

**A Study of Cultural Hybridity in Paulo Coelho's Select Novels**

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## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

In the era of globalization all cultures are in contact with one another, therefore, “no culture is an island” (Burke 102). The cultural panorama in the contemporary world is a fusion of diverse cultures and it is seen that the culture of the West and the East, dominant and subaltern, Self and Other, Orient and Occident are all overlapping each other and the locus of this process is globalization. And it is a phenomenon where the fusion of numerous cultures occurs continually initiated by two most important media, internet and the popular culture. The end product is then cultural hybridity, “unbound and fluid” and “moving between the spaces of meaning” (Yazdiha 31). The concept of cultural hybridity is in fact not a phenomenon of the recent years as it existed in the past and transpired through the process of trade and commerce and also due to colonization of or colonization between civilizations, indicating the advent of the process of globalization. However, it was not popularized until the theory of postcolonialism was constructed in the 1980s. With it, the advent of postcolonial theory and cultural studies focused on the study of the interactions of cultures amid the colonizers and the colonized. It may be argued that traditions and cultures of a particular social group in the world is in one way or the other amalgamated and thus, the purity of traditions and cultures are under consideration. Globalization has marked the process of cultural diffusion, which is the flow of cultural elements and ideas from one culture to another. This process leads to the development of cultural hybridity. Therefore, there are certain individuals who worry that traditional cultures may eventually disappear from the world as a result of cultural hybridization. Paradoxically, they fail to understand that aspects from other cultures can be adopted without abandoning their own through the process of glocalization. Additionally, the use of contemporary technologies can help preserve and propagate traditional cultures and consequently, the purity of traditions and cultures are under consideration. A culture that does not change and interact with other cultures is

destined to disappear, and the idea that a culture is pure is an atrocious and dangerous fabrication. For instance, in some of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, native primitive tribes retained their unique cultures by residing deep in the jungles. They resisted the process of evolution and acclimatization of their cultures with the change of time. As a result, sixty-five thousand years old connection to one of the world's oldest societies has been severed in the Andaman Islands after the last speaker of a long-extinct Bo tribal language passed away in 2010. Similar to the Bo tribe, five tribes in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, and Shompens are currently on the verge of extinction. Thus, it is observed that traditions should be and they are like "building sites, under constant construction or reconstruction, whether the individuals and groups who participate in those traditions realize this or not" (Burke 103). As a result, hybridity may be understood as the cultural logic of globalization, indicating that in the past and the present day, hybridity in culture had and has been shaped by the synthesis of many populations and their traditions due to the use of multiple media.

In the current age of globalization, hybridization occurs among cultural elements and domains across societies and consequently, globalization is signified "as a process of hybridization that gives rise to a global *mélange*" (Pieterse 65). The postmodern societies in the age of globalization are inevitably hybridized and accordingly, the concept of cultural hybridization has become an important area of study in the recent times. Therefore, in this thesis, the area of study is the concept of cultural hybridity associated to the phenomena like creolization, transculturation, multiculturalism and cross-culturalism and on the basis of the study of the concept of cultural hybridity expounded by numerous eminent theorists, the select novels of transnational author Paulo Coelho are analyzed. In the recent years, towards the end of the twentieth century, the advent of a wide range of cultural and social theories occurred, most notably in the postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and globalization movements. And the eminent theorists of these theories include Nestor Garcia Canclini (1989), Paul Gilroy (1993), Homi K. Bhabha (1994),

Robert Young (1995), Stuart Hall (1996), and Pieterse (1996). The concept of cultural hybridization provided by these theorists promoted a comprehensive knowledge of both historical and contemporary global cultural dynamics. The emergence of the new media era in the twenty-first century, together with globalization, has increased cross-cultural interaction on a global scale and the idea of cultural hybridity has been discussed frequently used in conjunction with phenomena like creolization, transculturation, multiculturalism, and cross-culturalism. And in this context, the diasporic groups, migrants, and multi-cultural populations are all intrinsically linked to the concept of cultural hybridity. The concept of cultural hybridity constructs a discourse contradicting the essentialist notions of a dominant culture and disrupt the rigid power structures, creating an alternative discourse. The notion of hybridity in the cultural context is considered as a cultural bi-product of globalization, in which the perceptions of boundaries diffuse and the concept of national identity are constantly being reinterpreted. Accordingly, in a postmodern globalized society, hybridity opposes the idea of purity in racial and cultural identity as well as the immutable and essentialist identity, and it celebrates the fusion, mixing, and syncretism of cultures which encourage the hybrid, the impure, the heterogeneous, and the cosmopolitan as discussed by numerous theorists and critics like Canclini (1989), Gilroy (1993), Hall (1996), Pieterse (1996), Anderson (1998), Kraidy (2007) and Burke (2009) in their works. Thus, in the contemporary times, the concept of hybridity, its meanings and multifaceted perspectives are required to be explored rather than to argue for or against it because globalization and culture are “a live-wire theme in constant flux—in lifestyles, cross-cultural encounters, migration, global-local relations, music, media, movies, marketing, fashion, cuisine, and so forth” (Pieterse 44). In this light, this thesis analyses the numerous approaches associated to the concept of cultural hybridity, which are employed by cultural theorists to study the behavioural patterns and consciousness of the individuals who occupy the space of multiple identities and mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The deconstruction of the essentialist notions of culture and identity highlight the concept of cultural hybridity, which stands for anti-essentialist notions of culture and identity indicating that the culture and identity is fragmented and persistently shift their location and therefore, they are decentered as proposed by theorists like Canclini (1989), Hall (1992/1996), Gilroy (1993) and Pieterse (1996). The idea of cultural hybridity, thus, focuses on the mutable and heterogeneous structures of culture and identity. As a result, the essentialist perspective is contested indicating ruptures where the phenomenon of cultural hybridity manifests itself, contradicting the ideas of purity and homogeneity. Therefore, it can be considered that due to continuous flow of intercultural interactions, an individual, occupies disintegrated multiple spaces, which occasionally indicate ambiguous or uncertain identities. It is also seen that in the contemporary times of the globalized world, where there is an easy access to freedom of movement and choice, the postmodern subject dwells multiple spaces leading to cultural interaction, transmission, and exchange. And in this context, in postcolonial cultural studies, the concept of cultural hybridity has evolved as a key concept and metaphor. The term cultural hybridity is thus, frequently applied to describe the concepts like creolization, transculturation, multiculturalism, cross-culturalism, in-betweenness, and syncretism. As a result, all these concepts are acquiring more recognition in cultural and literary studies. The concept of cultural hybridization plays a role in all of these phenomena to focus on the processes of coalescence, mixture, or fusion involved in the construction of culture and identity. And in doing so subverts the dualistic structures and contests the ideas of the absolute and pure forms of culture and identity. Thus, to Rowe and Schelling, cultural hybridization is associated to “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (qtd. in Pieterse 70). According to Bronfen and Marius, it indicates the “mixture of traditions or chains of signification”, all that connects diverse kinds of “discourse and technologies, everything that came into being through techniques of *collage*, *sampling*, or *bricolage*” (qtd. in Raab and Bulter 1).

In the contemporary globalized world it is apparent that the literary writings have surpassed national and cultural barriers, changing the literary landscape where people have instant access to knowledge. And as a result, many literary works transcend outside of their countries of origin, resulting in the emergence of innumerable transnational authors. It is seen that among all the transnational authors of the contemporary times, Paulo Coelho is considered as one of the best selling authors. Therefore, in this thesis, Paulo Coelho's select novels are analyzed to explore the concept of cultural hybridity which is associated to numerous phenomena notably creolization, diaspora, transculturation, multiculturalism, and cross-culturalism. In this thesis, Coelho's four novels namely *The Alchemist* (1988), *The Zahir* (2005), *The Witch of Portobello* (2006) and *Aleph* (2010) are analyzed on the basis of the concept of cultural hybridity. Coelho, who was born and raised in Brazil, a nation in Latin America where the idea of cultural hybridization first emerged and thus, he is uniquely able to relate to the concept of cultural hybridity. Thus, in his works, Coelho emphasizes the process of blending, fusion, or cross-over that contradicts traditional dichotomous structures and the flawed assumption of an idealised absolute form of essentialism in culture and identity.

In the postcolonial era, in order to describe the social circumstances and cultural aspects of the colonised Mestizo continent, the maxims like *metisage* biculturalism, creolization, transculturation, multiculturalism, the neobaroque, and magical realism have become prominent in the literary studies. This said, a Latin America is influenced by at least two cultures and therefore, in this context "Latin American writers share much in common with postcolonial writing in general" (Cooper 17). Postcolonial writers in English share a perspective from the periphery of dominant European cultures and an interest in the syncretism brought about by colonization with their South American equivalents like Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende. And drawing on the distinctive characteristics of magic realism technique, postcolonial writers are able "to express their view of a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement" (Boehmer 4). Therefore, there are some similarities among these postcolonial, culturally displaced authors who create

magical realist novels. These cosmopolitan intellectuals who create the majority of the literature and culture of their countries have something in common despite the historical contrasts between their respective countries and themselves. Timothy Brennan (1989) focusing on the cosmopolite postcolonial authors attempts to signify their shared characteristics under the category of 'Third-World cosmopolitans'. He includes authors like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Derek Walcott, Mario Vargas Llosa and others. By the term 'cosmopolitans' he meant "those writers Western reviewers seemed to be choosing as the interpreters and authentic public voices of the Third World-writers who, in a sense, allowed a flirtation with change that ensured continuity, a familiar strangeness, a trauma by inches" (Brennan viii-ix). This said, such cosmopolitans continue to have ambivalent attitude toward nationalism, national culture, and the yearning for national freedom and this continuing ambiguity becomes a defining factor in their postcolonial writings. Brennan asserts that cosmopolitans transgress a significant Third-World rhetorical form by departing from the framework of national liberation. Then the cosmopolitans' muted outlook to "the national question' is linked closely to their embrace of hybridity" (Cooper 20). This is not to imply that these global citizens hold the same views on divisive political issues, however they do share "a declaration of cultural "hybridity"—a hybridity claimed to offer certain advantages in negotiating the collisions of language, race and art" (Brennan 35). The politics and methods used in magical realism are fundamentally based on this hybridity. Thus, in the literary oeuvres related to the postcolonial cultural studies, the concept of cultural hybridity like that of "uncertain crossing and invasion of identities", either class and gender or culture and race, has been implicitly or explicitly represented (Young 2). The authors regarded as the 'Third-World cosmopolitans' represent the fusion of diverse cultures and transcultural characters like Aureliano Babilonia by Marquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), Gibreel Farishta in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and Eliza Sommers in Allende's *Daughter of Fortune* (1998). It can be observed they acknowledge the idea that there is no such thing as absolute, pure and constant forms of culture and

identity. This said, in this thesis, the place of Paulo Coelho is negotiated among the ‘Third-World cosmopolitans’ in order to define his art of fiction.

In his works, Coelho, like the ‘Third-World cosmopolitans’ celebrates cultural hybridity that occurs from new and unforeseen mixtures of people, cultures, ideas and politics. Coelho, like them employ the magic realism narrative technique to contest against totality and thereby alter the established fundamental frameworks of truth, reality, and history. He is a Brazilian author with cosmopolitan outlook and therefore, a transnational writer reflecting the mechanism of cultural hybridity through numerous phenomena associated to it. He employs the magic realism narrative technique to explore the quest of personal legend, which is achieved by the protagonists upon transcending the borders and wandering in the multi-cultural realms. His works are concerned with traversing intercultural surroundings and crossing boundaries. His narration includes a mythological journey, search for one’s personal legend leading to spiritual awakening. He engages numerous viewpoints like Carl Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious, “the concept of cultural politics underlying the ideology of representation of basic and complex cultural prospects in his works” as well as the creative cultural diaspora he came to understand while travelling (Upadhyay and Gautam 3202). He sees the world with his Brazilian eyes, which “are those of the hybrid in which there is no single, overriding monofocal vision of reality” rather it is fragments in which diverse cultures interact overlapping each other, “the faces of different cultures melt into each other” (Hart 311). The novels of Coelho usually culminate in “similar utopian tones: transcultural encounters in contact zones *dialogically* yield self-realization and the betterment or re-definition of the self” (Murta 93). And according to Trousdale, this utopian tone “is a conventional authorial attitude in transnational discourse” which “emphasizes that identity is a process, not a stable product, subject to reaffirmation and reconstruction, during which an individual’s attributes and affiliations can be reinterpreted as the grounds of similarity to or difference from the people she encounters” (Trousdale 194). Coelho’s narratives include characters representing a postmodern man living in a postmodern world and are transcultural.



Accordingly, his novels can be considered within World Literature as a transnational popular novels as his narratives are “postmodern in the sense that it does away with the politically-biased distinction between “high” and “low” culture and the erroneous, view of mass-produced art as exclusively commercial and consequently disreputable” (Murta 161). His novels also highlight “a transnational paradigm which understands that identities” are more precisely based on affinities rather than on borders between countries, “accounting for how subjectivities” are changed by global movement, and taking into consideration the intricate connections “between international and national literary spaces” (Murta 161). The spiritualism aspects in his novels are the outcome of the fusion of various religious philosophies highlighting the concept of cultural hybridity. His postmodern take on spiritualism thus, establishes him as a mythical sage of spirituality. His novels through the representation of the “rejection of organized religion as well as the way in which it offers an antidote to the inadequacy of atheistic existentialism in supplying meaning, value and purpose” and denote that “spirituality is a personal and individual approach” (More 20). According to literary critic Idelber Avelar, professor for Latin American literature at the Tulane University in New Orleans, Coelho has been able to successfully include the genre of the parable into popular literature through his works. His narratives include his beliefs and experiences, which are, transformed into parables of postmodern life to establish the complexity and volatile nature of identity. Thus, Paulo Coelho is considered as a “Post-modern Aesop”, a remarkable storyteller who encourages people all over the globe to look past the mundane and into the miraculous (Mousume 7). Through the narratives of postmodern parables, he often introduces innovative novel practices that evolve through fusion of two or more distinct cultures. These novel practices “are a consequence of migratory processes, as well as of worldwide material and immaterial communications systems and economic interdependencies and dependencies” (Welsch 4). Through his characters he connotes that single identity of an individual is not a fixed marker of an individual and in the contemporary world it is seen that cultures are “in general characterized by

hybridization” and for each culture, “all other cultures have tendentially come to be inner-content or satellites” (Welsch 5). The phenomenon of globalization has also boosted the pace of cultural hybridity and it has propelled to reconsider the numerous conformist hegemonic ideologies. Thus, transnational literary works, such as the novels of Paulo Coelho have become a progressive approach to comprehend the concept of cultural hybridity. The narratives of Coelho’s novels focus on the personal experiences of transnational readers whose sense of self is profoundly impacted by cultural hybridization, and who then achieve their self-enlightenment and in order to highlight the theme of cultural hybridity in Coelho’s works, his four novels *The Alchemist* (1988), *The Zahir* (2005), *The Witch of Portobello* (2006) and *Aleph* (2010) are analyzed on the basis of the study of the works by cultural theorists like Ortiz (1970), Rama (1974/1982), Canclini (1989), Gilroy (1993), Bhabha (1994), Hall (1996), Pieterse (1996) and Parekh (2000).

The analysis of Coelho’s select novels reveal that he emphasizes the phenomenon of cultural hybridity, the unusual and unforeseen fusions of individuals, cultures, ideologies, and politics. In each of his select novels, he employs the magic realism narrative technique to support anti-essentialist notions of culture and identity contesting the concept of essentialism and subverting the established fundamental structures of reality and truth. He also illustrates a wide range of phenomena, such as *métissage*, in-betweenness, syncretism, transculturation, multiculturalism and cross-culturalism to emphasize the process of cultural hybridization. In contrast to having a single, encompassing monofocal vision, he sees the world through as a Brazilian, which causes him to perceive it as fragments where many cultures mix and overlap each other. The art of characterization in his select novels include the depiction of postmodern subjects who go through existential crises and then set off on a quest to pursue their personal legends, crossing both cultural and national boundaries. The protagonists in all of his select novels, Santiago in *The Alchemist* (1988), Athena in *The Witch of Portobello* (2005), unnamed narrator in *The Zahir* (2006) and Paulo in *Aleph* (2010) represent postmodern subjects. He represents characters of mixed ancestries or biracials like that of

Athena and Mikhail to indicate the process of *métissage* and creolization. In his select novels, some of the characters are also involved in interracial relationships, for instances, in *The Zahir* (2006), Mikhail, a transcultural Kazakh man is in love with an Italian woman, and in *The Witch of Portobello* (2005), a transcultural Romani-Lebanese woman was married to a Scandinavian man. He also portrays some minor characters along with the protagonists who are transcultural. And these minor characters contribute equally as the protagonists in the development of the narratives highlighting cultural hybridity. In his select novels, his characters are set in the multicultural societies where they experience the phenomena like multiculturalism and cross-culturalism. He draws attention to the fact that in the age of globalization, the cultural landscape is a fusion of intercultural exchanges that overlap, and as a result, identity in the postmodern world is decentered, deconstructed, and constantly altering. As a result, rather than having a single and consistent type of identity, the identities of the characters in his novels are fragmented and occupy multiple, frequently ambiguous or uncertain identities. His characters exemplify the postmodern subjects who inhabit multiple locations and express themselves freely in intercultural interaction, contact and transfer, which eventually results in the process of cultural fusion transcending national boundaries. In *The Witch of Portobello* (2006), Coelho highlights the concepts of double consciousness and rhizomatic transcultural structure in diasporic culture and identity emphasizing that these concepts are brought about by the phenomenon of creolization and which involves the process of cultural hybridity. In *The Witch of Portobello* (2006) the diaspora populations of – Gypsies in Romania, Lebanese and Polish population in London are portrayed. The narratives of the characters that represent the members of the diaspora population illustrate that their culture and identity are not “established thing that transcend space, time, history, and culture” and “far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (Hall 225). He highlights the process of creolization in the diaspora population, illustrating that their culture and identity are continually being constructed and reconstructed through alteration

and difference, resulting in the process of cultural hybridity. Coelho's novels are representative of his multicultural readership and a transnational literature. Additionally, the process of cultural hybridization are ubiquitous in his narrative structure. These include the blending of religious ideologies, textual allusions from diverse cultures, transcultural contexts and multicultural interpretations. The narratives of his novels are directed to emphasize personal legends of the protagonists through the contextual discourse or interactions between the characters. It is considered that Coelho, in conformity with his hybridized transnational identity, maintains equivalent attempts at mimesis (rhetorical narratives) and anti-mimesis narratives (unnatural narratives). And in his select novels these narratives strengthen one another, amplifying their respective narrative impacts. In his select novels, narratives revolving the pursuit of personal legends of the protagonists highlight the mimetic-thematic perspective and the narratives regarding the magical, supernatural, and fantastic elements emphasize the anti-mimetic perspective. The paratextual settings, peritexts, and epitexts in Coelho's select novels assist the readers to understand the mimetic perspective in rhetorical narratives related to the pursuit of personal legend, which is attained by fusing intercultural contexts and employing the strategy of multiple viewpoints as proposed by Bakhtin (1934/ 1963) and the anti-mimetic perspective in unnatural narratives which is associated to the concept of intertextuality as proposed by Kristeva (1980). In the select novels of Coelho, the key ideas of heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism are thus, applied to evaluate the mimetic viewpoint in rhetorical narratives that is attained when a character first acknowledges the perspective of another character from different cultural background and then involve in a sustaining continuous, inconclusive, yet transformative dialogues. The rhetorical narratives in Coelho's select novels are based on real-life events, taking place in familiar regions of multiple countries and with multicultural casts of characters. And the primary plot development occur when the protagonists travel between diverse countries in the pursuit of their personal legends and engage in a discourse with characters from multicultural backgrounds, ultimately experiencing the process of transculturation which

help them to attain self-enlightenment. The unnatural narratives of Coelho's select novels are described as conventional and anti-mimetic. The linear narration of the plot is frequently interrupted by a sub-narrative in which the narrator, the protagonist, or another character narrates particular legends and folklore, histories, and proverbs associated with a culture of a certain group. Such sub-narratives are represented in the paratextual settings, particularly in peritexts and indicate the anti-mimetic perspectives of the unnatural narratives in his select novels. Thus, it can be considered that he applies the concept of intertextuality technique by constructing the meaning of his artificial narratives to subtly convey the process of cultural hybridity. He uses the intertextuality approach in terms of cultural contexts, emphasizing the traditions, myths, folklores, and histories from diverse cultures. Thus, a diversity of writings intermingle and merge in a multi-dimensional space in his select novels, demonstrating that his narratives are made up of a variety of fragments drawn from various cultural settings of other texts. The narrative perspectives in his novels are a "culture of palimpsest in which different cultural surfaces slide over one another, supplanting each other momentarily" (Hart 311). Coelho's notion of postmodernism in his select novels is a result of cultural fusion rather than textuality or language alone, in which the free play of signifiers occurs within the literary text.

In this thesis, thus, through the analysis of Coelho's select novels it is seen that the concept of cultural hybridity like are implicitly or explicitly represented by him in his narratives. Paulo Coelho, one of the best-selling transnational authors in the globe, perceives the world surrounding him through the lens of his hybrid eyes which is developed from his Brazilian cultural background. Brazil is a country with colossal diversity of cultures and the cultures of indigenous Brazilians, people of African descendants, Portuguese people of European descendants to name a few coexist leading to the formation of numerous forms of cultural hybridity. This particular phenomenon of cultural hybridity experienced by Coelho in his native country is reflected in his literary works. Coelho, in *Paulo Coelho: Confessions of a Pilgrim* (1999) stated that being Brazilian to him means "living in a permanent

breeding ground, in a mixture of races unique to the world, with African, indigenous Brazilian, Japanese, European influences” (Arias 154). His novels celebrate hybridity and impurity, the accumulation of new forms and its possible outcomes. He articulates that he is worried of the idea of globalization and “a homogeneous culture made to everyone’s measure” and “dogmatically valid for everyone, as opposed to the personal” which can be discovered through the interactions with the individuals from diverse cultures (Arias 80). In Coelho’s opinion, the construction of a culture that serves as a “universal mind-control” instrument is the greatest threat presented by global capitalism (Arias 80). His novels, therefore, depict the search for spiritual growth and renewal through the delicate interconnection between people and cultures through time and space. His novels construct the idea that culture and identity are always in a state of mutability, continually evolving. And thus, in the novels of Coelho often an innovative new practice evolved through fusion of the elements of two or more distinct cultures. In the contemporary world it is seen that cultures are “in general characterized by hybridization” and for each culture, “all other cultures have tendentially come to be inner-content or satellites” (Welsch 5). According to Coelho the great menace of the global capitalism lies in generating a culture as a “universal mind-control” (Arias 80). Globalization has, however, accelerated the pace of cultural hybridity and prompted many established ideologies to be reexamined. Thus, transnational literary works, such as the novels of Paulo Coelho has become a progressive approach to comprehend the theory of cultural hybridity in the sense that cultural fusion is a common ground in transnational novels, which are written by transnational writers, and in the routine lives of transnational readers. The narratives of Coelho’s novels depict the personal experiences of transnational audiences whose sense of self is profoundly impacted by cultural fusions, providing them the idea of self-enlightenment which is attained through intercultural, transcultural, multicultural and cross-cultural contacts.

Globalization has seen significant changes in the recent years, especially since the 1990s as a result of the rapid advancement of technology. It reconfigures the structure and characteristics of nation-states and

consequently, national boundaries are becoming less important in a globalized society, and many countries have a substantial impact on one another. The fact that globalization coexists with regionalization is one of its drawbacks and thus, globalization simultaneously separates and unifies people. To put it simply, globalization comprises both the mechanisms of cultural homogeneity and differentialism, two opposed tendencies that are always at odds with one another and which ultimately result in cultural hybridization. Peter Burke, in *Cultural Hybridity* (2009), thus, has proposed four outcomes constructed on the dynamics of the flexibility nature of hybridity. First, evaporation of distinct cultures as a result of globalization leading to homogenization. The second outcome includes, resistance of the phenomenon of globalization. Thirdly, hybridity hints the dawn of glocalization and fourth, the creolization of the world. The ultimate mutation of all cultures due to globalization, that is hybridity in the global melting pot could possibly shape the creolization of the world. The first outcome, the cultural homogenization is prevalent in the concept of McDonaldisation, which places emphasis on global cultural fusion indicating “Americanization or the ‘Coca-Cola effect’”, which is the impact of American culture and commerce on the rest of the world (Burke 104). The homogenization is the ultimate consequences of cultural hybridity, the fusion of all cultures due to globalization. In the present times, the cultures and identities are at best portrayed in terms of transnationalism, the transnational movements and the decentralization of geographic and cultural boundaries. It implores the “radical break with the narratives of colonisation and anti-colonialism” (Loomba 213). In *Empire* (2000), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri assert that the evolving postmodern construct has produced a novel hegemony, ‘Empire’ as termed by the authors. Their term, ‘Empire’ is defined in contrast to imperialism as it “establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers” (Hardt and Negri xii). They argue that it acts as an instrument to decentralize and deterritorialize the statute, which is gradually assimilating the whole global order. It focuses on “hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command”, and connotes the fusion of the “distinct

national colors of the imperial map of the world” which then blends in “the imperial global rainbow” (Hardt and Negri xii-xiii). They denote that “Empire” can be compared to the Roman Empire as this new hegemony also “loosely incorporated its subject states rather than controlling them directly” (Loomba 215). According to Hardt and Negri, this “Empire” is the outcome of the worldwide extension of the United States internal constitutional project. However, United States is not identified as this “new hegemony” because it is a new order and “sought to include and incorporate minorities into the mainstream rather than simply expel or exclude them” (Loomba 214). Thus, in *Cultural Hybridity* (2009), Peter Burke denoted that in the age of globalization, the process of the fusion of cultures contribute in the rise of global, quasi-global or glocal culture and it is not only seen in the West but also in the countries like India, Japan and China. For instance, a global interest in contemporary South Korean fashion has contributed to the evolution of the Korean pop (also known as K-pop) into an extensive subculture all over the world. The globalization of K-pop culture is also a reflection of how cultural globalization is dispersing from Western centres. Cultural homogenization at the local level is heterogeneous indicating that at individual level, “there is more choice, more freedom, a widening of options” and at global level it “is the reverse, a narrowing of diversity” (Burke 105). According to Emily Apter due to the rise in the process of global market, nowadays many authors and filmmakers “consciously or unconsciously build translatability into their art forms” (qtd in Burke 105). The transnational author like Paulo Coelho in his narratives focus on the human condition and reflect the universal experience. This universal experience represents the pursuit of personal legend, which is achieved through intercultural interactions. He, thus, is concerned about the notion of globalization and “a homogeneous culture made to everyone’s measure” and “dogmatically valid for everyone, as opposed to the personal” which can be discovered by interacting with the individuals from diverse cultures (Arias 80). And on the context of translatability in the art forms, the Marvel Cinematic Universe films is worth mentioning. It is a United States based company, which produces a series of superhero movies in which the



universe is represented on the basis of transculturality and transnationalism through the narrative technique of magic realism.

The second outcome of the process of cultural hybridity is the resistance of the phenomenon of globalization. According to Peter Burke, in recent times the manifestation of “resistance to the ‘intrusion’ or ‘invasion’ of global forms of culture” has occurred (Burke 108). This reaction of counter-globalization is termed as ‘cultural lag’ by the sociologists. On one hand globalization is an invincible phenomenon indicating an evolution of a new order and a new world. On the other hand, there is the counter-globalization movement to conserve the local or regional culture or identity. This results in “narcissism of minor differences” as termed by Sigmund Freud (qtd. in Burke 110). In simplest terms, it means the shared phenomenon of the uprising rebellion of the regions, ‘the regionalist revolution’ as coined by Robert Lafont (Burke 109). According to Welsch in “Transculturality: the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today” (1999), the globalization leads to particularisms, “phenomena which are retrograde” (204). The particularisms marks the “return to tribes” engaging in “cultural identity to nationalisms producing hatred, purification actions and war” (Welsch 204). For instance, the ethnonationalism movement in North-eastern parts of India. These regions include eight states, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya. The numerous ethnic groups in North-eastern parts of India endeavour to resist the invasion of their ethnicities and preserve the elements of their cultures. Also, the restrictions on Iranian women’s attire and conduct, which is based on Islamic culture and religion, certainly represents an act of opposition to cultural hybridity in particular and globalization in general. In the select novels of Paulo Coelho, for instance, in *The Witch of Portobello* (2005), this particular outcome is evidently represented. In the later stages of her life, Athena acquired knowledge from various cultures like Greek, Gipsy, the Middle East, Polish and achieved self-enlightenment. She also started a new cult in London with a group called the “Pilgrims of the Vertex” as a result of her personal legend. She assumed the identity of Hagia Sofia, her alter ego, while performing the esoteric trance dance, and

while in a state of ecstasy, she preached to her cult members. For her followers, London's Portobello Road became their devoted home. However, Athena's new cult sparked a Protestant uprising and protest, leading to her being labelled as "the witch of Portobello". They were not ready to accept the omniscient deity, Hagia Sofia and a religion based on the concept of cultural hybridity. In this context, the process of cultural hybridity in the phenomena like multiculturalism, cross-culturalism and transculturalism is promoted by the concept of globalization. These concepts enfold the "global and local, universalistic and particularistic aspects and it does so quite naturally from the logic of transcultural processes" (Welsch 205). Thus, the affinities towards global and local are attained through the process of cultural hybridity.

It is seen that in the age of globalization, the concept of cultural hybridity is celebrated and resisted as well. The argument remains on the preservation of the ethnic culture and identity, to retain every little thing that is local. And this results in the third outcome as proposed by Peter Burke, the dawn of glocalization. With the celebrated and resisted hybridized shades of cultures, the phenomenon of glocalization is formed, a kind of living a life of biculture. It is a form of cultural diglossia which involves the process of following what is global while retaining the local. It is the process in which the local societies concurrently experience "transformation of themselves to respond to and engage in transnationalism—negotiating, constructing, and reinventing their own subjectivities" (Chiang 41). In recent times, such movement has been witnessed in North-eastern parts of India. For instances, in the Bodo society during a Christian wedding, the Bodo Christian bride wears white *dokhona*, the traditional attire instead of the white gown while maintaining the colour. A new traditional attire known as 'Rigu-Set' has been familiarized among the Dimasa Kacharis due to the influence of the mainstream Indian culture. It is a kind of a Dimasa 'mekhela chadar' created out of a traditional 'Rigu' and a 'Set' which resembles the draping design of a saree. Another illustration is the development of pizza in India. Pizza is an Italian dish served with plenty of cheese and pepperoni toppings. However, in India, there is a Indian franchise known as 'Laziz Pizza', which serves pizza

with toppings of Indian spices and *paneer*. And in Paulo Coelho's select novels this process of retaining local culture while adopting global one is represented vividly. For instance, in *The Zahir* (2005), Mikhail becomes a transcultural man by adopting the process of glocalization. He adopts the elements from other cultures while maintaining his own Mongolian culture and like Athena from *The Witch of Portobello* (2006) starts his own cult based on the knowledge he had acquired from his own culture as well from others.

The fourth outcome is the creolization of the world, the fusion of all cultures of the world. In the contemporary world, the interaction between the diverse cultures is an inevitable phenomenon. It is ubiquitous and a continuous process which is experienced everyday in our lives. These encounters between the distinct cultures usher in cultural hybridity. In this context, it can be considered that despite hybridity, "a culture or a cultural tradition can remain 'pure'" on one side and on the other, "the assertion that a single culture" would eventually overpower the others as a whole (Burke 113). Burke has cited two cultures as agents of hegemony cultures, French culture as an instance from the past and the American culture as an instance of the present. Thus, conversely there are two opposite sides of cultural mutation. The first side denotes negation of cultural hybridity. The critics like Arnold Toynbee accentuates that cultural hybridity is a chaos and a process of cultural disintegration as it involves the lost of a fragment from the original culture. This particular aspect highlighted by Arnold Tonybee cannot be denied. For instance, in India the diaspora population while adapting to their new homeland, had lost fragments from their original culture. On this light, the Tai Ahom of Assam can be mentioned. It is believed that they have migrated to Assam in the year 1228 from either Mong Mao of South China or Hukawng Valley in Myanmar. In the process of adaptation to their new homeland, there culture merged with the then local culture of Assam and today their Ahom language from the Kra-Dai language family is dead. They use Assamese language as a mode of their communication. Burke argues that the second side highlights the positive element of cultural hybridity which is

“the tendency to synthesis and to the emergence of new forms” (Burke 113). And this tendency according to Burke can be elucidated through the concept of creolization. He cites the analysis of the American anthropologist Marshall Sahlins on the island, “Hawaii before and after the encounter with Captain Cook” (Burke 114). The paradigm of a new cultural order, which is “a dialectic theory of cultural change in which ideas, objects or practices from outside are absorbed or ‘ordered’ by a given culture” and in this manner the culture is re-ordered (114). For instance, When the Tai Ahom arrived in Assam in the thirteenth century, they were aware of their minority status, and thus, many native population of Assam then were formally adopted to Ahom clan. This Ahomization process continued until the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Ahom civilization itself was directly influenced by Hinduism. The assimilation process known as Ahomization was not too challenging because the Ahoms practiced open marriage outside of their own clans. As a result, even if some aspects or components of their culture went extinct, their civilization was still able to persist due to the formation of new cultural elements through the process of cultural hybridity. Another illustration is that of the Assamese Sikhs in the state of Assam in India. They also follow the paradigm of a new cultural order. Their history is traced back to the time in 1820 when Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Sikh Empire sent around five hundred soldiers to Assam in order to fight against the Burmese invaders. In the contemporary times, the Assamese Sikhs follow new cultural order by absorbing the culture of Assam while retaining their own Sikh tradition. For example, they use Assamese language as their mode of communication. Burke employs the process of ‘crystallization’ as a metaphor for the process of the formation of a new cultural order in which the “old elements have been arranged into a new pattern” (Burke 114). And he denotes that “when cultural encounters and exchanges take place, a period of relative fluidity” is followed by “a time when the fluid solidifies, congeals, turns into routine and becomes resistant to further change” (114). Thus, it can be established that cultural hybridity at present times is not inevitably an epoch of homogeneous global culture rather it is “the one that sees a new order

coming into being” which is the “the reconfiguration of cultures, ‘the creolization of the world’” (Burke 115). Cultural hybridity then, constructs new global order, which Burke calls crystallization or the creolization of the world. This process of crystallization is evidently shown through diaspora cultures like that of Lebanese, Gipsy and Polish populations in Paulo Coelho’s *The Witch of Portobello* (2006).

In the contemporary times, in a postmodern globalized world, the notion of hybridity is inextricably linked with the idea of identity in the context of immigrants, diasporic communities, and multicultural individuals. In the era of globalization, there is a constant and inevitable process of hybridization in diverse cultural contacts transpiring frequently and consequently, postmodern subjects are experiencing multiple identities and mixed ancestries. As such, in the present times, high-speed communication and globalization have ignited the mechanism of re-evaluating fundamental beliefs since they have accelerated cultural diffusion, thereby stimulating the process of cultural hybridity. Thus, process of cultural hybridity is open to many unanticipated outcomes with both negative and positive impacts. In this context, it may be concluded that cosmopolitan writers frequently explore the notion of cultural hybridity in their writings. Additionally, since cultural diffusion is a phenomenon that transnational readers encounter on a regular basis, the readers can connect to the process of cultural hybridity more effectively through the works of transnational writers. Thus, the transnational literary works, like that of Paulo Coelho’s novels, become a progressive approach to understand the concept of cultural hybridity. Coelho is a non-conformist and believes that “culture isn’t something that’s transmitted through the genes” (*Witch of Portobello* 21). And like Salman Rushdie, he celebrates hybridity and fears the totalitarianism. This thesis, therefore, reads the concept of cultural hybridity by correlating it with the phenomena like creolization, transculturation, multiculturalism and cross-culturalism in the select novels of Paulo Coelho. His novels otherwise have been possibly read only from the perspectives of spiritualism, mysticism, feminine divinity, magic realism and others. This thesis also discusses

Coelho's art of fiction by negotiating his position among the 'Third-World cosmopolitans' which then has not been discussed yet. And accordingly, this thesis will provide knowledge to the future researchers and scholars guiding them to explore Coelho's novels further not only in the area of cultural hybridity but also in other areas as well.

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