through the pages as a signifier continuum. With the result, the semiotics of salvation reaches the position of a transcendental signifier in the fictional space of the narrative of '*The Alchemist*.'

The ontological queries related to salvation can be analysed as the heightened mode of perception in the quest of Athena for alterity or otherness through her bouts of revelation as Hagia Sophia in *The Witch of Portobello* (2007). As a contrast to the third person narrative point of view in *The Alchemist*, the polyphonic fragmented episodic mode of narration in *The Witch of Portobello* reflects the metaphysical anxiety of the protagonist, the nature of alienation emanated out of her split persona. In the episodes related by the focal-narrator Ryan, who reports and analyses the cause of murder of Athena, salvation, emerges in the narrative as an 'indigenous spiritual paradigm,' the signifier of 'otherness' along with the revisitation of mythic traditions namely that of the gypsies and Mother Goddess-Hagia Sophia. The gypsy tradition being symbolic, fuses fantasy and reality grouping the world to

that of magic realistic tradition. The different irreducible elements of magic realism create a hybrid atmosphere out of mythology and pagan tradition/spiritual tradition. Salvation acts as a pragmatic sign of spirituality, that takes the shape of an occult sign in the novel. In the female quest of immanence, Athena, herself and the myth of Hagia Sophia function as 'paradigmatic signifiers' in the movement of the plot of the narrative. The myth imbibes itself into the semiological system of significations of the narrative creating a coherence out of the wholeness of the 'quest of the self' in Athena. The primal scenes of the narrative projects the depth of human relationship as in the case of the gypsy mother of Athena and the sense of being a member of a dominant out-group and the consciousness of absent motherhood framed a witch out of her in the personal and spiritual quests.

The exhibitiv nature of the shamanic performance reveals the polarity of 'otherness' in Athena. The indigenous spirituality compliments on the Wicca tradition in the novel when it equates Athena with the female principle. Through the female principle, the narrator explodes a spiritual revolution that is possible in the three paradigmatic signs-sacred, earth and centre. Both of these traditions of Wicca and Mother Goddess are 'the paired signifiers' that indicate woman-centred spirituality, the depth of signifiers as the signification of the 'big soul.' Like Flaubert and Ibsen, Women empowerment in Coelho remains a thoughtful reaction focused on indigenous spirituality, a revival of the Female Principle. Female principle is interpreted as a force that creates and transforms everything through immanence. The dismantling of the traditional concept of a woman leads to the internalization of otherness. The text observes salvation as both transcendental and indigenous to the core and as in the case of Indian

philosophy, the means of realization of both turns infinite in the novel. The fictional space thus creates a divine aura, a kind of blanket between the physical and the spiritual planes of reality. The text elaborates the mystic in Coelho revealing the illumined and transitory nature of consciousness in Athena.

The pursuit of signs in *The Witch of Portobello* reveal many other traits of magic realism –mythology, the pagan tradition, the experiences of trance at Portobello street in London that infuse the indigenous and the modern worlds. The fictional world combines the phenomenal with the real producing a telluric effect in the narrative. Tellurism that heightens the magic realist texture of the novel alludes to the awakening of an apprehending nature that lay dormant in the soul of the nation shaped by the subdued Indian and African heritage. The magic realist tendencies in the fictitive realm change with places of telluric effect as in the case of Pyramids in Tangiers in *The Alchemist*, scenes of wilderness related to forests in *Brida*. The Portobello Street in *The Witch of Portobello*, and Lake Baikal in *Aleph*. The use of myth in these novels endow these places with attributes of allegory and impose a richness of quality. A mysterious sense of aesthetics emerge out of the meticulous use of these locales. Coelho uses paganism as a counter narrative of alternate spirituality for targeting modern age's problematic religion. The post-modern Brazilian cultural space thereby creates a zone of occult poetics and stability in the narratives of Coelho. The use of magic realism is both ontological and metaphysic in the narrative tradition of *The Witch of Portobello*.

The narrative mode of magic realism in the novels of Coelho encompass different cultural worlds and frequently approximates a primitive aesthetic attempt to represent elements of a vanishing or emergent culture to speak using or appropriating another voice, a kind of ventriloquism. Liliana, the gypsy mother of Athena in *The Witch of Portobello* and the Shaman in *Aleph* are voices appropriated by the narrator in order to comprehend 'otherness of religion' as alternate spirituality. With the mode of ventriloquism the novels engulf the gap between true religion and shamanism, the hiatus between high and low cultures, following the pattern of Postmodernism. The shaman and the gypsy woman speak for the marginalized voices acting as the hallucinogenic creation of the anti-self.

Adapting itself to Post-modern practices, form is almost like a theme or character in the fiction of Coelho who has evolved a new tradition of experimentation in the narrative use of language. The quibble of words or signs that the reader gathers in the novels can be equated with the playful quality of language in Post-modern fiction. The words of Coelho infuse themselves into a host of associative signifiers indicating varying paradigmatic levels. For example, Salvation indicates the signification of both transcendental and occult. Hagia Sophia turns into a female goddess and Athena to a shaman in *The Witch of Portobello*. Similarly Dance and Calligraphy act as conduit expressions of energy that leads the protagonist, to the centre. Athena, as a contrast to her association of her name with wisdom as the Goddess of Greece, positions herself in the narrative, to occult practices and knowledge.

Coelho's *Brida* reflects on the unending tale of a beautiful Irish girl's quest after the ritualistic Tradition of the Sun and The Tradition of the Moon. Within the realm of esoteric spirituality, the narrative pattern is infused with eco-spiritual trappings. The dark night, a connotation of faith and the quest of Salvation act as interfused metaphors of spirituality and the occult in the novel. The telluric feature of the narrative explains the occult as a reflection of paganism through the Wicca tradition. The narrative explicates the androgynous vision of alchemy in Brida's realization of the Soulmate. The concept of time fantasy fuses the real world of Brida with the invisible world of magic through magic realism.

The quest of self transforms into a quest for an appropriate language and its semiotics in *Aleph*. As the New age imbibes the culture of Narcissus, there is a quest for paradisaal harmony in the narrative the narrative emphasizes indigenous spirituality through the revival of shamanism. Thus the New Alternate spirituality is the transcendental signified promoted by Coelho. The spiritual realm is by and large present in the fictional world like the world of reality. In *Aleph*, Coelho's intention is to restore 'the kingdom of words' by providing a space for New age spirituality and the novels try to articulate his identity in the new space. The narrator re-writes and reshapes the mythic history. The narrative strategies function like a spiritual conversion as the novels unearth hidden histories and myths. The novels are re-defined attempts of spiritual re-construction. Salvation, a search of spirituality in the novels of Coelho is a search of wholeness, re-memory and ancient spiritualism, a collective repository of wisdom that gives guidance and solace to future

generations. The subjective self of the author transforms into 'absent signifier' when the quest motif of the novel reaches archetypal heights.

The novels of Coelho incorporates quest in terms of mythology creating a structural principle out of it. The 'functionality of signs' gain prominence in the myths employed by Coelho in depicting the 'occult tradition' of the novels. The myth of Narcissus introduces the role of *The Alchemist* in initiating action in Santiago and at the same time foregrounds the fate of the protagonist. The 'mythic nature of a quest' reveals the character of Santiago in his transcendental level of attainment of divine language. 'The Myth of Hagia Sophia' depicts the multiple and fragmented nature of selfhood in Athena. The travails of Brida reflect the quest of being after the myth of 'The tradition of the Sun and The tradition of the Moon.' The mythical past acts as a commentary on human condition. In *Aleph*, the myth of reincarnation unravels the ontological quest of the author after 'the Ring of Fire' that releases cosmic energy. Out of the semiological system of myths, a second order semiological system is derived through the situations that delineated the character's persona in order to compile the meaning and the depth of alternate spirituality focused by these texts.

The use of myths as an 'obvious framing device' create a paradoxical relationship between the form and content in the novels. Framing also enhances the intertextuality of the sjuzet making the novels meta-narratives. All the four texts create para-texts and hyper narratives out of the original stories/ myths created through the novels. The novels of Coelho fall into the category of post-modernist texts which attempt to perceive experience through structure and

frames that provide a meta fictional gloss to fiction. In the mythic revisions of the narratives, Brazilian syncretism is reshaped through the new chronotype of spirituality. Even though it is impossible to know the beginning and end of a frame, most often these frames initiate action that facilitate them and get involved in a situation in the fictional milieu. All the four novels make use of intertextuality and multiple voices as the initial characteristic of post-modernism. The narratives also appropriate intertextuality to affirm the cultural authority. In the case of *The Alchemist*, the plot of *The Alchemist* and Santiago move as parallel sjuzet, the former serving the frame of the latter creating an atmosphere of intertextuality. In *The Witch of Portobello*, the Myth of Hagia Sophia acts as an 'overt frame' incorporating a visionary context of hallucination causing a mesmerised magic realist effect. In *Brida*, the dream of the Irish girl, as Loni in the past life (Loni-Talbo), with the perennial philosophy packed through the Tarot pack of cards. The word Soulmate acts as a symbolic signifier related to esotericism. Against the milieu of reincarnation, occult tradition plays the role of 'otherness' in the novels of Coelho. The interpretations of the two traditions- The Tradition of Sun and The Tradition of Moon by Magus and Wicca indicate both the feminine and masculine traditions (Moon and Sun) as signifiers of alternate spirituality.

Hilal in *Aleph* reveal the experiences of women's sexuality as an expression of the holistic nature of life and 'the body parable' of oneness and inter connectedness of all matter and energy. Thus the metaphysic of self in the novel creates a male self urging transcendence and the female self craving for immanence in the novels connoting different aspects of spirituality. Coelho's insistence on the ineffability of true identity makes him suggest the depths of

the mysterious inexpressible spontaneous self. The novels create a 'living moment' in the character's response to physical universe. When the narratives meander between history and fiction, the mythic sense of the novels convey the historic sense of the writer and his consciousness of tradition.

The realization of 'otherness' adopts different forms and shapes in the semiotic analysis of this study, as it explains otherness in the quest of these characters as both ontological and cultural and as one related to the hierarchy of religion. The novels of Coelho interpret spiritual quest and salvation as a quality of otherness in the portrayal of the occult characters and situations. Thereby the novelist makes a significant contribution by providing space to otherness-through witchcraft, occult and shamanism-the different modes of alternate spirituality. Coelho adopts an individual indigenous mode of explication of spirituality. Santiago's character reflect 'the other' as an object of consciousness. In the case of both *Brida* and *Athena*, they are portrayed as women of great aspirations in their inclination towards magic/ witchcraft and with their superimposed qualities of otherness. Both have adopted journey through famished roads. The narrator allows the witches to be reified creating the characteristic quality of exoticism out of otherness- both social and cultural otherness. Within the trope of occult tradition, there is polarity in the signifier of otherness which include both sameness and difference. The three novels – *Brida*, *The Witch of Portobello* and *Aleph* present both connotations of faith and create occult worlds simultaneously. The other with-in the women represented through their attempts to demonise powers. The reader can gather an interpretation in relation to the historicity of shamanism and the production of self and subjectivity in a discourse. In *Aleph*, the self and the other are

portrayed as mirror –images where Coelho is able to recognize his ontological self in the otherness of reincarnated past. Influenced by Indian cosmogony, Coelho's belief in reincarnation indicate the knowledge of Karmic cycle of Oriental tradition. The use of magic realism is powerful in creating 'coterminous worlds' of self and otherness, with salvation, the signifier acting as 'the other of occult' and witchcraft ennobling the other as representatives of Brazilian cultural hybridity. From this perspective, magic realism with its irreducible elements that question the dominant notion of salvation constitute a kind of liberating poetics. The technique of Magic Realism create both weird and fantastic spaces helping the narrator to challenge icons of religion. In the suspended vision of reality, Coelho's novels project the debunking nature of the signifier 'salvation' in the entire semiosis of alternate spirituality projected. All the novels taken into consideration are clear indications of semiotic subversion of the paradigm salvation. The mythic consciousness reshapes the narrative and a new chronotype of spirituality is created out of the subversive deployment of mythic narration. The mythic revisions reshape the narratives of Coelho. Out of the mosaic pattern of mythical space, an elusive mystical universe is depicted in the novels emphasizing the timeless need of spirituality in the form of indigenous spiritual consciousness. The novels have hewn the mythical method to make the pantheistic philosophy more emphatic.

The fictitive realm of Coelho impregnate journey as an important 'topoi,' the reason for which resides in the colonial past and in the impact of the three 'sad races' of Brazil. Diverse elements interrelate and disseminate through the device of journey /pursuit and the act of writing. The old notions of art and artistic in Coelho are being replaced by new notions of creativity.

Journey, a quest motif, the kinetic signifier reflects the confessional mode of writing in Coelho with recasting notions of subjectivity in the latest work 'Aleph.' The diverse novels portray the image of Paulo Coelho as a pilgrim who travelled an endless path seizing the spiritual adventures and realizing the 'omens.' The basic qualities of a post-modern novel, its self-reflexiveness and historicity can be perceived in his novels and they speak of the possibility of an observed culture- the locus of Latin-America, voicing the capability of converting the interpreting culture into an interpreted one.

Coelho's creation of female protagonists is a eulogy on the 'wild woman' concept by including the mythic traditions of the shaman and Magus simultaneously. The curing ceremonies portrayed in *The Witch of Portobello* provides the picture of a culture in which women are central to everything and even the story telling functions as a ceremony for curing. The pagans possessed some special attributes of healing for the troubled psyche of the heroines who appear fragmented in their lost sense of being. For example, The Magus in *Brida*. The Shaman in *Aleph* acts as an accomplice of Coelho in the journey of reincarnated lives. In this respect novels appear as journeys to healing. The very signifier 'Journey' acts as a paradigm of curing ceremony. The novelist emphasizes the occult in the personification of Athena and Brida as Spirits and as reincarnations of female principle. The novelist relates Goddess consciousness to alternate spirituality. Through Women's spirituality, the essential nature of femininity in the novels gets associated with the creative organic power of thought. The sign occult becomes empirical and a logical necessity of the modern hour. As Jung discussed, a new religious innovation is developed through visions, dreams and fantasies. Alternate /Goddess

spirituality creates a new religious consciousness and order for the reading public.

Like Euripides's Medea, Coelho's heroines reveal the new experiences of women as an important ritual for spiritual transformation. The quest of the female begins from an experience of nothingness to immanence, the centre of human consciousness. All the heroines except Fatima lack a 'coherent self' in the realm of Coelho's fiction. They meander through the dismantled notions of selfhood, seek 'the otherness of the self' through 'the quiet empty spaces of their alienated self,' regains strength through 'the dark night of the soul.' The spiritual heroines realize the dark zone as neither dark nor impenetrable. They are engaged with a spiritual, mythical and an archetypal quest of coherence-womanhood. Thus Alternate spirituality remains an unhewn stone or a New Atlantis, newly risen, in the fictional space of Coelho. A new hermeneutics of witchcraft as religion is derived by the writer making the reader gather the witch as an extraordinary symbol-both spiritual and magical- a woman who lives outside the definition of society .Witchcraft traditions which are rarely written down transforms into an absolute reality of Mother goddess and it is represented metaphorically in the novels of Coelho.

Memory creates an evocative space in the novels as it helps to reveal the consciousness of the protagonists. Memory pertains to a dreamy space in Santiago and it becomes a nostalgia of recollected experiences in Athena, a reappearance of past in Loni-turbo episode in the case of Brida, a memory of past-lives and different generations in the character of Coelho as narrator.

Thus the individual memory of characters turns into the collective consciousness of pagan tradition and shamanism.

The novels celebrate the cultural syncretism of Brazil, when the rapture in the subject-position of the writer utilizes the kingdom of words in 'Aleph' to reconstruct his own identity. The semiotics of the author's vocation emerges out of the fictive realm through different perspectives as follows:

- a. Quest/pursuit of life.
- b. The cultural liminality that creates a different pattern of religious perspective.
- c. The vocation of a writer as a connotative sign of the self.
- d. The novels as perception of linguistic signs. Like Santiago, the great protagonist of *The Alchemist*, Coelho himself gets acquainted with 'the puzzle and dream of life.'

Conscious of the cultural vacuum, the writer is conscious of the religious indeterminacy opted for otherness of religion. In *Aleph*, the reader can realize the threshold of positive energy, the culmination of all energies. Coelho frames a semiotics of his own religious position, the vocation of a writer and the 'écriture' of writing. What is begun as an odyssey of the protagonists shift into a personal quest after coherence in Paulo Coelho and the semiotics of salvation culminates into a pragmatic philosophy in the fictional space.

The fictional oeuvre of Coelho suggests that he has developed a pattern of adopting differing modes of narration without affecting the temporal sequentiality. Brevity and simplicity of language, deeply embedded with penetrative revelations of life make Coelho, a widely translated popular author. Like Clarice Lispector, the novelist has opted for subversion of narrative techniques, linguistic strategies which create both illusion and reality to the readers with different slices of life, with enigmatic values that move beyond the signs /signifiers.

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