

Chapter III

Psycho Synthesis - Synthesis Realised

Psychological study is the study of the mind, brain and behaviour. While the brain refers to the physical part of human physiology, the mind refers to the subjective feelings and thoughts and the resultant actions can be taken as behaviour. The advent of technology has helped in a scientific study of the working of the brain, the chemical reactions which lead to certain thought processes and the actions thereof. The actual working of the mind has bewildered psychologists and this has led to some path breaking discoveries and theories in psychology. As early as in 1843, John Stuart Mill in his *System of Logic* had felt that psychology should become observational and experimental. Sigmund Freud's contribution to the study of the mind such as the id, the ego and the superego has helped psychologists arrive at certain conclusions regarding the working of the mind. A number of developments in the field of psychology has led to arriving at various theories and branching of this science which covers all aspects of human life and behaviour as individuals and as in a group, society. In 1879, Wilhelm Wundt set up the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig where students were trained to experiment with thought processes. He advocated the method of introspection to examine the subjective mental experiences. William James, whose *Principles of Psychology* remains to this day as one of the most influential books in psychology sought the method of functionalism. He was concerned with the operation of the mind, how the mind, and the human behaviour has changed for the preservation of human species. He was heavily influenced by Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution. All these developments in the understanding of psychology leads to the most important aspect of human behaviour- the psycho synthesis. The understanding of the

mind and the influence of various factors that lead to a certain way of thinking and acting has enabled the emergence of a very powerful branch of psychology called the psychosynthesis.

Psycho synthesis, developed by the Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli, is a therapeutic approach focussing on personal growth and development. Psycho synthesis aims at the individual's need to synthesize various aspects of the self and evolve as a self-actualized person. Every individual has certain potentials and is in the process of constant development, growing and realising the potential that is within him and is confronted by choices and decisions along with it the responsibility that it entails. The awareness of this motivation determines these choices. The recognition of the depth and seriousness of human life and the anxiety and the fear which envelops the lives and the need to face it, overcome and win over that fear leads to the synthesis.

The semantic meaning of the word suggests the synthesis of the various aspects of the mind, as propounded by Freud the Id, the Ego and the Superego. The word has in itself the unfathomable attributes of the mind and combination of these faculties, a "mental synthesis" (Assagioli 10). Psycho synthesis also has within itself the relationship between and the individual psychology and the subterranean layers where challenging correlations between the individual's morphology and the pathogenic character give rise to the need to study the matrix of the psychic activity. This leads to the assertion of the 'pluridimensional character of human personality' (Assagioli 14) and the need to address the imperfections and conflicts and ways to resolve them. Paulo Coelho's stories are of the individuals who face these challenges in life and also find harmony at the end.

The chapter analyses the journey of the characters' transformation from conflicted beings

to individuals who have attained a synthesis through Assagioli's principles of Psychosynthesis.

In the works of Paulo Coelho, the world is that of an ordinary man's, but he has to struggle to attain certain rewards. This reward is his understanding of his own self. In this process of understanding he faces, encounters situations and people who challenge this growth, but are actually the means to achieve this synthesis.

Assagioli suggests four stages for the attainment of the goal, freedom from enslavement and achieving a harmonious integration, true self-realisation and right relationship with others. They are, a thorough knowledge of one's personality, control of its various elements of the personality, realisation of one's true self – the discovery or creation of a unifying centre and psychosynthesis, the formation or reconstruction of the personality around the centre.

An analysis of the characters of Paulo Coelho pictures the basic conflicts inherent in human nature. As Saul McLeod notes, when these conflicts are resolved and they become what Maslow terms as self-actualised individuals moving towards the highest need of Transcendence. Each of the novels taken for study are analysed in this aspect. *The Alchemist*, one of the profound novels that has made a powerful impact on the audience, is the story of an Andalusian shepherd boy who is unaware of the conflicts within on the physical level. He reaches the stage of self-actualisation by using every opportunity that comes his way; meeting people, learning from every situation. Everything around, impacts and influences a person's cognizance of the universe. A person learns about himself and understands his calling from the result of the impact of the world around him. This is an extensive exploration of the vast regions of

unconsciousness. The unconscious is a repository of the various feelings and passions which drive a person towards any sort of action. Santiago, the shepherd boy, wanted to discover the elixir of life. The recurrent dream of a hidden treasure takes him to places he had undreamt of. Santiago felt he had a purpose in life, that is to seek his personal legend. As simple shepherds his parents wanted him to enter the seminary, and seek God. But he could not tie himself to the closed walls of the seminary and find God. "I couldn't have found God in the seminary" (Coelho, *TA* 10). Being a shepherd offered him the opportunity and new routes to new places. The quest to explore the world and the persistent dream become complementary to each other. Jeremy Taylor points out that as dreams are pointers towards a primal world, exploration and interpretation of the dreams provide the necessary cue to the future action that will be decisive. This makes him seek the help of the old woman, the interpreter of dreams, and the dream becomes a motivating factor. The old woman does not take the price for deciphering the dream, to go to the pyramids of Egypt to find the treasure, instead she wants a share of the treasure. That ensures Santiago that there is a treasure and it can be found. Dreams are something very personal and each one's dream is unique because, "dreams are the language of God. When He speaks in our language I can interpret. But if He speaks in the language of the soul only you can understand" (Coelho, *TA* 13). Another person who helps Santiago to understand himself is the old man who calls himself the King of Salem. The most quoted words of Coelho "when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it" (*TA* 23). Santiago knew his calling but to keep alive his deep calling he needed people like the King of Salem. Every now and then people do need something or someone to remind them of their mission. "Because you are trying to realize your

destiny. And you are at a point where you're about to give it all up" (Coelho, *TA* 24). The old man talks about the principle of favourability. That is what makes one explore the possibility of doing things and understanding oneself. The beginner's luck gives the needed confidence. The story of the boy with the spoon of oil who is in search of the secret of happiness teaches the shepherd boy to be watchful of everything around him. This knowledge helps him in the desert of Egypt.

The King of Salem gives him two stones, the chance to read omens. The Universe is mysterious, and to understand it an ordinary man needs a force beyond him. Omens are the language of the universe and they reveal the meaning only when we believe in them, have faith in them. At one time he lost those stones. This is also a revelation, to continue to accept what comes along. The merchant who bought wool from him and the merchant's daughter, prompted in him the will to live and enjoy life. He felt a necessity to impress the merchant's daughter so that she would become his partner for life. He took pride that he was able to do that with stories that he had read from the books but "would tell them as if they were from his personal experience. She would never know the difference, because she didn't know how to read" (Coelho, *TA* 17). The books that he read always open up new worlds, worlds filled with adventure. His sheep was a great source of knowledge. His sheep had taught him the language of enthusiasm because they are always happy to follow the path, though, the same, as each day is new and dawns with a new hope. After losing Urim and Thummim and also the money, with no possession, the shepherd boy works for the crystal merchant, he was able to get rid of all the negative thoughts. He gave a new hope to the crystal merchant by resetting the shop. Resetting the shop is resetting himself. Making himself pure to learn the alchemy of life. When he cleaned the

crystal he was able to clean himself, “he could free himself from negative thoughts” (Coelho, *TA* 85). When he joined the caravan to go to Egypt, he met an Englishman in pursuit of the study of alchemy. He teaches Santiago to value everything. All are tested for what we are “Every second of the search is an encounter with God” (Coelho, *TA* 138). By the end of the journey he had understood that everybody is tested for everything for “the soul of the world tests everything” (Coelho, *TA* 138) to make one worthy of living on this planet. Santiago becomes worthy to receive the treasure, whatever it might be.

Personality is the sum total of a person’s attitude, his understanding of life and people. Having understood one’s personality, it is also important to objectively know who we are. This helps in disassociation and ‘disidentification’ (Assagioli 19) from oneself to have a better control of self. Disassociation from what is harmful to the self and thus having control over self and utilising the energies thus gained from this realisation helps one to realise the true potentialities and move towards synthesis. Santiago felt he wanted to know the world. The sheep taught him many things. “He had only to allow the sheep to set the route for a while, and he would discover other interesting things” (Coelho, *TA* 11). But he had to pay the price of one tenth of the sheep to the King of Salem in order to find the treasure. To know about the treasure was binding Santiago unlike the baker who gave up his desire of travelling to settle down as a baker. There has to be created a “psychological distance” (Assagioli 20) in order to critically analyse the situation to gain objectification. The old man had realised that Santiago needed this and so he asked for the price. He said like the Baker, Santiago also was “trying to realise your destiny. And you are at the point where you’re about to give it all up” (Coelho, *TA* 24). Santiago had to win over his love for the merchant’s daughter also as he felt she was interested in him but

she was rather interested in his stories. The stories that he had told her were not his own. They were what he had read from the books, but to excite her he called them his own. This falsity also had to be given up, because any search will not succeed with anything that is false in it. He loses Urim and Thummim with which he could read omens and also the money. And he had to rely only on himself to realise his destiny. His destiny took him to the crystal merchant. He had to learn everything, take control over the situation and he learnt. As he reset the crystal shop, he reset himself. The crystal merchant said, “good for the boy to clean the crystal pieces, so that he could free himself from negative thoughts” (Coelho, *TA* 85). Once he lost those which he thought would be a shield, money, the ability to read the omens, he unconsciously took control over himself. He was able to leave the crystal merchant and proceed further in his mission to find the treasure, to find his destiny.

He joined the caravan going to Egypt. His encounter with the tribesmen, the Englishman, the alchemist who really wanted to study for the sake of it, Fatima, the girl with whom he fell in love, all helped him synthesise his being. He learnt from the Englishman that destiny was not the end, but the way of life. That was why other alchemists had failed. “They were looking only for gold” (Coelho, *TA* 132). He was ready to understand what life was. He took control over his thoughts that guided him. And he was able to understand what the real treasure was.

The true self, the pure self-awareness is often confused with the conscious personality. It is the centre of consciousness as different from the various sensations, thoughts and feelings that one experiences. As Assagioli puts it , “The conscious self is generally not only submerged in the ceaseless flow of psychological contents but seems to disappear altogether when we fall asleep, when we faint, when we are under the effect

of an anaesthetic or alcohol, or in a state of hypnosis” (16). It becomes the synthesising centre. This self is unaffected by the bodily conditions and one has to recognise this for a synthesis. The characters in the novels are affected and effected by various impulses, physical and psychological. These impulses and drives have to be coordinated in order to realise one’s true self. The conscious self is reawakened by various factors like different situations in which one is placed in life, different people that one meets, the exchange of feelings that happens when situations and people crisscross help in the discovery of this unified self.

Santiago is a shepherd boy. But he felt a calling which was not usual for a person of his kind. He recognized the inherent nature of wanderlust in him as is in the flock of sheep that he tended. He sensed that the flock had much to teach him about the world than he would learn in a seminary. Slowly he moved towards the higher calling. But this discovery of the self was not just a vertical journey. He met the old man, the King of Salem, who talked to him about destiny. “You have succeeded in discovering your destiny” (Coelho, *TA* 22) and he also understood that “to realise one’s destiny is a person’s real obligation. All things are one” (Coelho, *TA* 23). He had to explore the world so that his calling would be kept alive. The loss of Urim and Thummim did not affect him much. “I promised that I would make my own decisions” (Coelho, *TA* 43). “I am an adventurer” (Coelho, *TA* 44). His association with the crystal merchant qualified him to cleanse himself of anything that deterred him from reaching his destiny. The adventurer in him chose to leave the place and set out towards Egypt, to the pyramids, where he was told the treasure lay.

He became one among the travellers to Egypt in the caravan along with the Englishman who was in search of the Alchemist. Santiago had the peak experience when he decided to move further on in his journey. The Englishman heard of the story and remarked, “That’s the principle that governs all things, he said. “In alchemy, it’s called the Soul of the World. When you want something with all your heart, that’s when you are closest to the Soul of the World. It’s always a positive force... We are part of that soul, so we rarely recognize that it is working for us. But in the crystal shop you probably realized that even the glasses were collaborating in your success” (Coelho, *TA* 82). When the caravan reached an oasis, and the two of them, Santiago and the Englishman, went in search of the Alchemist, Santiago saw the girl, Fatimah. Instantly he realized that he was in love with her. He had understood the universal language of love and, “when two such people encounter each other, and their eyes meet, the past and the future become unimportant. There is only that moment, and the incredible certainty that everything under the sun has been written by one hand only. It is the hand that evokes love, and creates a twin soul for every person in the world. Without such love, one’s dreams would have no meaning. “*Maktub*, thought the boy” (Coelho, *TA* 98). This is the peak experience as it deals with the experiences of love, joy and Truth and when the feeling is, “‘right’, when everything around us feels harmonious, and our lives are filled with qualities such as Love, Joy and Truth, we can make positive affirmations that will expand us.” (Parfitt, 19)

Psychosynthesis helps in grounding these qualities for a beautiful transformation through assimilation. Fatima advised him to continue the journey as the war in the desert might not come to an end and that should not deter him from his dream of finding the treasure. Fatima, in a way became his “superconscious, our evolutionary future, the region from

where we receive all inspiration and illumination” (Parfitt 27). She assured him of their love and she worded it beautifully. “The dunes are changed by the wind, but the desert never changes. That’s the way it will be with our love for each other” (Coelho, *TA* 102).

Santiago progressed into the last stage of psychosynthesis, the formation or reconstruction of the personality around the centre. In order to achieve this synthesis it is necessary to resolve the course and purpose of action. Santiago stood in the centre of action. Fatima, whom destiny had given to him, reiterated that he has to go in search of the treasure. “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” (Coelho, *TA* 126). He met the alchemist who would take him through the desert, on the road to the treasure. He learnt from the alchemist that the only way to learn was through action. This is how the Andulasian shepherd boy has crossed this far in life. Practical psychosynthesis utilises the available energies by transformation of the unconscious forces that lie concealed within oneself. His love for Fatima, coupled with his desire to search for the treasure are the catalytic forces and he has met the right person, the alchemist who would teach him the alchemy of life. His personality is enhanced by “creative affirmation” (Assagioli 25). He understood through the wise words of the alchemist that action is the right and only way to succeed. The alchemy of life is in living. Those who could not succeed, “were seeking the treasure of their destiny, without wanting actually to love out the destiny” (Coelho, *TA* 132). Action is to understand the marvels of creation. It has become an auto suggestion in Santiago. When he feels that his heart is a traitor in the sense that, “It doesn’t want me to go on” (Coelho, *TA* 135), the wise man replies that it is because the heart is cautious that

it should not lose anything that it has won. But on the contrary if one does not listen, the heart will not keep quiet, the alchemist's advice is to keep listening to the heart because it will never fail. Santiago realised that every second is an "encounter with God" (Coelho, *TA* 137) and Santiago feels a "creative affirmation" (Assagioli 25) as he learns of the real meaning of alchemy.

The alchemist's advice was that he had to pay heed to the omens and apprehend the lessons as he would be continuously tested by the Soul of the world, now that his heart had returned to it. This is the point when most people give up their search. "Every search begins with the beginner's luck. And every search ends with the victor being severely tested" (Coelho, *TA* 139). As they continue their journey they were taken captive by the tribesmen and the alchemist tells of Santiago as an alchemist who understands "the forces of nature. And he wants to show you his extraordinary powers" (Coelho, *TA* 146). At this point the actual reconstruction of a new personality of Santiago begins. This is demonstrated when the alchemist told the chief of tribesman that Santiago could destroy the camp with the force of the wind. And he needed only three days for that. When confronted with an unlikely situation the hidden tendencies and capacities are pushed to the conscious level, there is an operation of energies and a transmutation is effected "just as heat is changed into motion and electric energy... emotions are transformed into physical actions or into imaginative and intellectual activities" (Assagioli 25). He spoke to the Sun as he thought the Sun would know the language of the Soul of the World and by the direction of the Sun he evoked the "hand that wrote all" (Coelho, *TA* 159). That moment became momentous and he could pray as he had done before, he was able to see the omens and understand their significance, he was able to understand the very physical manifestation

of the hand that wrote all, the desert, the wind, the sun. He understood the reason behind all the miracles and that “it was a larger design that had moved the universe to a point at which six days of creation had evolved into a Master Work” (Coelho, *TA* 160). This feeling is the result of the coordination of the various psychological energies and a firm personality emerges thereof. The boy was able to feel the Simum, a warm wind that blows from the centre of Africa and is capable of creating sandstorms. It became a manifestation of the inner energy, the synthesis of all the psychic energies that makes life meaningful. When the wind stopped everyone was in agape and the alchemist knew that time had come for him to leave the boy because he had understood the purpose and the glory of God. As he reached the pyramids he was stopped by the refugees of the tribal war and one of them demanded to know what he was hiding as he was digging. When he replied that he was searching for the treasure one of them replied that he too had a dream which said that he could find treasure under a sycamore tree in the far off land. Santiago understood the meaning.

Trying for the fulfilment of the personal legend is the treasure because personal legend is what is important. Santiago understood the reason for his life. It is the search for the meaning that makes a person enthusiastic to live his life. And when there is a lack of enthusiasm it is betraying one’s personal legend. Ultimately Santiago had achieved this synthesis of all that is needed to live a meaningful life. When he knew that the refugee also had the same dream but that the treasure was to be found in the land that he came from he understood the meaning of life. God had shown him many paths and strange ways to realise his dreams. The omens also had helped him to appreciate the purpose of his life. It is by proper utilization of the energies, by developing different

aspects of personality like curiosity, when he decided to know the meaning of the dream, the zest to move on even when he lost everything, and the thirst to know which is evident from the books he read and his conversation with the King of Salem, the Englishman who wanted to become an alchemist and the alchemist himself who was a catalyst in his transformation that the psychosynthesis happened. He decided to get back to Tarifa, to keep up the promise of giving one third of the treasure to the gipsy woman who tried decoding his dream and then he felt the levanter which brought with it the scent of the perfume and as a fully synthesised being.

The Pilgrimage (TP) is the story of Paulo Coelho himself, the pilgrimage he undertook to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. He had been a student of occult practices and RAM practice was one. During the ordination when he was about to get the sword, the sword slipped from his hand and the Master gave the sword to his wife, he had to find the sword again. Paulo Coelho in an interview says this story is a non-fiction but still it is his story of how he regained the power over himself, “the Road to Santiago was going to help me find myself” (Coelho, *TP* 14). It is the story of Coelho’s spiritual realisation and essential lessons of life like faith and surrender. He has to win the sword if he has to become the Magus. But the acquisition of the sword is not easy. He had to undergo trials and make himself deserving to get the sword. So the sword became a metaphor of knowledge and power, the power to be yourself, to live for yourself. It also becomes the Personal Legend that one has to seek. The process of acquisition are the different stages of psychosynthesis. In the process Paulo Coelho learnt many lessons like patience, awareness, to be alert, to trust oneself, above all be true to the conviction and unlearn those like unidentified fears that become impediments to this journey. It is a spiritual

journey towards a rediscovery of the self. This corresponds to the self-actualization as defined by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs and it is much more than that. It is towards a transcendence, a “realization of the self” (Assagioli 34).

Coelho had been wanting the sword to be ordained as the Master of the Order of RAM. During the ceremony of ordination, when he was about to get the sword, the Master denied him and the sword was given to his wife. He was told by the Master that it was because of his avidity for the possession of the sword without understanding the real meaning of the possession, his fascination for miracles and pride that he has to seek the sword among the simple people. Now that he has understood what failed him, he embarked on the pilgrimage. He was told that he had to follow the Jacobean route, the Road of the Spades which would give him the power. But power had to be combined with other elements such as love, surrender, and acceptance in order to make himself worthy of possessing the sword. So the pilgrimage had to be undertaken to learn the lessons of life. Coelho has to arrive at a spiritual synthesis for his life to be meaningful and that is the purpose of acquiring the sword too. The state in which Coelho is now in can be referred to as the “crisis preceding the spiritual awakening” (Assagioli 36). The word spiritual here does not refer to any precise religious experience but a state of consciousness of possessing certain values of life higher than altruism and selflessness. This is the most momentous period of his life because of the changes that he might feel in himself. But suddenly the loss of the sword shocked him to reality of or the presence of a much more substantial and significant facet of life. So the journey that he had to undertake was to become aware of all these and appreciate them in all their entirety so that he could have a control of his personality, his spiritual self which is always in a

journey towards realisation. He was told by his wife that Mme Lourdes in France would help him in the journey. When he arrived at Mme Lourdes, he found no response. When he sought the help of a child to enter the gate, the child ran through the gate. To his surprise he found that the gate was open and he had not realised it. He had taken it for granted that the gate had to be knocked. He failed to realise that gates could also be open and one cannot take even simple things like this for granted. He was greeted by Mme Lourdes and after a formal ritual she sent him with blessings and told him that from then on he would have to listen to his guide, “may you obey the one who is your guide, even though he may issue an order that is homicidal, blasphemous, or senseless. You must swear total obedience to your guide” (Coelho, *TP*18). This is the first trial in the journey of self-realisation. “It has to be accepted cheerfully, or at least serenely and used as an opportunity for developing inner strength” (Assagioli 45).

After walking for about forty minutes he found a man in his fifties looking like a gypsy. Coelho mistook him for his guide, but at the right time his guide appeared and saved him. The new arrival, a man of about forty, remarked, “You don’t have to climb a mountain to find out whether or not it’s high” (Coelho, *TP* 21). Immediately Coelho remembered that it was the password. The next lesson he learnt was to be cautious. He was Petrus, his guide for the rest of the journey. Petrus confirmed that the gypsy was the Devil from whom he should be cautious. Petrus again warned him that the gypsy was not the only Devil for they will be meeting many more devils during the journey. These devils might be those feelings and attitudes that define a person, which for many reasons might become hindrances in the journey of self-discovery. But these are also necessary to bring to light those unwanted feelings and refrain from them. Petrus also talked about the

personal devil who will actually help one, “the devil of the Tradition” (Coelho, *TP* 22). He also learnt why he was refused the sword. He had not understood the meaning of miracles. Petrus tried to make Coelho understand the significance of miracles by asking the question, “Miracles are very important, don’t you think?” (Coelho, *TP* 23) He agreed but also said he had not witnessed his Master performing great miracles because they seemed not to “contradict the laws of nature” (Coelho, *TP* 24). He has to understand that miracles do not contradict nature, but they are affirmations of nature. It is the knowledge of supreme power and our coexistence with it. Coelho did not understand why the Master performed those feats. Petrus explains, “The path to knowledge is a path that is open to everyone, to the common people” (Coelho, *TP* 24).

He had to gain that knowledge to comprehend life’s lessons. He learnt some exercises and some rituals of the RAM practices which helps him in this understanding. The first is the Seed Exercise. This exercise helps in experiencing a rebirth, like the seed sprouting out, breaking open the hard crust of the earth. Sitting in the foetal position, imagining that we are cuddled in the embrace of the earth, and slowly releasing each part of the body until one feels the explosion of coming out, shattering those feelings and mental attributes which had confined one’s growth, there is a sense of release. Coelho felt a sense of rebirth and he could be born as many times as he wanted. This exercise helps in rediscovery of the senses which will enable him to overcome the fear and anxiety caused by the immensity of the purpose of the trip. “I had discovered that although the earth and my sleep were full of comfort, the life “up there” was much more beautiful. And I could always be reborn, as many times as I wanted, until my arms were long enough to embrace the earth from which I had come” (Coelho, *TP* 29). The second

exercise is the speed exercise. It helps one to have the objective of the journey in mind. The exercise is a manifestation of the journey of life where one cannot lose sight of anything. This exercise is to walk as slowly as possible so that nothing will be missed. “When you are moving toward an objective,” said Petrus, “it is very important to pay attention to the road. It is the road that teaches us the best way to get there, and the road enriches us as we walk its length” (Coelho, *TP* 36). In this sense the road can be taken as a metaphor. One has to be aware of everything around as even small things can teach something. Time is what one makes out of it. “It is we who determine how quickly time passes” (Coelho, *TP* 38).

His meeting Father Jordi helped him further in his journey. Father Jordi said of the many layers of one’s life the pilgrim is one layer and when it is broken he will be able to experience agape. And Father also added “Wherever your treasure is, there will be your heart. And wherever your heart is, there will be the Second Coming of Christ” (Coelho, *TP* 43). And when Petrus said the Second Coming, “is always happening. That is the secret of the sword.” Paulo Coelho understood the essence of the Second Coming. It is whenever faith is reiterated and whenever everything is done as a surrender to the Lord. In an interview with Brian Draper for *Nuggets of Gold* he had said, “Don’t complicate, Paulo! Things are easier than you think. Just open your heart and let the light of God inside!” (qtd. Draper)

Further in the conversation with Petrus about God and the power Coelho’s affirmation of religion and the beauty and the energy behind God’s creation is evident. As Assagioli puts here there is a “proper recognition and assimilation of the energies inflowing from the Self and from super-conscious levels” (51). Beyond the psychological

meaning of dreams Paulo Coelho believes that dreams are a power that helps in the discovery of the Self. Dreams have to be pursued till the last bit. The story of Felicia of Aquitaine, the princess who gave up everything, even her life, for setting up the house of Love in the form of a church is an example. When Paulo, the seeker, hears this his belief in the power of the dream is enhanced. “The good fight is the one that is fought in the name of our dreams” (Coelho, *TP* 50). A dream cannot be given up lest it rots and infects.

The dreams have to be kept alive and Petrus teaches him the cruelty exercise. This exercise helps to keep the dream alive and be generous with ourselves in case we lose in our struggle. But the battle in realising the dream will always be won. The cruelty exercise is to feel the physical pain whenever there is a spiritual pain. Every time one feels guilty or jealous or hatred, feelings that end up in remorse, this exercise helps in overcoming it. The Messenger Ritual is to invoke the messenger, who according to Petrus, is the personal devil, and will be like a sword of protection. Petrus warns Coelho that this personal devil can be allowed to advise but never to dictate. That is why the messenger is the sword, while the angel is the shield. The sword will protect but at any time it can turn against us. This messenger can be taken as a sub personality. Subpersonality, as Will Parfitt puts it, are different parts of ourselves having their own needs and desires. “Each Subpersonality has a part to play in our lives and we all play many parts, often with conflicting thoughts and feelings about what is good for us, or even of who we actually are” (31). The recognition of the subpersonalities helps in interaction with oneself because every subpersonality has a distinct role to play. But as Petrus warned Coelho, the Messenger should not be allowed to dictate, he should be kept under control. “Problems arise when they have got you rather than you having them”

(Parfitt 35). These subpersonalities might enter into conflict with each other because of the “dynamic between Love and Will.” A synthesis is achieved when a person knows to choose which is needed at the time of Love or Will. This decision has to be taken intellectually not emotionally. Coelho’s association with the Messenger is of that sort. He learnt to take advice from the Messenger who is named as Astrain. The episode of the boy with the ball and the exorcism of the devil from the dog in the old woman’s house are meant to understand the synthesis that is happening in Paulo Coelho.

Petrus next teaches Coelho the Intuition exercise. Psycho synthesis aims at understanding the individual at all levels of consciousness. Parfitt quotes Assagioli in this regard. “The true, deeper understanding is the comprehension of the individual as a unique being, with unique qualities, problems, and possibilities. It is the fruit of empathy, intuition, and love” (160). In psychosynthesis intuition is the connection with the soul and along with other vehicles of experience such as sensations (body) emotions (feelings) and thoughts (mind) it is used to experience and express one's self. The Intuition exercise is a simple exercise and Petrus says one needs to trust it when it manifests itself.

As the journey continues Petrus teaches the next exercise that of the Blue sphere the Ritual of Agape to understand and experience agape. Petrus talks about three forms of love, Eros, Philos and Agape. Eros is the love shared by two human beings, the physical form of love. Philos is that love between two friends. Agape is the highest form of love, the love that Jesus had for his fellow beings, and “the love that consumes” (Coelho, *TP* 113). After having the experience of love he learns to overcome fear. “That’s the right thing to say. Agape is action” (qtd., Tippett). The Buried Alive exercise is to overcome fear. Petrus explained that death is another manifestation of agape. Coelho acknowledged

that “I was more frightened by the way in which I would die than by death itself” (Coelho, *TP* 124). Paulo took up the death exercise, to lie as if dead and imagine all the rituals that would be done, to lie down and feel the sensation until it becomes unbearable and throwing out all the confines and becoming free accompanied by a scream that comes from the depth of the being. When Coelho did that exercise he felt that, “I was sure that I was going to be able to drink from the fountain of life” (Coelho, *TP*131). Once death is experienced then the fear of it vanishes. He realised that he will be “fighting life's battles and will drink from the fountain of life” (Coelho, *TP*131), because Coelho feels “You are here to honour the miracle of life.” (Winfrey 0.40:0.44)

Coelho moves towards “the proper recognition and assimilation of the energies in flowing from the Self and from superconscious levels” (Assagioli, 51) when Petrus engages him in climbing the waterfall. Petrus says, “this waterfall will teach you how to be a Master” (Coelho, *TP*144). He realised that in life he has to struggle in order to win and also alone. “I had to do it all. I, alone, had to win my victory” (Coelho, *TP*144). There is no place for regret in the last lap of the endeavour. Finally he found the foothold to climb on the top and when he felt the warmth of the sun he felt tired and relaxed. He moves on the next exercise, the breathing exercise to draw energy from everything around. This exercise is to exhale air first and inhale as much as possible to retain the air as long as possible enjoying the harmony between oneself and the outside world. This helps in drawing energy from everything outside.

In order to utilize the energies thus gained one should be prepared for the change, only then “the flame of madness” (Coelho, *TP* 157) will be kept alive. Agape is sustained only with the streak of madness. This madness is the will to change and transform in order to

synthesise the senses. Coelho is in the process of “reconstruction of his personality around a higher inner centre, that is, in the achievement of his psychosynthesis” (Assagioli 51). He is taught the shadow exercise. The story of Don Quinones and the combat that he engaged himself in order to win his lady love and the institution of the Military Order of Santiago of the Sword in order to protect the pilgrims on the Road to Santiago are instances to show how to take the correct decision in life. There are problems in life which require choosing the decisions and it will be the deciding one for life. One way to hit at the right decision is to know the wrong one. The shadow exercise teaches this to Coelho. The exercise is to concentrate on the shadows around and to identify which object or person casts the shadow while concentrating on the problem and looking for all the possible wrong solutions. Spending a few minutes at the possible right decisions and eliminating one by one until one stands which will be the right solution is the message of this exercise. Coelho learns from this the sword, the objective of this pilgrimage, will not be kept in any ordinary place. He has to find that consecrated place. The episode with the dog also helped him to get over the fear. The incident where Petrus asks Paulo to erect the cross teaches him the value of surrender and obedience. The last exercise is the Dance exercise and it is the “perfect means of communication with the Infinite Intelligence” (Coelho, *TP* 193). He continued the journey alone after Petrus left him and finally he won the sword. His Master was waiting for him in a small chapel.

All the exercises are meant to teach the inevitable lessons. Life in its varied forms teaches, but it is not recognised. The exercises help in becoming aware of these. Coelho walks through the road to the Shrine is a metaphorical road which everyone takes. In the journey he learnt to control his will and at the same time to use it wisely. This led to the

proper responsiveness and receptiveness to various other feelings and emotions which are energies from the superconscious level. As a pilgrim of life he also learnt to use these energies, especially love, for love is the greatest and strongest energy. A psycho synthesis is achieved finally as there is a total reconstruction of personality.

The Zahir (TZ) is another story of search, a pilgrimage towards the meaning of love and life. This story is also filled with biographical details, his emergence as a writer and finding the meaning of love. After the initial hiccups, Coelho had now become an acclaimed writer, with book launches and book signing affairs. One day he found that his wife Esther was missing. She was a war correspondent and her life was always as eventful as it is also under threat. Paulo Coelho becomes the first suspect. He was questioned and was found not guilty of anything that could have made his wife leave him in any sense and was let free. As a husband he considered all the possibilities of her missing. She could have been kidnapped. But she had taken her passport with her along with her wallet in which she had the images of all the patron saints which she always carries. So she could not have been kidnapped. Did she believe in a promise and that became a trap? This was a possibility because of the nature of her job. But she would leave a message with the name of the person whom she would be meeting and what to do if she did not return by a certain hour. She had not left any such message, so this also is not a possibility. What if she had another man and left for him? This is a possibility. But considering their life together for so many years, could that be possible? If so, what could be the reason? These are the questions, the answers to which makes Coelho understand his personality and their relationship. "Is that question worth answering? No. Because hidden in the answer is my own inability to keep the woman I love by my

side. Is it worth finding her and persuading her to come back? Begging and imploring her to give our marriage another chance?” (Coelho, *TZ* 15)

The answer to this question is the first step that Coelho takes to understand his personality. A famous writer that he was, who was the real him? How is his engagement with the world outside? The answers are the story in itself. It was his wife who shook his complacency and helped him realise his dream of becoming a writer, because that is what he wanted to be ever since his younger days. She made him travel the miracle route to Santiago de Compostela which brought the change in his life. He started writing and found himself famous. He also favoured “favour bank” (Coelho, *TZ* 34) which meant mutual help among the publishers and writers which helped the fledglings to succeed. The central importance in psychosynthesis is the meaning an individual gives to life and the choices and decisions he takes along with the responsibility that it necessitates. In this respect Coelho had to find the reason for his wife’s disappearance. He felt that he had everything in life, money, fame which have become the determinants of happiness. But he could not answer the question once posed by his wife if he was happy? Now he had to take cognizance of the variants that determine his happiness and that would be the dynamics for the future. When his wife wanted to become a war correspondent she wanted to understand life at its limit. He had to understand this side of his wife, why did she want to become a war correspondent and the meaning of understanding life at its limit. He also remembered one Mikhail, her translator and her visits to the beggars. While he probed answers for these questions he understood his personality. After days of scandal, as Paulo Coelho returned to normal life of literary meetings and book signings, he felt a sense of loss and void. His visit to the Cathedral of Santa Maria gave another insight into himself.

The small chapel, after many years, became a church and after a century it took shape as a Gothic cathedral with the structural changes which people deemed fit. He realised, as he stood at the central nave, that he is the cathedral that needs to be corrected, just as this cathedral took this shape because people from time to time thought that it needed those changes. “Yes, we are all cathedrals, there is no doubt about it; but what lies in the empty space of my inner cathedral?” (Coelho, *TZ* 60) He realised his ‘Zahir’ (Coelho, *TZ* 60). According to the Islamic tradition the Zahir is something that couldn't be done away with. In the interview with Oprah Winfrey Paulo Coelho talks about the Zahir. “We follow certain rules.....we become obsessed by it.... And it becomes the guideline...” (qtd. Winfrey). The Zahir is Esther, his wife. He understands the question that his wife Esther had asked if he was happy. Then his response was yes. But he realised that it is not. When Esther asked if he was interested in her work, his reply was he was but he did not want to interfere and she seemed satisfied with his remark. Now he realised that it was just an excuse and taking things for granted. It is not real love and an understanding of the world outside. He has also to understand what happiness is and its real value. He shut himself in his room for some days and completed another book, “or rather, a letter, a long letter to the woman of my dreams, to the woman I love and will always love” (Coelho, *TZ* 60). The book became a big success as usual. In one of the book signing functions he met Mikhail, the young translator who was with Esther.

His meeting with Mikhail during the following days helped Coelho realise his true self. In the ensuing days the conversation with Mikhail helped him realise why Esther left him and the meaning of love. He came to know that Mikhail was from Kazakhstan in Central Asia. That which was a fertile land with less population, became a

desert with the coming of the communist regime and nuclear tests. At the end of the book signing session, he came to Coelho and said that his wife was fine. Coelho understood that Mikhail knew about her. In the days that followed, Coelho met Mikhail several times during the meetings at the Armenian restaurant where anyone can speak about anything. After one of these meetings, he asked Mikhail the reason for Esther leaving him and he added, “I don’t believe Esther would have left me if I had respected her love” (Coelho, *TZ* 99) and Mikhail’s reply was, “You understand nothing” (Coelho, *TZ* 99). Coelho was irritated. He felt that a twenty five year old young man would not know anything about life. But he had to accept Mikhail’s remarks. These are the manifestations of his lower consciousness which are filled with complexes and intense emotions. Mikhail spoke of the divine energy that was passing through him which reminded Coelho of a conversation that he had with Esther a few days before she disappeared. She spoke of the soldiers whose lives were meaningful because they live for a cause and there is sacrifice in their lives in spite of the fear of death. Not only have the soldiers, even the war correspondents felt the same. “In a war, everyone knows they’re experiencing something important, they’re experiencing the true essence of man, Love” (Coelho, *TZ* 103 -104).

She explained how love is experienced. Every minute becomes important so every minute is lived in the battle front. Just as the soldiers run to save one another amid the rain of bullets, they shoot at everything aimlessly. Those who were enemies feel a sense of camaraderie and “they become incapable of doing wrong” (Coelho, *TZ* 105). She further added that a wounded soldier never asks to be saved, instead he tells, “Tell my wife and my son that I love them” (Coelho, *TZ* 105). All these point towards something that Paulo Coelho had missed in life and in his love towards his wife.

Mikhail seemed to be talking of the same divine energy descending upon him and people capable of such a love. He spoke about the piece of blood stained green cloth that Esther gave to so many people, a fraternity who thought it was Esther who brought them all together and made them experience the real meaning of love. Esther had attained this synthesis when she realised the energy of true love. It is altruistic. She has discovered her unifying centre which is a “magnificent endeavour” (Assagioli 21) and she impacts Coelho and the urge to expand the personal consciousness is necessitated. The absence of Esther can be considered as a “psychological distancing” (Assagioli 20) in order to arrive at an answer for ‘being happy’ which Esther raised earlier. He had been of the idea that the feeling of love is easy to develop or feel because it is just accepting and letting the person loved ‘be’. That is what he meant when he said he did not interfere in her career because he respected her love. But he has to disidentify himself from this personality so that he can reconstruct a personality which will be in harmony with the universal love that Esther tries to make him understand. He had felt his world was torn apart when Esther left him and she had become his obsession, the Zahir. In his search for the Zahir, with Mikhail to guide him, he will find a new clarity which did not exist before.

His further conversations with Mikhail and his meetings with the ‘beggars’ and those who attend the meetings at the Armenian restaurant helped him to understand the association of love. In one of the meetings, Coelho spoke about why the railway tracks around the world are four feet eight inches wide. The love between the husband and the wife is like the railway tracks. They will be journeying in their lives in the same way without any change for any change would affect everybody and for the sake of the neighbourhood, children and society they will continue and their love becomes a

pretence. He remembered a conversation he had with Esther. Both of them felt that something was wrong with their relationship though both love each other intensely. It is better that love creates problems than make life monotonous, losing all its vitality. “It would be a constant battle, but it would at least keep us active, alive and cheerful, with many universes to conquer; the trouble is we’re heading towards a point where things are becoming too comfortable, where love stops creating problems and confrontations and becomes instead a solution” (Coelho, *TZ* 155). Mikhail tells Coelho that Esther would not have left if she had not loved Coelho. Mikhail worked with Esther as an interpreter when she travelled in Kazakhstan. Both of them soon found out that they shared so many things in common. She understood perfectly of the visions that he got, the voices that he heard and the ‘epilepsy’ that he suffered from. These are instances of the different levels of Consciousness, the lower, the middle and the higher levels moving towards the Conscious Self or ‘I’ (Assagioli 15). This Self is above all mental and bodily conditions and so physical attraction is of no avail in this condition. Esther had, by going to pursue what she thought best to live life to its fullest, had overcome those fixations which are harmful to the development of personality. She is able to create a unifying centre and thus there happens a synthesis. In the same way Coelho also has to ascend from the various elements, which can also be the subpersonalities, he as her husband, which bind him and hinder this realisation. This will happen when he is ready for the search. The search here is his search for Esther. Those people like Mikhail, the ‘beggars’ and the people who attend the meetings at the Armenian restaurant are those who are capable of this ascension. Mikhail told Paulo Coelho that Esther is in Central Asia doing fine and time had not come for him to meet her. He also added that if he meets he must find,

“not only her body, but also her soul” (Coelho, *TZ* 110). When Coelho met with an accident and was in the hospital, to his surprise, he found that even his doctor had that bit of blood stained cloth. He remembers another conversation with Esther regarding the postponement of everything. She had remarked, “Tonight I’m going to pray with all my might and all my faith and ask God not to let me spend the rest of the days like this” (Coelho, *TZ* 245).

He also remembers another story of two firemen inside the forest one of whom is mud stained. When they find water, who will wash himself? The obvious answer will be the person with dirt on him. Rather it is the person with clean face who will wash, because he sees his friend with dirt on him and assumes that he will be obviously dirty. Coelho understood that, that is how he had been all the while. He saw Esther, and also his other friends, and thought he was clean. While Esther saw the grime on him and wanted to cleanse herself of all that made her life mundane and meaningless and purposeless, he thought that everything was alright and life was as entertaining as ever. But now he realised that all those were wrong. Mikhail had given him the address where he could find Esther, but he decided “Before I could find her, I must find myself” (Coelho, *TZ* 179). He understood the accident he suffered to be a sign towards this. He had stated to believe in signs ever since he undertook the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago in Spain. “Divinity comes to our aid, preventing us from making a mistake” (Coelho, *TZ* 169). Thus he had established the “unifying and controlling principle of life” (Assagioli 21). It was holding Adriane’s thread, unrolling to find the unknown. He is in the process of discovering a unifying centre. “It is a tremendous undertaking” (Assagioli 21). towards self-realization and synthesis.

This realization takes him to Esther. By now he has become fully deserving for the love of the woman who has become his Zahir. “In the words of a Persian sage, Love

is a disease no one wants to get rid of. Those who catch it never try to get better, and those who suffer do not wish to be cured” (Coelho, *TZ* 336). It was then he understood that to love a person is not to love as one wants to be loved but “love should manifest itself- free and untrammelled, guiding us with its force and driving us on” (Coelho, *TZ* 337). Coelho achieved this synthesis by development of aspects of his personality which was possible through his meetings with Mikhail, the people in the Armenian restaurant, the beggars, Marie. A coordination of his energies happened through his interaction with these people. Thus a new personality is developed.

Veronika Decides to Die (VDD) is the story of a young woman who chose to die for two good reasons. She could not bear to see herself grow old and suffer, “Once her youth was gone, it would be downhill all the way, with old age beginning to leave irreversible marks, the onset of illness...likelihood of suffering only increased” (Coelho, *VDD* 6). The second reason, according to Veronica, is philosophical, in the world that was all wrong, she cannot contribute anything constructive and, “that gave her a sense of complete powerlessness” (Coelho, *VDD* 6). Of the three conscious levels, the lower, the middle and the higher conscious, an exploration of these three is the task of psychosynthesis, the lower consciousness in Veronica seems to be predominant. The lower consciousness which Assagioli represents as lower unconscious has all the pathological manifestations, compulsive drives along with different paranoia. It is charged with intense emotions leading to conflicting desires and actions. Unable to live a satisfactory life she chose to die for shallow reasons. At twenty four she was leading a fairly good life working at the local library, staying at a convent, and with a few boyfriends not to make life uninteresting. Despite these circumstances she wishes to end

her life. This is what Parfitt terms as the “crisis of existence” (Parfitt, 181) during the midlife, when life seems to be empty and purposeless. This crisis is felt by the individual because of the mindfulness of the present state of affairs and an unease about the future. As Parfitt further clarifies, this existential crisis can be seen in three stages. The first stage when an individual feels a separation from that he has been accustomed to, “the comfortable or at least familiar patterns of daily life” (181). Veronica has had a comfortable childhood with loving parents who let her choose her life. She had a comfortable job and she chose to stay at the convent because that would be a valid reason for not staying out late in the nights if any of her boyfriends insist upon. The third stage would be to return to the comfortable zone when everything will be familiar but with a renewed understanding. But the second stage, which Parfitt terms as “liminality” or “to be in the limbo” (181) is of utmost importance. As limbo suggests, people are nowhere. Assagioli suggests the conscious seems to struggle to come out of the past with an unclear picture of the future. It is at this stage that Veronica was, when she decided to end her life. She was not a nonbeliever but was not serious in her religious convictions. “In her heart of hearts, though, there was still a doubt: what if God exists?” (Coelho, *VDD* 7)

As man is a pluridimensional personality, the lower unconscious which has many complex drives triggers Veronica to take the unreasonable step.

To move towards synthesis of her personality she has to move to the second stage of Assagioli’s psychosynthesis, that is taking control of the various elements of personality. Veronica survives her attempt on life and as a corollary this leads her to take charge of the various aspects of personality. She has to understand the reasons for and accept logically numerous happenings and learn to live this life. Assagioli’s method to

achieve this by “disidentification” (19). He further states “We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves” (19). This happens when one is able to disintegrate those images or complexes which an individual realises leads him nowhere and by making use of the renewed understanding. This process starts in Veronica when she finds herself in Villette, the mental asylum. This disintegration of the objectionable complexes and channelling the energy thus gained towards creativity is challenging. These disagreeable drives when detached from the previous channels may find new outlets. So a unifying centre has to be created which will become the “controlling principle of our life” (Assagioli 21).

When Veronika woke up from the delirium caused by the impact of the sleeping pills, she heard from the nursing assistant that she had landed in a place worse than hell. Villette is a mental asylum, governed by bureaucrats. It had become an asylum for whoever wanted to escape punishment or get rid of an annoying relative. “...to be admitted to the hospital, all you needed was money” (Coelho, *VDD* 11).

Dr. Igor, who was in charge of the hospital was engaged in a research on vitriol, a chemical that induces bitterness leading to suicide. Zedka, Mari and Eduard were the inmates who brought about the change in her. Zedka was in Villette because she suffered depression. She had loved a married man and accepted to be his mistress. But as days passed she felt that his love was diminishing. “Despite her determination to put up with everything in the name of love, the relationship did not work out. He never said anything directly, but one day, Zedka realised that she was no longer welcome and she returned to Slovenia” (Coelho, *VDD* 49). Luckily she married a nonchalant person and was satisfied

with her family. But suddenly a thought crossed her mind if she fought hard enough to retain her first love? The days were not the same thereafter. She suffered from what the Dr. Igor said was depression. In Villette she went on astral journeys which gave her a new insight into life.

Mari, a lawyer by profession, was affected by cerebral aneurysm and she went blank sometimes. She too was in Villette for the cure. Eduard, a schizophrenic also found himself in the mental asylum because he was different from others. In the hospital, when she saw the inmates being given sedative injections and induced coma she felt helpless and sad. "If the patient gets agitated, the regulations say I must give them a sedative" (Coelho, *VDD*13). When the unwanted drives and desires are identified and identified and shunned the real process of self-identification begins. Veronica still had the last dregs of undesirable drive to end her life. She felt she could not bear to see people talk about her as a person who had been to the mental asylum and accept the drudgery of a feigned life when marriage and children will only be for the sake of putting an end to gossip and not the result of love. "People will consider us a happy couple, and no one will know how much solitude, bitterness and resignation lies beneath the surface happiness" (Coelho, *VDD* 21). In personal psychosynthesis self-identification becomes important for a purposeful synthesis. But the term is very ambiguous because an individual can identify with what he feels gives him a sense of "aliveness" (Assagioli, 98). The other meaning would be relating to the inner experience which results out of "inner experimentation" (Assagioli 98). Veronica does not seem to have identified herself with either of these. In Villette when she came into contact with other inmates she developed this self-

identification. With only five days or a maximum of a week to live she could not stand to be termed mad and wait for death to take her.

Zedka, who was in the hospital for depression, gives a working but classic meaning for madness. “Anyone who lives in their own world is mad. Like schizophrenics, psychopaths, maniacs. I mean people who are different from others” (Coelho, *VDD* 30). She gave the examples of Einstein, Columbus, Edmund Hillary and the Beatles. All of these chased a cause that was instrumental for a decisive change in the world and humanity, in its understanding and outlook. So Veronica could not consider herself as mad as understood by at least the people in the hospital. So another attempt would not be wrong. As she was trying the pills that would put her to sleep her relationship with Zedka took her a step ahead towards understanding of her personality. As Villette is an asylum, anything that is done by the inmates does not invite criticism or punishment. So Veronica slapped the man who seemed to be the oldest of the lot expecting some reaction from anybody. “She had done something that she had never done before” (Coelho, *VDD* 41). But three days passed and nobody seemed to talk about the incident. She felt, “if she wasn’t careful, she might end up convinced that life was worth living, and that would cause her pointless pain, since she would soon have to leave this world anyway” (Coelho, *VDD* 41). She felt if she had known this is how her life would have been, she would not attempted suicide but her inner voice said, “There is no perhaps because there is no choice” (Coelho, *VDD* 42). Again when she saw Zedka being given insulin injections to induce coma she felt that nothing could be changed there or anywhere and she had to understand. Zedka is put into an induced coma to put to rest all the organs and thereby reduce the condition of depression.

Veronica could not understand the rationality of the treatment even when the nurse said, “a state of coma allows the organism to rest; its functions are all drastically reduced and any existing tension disappears” (Coelho, *VDD* 43). This incident put her on a self - analysis mode and she started crying. The bitter tears that she brought forth helped her to think of the reason for her attempt. She was satisfied with anything in life because of fear and hatred, fear that her life would become monotonous and finally end up with a sense of remorse.

Except that I'll eat my sandwiches with a sense of guilt, because I'm getting fatter; and I won't go to bars anymore, because I have a husband expecting me to come home and look after children... One fine day I 'll reach the conclusion that that's what life is like, there's no point worrying about it, nothing will change. And I'll accept it. (Coelho, *VDD* 22)

This is the situation that she did not want to happen and she hated herself for that. “When I took the pills, I wanted to kill someone I hated. I didn't know the other Veronicas existed inside me, Veronica that I could love” (Coelho, *VDD* 59). She went out and pounded on the piano and she felt a sense of ease coming over her, “She pounded on the piano again, once, twice, ten, twenty times, and each time she did it, her hatred seemed to diminish, until it passed away completely” (Coelho, *VDD* 63). Veronica was able to disidentify herself from the weakness of being frightened and guilt which for so long was paralysing her. Her thoughts were about her family, her mother and father who had loved her unconditionally. “It was the love that for years had tried to hide from her the difficulties and the corruption that existed in the world, ignoring the fact that, one day, she would have to find this out, and would then be defenceless against them” (Coelho, *VDD* 62).

When she felt the hatred that was consuming her was diminishing, of the two forces, the vigilant self and force of discouragement, the feeling of hatred, that were in confrontation with each other, the observant force always came back and this is the dynamic element of one's personality which steers the person towards consolidation of the energies for a synthesis.

As Veronica felt a sense of calmness she moved on to the next stage of psychosynthesis realisation of one's true self. "She had finally allowed her negative feelings to surface, feelings that had been repressed for years in her soul. She had actually felt them, and they were no longer necessary, they could leave" (Coelho, *VDD* 64). She played music for everything under the sun, even to the moon, and to her surprise even to the schizophrenic Eduard who was supposed to be "beyond all cure" (Coelho, *VDD* 64). The music could even penetrate his remote world, more distant than the moon itself; it could even perform miracles. She was able to find the unifying centre of her personality after this.

According to Assagioli, the construction of a new personality happens when there is a development in those aspects which are deficient, now there is a creative affirmation. Her association with Mari, another inmate who was in Villette because she suffered panic attacks, made her get the answer for who she was. "What is the real 'I'?" asked Veronica. "It's what you are, not what others make of you" (Coelho, *VDD* 93). Mari, as a lawyer, could find inadequacies even in the eternal law, the law that punished Adam and Eve and thus made the whole mankind suffer. Mari reasoned out that it was a clever plan of God and also predestined. "The tangle of laws created such confusion that the Son ended up nailed to a cross. It was no simple trial;" (Coelho, *VDD* 98). She realised her 'I' and she

was able to decide what she will do, she will be anybody other than a lawyer. Veronika establishes a vivacious connection with the outer world when she smiles at Eduard.

The energy thus created by fighting against the unwanted feelings made Veronica accept the situation in which she was and tried to make the best use of it. She started responding to Eduard, Mari and Zedka in the most amicable way. She even felt a sort of love towards Eduard. She understood he did not expect anything from her except some sort of love which probably he did not get in the outside world. She realised it was her body that he wanted but something beyond. The music that she played had touched him and that was what he expected. She played for him and he felt a sense of calmness.

Unable to accept the norms of the outside world he had created a world of his own and Veronika found she was able to understand him. She came to accept that she would live only for a few days and these few days she wanted to live as she wanted. “In the last days of her life, she had finally realised a grand dream: to play with heart and soul, for as long as wanted and whenever the mood took her. It didn’t matter to her that her only audience was a young schizophrenic; he seemed to understand music, and that was what mattered” (Coelho, *VDD*102). For each of these four, though for different reasons found themselves in Villette, their stay had taught them lessons of life and they reached the synthesis.

The stay in Villette made them understand that life had to be lived. They visualise the purpose of their lives, a genuine model with a “dynamic creative power” (Assagioli 23) This aids in eliminating faults and uncertainties and utilises the energy. Veronica understands the love of Eduard. Eduard’s visions of paradise did not leave him but he had understood how to live and he decided to leave Villette for good. Mari decided to go back to her ex-husband. She no longer wanted to be a lawyer, because law was, according to

her, arbitrary. Instead she would work for the alleviation of suffering of people anywhere in the world, even in Sarajevo. As Dr. Igor says, “An awareness of death encourages us to live more intensely” (Coelho, *VDD* 190). When Veronica saw the electric shock given to Eduard, her will to overcome all these sufferings heightened and she wanted to live at least for the sake of Eduard. Mari left Villette in search of a new life where there were no walls like an aquarium to see the outside world only through the glass. Eduard and Veronika went out, rather escaped, from the mental asylum to live their lives. Veronica realises that she did not die even after the deadline given to her. With her experience in Villette she was able to coordinate her energies. She became a real friend to Eduard and encouraged him to start painting the visions of paradise he had once done. Thus in the character Veronica psychosynthesis is accomplished.

The Devil and Miss Prym (TDMP) is the story of temptation, the eternal struggle between the good and the evil, dramatized through the inhabitants of the small village of Viscos, Miss Chantal Prym and the stranger who comes to the village to tempt the villagers. The world is filled with both good and bad. Coelho quotes from the Bible “And a certain ruler asked him, saying, ‘Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ And Jesus said unto him, ‘Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one that is God’” (Coelho, *TDMP* vi). In an interview with Brendon Burchard, Coelho said, “Once you take destiny in your hands you are responsible for everything. Every day is important.” (Burchard 15.32:15.33) As this struggle is experienced by the characters, they are able to understand their inherent quality as to who they are? Viscos is a nondescript village where the inhabitants are mostly satisfied in their way of life. The young had left for the city in search of better pastures and the old of the village were

only too happy to be undisturbed by the outside world. Miss Pym was the only young woman left behind in the village. An orphan, who was raised by the good will of the villagers, worked in the only bar and restaurant of the village. She wanted to see the large world outside Viscos but at the same time did not have the courage to face the outside world. It was always a wishful dream that someday she would be able to go out of Viscos to start a new life. Now she is faced with the predicament of going against the Commandment of “Thou shall not kill” for the gold or forfeiting the gold and reinstating the goodness of human beings. The stranger who is responsible for Miss Pym’s dilemma has come to the village to experiment with the inherent nature of Man. He felt that he had been wronged by God for no fault of his. He was in the arms business, earning enough money in honest dealings. He was leading a happy life with his wife and children when the world suddenly blew off his hat. His wife and children were killed leaving upon him the doubt on the nature of Man. He wanted to find out if man is inherently evil, given the circumstances he would trespass the Commandments for his good.

He chose this village for no good reason because the Commandments are universal and “the story of one man is the story of all men” (Coelho, *TDMP* 18). Miss Pym's lower consciousness houses her instincts and repressed complexes along with the physical functions. Orphaned as soon as she was born and raised by the grandmother and by the help of other villagers, she wanted to go out of Viscos in order to live her life. She felt life in Viscos, though stable and secure, was limiting her. This is a sort of “psychological gestation” (Assagioli 15) where her desire to go out into the wider world is contained, waiting for the right time to surface and find the way to execute this desire. So, when confronted with the option of winning the gold, which will usher her a new life,

if she accepts the stranger's bargain to let the village know about the gold and the circumstances in which it can be won, she tries to look into the pros and cons of the proposition. On the other hand the stranger had been living a normal life with a thriving business and a happy family. His higher consciousness or his super consciousness is at work when he tries to find the answer if man is inherently good or bad. If good why should he suffer such devastation or if bad what he is now trying to do will leave him with guilt. These are "ethical imperatives" (Assagioli 15) which belong to the higher consciousness that urges his action to tempt people with gold to transgress one Commandment, Thou shall not kill.

Miss Pym, when she meets the stranger for the first time near the river, her subpersonality of an adventurer is in play. This is in tune with her desire to go beyond Viscos to find herself a new life. "For a moment she was afraid, but her fear was quickly replaced by a desire for adventure; after all, this man wouldn't dare to do anything to her when she had just told him that everyone in the village knew about him" (Coelho, *TDMP* 9). Berta, the old widow, recognised the devil entering the village along with the stranger. She feels that her dead husband still talks to her and advises her on various things of the living world from the dead world. She too affects the change that will come over Miss Pym as she identifies herself with her weakness for the gold and the emotion that she has to leave the village for a better future. She has to disidentify herself from this aspect of her personality and let the vigilant self win over that weakness. This happens when she meets the stranger for the second time in the woods. She goes to the place where the gold was hidden and as she contemplates on the course of her action. When she listens to Berta telling the story of the young man who had been the model for infant Jesus, when

Da Vinci was painting his Last Supper, became the model for Judas also because of the sins that he did commit, she realised humans are both good and evil. The story of Ahab who deconstructed and reconstructed Viscos when he sent his son to buy salt and a fair price for it, nothing more and nothing less because paying less than the due is taking advantage of the situation because the seller would sell for less only when he is desperate for money and it means not respecting the sweat and struggle that went behind the making of anything and Ahab also added, “ In the beginning, there was only a small amount of injustice abroad in the world, but everyone who came afterwards added their portion, always thinking it was very small and unimportant, and look where we have ended up today” (Coelho, *TDMP* 49).

Her conversation with Berta, and with the stranger himself helped her to free herself from those that would distract her from achieving this synthesis. She now utilised the energy thus gained by the disintegration of those that are harmful by disclosing to the people of Viscos the purpose of the stranger’s visit to Viscos. It was difficult for them to believe, but no one is insulated from the dream of a better life than the one they lead, even the priest of Viscos. He recalled how he came to Viscos and his purpose as a priest. He was not able to offer himself to be the victim for he believed that the people of Viscos needed him now more than ever.

Having arrived at a consensus to commit the murder for the sake of the good of the village, Berta became the lamb to be slaughtered. Berta, in a very subtle manner, is made known that she is the chosen one for this act and the process of the act is also concluded. On the day of the act when all the people of Viscos meet in the square Miss Prym refuses to use the gun as it was decided. She recalls how Ahab, the person who was

responsible for the transformation of Viscos into what it is, had converted the scaffold he had built to punish the wrongdoers into a cross as a symbol of faith, while the scaffold had been the symbol of fear. Ahab too had threatened to kill the men who came to the village calling themselves as alchemists. Fear is not an amiable emotion. She tells the story of King Midas, who had the power of turning everything into gold and added, “the gold will slip through your fingers as quickly as it came” (Coelho, *TDMP* 188). She spoke without paying heed to the words of the Mayor who tried to stop her. “The servants fled the palace, terrified that the same thing would happen to them. In less than a week, Midas had died of hunger and thirst, surrounded by gold on all sides” (Coelho, *TDMP* 189). She boldly refused to agree on everything they said to make the gold they will get into money which can be used and she walked out. People were struck by the rationality of her argument and one by one put down their guns and left. The personal devils of both Miss Pym and the stranger lost their wager. The unconscious of Miss Pym was able to disintegrate the harmful complexes that had hindered her a conflict free life. Now she had the courage to face the situation which demanded an objective and cogent understanding. She was able to develop this personality when she created a “psychological distance” (Assagioli 20) and considered those conflicting thoughts. When she confronted the stranger and contended with him on the proposition of committing a murder for the sake of the gold, when she spent some time with Berta after having come to know that she would be the price for the gold and later at the time when actually the devil seemed to win, there was a transmutation of the unconscious forces that all her energies created a firm personality. In Miss Pym there has happened a psychological development which leads to the psychosynthesis. Even in the stranger, the conflicting forces within him were the result of a deep psychological

crisis because of the personal loss that he suffered. But when he encountered Miss Pym, she became an element of his own personality because she too wanted to escape from the real situation rather than accept. When the stranger narrated his story despite the suffering there was a creative affirmation. That is the reason for him trying to validate if good or evil will prevail. The same is the case with Miss Pym. That is why she narrates the story of King Midas and Ahab who were examples of the conflicting nature of human psychology. Thus here happens a coordination of psychological energies leading to psychosynthesis.

By the River Piedra I sat down and Wept (BRP) is another story of Paulo Coelho, which talks about the story of a young woman Pilar, who meets her childhood friend and her life changes forever. The young man was just an ordinary person as far as she knew but when she met him after so many years she found him to be someone who is on his spiritual journey and a zealous believer in the feminine aspect of God. He is in the seminary, progressing towards renunciation and to be in the service of God and humanity. He is also a person who has gained the power of performing miracles from the Virgin. The title is a reverberation of the Psalm 137, *By the Rivers of Babylon* supposed to have been sung by the Israelites, a lamentation for their promised land of Israel after it was destroyed and its people scattered. In the story both Pilar and her beloved have to understand each other fully in order that they embark on their life. He is a spiritually inclined person and she is an ordinary woman who dreams of settling in life with a happy family. So the story becomes the voyage of their transformation towards accepting each other and still being who they are. Coelho, in the interview with Ariana Huffington for Huffington Post, said his stories are about transformation (Huffington 3.00:3.20) which

leads to their destiny. He further adds, in this world which is “swimming in data and drowning in wisdom” (Huffington 2.30:2.33) sharing is the most important thing and “love is sharing” (Huffington 2.36:2.38)). As they realise this, both of them are able to experience a spiritual psychosynthesis.

Pilar, an ordinary girl, with an austere catholic upbringing nurtures love towards her childhood friend. But she is frightened to express this love for fear of criticism and rejection. In her lower consciousness is her complex of fear and rejection. She was invited by him to go over to Madrid just to meet him. She saw him as a speaker who had won the people’s hearts. In her innermost self she had fostered love towards him but for various reasons she had not expressed it. After the meeting, when she saw the audience rush up to him in adoration, she “felt like a child, - insecure, tense because I knew none of his new friends, and jealous that he was paying attention to the others than to me” (Coelho, *BRP* 10). But when she asked if they could have coffee together and subsequently went to Bilbao where he is supposed to give another lecture the next day, the inner self had disidentified with that self that was afraid to express the feeling. Her vigilant self was aware of the emotion that was preventing her from moving forward and took the better of her. So she was able to invite him for coffee and consent to travel with him to Bilbao where he was supposed to lecture. When he accepted, it was sealing the fate for both of them. “In spite of all the things I could have done or said, I asked a question that has brought me, a week later, to this river and has caused me to write these very lines. And he, turning to me, accepted the hand offered by fate” (Coelho, *BRP* 11). He too had nursed such a love for Pilar but was unable to express it. When both of them

agreed to spend one more day together, their selves have disintegrated the complex that was hindering them in their realisation of the selves.

In order to achieve psychosynthesis, a unifying centre should be established. This happens for both of them when Pilar meets one of the attendees of the lecture, Brida, who claims to have known him. And for him when he invites her to look at a house in France. Brida spoke about the feminine side of God of which he is a devotee. She says, “I can read it in your eyes. I can read your heart. You are going to fall in love. And suffer.... He loves you. Even though he says some silly things, at least he recognises the Great Mother. Don’t let him lose his way. Help him” (Coelho, *BRP* 17). He takes her to a house and reveals that he had always wanted to start his life with her in that house. Elsewhere he spoke about the ‘other’ which is present in everyone. “The Other is the one who taught me what I should be like, but not what I am. The Other believes that it is our obligation to spend our entire life thinking about how to get our hands on as much money as possible so that we will not die of hunger when we are old... And then it is too late” (Coelho, *BRP* 56). But he did not allow this Other to dictate how he should live his life. And he began to realise, “From the moment that I ousted the Other from my life, the Divine Energy began to perform its miracles” (Coelho, *BRP* 57). This corresponds to Parfitt’s reference to Assagioli, “ In accepting pleasure without craving for it and attachment to it, and in accepting pain, when unavoidable, without fearing it and rebelling against it, one can learn much from both pleasure and pain, and ‘distil the essence’ which they contain” (Parfitt, 79). The development of the self leading to psychosynthesis is carried out by means of creative affirmation which results in a firm organisation of the personality. (Assagioli, 25) Both of them having understood their situation head towards a meaningful

union. Pilar started understanding his conviction towards the Immaculate Conception and his adoration of Virgin Mary. She acknowledged his gift of performing miracles when she saw how indispensable he had become to the needy, when the old man pleaded to go over with him to cure his son. “I realised then that we both wanted to unite our souls under one destiny- but the seminary and Zaragoza stood in the way. God, I am trying to recover my faith. Please don’t abandon me in the middle of this adventure, I prayed, pushing my fears aside” (Coelho, *BRP* 99). She realised his conviction towards the gift bestowed on him by the Virgin, and he has to be faithful to this gift.

The conversation with the Padre made her realise the difficulty in living such a life. The Padre asks her to bring him out of this. “In order to have a spiritual life, you need not enter a seminary, or fast, or abstain, or take a vow of chastity. All you have to do is have faith and accept God. From then on each of us became a vehicle for His miracles.” (Coelho, *BRP* 137) When he talks about his love towards her, and how he got the house in Saint Savin imagining a life with her, he too was struggling with pain to accept the change. He says, “From that day on, I couldn’t forget that house. Every time I went to the chapel to pray, I realised that my renunciation had not been total. I imagined myself there with you. . . . I pictured our children running around the house and playing in the fields around Saint-Savin” (Coelho, *BRP* 103). Both of them had used the power of their will to change for their heart’s desire. They use the energy of “love, awareness, will and imagination” (Parfitt 83) which aids us in making choices that are in harmony with our consciousness. Before Pilar reached this understanding, she was in a “crises preceding the spiritual awakening” and he “crises caused by the spiritual awakening” (Assagioli, 36).

She had taken life as it came, loved and lost. Religion was something taken for granted. Her conversation with Padre exemplifies this. She says priests live a life of austerity and poverty, “they threaten us with the fires of hell for mistakes that they themselves make. And they present God to us as a vengeful being who blames man for the death of His only Son.” Padre replies, “You’ve had an excellent Catholic education” (Coelho, *BRP*136). Padre further tells,

A person who goes in search of God is wasting his time. He can walk a thousand roads and join many religious sects- but he’ll never find God that way. God is here, right now, at our side. We can see Him in this mist, in the ground we’re walking on, even in my shoes. His angels keep watch while we sleep and help us in our work. In order to find God, you have only to look around..... All you have to do is keep faith and accept God. From then on, each of us becomes a part of His path. We become a vehicle for His miracles. (Coelho, *BRP*137)

She enters into a phase of “reactions to the spiritual awakening” (Assagioli, 41). She is able to understand his love for humanity and her part in sharing the altruistic duty. So she prayed, “Our Lady, give me my faith. May I also serve as an instrument of your work. Give me the opportunity to learn through my love, because love has never kept anyone away from their dreams. May I be a companion and ally of the man I love. May we accomplish everything we have to accomplish together?” (Coelho, *BRP*162 -163) He talks to her about the simplicity of faith, echoing Padre’s words. “He came as a carpenter to show that – no matter what we do – everything leads us to the experience of God’s love” (Coelho, *BRP* 166). She understood his struggle between the seminary and

the world outside. “I want to talk about the other kind of love,” he said again. “The love that a man and a woman share, and in which there are also miracles” (Coelho, *BRP* 167). She fully acknowledged this feeling. His association and acceptance of the idea of dedicating his life to The Virgin and the ensuing gift of performing miracles to heal people are what Assagioli remarks as “divine homesickness”(Assagioli 42). Both of them undergo a process of transmutation where any obstacle on the path of self – realization should be overcome so that there happens a regeneration. Her doubt and his vacillation are accounts of this transmutation. As Assagioli puts it is a condition like that of a caterpillar before emerging into a beautiful butterfly.

The reconstruction of their personality happens when Pilar asked him to break the glass. Pilar has accepted him as what he is, a votary of The Virgin, whose life will be divided between altruism and personal love. He has to overcome this dilemma and fear of non-performance. The breaking of the glass is metaphorical of breaking through this dilemma and coming out of it. “Break the glass, I thought to myself, because it’s a symbolic gesture. Try to understand that I have broken things within myself that were much more important than a glass, and I’m happy I did. Resolve your own internal battle, and break the glass” (Coelho, *BRP* 169). For him it has to be a complete break away from the past. He had to learn a little more. Like the Gift of the Magi, each one sacrificing for the sake of the other, Pilar did not get back to her previous life, and he, as a faithful servant of the Virgin, gave up the gift of performing miracles. This again erupts a turmoil in Pilar as this was not what she had wanted of him. She wanted to partake and share the responsibility that he had taken upon himself. It is the last stage in psychosynthesis when both of them realise themselves. She leaves the place and finds herself in a convent. Both

of them experience a period of stress and strife in their journey towards self-realization, their love and finally a synthesis. This synthesis is achieved when he comes back to her and both of them unite to carry forward their responsibility of being available to the needy with the blessings of the Virgin. ““But the Goddess has always given me a second chance in life. And She is giving me that with you. She will help me to find my path again.” “Our Path”” (Coelho, *BRP* 210).

Psychosynthesis, as it is understood, is a holistic and evolutionary approach towards realization of the potential within each one. Each of the characters of the novels discussed, constantly grow. Coelho, in an interview with Glauco Ortolano for ‘World Literature Today’, while discussing the coming of age literature, said in an age that is bereft of any ideology to follow, there is a concern to return to the time when human concern is viewed as very important, said humanity is always searching for ethics and an ideal to live by. This ideology is fulfilled in all these select novels taken for study. Each character undergoes a volcanic eruption and in a given moment this exercise of eruption begins and they withstand the pain caused in order to enjoy the new panorama of life around. The different aspects that lead to a synthesis is worked out in all those people in the novels. It is axiomatic that psychosynthesis is a way of understanding our lives, knowing ourselves and having trust in ourselves and in the growth process.

Psychosynthesis as a methodology for understanding oneself, in its process, helps honour not just self but others also. All the characters transform into a new personality through the situations they find themselves in and it warrants the necessitated change. As this theory says, all people grow and this validates who each one is and what each one wants to become.