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**Interface between Magic and Reality in Coelho's *Like the Flowing River***

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Central  
Department of English in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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## **Letter of Recommendation**

MrHem Singh Karki has completed his thesis entitled “Interface between magic and reality in Coelho's *Like the Flowing River*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from April 2013 to April 2014 A.D. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Dr. BaikunthaPoudel

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**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Central Department of English**

**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled “Interface between Magic and Reality in Coelho's *Like the Flowing River*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Hem Singh Karki has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee.

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## **Abstract**

To delve into the everyday phenomena like death, love, circulation of money, faith among others which are either taken for granted or ignored by people in general, Paulo Coelho in his novel *Like the Flowing River*, makes use of supernatural elements. Coelho in the novel presents own thoughts and feeling on life experiences where he touches the philosophy of life and appeals to go on an exciting journey of own. The present research probes into the issue of unveiling daily phenomena of life devouring magic realism as its weapon. In *Like the Flowing River* magic realism occurs when a character in the story continues to be alive beyond the normal length of life and this is subtly depicted by the character being present throughout many generations. The research diving into nearly fifteen stories and articles collected in *Like the Flowing River* unveil the blending of reality with the fantasy. Through these different stories Coelho deepens to find out how we receive spiritual guidance or wisdom presenting the real characters in the fictional events and settings and vice-versa.

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## **I. Paulo Coelho's *Like the Flowing River*: A Flow of Spirituality**

The present research deals with the issue of communication with god based on magic realism. Coelho uses supernatural elements to shed light on those everyday phenomena like death, love, circulation of money, faith among others which are either taken for granted or ignored by people in general. *Like the Flowing River* is a collection of short stories. It is a breathtaking collection of reflections from one of the best storytellers, Paulo Coelho. In this riveting collection of thoughts and stories, Paulo Coelho offers his personal reflections on a wide range of subjects from archery and music to elegance, travelling and the nature of good and evil which is bonded with supernaturality. It bears the themes of love, hate, violence, religion, faith, self assurance and faith on God and its further consequences.

*Like the Flowing River* book contains stories and articles that previously have been published in various newspapers around the world. With works compiled from 1998 to 2005 this book is published. Like the Chinese saying, our life flow like the water in the river, the book title projected the value of what it contains. The stories and articles are about his experience on the road, his daily life experience, the people he met, his action when faced with God's calling, his point of view towards certain things that happened, lesson of life that all could learn from things happened around us, because everything happens for a reason which can be sometimes seen by ordinary men and sometimes cannot. He makes a noticeable point that all god creation exist to realize that one should be grateful with what we are trying for. He says:

For the good things and bad things that ever happened, we might just forget it with the time passing by, most people remember the bad more than the good one. We are all so focus on the matter, the story

lines, what is right and what is wrong, mostly we put our self as the victim and we are on the right side. But we never tell our self to ask why that certain things happened? What it want us to learn from it, what is its message. (12)

Coelho seems very touched with the different circumstances of the life that one has to face. He is able to relate the stories to the day to day life action in one or other way. In the above quote too, he tries his best to spread the life – theme that leads to the path of success though he seems supernaturalistic in his tone. In the very last sentence of the quote, Coelho magnifies the grace of supernatural events advocating our disability to ask why the certain things – expected or unexpected – continuously take place in human life.

Magic realism is a genre where magic elements are a natural part in an action otherwise mundane, realistic environment. Although it is most commonly used as a literary genre, magic realism also applies to film and the visual arts.

Magic realism in *Like the Flowing River* occurs when a character in the story continues to be alive beyond the normal length of life and this is subtly depicted by the character being present throughout many generations. On the surface the story has no clear magical attributes and everything is conveyed in a real setting, but such a character breaks the rules of our real world. The author may give precise details of the real world such as the date of birth of a reference character and the army recruitment age, but such facts help to define an age for the fantastic character of the story that would turn out to be an abnormal occurrence like someone living for two hundred years.

The term is broadly descriptive rather than critically rigorous: Professor Matthew Strecher defines magic realism as the event that happens when a highly



detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe. Many writers are categorized as magical realists, which confuses what the term really means and how wide its definition is. While the term magical realism in its modern sense first appeared in 1955, the German art critic Franz Roh first used the phrase in 1925. Roh believed magic realism is related to, but distinctive from, surrealism, due to magic realism's focus on the material object and the actual existence of things in the world, as opposed to the more cerebral, psychological and subconscious reality that the surrealists explored. Magic realism was later used to describe the uncanny realism by American painters such as Ivan Albright, Paul Cadmus, George Tooker and other artists during the 1940s and 1950s. However, in contrast with its use in literature, magical realist art does not often include overtly fantastic or magical content, but rather looks at the mundane through a hyper-realistic and often mysterious lens. The extent to which magical elements enter in visual art depends on the subcategory, discussed in detail below.

Magical realism is controversial among literary critics. Maggie Ann Bowers argues that it first emerged in the 1955 essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" by critic Angel Flores. She notes that while Flores names Jorge Luis Borges as the first magical realist (some critics consider him a predecessor, not actually a magical realist), he fails to acknowledge either Alejo Carpentier or Arturo Uslar-Pietri for bringing Roh's magic realism to Latin America. However, both Luis Leal and Irene Guenther, (referencing Pietri and Jean Weisgerber texts, respectively), attest that Pietri was one of the first, if not the first, to apply the term to Latin American literature.

A mystic philosopher, McGinn argues that presence is more accurate than "union", since not all mystics spoke of union with God, and since many visions and

miracles were not necessarily related to union. He also argues that we should speak of "consciousness" of God's presence, rather than of "experience", since mystical activity is not simply about the sensation of God as an external object, but more broadly about new ways of knowing and loving based on states of awareness in which God becomes present in our inner acts.

William James popularized the use of the term "religious experience" in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It has also influenced the understanding of mysticism as a distinctive experience which supplies knowledge. An American scholar of religion, Wayne Proudfoot traces the roots of the notion of "religious experience" further back to the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), who argued that religion is based on a feeling of the infinite. The notion of "religious experience" was used by Schleiermacher to defend religion against the growing scientific and secular critique.

Wayne Proudfoot investigates the relatively brief and chaotic development of the idea of "religious experience". He finds difficulties in the way it has been described, resulting from efforts to render religion invulnerable to critique. Many thinkers have tried to show that religious experience is a primary phenomenon, like feeling or sensation, completely prior to thoughts or beliefs. In other words, they have claimed that religious experience is in no way a product of our own intellectual processes, but comes to us much like sensation or feeling. But Proudfoot proves that religious experiences are in fact shaped by the beliefs we bring to them. They are not independent of our mental processes. A Catholic's experience of Mary- the Goddess, for example, is conditioned by what is expected of a religious experience of Mary. To a certain extent religious experiences are created by what we believe will be experienced.

The existence of fantasy elements in the real world provides the basis for magical realism. Writers don't invent new worlds but reveal the magical in this world, as was done by Gabriel Garcia Marquez who wrote the seminal work of the style, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In the binary world of magical realism, the supernatural realm blends with the natural, familiar world.

In 1986, Coelho walked more than five hundred mile Road of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain, a turning point in his life. On the path, Coelho had a spiritual awakening, which he described autobiographically in *The Pilgrimage*. In an interview, Coelho stated:

I was very happy in the things I was doing. I was doing something that gave me food and water – to use the metaphor in *Like the Flowing River*, I was working, I had a person whom I loved, I had money, but I was not fulfilling my dream. My dream was, and still is, to be a writer. (23)

Coelho relates all the happenings that have taken place in the life to the day to day phenomena of life. He believes that fulfilling dream is also a kind of achieving topmost aim of life. Coelho says himself that he has everything that he wanted but his dream of becoming a writer is not fulfilled that is why knitting his dream with surreal phenomena, Coelho, reflects his innermost view of becoming a good writer in the future.

*Like the flowing river* is a compilation of Coelho's thoughts and stories that have had an impact on his life. And the way he presents it is quite poetic and impactful. One thing that draws me to Coelho's books is his simplicity in writing. He conveys perhaps the deepest secrets of the human mind in the most explicit way. And this book is a testimony to the fact. In the preface to his book, Coelho revisits

his childhood and provides the readers with an insight into what a writer was to him when he was fifteen. He clearly points out that even as a kid he had a clear view as to who a writer was. He was not one who wore glasses and wore uncombed hair but was one genius who would not be understood by his generation. A writer, according to him, breaks the cliches and is not afraid to seduce a woman in his own special yet unusual style.

There is no single, widely-agreed definition of supernaturality. Social scientists have defined supernaturality as the search for the sacred, for that which is set apart from the ordinary and worthy of veneration, "a transcendent dimension within human experience discovered in moments in which the individual questions the meaning of personal existence and attempts to place the self within a broader ontological context"(89). Supernaturality is a double-edged sword. It leads enlightened souls on the path of rectitude by shining brightly before them on their arduous trail which is narrow and winding. The promise of this guiding beacon to transcend physical mortality to become one with the supreme being, or creator, or whatever we may call it keeps them straightforwardly riveted to the correct path. Atheists and agnostics, who are the beacons for quite a different route to truth, have no bones of contention with these straight souls who live a life of spotless clarity. However, there is another, dark, and sinister side of supernaturality which is surprisingly rampant and eclipses its benevolent twin-brother. How else can we account for the fanatical and murderous tirades being enacted in many places of the world against the screening of a film which is supposed to have ridiculed the founder of one of the major religions of the world. Coelho's supernaturality and message thankfully belong to the former category which could provide solace and

confidence to many individuals who falter in their steps without knowing the right thing to do.

The Mexican critic Luis Leal summed up the difficulty of defining magical realism by writing. For him:

If you can explain it, then it's not magical realism." He offers his own definition by writing, "Without thinking of the concept of magical realism, each writer gives expression to a reality he observes in the people. To me, magical realism is an attitude on the part of the characters in the novel toward the world or toward nature. (11)

Leal and Irene Guenther both quote Arturo Uslar-Pietri, who described "man as a mystery surrounded by realistic facts. A poetic prediction or a poetic denial of reality. What for lack of another name could be called a magical realism." (15) It is worth noting that Pietri, in presenting his term for this literary tendency, always kept its definition open by means of a language more lyrical and evocative than strictly critical, as in this 1948 statement. When academic critics attempted to define magical realism with scholarly exactitude, they discovered that it was more powerful than precise. Critics, frustrated by their inability to pin down the term's meaning, have urged its complete abandonment.

Magical realism plot lines characteristically employ hybrid multiple planes of reality that take place in "inharmonious arenas of such opposites as urban and rural, and Western and indigenous."(21) Sense of mystery is something that most critics agree on is this major theme. Magic realist literature tends to read at an intensified level. Taking *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the reader must let go of preexisting ties to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, scientific reason, etc. to strive for a state of

heightened awareness of life's connectedness or hidden meanings. Luis Leal articulates this feeling as "to seize the mystery that breathes behind things," and supports the claim by saying a writer must heighten his senses to the point of limit state in order to realize all levels of reality, most importantly that of mystery.

There are different critics who criticize this novel *Like the Flowing River* through different point of view. Nicole Del Sesto argues: "the story of novel is weak in which writer has sacrificed a character development. There is not the bond of character relation" (31). Similarly, another critic C. Symington asserts,

Coelho is known for his layered prose, and this is no exception. Given the times in which we live, the struggle between good and evil resonates heartily with those of us who so desperately ask why. I have also noticed that in recent years Coelho's style, his way of writing has also moved on. 'Brida' and 'The Witch of Portobello' are indicators that he has distanced himself from the mysterious suffusion of oriental Islam and Latin-American Christianity. Instead Coelho's gaze has moved towards more European climes, and this is only natural since his pilgrimages are taking him further towards Russia. (20)

*Like the flowing river*, the book leads us to the mysteries of life through a collection of thoughts and short stories. Yoking fantasy with the real life, the short stories and events given in the book are really inspirational. The author expresses his reflections on a variety of subjects from literature and history, from books and libraries. Unlike other books of the same kind, *Like the flowing river* is very simple and straightforward and is easy to comprehend by all age groups. The book reveals before us the truth and beauty of life and touches our heart. The instructions "How

to climb a mountain” provides the secrets to achieve our dreams. Through the meaningful stories he offers his thoughts on supernaturality, life and morals. In this context, Ramjanam Singh quotes:

Paulo Coelho once again mesmerized his readers with his deep, philosophical tone in his book *Like the Flowing River*. We all know that Coelho, the writer of such great works *The Winner Stands Alone*, *The Alchemist* and *Eleven Minutes* is nothing less than a masterful writer but in this book, Coelho showed that he is more than a literary genius - he's just a man with overflowing wisdom. (12)

Here Ramjanam believes that Coelho doesn't write any article and books for only literariness but it is also for the reformation and upgradation of life. He is of the point that Coelho scatters the real sense of spiritual experiences in his almost all writings. *Like the flowing River* gives a lot of insights on human life. It's profound wisdom which is entranced into the inner precepts of Coelho. In fact, it is a profound wisdom entranced within us all. Giving focus to the wisdom and reserved quality of the writher Seth John Pyrr states:

*Like the Flowing River* is a collection of thoughts and reflections of the author, published through his syndicated columns in news papers published in many languages. It consists of about 100 essays on various topics from self-improvement to community living to international peace. Always a conservative, the author treads cautiously and along with established religions whenever any of his utterances might seem to ruffle the feathers of established wisdom.

(13)

The blending of the eastern, western and catholic ways of supernaturalism in the same book is the unbelievable quality and ability of the writer as Pyrr agrees. Saron Plath sees sensitiveness of the creator in the book *Like the Flowing River*. He praises the writer as one of the brilliant writers of the Brazil. Placing the connotation of the image of the feeling that comes in one's mind when he sees the flowing river, he quotes:

A transversal cut in the anatomy of Paulo Coelho's literary work, Be like a river flow compilation of tales, opinions and ideas constitutes a beautiful reflection of the wide creation of the Brazilian writer.

Rescued from different periods and publications, the current collection draws the sensitive line followed by the eyes of the creator, stopping on those details of reality and contemplation which distill the subtle philosophy of one who observes existence with the same placidity of gazing at a river. (22)

*Like the Flowing River* contains a collection of weird and sometimes miraculous incidents in his life, stories he has come across from around the world and his reflections on different aspects of life. An interesting read, one can skim across the pages without much delay, but each of the stories leave a thought in the mind that we can take back when we are alone and chew on, analyze them in our own ways and find conclusions based on our experiences indirectly Coelho leaves the traces on the arena of God and His mystic manifestation. Though he argues to believe on God, there is difference between the way he suggests to believe and the way we believe. He is of the view that if God exists in the universe he helps us in our every step to success. Even though supernaturality is different than religion, eastern religions aimed supernaturality at personal well-being and personal



development. The notion of spiritual experience plays an important role in modern supernaturalism. But it has a relatively recent origin. Spiritual experience is a process that involves a transcendent growth process. Transcend means to move beyond one's former frame of reference in a direction of higher or broader scope, a more inclusive perspective. Such transcendence is essential to human growth. A transcendent growth process, found in all human beings, involves moving beyond one's own unhealthy egocentricity, duality, and exclusivity towards more healthy egocentricity, inclusivity, unity, and a capacity to love. The movement from unhealthy to healthy egocentricity might involve the ability to become more assertive or the increased ability to stand one's ground. Gendlin has described this growth process in the following way; "when a person's central core or inward self expands...it strengthens and develops, the "I" becomes stronger. The person--I mean that which looks out from behind the eyes--comes more into its own...." (11) One develops when he/she desires to live and do things stirs deep down, when one's own hopes and desires stir, when one's own perceptions and evaluations carry a new sureness, when the capacity to stand one's ground increases, and when one can consider others and their needs. One comes to feel one's separate existence solidly enough to want to be close to others as they really are. It is development when one is drawn to something that is directly interesting, and when one wants to play. It is development when something stirs inside that has long been immobile and silent, cramped and almost dumb, and when life's energy flows in a new way.

This is how other critics have discussed *Like the Flowing River*. This research focuses on every aspect of the human life including love, death, life, speeches, legends, travel, supernaturalism, virtues and several others. They capture the varied range of themes and matter of interests. So in this research to make knot

with the magical elements and its nexus with daily phenomena of life, different stories of *Like the Flowing River* are analyzed through the eyes of magic realism and spiritualism. This thesis is a library-based research. The research is based on the authentic cites. Guidance from the lecturers and professors is taken as the supportive tool. In addition to it the notion Magic Realism conceptualized by the thinkers such as a German art critic, Franz Roh, Luis Leal, Wayne Proudfoot and the notions of Gabriel Garcia Marquez are used to make the thesis prove the hypothesis. Different extracts from the novel related with the notion of life, death, love, faith, grief, belief, experiences, and incidents of supernatural acts are brought to prove the appropriateness of implementation of magic realism.

## **II: Interface between Magic and Reality in Coelho's *Like the Flowing River***

The present research deals with the issue of magic and reality being based on the notions of magic realists. Different stories of Paulo Coelho's short stories and newspaper article collection *Like the flowing river* conjures dreamlike circumstances and the characters who are filled and assimilated with the mode of surrealist way of life. Each article runs for just one to three pages and not more than that. It's a collection of articles published in various newspapers around the world, based on author's personal experience and stories he heard. It is about the life, love, hatred, belief, regret and daily experiences of life. To display such crucial parts of life Coelho has used the magical elements in the book *Like the Flowing River*.

Magic realism or magical realism is a genre where magic elements are a natural part in an otherwise mundane, realistic environment. In *Like the Flowing River* magic realism occurs when a character in the story continues to be alive beyond the normal length of life and this is subtly depicted by the character being present throughout many generations. On the surface the story has no clear magical attributes and everything is conveyed in a real setting, but such a character breaks the rules of our real world. The author may give precise details of the real world such as the date of birth of a reference character and the army recruitment age, but such facts help to define an age for the fantastic character of the story that would turn out to be an abnormal occurrence such as someone living for two hundred years.

There is always a hidden strand of comprehension running across the barriers of religion, language or culture, which binds the writer firmly tied to the readers. Man, being the same everywhere, the path and the vehicle to ride into his inner depths are the same – what a shrewd one needs to do is learn to ride the vehicle

which bestows him the talent to disregard the make or brand. Coelho wields the supreme talent to directly speak to the inner selves of the readers. The subtle signals which emanate from one individual to make sense to another defy common sense, logic and the rules of semantics. That may be why Coelho exerts such a pull on book lovers everywhere on the planet. *Like the Flowing River* is a collection of thoughts and reflections of the author, published through his syndicated columns in newspapers published in many languages. It consists of about 100 essays on various topics from self-improvement to community living to international peace. Always a conservative, the author treads cautiously and along with established religions whenever any of his utterances might seem to ruffle the feathers of established wisdom.

During all these years, the author has written columns and articles in newspapers and magazines from all over the world. *Like the Flowing River* is a selection of Paulo's texts made by the author himself. Drawn from different periods and publications, this collection contemplates everyday existence with the placidity with which one might gaze at a flowing river. A compilation of stories, thoughts and impressions which reflect the wide creation using magic in realistic circumstances and situations.

Coelho's simple words and subtle philosophy encompass reflections on solitude, the art of love or the way to become an archer, to parables on man's struggles and journey through life. His mission is to observe human beings; what they are and how they are, rather than what they want to be or pretend to be. Coelho's writing is timeless: thoughts on books and libraries and belonging to a technological age sit alongside an awareness of the value of an ordinary pencil. Through the artistic and powerful presentation of the stories Coelho becomes the

spokesman of supernaturality via different stories. The fullness of stories with the values of respect, god, and dignified life he revolves in the realm of ethics and Supernaturality.

In this experimental collection Coelho becomes a religious and spiritually guided writer. Everywhere in the book he celebrates the greatness of God. He shows respect and honor to all kinds of creations of the Creator. Paulo Coelho under the title "Prepared to battle with few doubts" pens his thoughts which came up while weeding his garden. He profoundly gives homage to God for creating innumerable lives. He is grateful to flowers and thrones, virtue and vice, light and dark, last but not the least, valuable and valueless. As the article proceeds he is busy in working in the field- Garden of the house. A weed is an unwanted plant which finds a place by itself to live. Coelho says that every living thing in this world has the right to live and who was he to kill those weeds. He makes his mind to respect the work of Creator. Coelho personifies the weed and sees that it is begging for his life. In this respect he says;

Am I doing the right thing? What we call a 'weed' is, in fact, an attempt at survival by a particular species that took nature millions of years to create and develop. The flower was fertilized at the expense of innumerable insects; it was transformed into seed; the wind scattered it over the fields round about. (4)

Magical realism portrays fantastical events in an otherwise realistic tone. It brings fables, folk tales, and myths into contemporary social relevance. Fantasy traits given to characters, such as levitation, telepathy, and telekinesis, help to encompass modern political realities that can be phantasmagorical. In the above mentioned quote, the use of telepathy is first and foremost use of tool. The narrator becomes able

to have communication with the weed. It was not with speech, writing or other signs or symbols.

In the course of respecting the life of weed, he bears dilemma to remove or not to remove it. He sees valuable workmanship of God in all creatures – from the greatest creature to the tiny weeds. At the same time, he wants to remove the weed in order to save the flowers and also wants to respect the nature and its creation. For this indecisiveness, he quotes:

Now it is up to me to continue that work, although the philosophical question remains; should I respect the work of the creator, of the gardener, or should I accept the survival instinct with which nature endowed this plant, which I now call 'weed' (5)

In this indecisiveness Coelho takes the help from the Hindu text “Bhagavat Gita” here Coelho, spiritually, supplies the answer that Krishna gives to the warrior Arjuna, when the latter loses heart before a decisive battle, throws down his arms, and says that it is not right to take part in a battle that will culminate in the death of his brother. Krishna says, “Do you really think you can kill anyone? Your hand is my hand and it was already written that everything you are doing would be done. No one kills and on one dies.” (6) finally being convinced and respectful to the God he continues weeding without any hesitation. By this small event, at last, he scatters a lesson that “ when something undesirable grows in my soul, I ask God to give me the same courage mercilessly to pluck it out” (6).

The existence of fantasy elements in the real world provides the basis for magical realism. Writers don't invent new worlds but reveal the magical in this world, as was done by Gabriel Garcia Marquez who wrote the seminal work of the

style, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In the binary world of magical realism, the supernatural realm blends with the natural, familiar world.

With the help of the story "The Tears of the Desert" Coelho expresses the concept of Oneness. It is a beautiful story about missionary's unique experiences in the city of Marrakesh. In the usual walk of morning he noticed a man lying down with his ear pressed to the ground and stroking the sand with one hand. As the days pass the event also comes with. Intrigued by that strange behaviour, he decided to speak to the stranger. To the answer of the question what he was doing he replied that he was companying the desert and offering it consolation for its loneliness and its tears.

The term was coined first by German art critic Franz Roh in 1925, but it was Alejo Carpentier who gave the term its current definition, in the prologue to his book *The marvelous*, he writes, in a translated version:

begins to be unmistakably marvelous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle), from a privileged revelation of reality, an unaccustomed insight that is singularly favored by the unexpected richness of reality or an amplification of the scale and categories of reality, perceived with particular intensity by virtue of an exaltation of the spirit that leads it to a kind of extreme state. (45)

There is an article comparing our actions with that of an ordinary pencil. Like a hand that guides the pencil, God guides all our actions, like sharpening the pencil, the problems and sufferings sharpens us to become a better person, we should "erase" our mistakes, the inner soul is more important than the outside body and we should leave a mark of our life in this world.

Then there is a story of Genghis Khan, the Moghal emperor and his Falcon, whom the emperor killed out of rage, only to realize later that, the Falcon only tried to save his life. He makes a replica of the Falcon in gold and engraves in its wings that “Your friend will remain as your friend, even when he does harms to you” and “any action done out of rage and anger, is bound to cause destruction” (57)

Supernaturality is not religion and is not even necessarily affiliated with religion. The definition of supernaturality is different for everyone. Supernaturality is the idea of a process or journey of self-discovery and of learning not only who you are, but who you want to be. It is the challenge of reaching beyond our current limits. This can include keeping an open mind, questioning current beliefs, or trying to better understand others' beliefs.

One of the articles collected in the book entitled "Pandora's box" deals with the value of force-latently the power of unknown, unseen and unspoken – with relation to the magic realist conception of images and illustration of Zeus, Prometheus and Pandora herself. The speaker of the short story describes the massive genocide of 1980 to 2000 that had taken place in Brazil. He surrenders to the power of force and makes himself feel assimilated with the almighty power of force. He says:

I used to think that if everyone played their part, then things would change; but tonight, while I look out at the icy mountains on the frontier with China, i have my doubts. Perhaps, even with everyone doing their bit, the saying i learned as a child is still true: 'You cannot argue with force'. (30)

The book abounds with pearls of wisdom and very practical ways for dealing with seemingly impossible tasks. In one of the essays, titled Statutes for the New



Millennium, two of the author's sixteen points deserve mention here. They are, 1) Every human being has the right to search for happiness, and by happiness is meant something that makes that individual feel content, not necessarily something that makes other people feel content and 2) Every human being should keep alive within them the sacred flame of madness, but should behave as a normal person (115).

Another essay, Charity under Threat (127) describes how a swindler obtained money from Coelho's wife posing to be a foreign tourist who has been robbed by local thugs. Even when it became clear that her generosity has been exploited by an unscrupulous guy, she says, "Well, that's not going to stop me helping anyone"!

(32) It proves how the inner light that guides us from within is and should be unperturbed by the storms that may upset all external considerations.

The greatest thing we can find unappealing in the book is its overzealous dependence on Supernaturality and power of belief. Coelho seems to cross the line in promoting these vague ideas to the hilt. How could rational people be on the story "On Witches and Forgiveness" Coelho when he says that:

I have seen the weather being changed, for example; I have seen operations performed without anesthetic. Believe me if you like – or laugh at me if that is the only way you can read what I am writing – but I have seen the transmutation of base metal; I have seen spoons being bent; and lights shining in the air around me because someone said this was going to happen. (129)

Even with the unfamiliar terrain of supernaturality and belief, the reading experience was altogether a good one. With a positive outlook on life, many of the recommendations and Aesop's fables-like moral stories are redundant to our personal lives. The book is easy to read and serves its purpose to impart a sense of

belonging in the readers' minds. The author has been immensely successful in achieving his aim.

Magical realism plot lines characteristically employ hybrid multiple planes of reality that take place in inharmonious arenas of such opposites as urban and rural, and Western and indigenous. For example, as seen in Julio Cortazar's "La Noche Boca Arriba," an individual experiences two realistic situations simultaneously in the same place but during two different time periods, centuries apart. His dreamlike state connects these two realities; this small bit of magic makes these multiple planes of reality possible. Overall, they establish a deeper and true reality than conventional realist techniques would illustrate.

In the book, *Like the Flowing River* Coelho always hovers in the praise of God whether in this or that way. In "Marked Out to Die" he asserts:

When I get home, I look up at the stars. Sometimes we encounter things on our path, but because our time has not yet come, they brush past us, without touching us, even though they were close enough for us to see them. I thank God for the awareness to understand, as a friend of mine says, that everything that had to happen happened, but nothing did. (78).

One of the methods to display the magic realism is to have its relation with the God, supernatural and somewhat mystical and spiritual experiences. The understanding comes up from glancing the stars paves the way to the application of magical element in order to have understanding concept towards it. In this riveting collection of thoughts and stories, Coelho, offers his personal reflections on a wide range of subjects from archery and music to elegance, traveling and the nature of good and evil. An old woman explains to her grandson how a mere pencil can show him the

path to happiness... instructions on “how to climb a mountain” reveal the secret to making your dreams a reality, the story of “Ghengis Khan and the Falcon” that teaches about the folly of anger - and the art of friendship, a pianist who performs an example in fulfilling your destiny. The author came to know three important lessons when he goes to the rescue of a man in the street - Paulo shows us how life has lessons for us in the greatest, smallest and most unusual of experiences.

Sharing his thoughts on supernatural, life and ethics, Paulo touches with his philosophy and invites one to go on an exciting journey of own. In this regard giving interview to the newspaper, Coelho strongly asserts:

All religions lead to the same God, and all deserve the same respect. Anyone who chooses a religion is also choosing a collective way for worshipping and sharing the mysteries. Nevertheless, that person is the only one responsible for his or her actions along the way and has no right to shift responsibility for any personal decisions on to that religion. (9)

Coelho here in the quote relates the magical belief of god in the real life. He is of the view that one who chooses a religion or any kind of belief pervasive in the society unknowingly chooses a collective way for worshipping and sharing the unknown mysteries of life. A person should be responsible for his/her all actions. It becomes painful to shift responsibility and accountability for any personal decisions on to that religion. In “Story of a Pencil” a boy is watching his grandmother write a letter. At one point, he asked: "Are you writing a story about what we've done? Is it a story about me?" His grandmother stopped writing her letter and said to her grandson: "I am writing about you, actually, but more important than the words is the pencil I'm using. I hope you will be like this pencil when you grow up." (10) The boy looked at

the pencil. It didn't seem very special to him so he says that it was same like that of other pencils that he had seen before. But mother focusing on its qualities assists that it depends on how anyone looks at things. That pencil has five qualities which, if you manage to hang on to them, will make you a person who is always at peace with the world. Pointing its qualities, she opines:

First Quality: you are capable of great things, but you must never forget that there is a hand guiding your steps. We call that hand God, and He always guides us according to His will. "Second Quality: now and then, I have to stop writing and use a sharpener. That makes the pencil suffer a little, but afterwards, he's much sharper. So you, too, must learn to bear certain pains and sorrows, because they will make you a better person. "Third Quality: the pencil always allows us to use an eraser to rub out any mistakes."Fourth Quality: what really matters in a pencil is not its wooden exterior, but the graphite inside. Finally, the pencil's Fifth Quality: it always leaves a mark. (10-11).

Here, pinpointing the qualities of pencil, Coelho highlights the value of five different qualities that are necessary for life journey. He symbolically praises the God for giving us life in this world. He is of the view that like that of the eraser of the pencil, we have to erase our misdeeds. This means that correcting something we did is not necessarily a bad thing; it helps to keep us on the road to justice. *Like The Flowing River* encompasses various themes and meanings. It bears the philosophy of life. A connectedness to yourself and to others. Supernaturality is personal, but it is also rooted in being connected with others and with the world around you. This connection can facilitate one finding our place in the world.

Magic realists believe in the theme of mystery that seems so near to the sense and notion of supernatural. Magic realist literature tends to read at an intensified level. Taking *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the reader must let go of preexisting ties to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, scientific reason, etc., to strive for a state of heightened awareness of life's connectedness or hidden meanings. Luis Leal articulates this feeling as to seize the mystery that breathes behind things, and supports the claim by saying a writer must heighten his senses to the point of limit state in order to realize all levels of reality, most importantly that of mystery.

Supernaturalism doesn't necessarily solve or reach conclusions, often embraces the concept of searching and moving forward in the direction of meaning, purpose, and direction for our life. A higher power, whether rooted in a religion, nature, or some kind of unknown essence. Relating this concept of supernaturalism Platvon notes:

*Like The Flowing River* is an intimate collection of Paulo Coelho's reflection and short stories. The stories relate to the philosophy of life, our destiny and choices, of love and his thoughts and reflections that explore the journey of life in search of its true meanings. (21)

With the help of different articles Coelho tries to instruct ourselves and spreads very fruitful findings – necessary for healthy life.

Realism is an attempt to create a depiction of actual life; a novel does not simply rely on what it presents but *how* it presents it. In this way, a realist narrative acts as a framework by which the reader constructs a world using the raw materials of life. Understanding both realism and magical realism within the realm of a narrative mode is key to understanding both terms. Magical realism "relies upon the

presentation of real, imagined or magical elements as if they were real. It relies upon realism, but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits." (12)

Coelho, through the depiction of fictional characters and their real life events, setting, emotions and suffering in "The Dead Man Wore Pyjamas" has blended the elements of magic and reality in a single story. The story is based on the reading of on-line newspaper that tells a story of death of a man in his pyjamas. For him people who die in their sleep or pyjamas is blessing. His analysis of death and the dead man is all seems to be based on the supernatural guidance. Through this fictional character who died in his pyjamas, Coelho, delivers the life-theme of pain and suffering that comes from feeling of loneliness and isolation. While analyzing the probable cause, Coelho says:

And then I thought about the dead man in pyjamas, about his complete and utter isolation, to the point that, for twenty long years, no one in the whole world had noticed that he had simply vanished without trace. I can only conclude that worse than hunger or thirst, worse than being unemployed, unhappy in love or defeated and in despair, far worse than any or all of those things, is feeling that on one, absolutely no one, cares about us. (39)

Here, meditation on life course and the negative strength of feeling of isolation and loneliness is clearly displayed pondering the utter isolation and its outcome as death. Coelho also opines that Gods are visible only to those who believe that God exists. For this faith he asserts the story called "Raju tells me a Story". In this story he relates the story of a poor widow and his son – living in a village of Bangal. When the son started his school, he has to walk through the forest because they cannot afford bus fare. As the son is leaving for school, mother assures him not to afraid

and suggests son to ask help from the God of the forest 'Krishna' to accompany. The boy followed mother's suggestion; Krishna duly appeared and started to accompany him to school every day.

One day the boy asked money to his mother as it was his teacher's birthday but she couldn't provide the money as per her son's desire so she once again she suggests him to share the problem with his god 'Krishna'. Krishna gave him 'a jug of milk' as present to offer his teacher. Boy happily goes to the teacher to offer his present. His friends presents were far superior than his so teacher didn't even notice the gift. The assistant was asked to take that jug to kitchen. When he tried to empty that jug it immediately felled up again so being amazed he asked the boy where did he get that jug. The boy said that the god of the forest gave it to him. The teacher, students and the assistant all burst out laughing and said no god exists in the forest. They challenged the boy to show the God. So they went to the forest. The boy called Krishna many times to appear but he didn't. Desperately for the last time the boy made a desperate appeal to Krishna to show off reporting that his teacher wanted to see him. At that moment, a voice emerged and echoed throughout the forest: "How can he possibly want to see me, my son, he doesn't even believe I exist!" (89)

So Coelho firmly asserts that God's visibility is the matter of faith and beliefs. He manifests only to those, those who gave faith that He exists. The present book urges one to think that every life – huge or tiny, is gift of God and they are the subjects of respect.

Coelho relates all his articles to God's achievement. He indirectly says that people having faith and believe in God fulfill everything in life. God is time, god is death, god is life and god is Omnipotent. He takes the manifestation of God as miracle in the world. In order to simplify this assertion, he opines "a miracle is

something that fills the soul with peace. sometimes it manifests itself in the form of a cure, or a wish granted.” (97)

However, Amaryll Beatrice Chanady distinguishes magical realist literature from fantasy literature based on differences between three shared dimensions: the use of antinomy, the inclusion of events that cannot be integrated into a logical framework, and the use of authorial reticence. In fantasy, the presence of the supernatural code is perceived as problematic, something that draws special attention where in magical realism, the presence of the supernatural is accepted. In fantasy, while authorial reticence creates a disturbing effect on the reader, it works to integrate the supernatural into the natural framework in magical realism. This integration is made possible in magical realism as the author presents the supernatural as being equally valid to the natural. There is no hierarchy between the two codes. The ghost of Melquiades in Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or the baby ghost in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* who visit or haunt the inhabitants of their previous residence are both presented by the narrator as ordinary occurrences; the reader, therefore, accepts the marvelous as normal and common.

Spirituality can be sought not only through traditional organized religions, but also through movements such as liberalism, feminist theology, and green politics. Spirituality is also now associated with mental health, managing substance abuse, marital functioning, parenting, and coping. It has been suggested that spirituality also leads to finding purpose and meaning in life. The use of the term spirituality has changed throughout the ages. In modern times spirituality is often separated from religion and connotes a blend of humanistic psychology with mystical and esoteric traditions and eastern religions aimed at personal well-being and personal development. The notion of spiritual experience plays an important role in modern spirituality, but



has a relatively recent origin. Spiritualizing the situation, Coelho in *The Alchemist*, says:

I want to be someone capable of seeing the unseen faces, of seeing those who do not seek fame or glory, who silently fulfil the role life has given them. I want to be able to do this because the most important things, those that shape our existence, are precisely the ones that never show their faces. (41)

Coelho searches spirituality and faith in God everywhere. He believes that god exists inside the inner core of each creature of the universe. But only the man is able to see and feel it. So he urges to look deeply inside ourselves. The only thing, he believes, that can change our life is only being capable of seeing unseen faces of God. To ensure the presence of God in the nation Coelho collaborates the concept of God with law. He is of the view that anyone who breaks the law is bound to get punishment. So, In one of the stories titled “The Law of Jante”, Coelho says,

Since I had clearly never heard of this law, he explained what it was. as I continued my journey, I came to realize that it was, indeed, hard to find anyone in the Scandinavian countries who'd not heard of the law. it may have existed since the beginning of civilization, but it was only officially set down in written form in 1933 by the writer Aksel Sandemose in his novel *A Fugitive Crossing his Tracks*. (214)

*Like flowing River* is a collection of thoughts and reflections. Some of them are from his own experiences while others constitute legends, stories and experiences which he has heard from various people he met on his journeys to various parts of this earth. Some are written by him for various occasions, as speech, while others he has written for himself. There is a story from almost all parts of the world and gives us a

kind of hint into the culture or history of that land. One thing we all can learn from this book is “How a good writer can write on every aspect of life and this world, without losing the interest and grip on the content and message.” There is something on every aspect, be it hope, love, dreams, life, supernaturality, legends, way of living and so on.

Book starts with an interesting Preface where Coelho has shared an incident from his life with us. At the age of 15 he told his mother that he wants to be a writer. So his mother asked him did he really know what it means to be a writer. So to answer her question he carried out a research and came out with his learning, Here is one of those points :

A writer has a duty and obligation never to be understood by his own generation; convinced, as he is, that he has been born into an age of mediocrity, he believes that being understood would mean losing of ever being considered a genius (xii, preface)

Garcia Marquez confessed: "my most important problem was destroying the line of demarcation that separates what seems real from what seems fantastic" (8). Isabel Allende was the first Latin American woman writer recognized outside the continent. Her most well-known novel, *The House of the Spirits*, is arguably similar to Garcia Marquez's style of magical realist writing. Another notable novelist is Laura Esquivel, whose *Like Water for Chocolate* tells the story of the domestic life of women living on the margins of their families and society.

“How to Climb a Mountain” has various aspects that should be given attention to before climbing a mountain are covered in this one, and they are very beautifully interrelated with how to choose and achieve our goals and objectives in life.

Some of them are like : " Choose the mountain you want to climb, Learn from someone who has been there, Be prepared to go the extra mile, Be joyful when you reach the top" (12-13).

“The Prayer that I Forgot” is a beautiful prayer of Coelho collected in *Like the Flowing River*. In this story Coelho makes very audacious claim for life to be guided by truth and faith. He says, “Lord, protect our doubts because doubt is a way of praying. It is doubt that makes us grow because it forces us to look fearlessly at many answers that exist to one question. (102).

There is a mirror that has looked its last on my face  
 there is a door I have closed for the final time.  
 Amongst the books in my library,  
 There are some I will never open again .” (99)

Anything becomes valueless when it is obtained. When books are collected they are sold out as a lot to some library or some waster paper shop or just thrown away. That’s what happens to most of possessions acquired over life time, with so much passion and love, when someone dies. These kinds of feelings are captured in this story.

From his experiences of traveling around every corner of this world is described in “Traveling Differently”. Coelho provides us here with very useful ways which, if we follow, can be a great help and will also make our tour and daily life different. Two of them are:

1. Try to travel alone – if married – with your spouse. You will never be in a new place if you are still in old folks.

2. A Journey is a adventure: Don't go for places you think you must visit because everybody visits them.. Make your own places.. be a adventurer not a follower. (133-134)

In the above quotes of the story "Travelling Differently", Coelho describes the life journey in full-fledged way being connected with the latent form of magical reality. In the story he doesn't tell us what kind of travel he is talking about. But he prefers the travelling taken place singularly.

“The Cloud and the Sand Dune” is very touching story of a young Cloud who takes the courage of living differently from other clouds and moves towards desert, falls in love with a Dune and rest is a beautiful conversation between the two. This cloud gives us a great lesson about how we should live for life through supernatural events.

The term magic realism is an oxymoron, one that suggests a binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that, roughly, of fantasy. In the language of narration in a magic realist text, a battle between two oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the "other," a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rendering them with gaps, absences, and silences (10). In *The Invention of the World*, Hodgins achieves this effect through a process of undercutting. His formal beginning to the novel (following a brief prologue) declares the work to be clearly within the conventions of realism:

On the day of the Loggers' Sports, on that day in July, a mighty uproar broke out in the beer parlour of the Coal-Tyee Hotel, which is an old but respectable five-story building directly above the harbour and only a block or two from the main shopping area of town. (11)

But soon a fantastic element enters the text, appearing first in the second-degree or intradiegetic level of narration told by Strabo Becker, the historian/taleteller figure, and soon beginning to appear in the extradiegetic narration — Horseman's miraculous escape from Wade's fort, for example . As the novel progresses toward the status of a twice-told tale, the motif with which it ends, the reader is pulled away from a tendency to neutralize the fantastic elements of the story within the general code of narrative realism and begins to read the work as being more closely aligned with the fantastic. Yet a complete transference from one mode to the other never takes place, and the novel remains suspended between the two.

“The Soldier in the Forest” This one is from a soldier Coelho met in a French forest while practicing archery. Questions that children have, we all had when we're children are put up in this one. Some of them are:

Why do we love some people and hate others? who named the different colors? If God is there in Heaven, and my mother is there too because she died, how come God is alive? Why did God created mosquitoes and flies? and why isn't our guardian angel beside us when we're sad? (172).

These questions which are put funnily in the story are actually life touching and are very difficult questions to find the answers. It bears all the life actions and questions the so called rationality of human beings. In “Alone on the Road” Life is compared to a cycle race here. “How we all start with our dreams in the beginning and one by

one stumble and move off the road, but some of us carry on, and at times we have to walk alone.. difficult stages of life.. but we must carry on.. ” When things get tough, let us not forget that independent of race, color, social situation, beliefs or cultures – everyone has experienced exactly the same ” (183).

Evil Wants Good to prevail is a story about how evil sometimes comes to us in the veil of goodness to misguide us or simply make us lead our life normally never let us think about our real purpose on this earth. “In the eyes of the God, each one of those prayers made with love and repentance would be equivalent to two hundred prayers said in ordinary, automatic way.” (211) “Around the world Trip after Death” is a beautiful story of a women who wished to travel the whole world but can’t and before dying made a wish to his son that she should be cremated and her ash be thrown in every part of the world. And it was really done, 191 countries and 50 US states. *Like the Flowing River* has got various nexus with different myths. The following are Lethal Spiritual Myths:

Myth one: Only one way leads to God. This is the most dangerous and lethal myth that was the cause and mostly the main excuse for many wars, persecutions, genocides, and judgments of our neighbors. The weakness in our Supernaturality is to blame the authorities or sacerdotal castes for the calamities that we perpetrate on others; we always fails to shoulder our individual responsibility for our belief system and that is why the authorities have an easy job of enslaving our spirit and guiding us whichever they wish us to do.

Myth two: The spirit can cure all. There are countless individuals who realized that physicians can overcome illnesses that all our spiritual gimmicks could not cure. Many times, it is better to pray that the experienced surgeon still rely on

God to guide his hands during operations. How many were victims of curable illness simply because of taboo Supernaturality?

Myth three: Red meat obstructs divine light. There are many trends for purifying our body by eating the most appropriate kinds of food and how it should be cooked for various reasons, and basically and implicitly based on religious doctrines. Jesus said “Evil is not in what enters your mouth but what goes out” Vegetables and flowers grown in greenhouses are might be purer for the consumers but they are incapable as naturally grown vegetables to resist minor weather variations. Vegetarians are still eating live condiments that obey the cycle of life as we will also end up being food for lower creatures and fishes. There are sects that prohibit ail, onion, tomatoes, dairy product, leavened products, and sugar on the ground that they disturb focus in contemplation and meditations. Others sects prohibit other kinds of condiments on the ground that they are poison to the body ‘that shell that is sanctified by God”. (123)

Myth four: God is sacrificial. People seek self-sacrificial ways by claiming that the road to heaven is through physical suffering. If this world is a benediction of God then why not take the opportunity to enjoying our life? Jesus Christ suffered for three days but he enjoyed most of his life traveling, meting people, sharing his bread, and disseminating his message of tolerance and charity. The Prophet Muhammad said “Unhappiness is contagious; if you are unhappy you extend it to our neighbors” (39)

In this way, God is a concept that became real, like the number zero and the imaginary number in mathematics, for constructing moral values that suit Nations. Here Coelho indirectly shows his devotion to God and his tasks. The different myths helps to understand the magical facts of life. In a sense, the concept

of god itself is magical. It has got pivotal role in human life. The real life is touched and control by the magical creation of human mind. So, with the help of these different myths, Coelho spreads his spiritual understanding with the help of imaginative or magical characters in the spectrum of real setting having happiness, pain, suffering and different taste of life. This myth is intrinsically related to myth one: God was rendered indispensable for mankind, was reduced to serve man, malleable to man's desires and his will for power. God is used to harangue armies to war and to escape the resolutions of real problems. Man manipulates God as the arbiter in nuclear debates and even in school systems. God is used to lambaste totalitarian regimes, Marxist regimes, opposition political parties, discriminating among the evil and good States, and West versus East.

Magic realism is a literary form in which odd, uncanny, and dreamlike tales are related as if the events were commonplace. Magic realism is the opposite of the "once-upon-a-time" style of story-telling in which the author emphasizes the fantastic quality of imaginary events. In the world of magic realism, the narrator speaks of the surreal so naturally it becomes real. Magic realism in its literary and artistic applications aimed to re-imagine the world and its reality. It is not an escapist venture but rather an opportunity to see the fantastic in the everyday. There are multiple stylistic traits of magic realism. The key, however, is rejection of subjectivity and emotionalism, simultaneity of past, present and future and defamiliarisation. However, these traits distinguish magic realism from the fantasy genre. In fantasy novels, the created world must have an internal logic. Magic realism however, is not subject to natural or physical laws.

Pablo Coelho attempts to offer guidelines before climbing a mountain in "How to Climb Mountain". First, select the mountain of your choice since you are



the sole responsible and you have to be sure of what you are doing. Second, learn how to face the mountain by trying all the possible routes to contour the mountain. The mountain that looks pretty and interesting from afar is but a terrible challenge when starting to conquer it. Third, do not hesitate to ask counsel of those who climbed your mountain of choice. Fourth, at close scrutiny dangers seem controllable. This is a fine hint that you need to watch every step while climbing. Fifth, take advantage to view the changing scenery as you progress steadily. Sixth, respect the capabilities and limitations of your physical conditioning. If your intention is to be back by nightfall then the speed of your progress should be steady with allowance that the summit is always farther than expected. Seventh, have respect for your spirit.

Coelho begins the story by stating that he had read in an online newspaper that a man was found dead on June 10th, 2004, in Tokyo, in his pyjamas. He goes through the various possibly ways in which the man died, and nothing seems out of the ordinary. Then he throws to us what was the most tragic part of the story - that the dead man was merely a skeleton wearing pajamas.

The newspaper beside the dead man was dated 20th February, 1984, and there was a calendar marked with the same date. The man had died almost twenty years before, and no one had noticed. It had taken twenty long years for the world to take notice of both his absence and his presence, after it was brought to light by the media. Coelho also outlines the various reasons why people had not noticed - the company that employed him had gone bankrupt (and hence did not find it strange when the man hadn't turned up for work), his wife had divorced him (and hence did not bother to get in contact with him again, which is why she did not learn of his

death) and his friends simply thought he had disappeared because he had borrowed money from them and was unable to pay it back.

There were two things from this story that really shook. One was that the man had died all alone. With no one to care for him, no one to even show him that they loved him. Worst of all, no one who missed his presence enough to enquire about where he had disappeared to. To quote author Coelho in his interview:

Worse than hunger or thirst, worse than being unemployed, unhappy in love or defeated and in despair, far worse than any or all of those things, is the feeling that no one, absolutely no one, cares about us. So often in our lives, we are crumpled, trampled, ill-treated, insulted, and yet, despite all that, we are still worth the same. (6)

It's difficult to think how that man must have lived the final moments of his life with that feeling. Even worse with the belief that once we die, our souls go up to Heaven/Hell and are able to watch over all that happens on earth, how he must have felt up there when he realized that no one missed him for twenty long years, and probably would not have either, if it were not for the fact that the media had brought his demise to light.

And this is the right time to realize how valuable the people who surround and support us are. Let us thank God for the friends we have, and the fact that they love and care for us. For the fact that we are not alone, and that if anything were to happen to us tomorrow, we would be missed. The second thing was that the man's mortal remains were returned to his ex-wife. One can only imagine how terrible she must have felt when she learnt of what had happened to the man who had once been her husband.

Coelho wonders what must have been going on in her head for these twenty years, one such thought being whether there was simply no point in continuing a relationship once it has been legally terminated. All of us are humans and have our own weaknesses and strengths. Many a time we have bitter arguments with a loved one, so much so that we decide to terminate the relationship then and there. But, as this story has made realize, it is important to stay in touch and value the bonds that we have formed. Regarding this view, a critic, Jollyan asserts:

It matters, both to us and the other party that we forgive, though we may not fully be able to forget. There is a line from the song Affirmation, by Savage Garden - "I believe the sun should never set on an argument", which is fitting here. Rather than harboring ill-feeling in our hearts, we should ignore the bad and see the good. I know it is easier said than done. But think what would be worse - a death which no one notices, simply because no one who loves you enough to notice is around, or a few slights that are ignored in lieu of a sense of satisfaction that, at the end of the day, we bear no malice towards others. (182)

Supernaturality is different path with that of religion, as most of the people think that they are similar. Supernaturality has nothing to do with religion. Religion tries to drag one on its own framework in one or another way. Whereas supernaturality has to do with self reliance and awareness. It makes aware of the happenings of local phenomena. And gives meaningful ways of living illumination life. So in a sense spiritualism has close nexus between parabolism. Coelho in his article entitled "Norma and the Good Things" illustrates the story of 'Norma' – Brazilian lady. Spanish call her 'the rocking grandma' because she works in various places,

organizing promotions parties and concerts. Once writer felt so tired in the morning so he was surprised to see the Norma fresh even she was of sixty. So he asked where she got all her energy from. Norma replies” I have a magic calendar. If you like, I can show it to you” (163). The following day, he was shown old, much scribed – upon calendar. “Right today is the day they discovered a vaccine against polio,” she said “ we must celebrate that because life is beautiful” (163). This magical instrument help to run her daily life enthusiastically.

In a sense we can call this collection Like the Flowing River a parable – story used to illustrate moral or spiritual lesson. Each and every story is filled with deep moral lesson. With the help of the story "The Tears of the Desert" Coelho expresses the concept of Oneness. It is a beautiful story about missionary’s unique experiences in the city of Marrakesh. In the usual walk of morning he noticed a man lying down with his ear pressed to the ground and stroking the sand with one hand. As the days pass the event also reoccurs frequently. Intrigued by that strange behavior, he decided to speak to the stranger. To the answer of the question what he was doing he replied that he was companying the desert and offering it consolation for its loneliness and its tears that is weeping for a long time. Desert dreams of being useful to people but he can’t. he can’t bear the green trees and bushes in his lap so he gets his tear to fall all the time. Here the narrator says to the missionary:

I’m keeping the desert company and offering it consolation for its loneliness and its tears. It weeps every day because it dreams of being useful to people, and of being transformed into a vast garden where they could grow cereal crops and flowers and graze sheep. (149)

Coelho here tries to awaken the spiritual side of the heart. The missionary consoles the man saying that it is not weeping and it is not unhappy; but it is performing an

important duty. Its vastness makes one realize the omnipotent nature of God. It makes one clear that “millions of people in the world who were born equal, even if the world has not always been fair to all of them.” (150) next day he asked the man whether it stopped weeping. The man said “it's still weeping because it has spent thousands of years thinking that it was completely useless and wasted all that time blaspheming against God and its own fate” (150). In this event Coelho spreads supernatural knowledge profoundly saying:

Well, tell the desert that even though we human beings have a much shorter lifespan, we also spend much of our time thinking we're useless. We rarely discover our true destiny, and feel that God has been unjust to us. When the moment finally comes, and something happens that reveals to us the reason we were born, we think it's too late to change our life and continue to suffer. (150)

Though, Coelho's essentially a unique artist in handling magic realism he also demonstrates that magical realism alone does not make a writer great. Coelho's imagination, human insight and literary skill, more than his genre, provide the best explanation for his art and popularity. As observed by one critic, "The magic realism in Paulo Coelho's novel forms a broad and diverse spectrum ranging from the literally extraordinary though Magic Realism in Coelho's *Like the Flowing River* nonetheless possible, to the farthest extremes of the physically fabulous and unlikely" Coelho tries his best, in every story, to spread the morals and guidelines to make the way of life easy. It seems that he has strong belief that from every living beings of non – living things one can pluck out very special things and lessons if he tries himself.

In this way, *Like the Flowing River* is a collection of Paulo Coelho's stories and articles which were published in different newspapers around the world. *Like the Flowing River* is definitely one of Coelho's best books. It contained his thoughts and reflections on different things—from the story of the pencil to a piece of bread that fell wrong side up. His view on the Universe, how he comes up with various realizations out of the simplest things that happen in his life make one ponder over the use of magic realism. This proves that Paulo Coelho really has a profound understanding of the Universe. The stories and articles were compiled in such a way that the reader would not have a hard time reading them. Connecting the circumstances and event to something unnatural, Coelho distinctly makes short but profound knots between human life and faith or belief in God and supernaturality.

### **III. Awareness of life as Unceasing stream in *Like the Flowing River***

*Like the Flowing River* is a collection of reflections from Brazilian author Paulo Coelho. In this collection of thoughts and stories, he offers his personal reflections on a wide range of subjects from archery and music to elegance, travelling and the nature of good and evil. An old woman explains to her grandson how a mere pencil can show him the path to happiness, instructions on how to climb a mountain reveals the secret to making dreams a reality. *Like the Flowing River* is a compilation of tales, opinions and ideas drawn from articles published in various newspapers.

The stories and articles are about his experience on the road, his daily life experience, the people he met, his action when faced with God's calling, his point of view towards certain things that happened, lesson of life that we all could learn from things happened around us, because everything happens for a reason. To round it up it makes to notice all god creation exist for us to realize that we should be grateful with what we have even. For the good things and bad things that ever happened, we might just forget it with the time passing by, most people remember the bad more than the good one. We are all so focus on the matter, the story lines, what is right and what is wrong, mostly we put our self as the victim and we are on the right side. But we never tell our self to ask why that certain things happened? What it want us to learn from it, what is its message? Sometimes, these words are too commonly heard. By the help of different stories he makes us to think about our life, way of our life, and parameters of judging anything else. So lifting on the side of supernaturalism and mysticism Coelho has collected brilliant and audacious stories and articles in the book *Like the Flowing River*.

Verities of criticisms have been received by *Like the Flowing River* in the span of time. Almost all the critics gave agreed that it is very energetic and path guider book. Above than all is its interconnectedness with the theme of magic and reality. Almost all the articles and stories collected in the book have their deep root on supernaturalism. Coelho, placing supernaturalism in a different spectrum than religion and god, tries to invoke the trustworthiness and faith from one's inner part of himself/herself in order to achieve the success in life.

In conclusion, this thesis being based on Paulo Coelho's *Like the Flowing River* discloses the supernaturalism as the root foundation of life which is above than the beliefs on the concept of God. Although every effort was made to ensure that the instrument measured supernaturalism beyond the boundaries of the Judeo-Christian religion, there was some feedback from the participants that this may not have been entirely realized. Extensive investigation of instruments that measure supernaturalism revealed that, although there is general agreement that supernaturalism can be meaningfully studied. It is also acknowledged that not one instrument currently exists that can encapsulate the entire range of spiritual expression in a way that is meaningful for every people.

*Like the Flowing River* includes realism and magic which seem at first to be opposites; they are, in fact, perfectly reconcilable. Both are necessary in order to convey Coelho's particular conception of the world. Coelho's novel reflects reality not as it is experienced by one observer, but as it is individually experienced by those with different backgrounds. Through magical realism he conveys a reality that incorporates magic, superstition, religion, life, death, faith, rationality and daily experiences of life which are unquestionably pervaded in the world.



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