



PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES IN HERMAN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to study Siddhartha's spiritual quest for self-knowledge in psychological perspective. It is meant to explore how far and in what ways is the mystical experience on par with secondary integration of personality that occurs only in the wake of the disintegration of several existing psychological structures. The protagonist's act of overcoming ego-consciousness and disassociating himself with the social labels and ultimately realizing his 'self' are analyzed psychologically using Kazimierz Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration as a conceptual framework. Herman Hesse's novel Siddhartha is selected for the study, and textual analysis is employed as a tool to analyse the text culling the relevant passages as evidence. The study reveals that the protagonist of the novel achieves higher level of personality development and the previously held assumptions which confuse spirituality with psychic disorders are overruled. It also asserts the validity of mystical experiences as higher form of consciousness yielding wisdom allowing mystics to transcend the temporal cum spatial barriers thereby elevating to the level of humanity. This paper suggests that the study of different mystical traditions may well lead to one's personal development and may prove a step towards gaining maturity.

Keywords: Mysticism, mystical experience, self-realization, positive disintegration, secondary integration.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the evolvement of critical faculties in humans, the broader ontological and epistemological questions have spurred human curiosity and wisdom. Incessant attempts, throughout the ages, have been made to understand the meaning of the life. Mysticism is

marked by a perpetuation of the immortal human quest for seeking answers to these eternal questions. It consists a conscious experience of peeling away the material constraints in the hope of getting at the Reality pervading the whole phenomena. It is characterised by the attempt to limit the limitless and to grasp what lies beyond the ordinary sensory experiences. Mystics often claim to have transcended the limitations of common sense perception, thereby making a union with the Reality. As Underhill (1943) defines, mysticism is “the way of union with Reality” (p. 3). The notion of “union” with some higher principles or states of consciousness is a common feature to many definitions of mysticism. Mysticism, in fact, is the study of the mystical Truth after abolishing all the barriers not only of time and place but also those of reason. According to Smith (1980), mysticism refers to “an innate tendency of the human soul, which seeks to transcend reason and to attain a direct experience of God” (p. 20). The emergence of psychology as a full-fledged discipline has contributed a great deal in understanding the psychological tendencies, varying dispositions and the state of consciousness manifest in mystical struggle. Kripal (2001) argues that “whereas premodern mysticism was historically embedded deeply in traditional forms of liturgical, scriptural, and doctrinal contexts, modernity has witnessed an increasing deracination of the mystical from the traditional forms of authority and faith and an ever-increasing psychologization of its meanings” (p. 10). Perhaps one of the most influential figures to study the psychology of mysticism is William James. According to King (1999), “a dominant trajectory in the contemporary study of mysticism since James has been the study of altered states of consciousness and the phenomenon connected with their attainment” (p. 22). He claims that this move to study “the mystical” in terms of “altered states of consciousness” has resulted in “the privatization of mysticism” (King, 1999, p. 21). That is, the experience of mystics began to be viewed as subjective mental states of psychological entities. Likewise, the union with the Reality, through psychological perspective, is observed as a result of psychological growth or emotional development whereby an individual is able to broaden his/her mental horizons. The higher state of consciousness, achieved through non-rational and super-sensory means, enables a mystic to locate the Reality deep in his/her consciousness rather than somewhere outside in time and place as Armstrong (1999) deems the Divine not as an entity “out there” but all pervasive and omnipotent force. Mystic’s experience is “always seen as a symbolic ascent through the mysterious regions of the mind” (p. 253). Smart (1980) also defines mysticism “as primarily consisting in an interior or introvertive quest, culminating in certain interior experience which are not described in terms of sense-experience or of mental images, etc.” (p. 78).

As for mystical experience, it is pertinent to mention Gellman (2005, p. 138) who refers to it as “a (purportedly) super sense-perceptual or sub sense-perceptual experience granting acquaintance of realities or states of affairs that are of a kind not accessible by way of sense perception, somatosensory modalities, or standard introspection”. Different religious traditions mould these experiences accordingly but the gist remains constant. Likewise, the concept of the Absolute or Ultimate Reality may take different names according to cultural and linguistic varieties. Without going into the details about constructivist and perennialistic dimensions of mystical experiences, for it does not fall within the scope of this study, certain common features may be outlined for the sake of systematic study. According to Gimello (1978), the following characteristics form the core of mysticism common to mystical experiences across regions, cultures, religious traditions and languages.

- i. Profound sense of unity or contact with the Reality.
- ii. Conscious awareness on the part of mystic about his/her spiritual quest or journey.
- iii. Feeling that the experience cannot be expressed through language.
- iv. Refinement of intuitive faculty and using intuition as a means to seeking an end.
- v. Ecstasy and sense of wholeness.

From this perspective, “mystical experience” can perhaps be defined as a unitive contact with Ultimate Reality that is marked by a kind of illumination or enlightenment. For the present study, Herman Hesse’s *Siddhartha* has been selected to analyse the mystical experience of a mystic character named Siddhartha. Through this study, an important research gap will be filled as the novel has not been studied in this perspective. Further, the study will give a new angle to the work and a psychological explanation to mystical experiences.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The subject of people having the experience of God or Deity has been as old as the concept of God itself. Throughout ages, different writers have produced a number of works on the nature of these experiences from multiple dimensions. The process of new insights adding to the existing corpus of mysticism has continued to the present times. In this process, many ideas, theories or findings have added, improved, refuted and replaced the existing ones. The hallmark of these studies have been the understanding of God as an entity or the supreme force, its role on the experienter and its involvement in human life as a whole.

The emergence of Psychology as a discipline has not only invested a great deal of interest in mysticism but has also contributed to the more objective study of the subject. There is an enormous body of works of literature in psychology and psychology of religion. Psychology offers perspectives to religion and mysticism. The psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud is perhaps the most representative work followed by people like Carl Gustav Jung, Alfred Adler and Erik Erikson. Their works have presented various psychological models for studying/analyzing the religious/mystical experiences. The psychoanalysts have primarily placed focus on the unconscious motives or urges of the individuals who claimed to have an experience of God. The psychoanalytic understanding of mystical experience starts out with Freud who describes mystical experience as a regression to the narcissistic symbiosis of mother and child. Geels (1991) believes that others have developed this further into a more Jungian understanding of mystical experience by relating regression to the collective unconscious. Many others have theorized the possible adaptive function of mystical experience, leading to change and an answer to existential problems. In psychoanalytic terms, most of the motives that trigger our actions, thoughts and experiences are hidden deep in the unconscious mind. So ‘unconscious’ holds a vital place in psychoanalytic studies.

Pruyser (1960) writes that psychoanalytic studies of religion are conceptually and methodically of special character. The beliefs and practices of an individual are analyzed from the point of view of psychoanalytic key concepts, particularly Freudian, like wish-fulfillment, libido, sexual urges, Oedipus complex, the super-ego and alike. The word “symptom” occurs most frequently in psychoanalysis and it connotes a vast range of possibilities including that of religion. In Freudian psychoanalysis, religion can be approached as symptom. Freud viewed religion as stemming from the child’s relationship with father. That is why in many cultures, Freud maintained, God is viewed as Heavenly father. Freud (1961) also states that religious ideas which are given out as teachings “are not precipitates of experience or end results of thinking: they are illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of

mankind” (p. 30). The assumption underlying Freudian viewpoint is that the concept of God is linked with worldly needs, fears and desires of human beings. In almost similar vein, Hood (1992) mentions that Freud owes much to Feuerbach for the latter’s theological supposition that theology is disguised anthropology. This simple inversion necessitates that one’s experience of God be rooted totally in one’s life experience, distorted as “of God”. In fact, Freud considers God as a projected father-figure based on child’s early experience of its father.

Adler laid stress on the role of goals and motivation in his Individual Psychology. According to Nielsen (1997) we have certain shortcomings in ourselves which we ever try to overcome by associating ourselves with notions of perfection and betterment. It becomes pertinent to the study of religious/mystical experiences, for the commitment to a particular creed or mystical tradition to hold communion with the Divine can be translated as an attempt for superiority and perfection. Religion is thus a means whereby individuals attempt to fill the void, to overcome their sense of powerlessness which is directly proportional to sense of inferiority. Since God is considered as Powerful, Superior and Omnipotent, one might compensate his/her inferiorities and imperfections by making union with Him. This experience of God allows one to become one with God. Nielsen (1997) is of the view that Adler is primarily interested in the idea of God as a motivator and not in the question of His existence. Human actions are the result of the motivations provided by God or the concept of God held by those individuals. In other words, the way people see the world around them is reflective of the concept of God they hold and Adler believes that these concepts have changed over time. He further suggests that we can view the world in one way or the other, that is, we can either assume that we the humans are at the centre of the world and are waiting for God’s attention or we ourselves are the centre and are able to use our potentials for the common good of the society. In the former case, we are more at the receiving end, that is, passively waiting for the Divine favour to let the things happen as per our wishes. In the latter case, activity and struggle is more involved. Adler’s tacit assumption is that our conception of God is quite significant because it encompasses our life-aims and channelizes our social interactions in a particular direction.

Jung (1969) also makes distinction between creed and religion, taking the former as “a codified and dogmatized” form of religious experience and the latter as the individual’s condition or state of mind established by his/her submission to higher power(s). The focal point in his understanding of religious (mystical) experience are contents of the collective unconscious which are known as “archetypes”, a term that will be dealt with in great detail in the later part of the thesis. Jung (1969) maintains that “the existence of an archetypal God-image is the most we can assert about God psychologically” (p. 59). Indeed, it is really an important archetype. It occurs most frequently and acts as an influential agency and is thus included into the category of religious experience.

Underhill has also produced some phenomenal works in the field of mysticism. In her classical study, “Mysticism” (Underhill, 1960), she gives the description of how a mystic undertakes mystical endeavour and passes through the five stages of the development of consciousness.

- i. The awakening of the self
- ii. The purification of the self
- iii. The illumination of the self
- iv. The dark night of the soul
- v. The unitive life

Underhill's psychological theory of mysticism is primarily based on the idea of the presence of an inner self in every individual. This, she calls, "the transcendental faculty" and "the eye of the soul". Elsewhere Underhill (1960) refers to it as the "deeper or hidden self" (p. 67), and "the transcendental self" (p. 68). As far as the awakening of the self is concerned, Underhill is of the view that this stage is marked by some inner conflict that triggers unrest in the individual (mystic). This conflict leads to conversion, not in the religious sense, as she insists "mystical conversion is not to be confused with religious conversion life from unbelief to belief or one set of beliefs to another set" (Underhill, 1960, p. 176). Mystical conversion implies an inner change indicated through a changed worldview. The conforming attitude is replaced by inquisitive and questioning habit of thought. This process may be gradual or sudden, depending upon individual temperament of mystic.

The study of mysticism owes greatly to William James who adopted psychological and philosophical perspectives to evaluate mystical experiences. In his "The Varieties of Religious Experience", James (1961) mentions his four famous marks of mysticism.

- a) Ineffability – mystics often report that their experiences "defy expression" (p. 300).
- b) Noetic quality – mystical experiences are reported to bring significant knowledge to the mystics in an illuminating and authoritative manner.
- c) Transiency – mystical states are transient and "can't be sustained for long" (p. 300).
- d) Passivity – mystical experiences are received in a passive manner and "the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power" (p. 300).

James (1961) considers the noetic quality as the most important characteristic of mystical experience and calls it "the essential mark of mysticism" (p. 320). He attaches great importance to the knowledge-giving quality of mysticism and argues that mystical experiences are "absolutely sensational in their epistemological quality and they are like face to face presentation of what seems immediately to exist" (James, 1961, p. 332). The worth of mysticism lies, therefore, in yielding an understanding or knowledge. James justifies the truth of mystical knowledge by the "fruits it brings – that is, the mystic's saintliness", which is witnessed to be a positive power of transformation in mystic's life and community" (James, 1961, p. 333). His notion of epistemic quality has been taken as benchmark for analyzing mystical experiences by several succeeding scholars.

Inspired by what has been called the "perennial philosophy" – a philosophy that believes in the ultimate unity of all religions, Stace (1960) argues that there exists a "common core" to mystical experiences which is a common ground for different religious traditions. This core is a state of "pure consciousness, a contentless, feelingless state of mind in which a mystic experiences an undifferentiated unity and a loss of personal identity" (Stace, 1960, p. 62). According to Stace (1960), although the "undifferentiated unity" is subject to multiple interpretations within different frameworks, but the pantheistic world-view brings variations to a single point of convergence "...in which the finite self and the Universal self (also called the One, Brahman, God etc.) comprise a unity" (p. 62).

Stace's perennial view is opposed by various scholars; the notable among them is Katz (1978) who argues that mystic's experiences are bound to be shaped by his/her background and personal expectations. In his view, therefore, there is no "core" that may be termed as a common denominator shared by mystical experiences belonging to different traditions. Both approaches, albeit their differences, attempt to rest on the knowledge-giving feature of

mysticism. And both, in fact, rely on the phenomenological characteristics of mystical experience for their arguments. Kimmel (2008), however, challenges and questions Katz' critique of perennial notion of mysticism and holds latter's contextualist stance to criticism.

Hardy (1979) also carried out the study of religious (mystical) experiences. Hardy and his colleagues accumulated the accounts of more than four hundred people who claimed to have had the experience of God. They reported varying experiences regarding the way they discerned or claimed to discern Reality. There were those who took the Reality for God as a physical entity; others had an experience of a non-physical supreme power and still others were those who had simply a hallucinatory experience either visual or auditory. The experiencers reported that they had had the experience either during meditation or contemplation over some natural phenomenon or during creating a work of art. Nearly in all cases, Hardy (1979) argues that the awareness of this presence affects the way people look at the world to such an extent that behaviour is altered.

Maslow (1964) shows his disinterest in traditional religion. It is not because he was anti-religion nor is it because he deemed non-theistic stance as the only viable philosophical posture but because of its least focus on what he calls 'peak experiences'. Maslow (1964) coined the term "peak experiences" for mystical or transcendental experiences. Following James and Dewey, he holds that these experiences are not dependent upon traditional religious doctrines. Rather they transcend the conventional religious system and aim at oneness and unity with the cosmos. Maslow (1964) develops another hypothesis after his intensive study on mysticism, which is that all mystical experiences are the same and all the religions are the same in their essence. And underneath the apparent philosophies and ethnographic phrasings there is left a core-religion or the transcendent experience. However, he also criticizes liberal religionists who seem to stress rational knowledge and try to rest all their efforts on knowledge of the impersonal world. They seem to be uneasy with the irrational, the anti-rational or the non-rational. They do not give place to "... the mysterious, the unknown, the unknowable, the dangerous-to-know, or the ineffable" (Maslow, 1964, p. 41).

Another eminent scholar of mysticism, Hocking (1981) regards mysticism neither as metaphysics, nor as an experience, but as an art: "the fine art, almost the lost art of worship" (p. 224). According to Hocking (1963), mystics are the people who took the traditional way(s) of worship to a higher level imbued with the element of virtuosity. Through their strenuous efforts in terms of the refinement of worship, they sought higher knowledge of God and God's ways. Hocking (1963) states that a philosophy of mysticism would be a philosophy of worship. He argues that mysticism should not be confused with certain states of frenzy and intoxication. The purpose of mystical experiences, on the contrary, is worship, not in the traditional sense of the term but in the sense of thinking and contemplation yielding the personal knowledge of God. Hocking (1981) also believes that one of the major difficulties for a mystic is to articulate the experience in plain language. Here he seems to endorse the noetic quality of mysticism presented by James. The state of mind characterized by dissatisfaction and incompleteness triggers mystics' urge to fill the spiritual void and though the journey has no end in terms of the point of conclusion, the mystic, nevertheless, feels satisfaction and serenity of mind at some stage.

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kazimierz Dabrowski is accredited with formulating a psychological theory of personality development, which envisages individuals capable of passing through different levels of

development by means of materializing their ideals. The theory comprises of five levels of personality development: the first level involves primitive integration where emotional, mental and imaginal activities are subservient to biological drives. The last level entails a final reintegration of personality marked by self-possession, responsibility, autonomy and authenticity, all of which flow effortlessly from a centre of consciousness that Dabrowski refers to as the "personality ideal". There are three intermediate levels between the two extremes, and these levels are mainly focused on the process of disintegration. It also deserves mention that there is no automatic transition of individuals from one to the next stage. Rather, some remain in the first level throughout their lives; others may find themselves in the second stage. Small number of people reaches the next stage and very rare, in fact, are the individuals who progress to the fourth and fifth levels.

In Dabrowski's (1967, 1996) theory the development is sequential and is characterized by an elevated level of consciousness which in turn is a corollary of the fusion of intellectual and emotional capabilities and functions. Individuals with higher consciousness are enabled to make choices and set ideals. This progression leads to the production of a unique and more authentic individual. The developmental progression is made possible through Dabrowski's phenomenon of "multilevelness". During the developmental process, individuals, particularly those who are progressing, can capitalize on what Dabrowski refers to as "the third factor". It is a transformative factor in the theory that carries within it the potential for the new personality ideal to emerge through "inner psychic transformation, self-awareness, self-control, education-of-oneself and autopsychotherapy" (Dabrowski, 1996, p. 19). The theory consists of five levels with various sub-levels. "Values appeared to represent different levels. The span between the levels of a given phenomenon became by far more significant than the content of the term defining the phenomenon" (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977, p. xii).

Further, conflict holds key position in this theory. The development initiates as a result of conflict. No progression or growth is possible without it. Conflicts exert varying impacts on people in accordance with their psychic make-up. However, in the individuals with higher developmental potential, they trigger progression and tendency towards self-transformation. The theory also adheres to the idea of breaking the existing structures and replacing them with the idealized ones. In the final level, conflicts are resolved and the Self achieves autonomy and authenticity. The levels are named as Primary Integration level, Uni-level Disintegration level, Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration, Organized Multilevel Disintegration and Secondary Integration level.

3.1 Level I: Primary Integration

The first level is devoid of any kind of conflict. A person finds himself perfectly attuned to his environment. At this level people are driven by their instincts and biological needs. "Behaviour is controlled by primitive drives and by externality. Intelligence neither controls nor transforms basic drives; it serves the ends determined by primitive drives" (Dabrowski, 1996, p. 18). Indulged in an animal-like way of living, individuals have no concern for self-reflection or self-correction. They show a conforming, uncritical attitude towards life. Their primary focus is to adapt themselves according to the external environment. Dabrowski (1996) views two kinds of adjustment – the negative adjustment and negative maladjustment. While the negative adjustment indicates people's adherence to the societal norms in an unthinking manner, the negative maladjustment refers to a person's disregard for the norms but choosing a degrading

and mean things in their place. Criminals and psychopaths can be seen as the examples of negative maladjustment.

3.2 Level II: Uni-level Disintegration

This level is called as Uni-level or one level because a person at this stage has no intrinsic criterion whereby he/she could determine which demands should take priority over the others. In addition to the biological needs, at this level there are also the demands of others, to which one is susceptible. Moreover, the inner conflict emerges and becomes inevitable where psychic overexcitability is strong. It gets intensified with the passage of time; however, individual has no idea how to cope with it. There is “continual vacillation between ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ with no clear direction out of the vicious circle” (Dabrowski, 1996, p. 18). The conflict demands an appropriate action and if it is not managed, it can result into some grave psychic disorder(s). As Dabrowski (1996) points out the severity of internal conflicts at this level can take an individual to a “no exit situation. Severe mental disorders are associated with unilevel developmental structure” (p. 18). Those who can somehow manage the conflict can progress into the third level.

3.3 Level III: Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration

The structure of spontaneous multilevel disintegration (level III) is composed of hierarchization, or the critical perception and assessment of experience, behaviour, attitudes and orientations in terms of higher and lower values; a set of self-critical dynamisms, such as guilt, shame, astonishment and disquietude with oneself; and empathy. The inner conflict that emerges in level II lacks a direction; here the direction is provided by the hierarchy of values. At this level an individual passes through the process of “self-evaluation, reflection, intense moral conflict, perception of the uniqueness of others, and existential anxiety” (Dabrowski, 1967, p.19). He is enabled to discern the higher and lower feelings and develops a sense of “what ought to be”. As the idealized self-entails better choices, it is positive maladjustment; and as the existing dynamisms have to be shattered, it is called disintegration. Experiences such as “inner conflict, sadness, anxiety, obsession, depression, and psychic tension all cooperate in the promotion of humanistic development” (Dabrowski, 1967, p.vi).

3.4 Level IV: Organized Multilevel Disintegration

This level is determined by dynamisms that reflect an increasing capacity of individuals to direct their own developmental processes. An individual consciously oversees his psychological development. He possesses a heightened sense of self-awareness and self-control. He is psychologically empowered enough to keep a check over regressive tendencies and to convert different experience and behaviour into means of personal growth. A well-formed vision of life takes the place of various involuntary spontaneous reactions. The criteria set at level III are materialized in this level and developmental potential gets even stronger. This level is called “organized” owing to the fact that the haphazard dynamisms are properly and consciously adjusted in accordance with the set idealized choices. Besides, the societal norms are followed only if they are not contradicting with the individual’s criterion. The lower and base ones are either discarded or replaced by higher values.

3.5 Level V: Secondary Integration

This level can be best considered as a stage where one intuitively and spontaneously unites oneself with the highest levels discovered in one's experience. This milestone is achieved only by a very few people. At this stage the process of personality development is complete. It is called secondary integration because it is followed by disintegration. According to Dabrowski (1996), the developmental dynamisms present at level V are “responsibility, autonomy, authenticity and personality ideal” (p. 20). The latter which emerges in level III in embryonic form also undergoes its own development in the final level. An individual attains self-realization and is in charge of his psychological cum emotional dynamisms. Individual idealized choices are prioritized and worldviews are developed or changed accordingly. All the petty follies like anger, violence, short-temper, short-sightedness and selfishness are replaced by self-autonomy, self-education and broader vision. Individuals at this stage very often are the trend-setters and may have increasing followers.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Transition from Primary Integration to Unilevel Disintegration

The first level is marked as the initiation of integration within the theory of positive disintegration. At level one there is no disintegration or conflict in the personality. An individual leads more like a stereotypical life, showing conformity with the existing structures. At this level of development people are usually self-centred, uncaring and indifferent to others. Dabrowski (1967) argues that in the first level of his theory, the primary integration entails automated and spontaneous behaviour, for the cognitive and emotional functions are characterised by rigidity, impulsiveness and spontaneity. Basic human drives and other external factors play a dominant role in shaping and controlling behaviour. Intelligence “neither controls nor transforms basic drives; it serves the ends determined by primitive drives” (p. 18). The individuals with almost no human qualities, particularly the psychopaths are found stuck in this level of existence. Dabrowski (1967) happily concedes that very rare individuals spend their lives at this level. He believes that a vast majority of the individuals possesses an overall positive behaviour. But there are also few who are driven by the primitive and completely negative drives, “... people who are a burden for their immediate social group, such as their family, school, or place of employment, and whose influence on it is destructive” (p. 7).

In Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*, the young man shows a yearning for knowing the meaning of existence through personal seeking and is ready even to break away with the existing structures. Siddhartha feels an inner conflict that motivates him to think and act differently at a very early stage in his life. He shows his discontent towards the Brahmin ways of life which according to him lack ‘something’ that he aspires for, as shown in this line: “restlessness of the soul came to him, arising from the smoke of the sacrifices ... trickling through from the teachings of the old Brahmin” (Hesse, 1951, p. 3). He has no wish to lead a stereotypical life of a Brahmin as his father wants him to do. Sense of inner void and an urge to fill this lack compel him to bid farewell to his household and the Brahmin doctrine. He decides to leave his house and family to join the wandering ascetics desperately in the hope of finding salvation, for he thinks of the Brahmin ways, rituals and sacrifices as incapable of connecting an individual with the Sacred, as shown in the line: “Father, I have come to tell you that I wish to

leave your house tomorrow and join the ascetics. I wish to become a Samana” (Hesse, 1951, p. 7).

Psychologically, Siddhartha experiences a kind of inner division at this stage which is similar to what Dabrowski calls unilevel disintegration. “...beloved by all, a joy to all, there was yet no joy in his own heart ... restless thoughts came flowing to him from the river, from the twinkling stars and night...” (Hesse, 1951, p. 3). The stage of unilevel disintegration is marked by the psychological states like doubts, hesitations, mood swings and the loosening of the previous personality structures which in Siddhartha’s character are manifest first in relinquishing Brahmin way of life and then feeling sceptical of the Samanas’ asceticism. He becomes the victim of self-doubts and expresses his disbelief in the path of Samanas. He enquires from his friend whether they are on the right track that might lead them to find salvation or simply going nowhere. He is critical of his association with the Samanas and asks a rhetorical question to Govinda: “Are we gaining knowledge? Are we approaching salvation? Or are we perhaps going in circles – we who thought to escape from the cycle?” (Hesse, 1951, p. 14). His quest for truth is not satiated. To him, the Samana path, too, is incapable of taking him towards his destination. Unlike his friend, Siddhartha does not adhere to Samanas doctrines. On the contrary he views them critically and the battle between him and the external world becomes more intense: “I suffer thirst, Govinda, and on this long Samana path my thirst has not grown less” (Hesse, 1951, p. 15). Intense moral conflict and existential anxiety occur in him and the void gets wider.

4.2 Identifying the “Personality Ideal” in Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration

His meeting with Buddha, the Illustrious One is highly significant in his journey, for it allows him to have a clearer understanding of “what ought to be”. After listening to his worldviews and debating with him, he begins to develop his personality ideal. He shows much reluctance in blind adherence to others’ teachings. Hence, he makes up his mind to develop his own vision of life, the personality ideal, which is precisely the result of his own experiential understanding. He rightly appreciates Buddha that the latter has attained salvation through his personal efforts. And that myriad of his followers are also following in his footsteps. They are trying to reach their respective destinations. Buddha’s consistent engagement with his spiritual pursuit has led him to seek enlightenment. He emphasizes that it has neither been because of his blind faith in some doctrines or teachings nor due to slavish imitation of certain rituals. Siddhartha reiterates that salvation cannot be sought through teachings: “To nobody, O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment” (Hesse, 1951, p.27). Instead of becoming a blind follower, he carves his own way which is identical with one’s personality ideal. This is the phase of spontaneous multilevel disintegration. He leaves Buddha and pursues his own roadmap that consists in seeking enlightenment through personal experiences. Nature of his inner conflict changes and he begins to have a growing sense of awareness coupled with unhappiness for not having been able to fill the spiritual void. Prior to this, the inner conflict lacked hierarchization as it was merely a feeling of discontent. It becomes ‘multilevel’ when he establishes what Dabrowski calls “the personality ideal”. The personality ideal or highly idealized image of the self is a subjective standard against which the actual personality structures are evaluated. According to Dabrowski (1972), “it becomes authentic and autonomous to eventually become the highest dynamism in the development of personality” (p. 301). Siddhartha’s initial deviation from the social norms gets further streamlined when he sets for him an idealized value. This consists in his casting

away first the Brahmin and the Samanas ways and then forsaking Buddhist doctrines. He does not wish to become a slavish imitator, for he realizes that mere adherence to certain doctrines cannot ensure salvation. The spontaneous multilevel disintegration appears when he himself exclaims, “That is why I am going on my way – not to seek another and better doctrines, for I know there is none, but to leave all doctrines and all teachers and to reach my goal alone – or die” (Hesse, 1951, p. 28).

4.3 Organized Multilevel Disintegration in Siddhartha

The process of self-realization carries on in the protagonist’s life and the development becomes more organized. At the stage of organized multi-level disintegration, the individual is consciously aware of his/her development. The ideal set at the previous stage is now consciously materialized and individual asserts the importance of the “self”. Conscious efforts are made to achieve heightened sense of the self, autonomy and self-control. There is no better way to demonstrate the awareness that occurred in Siddhartha than to quote his own words: “I called the world of appearance, illusion. I called my eyes and tongues, chance. Now it is over. I have awakened” (Hesse, 1951, p. 33). To reach this stage, Siddhartha places confidence in his own choices and decisions. Instead of sticking to a certain body of doctrines he preferred to undergo the experience of the Self himself, for it could not be communicated through teaching and preaching. He readily deviated himself from the norms whenever and wherever he found them contradictory to his personality ideal. He transacted business successfully enough; became a lover, fathered a child; amused himself in the company of women and learned ways to “wear fine clothes, to command servants, to bathe in sweet-smelling waters” (Hesse, 1951, p. 61). His interactions with Buddha, Kamaswami, Kamala and Vasudeva were occasional but significant episodes in his mystical journey towards personal transformation. Further, at this stage his tensions and conflicts lose their previous intensity. His spiritual pursuit involving on-hand experiences is marked by self-confidence and courage. He wants to understand the purpose of his existence and puts efforts to bring meaning to it.

4.4 Secondary Integration

The final level is known as the secondary integration because it comes about in the wake of disintegration of personality structures. Both primary integration and secondary integration are poles apart inasmuch as the former is related with the acquired, instinctual and stereotypical ways of life, the latter, however, involves personality development through conscious efforts and disintegration of several psychic structures. Secondary integration level is characterised by immense joy, peace and contentment. All the conflicts come to an end as the individual reaches his/her ideal of “what ought to be”. The developmental dynamisms present at level V are “responsibility, autonomy and personality ideal” (Dabrowski, 1996, p. 20). Owing to the higher level consciousness and development of empathetic feelings, the individual becomes more concerned about the welfare of the other people. An individual has a clearer understanding of his/her vision of life. He/she is able to observe his/her personality more objectively and in fact, has more control over his/her emotions. Elevated level of patience, tolerance and freedom are achieved. Siddhartha ultimately becomes his own person which is indicative of self-autonomy and conscious development of the inner standards. He seeks the transcendent meaning and value of human existence, a stage Dabrowski refers to as Secondary Integration. As a mystic he is no longer entangled in the confines of time and place but transcends these barriers by

developing self-autonomy and empathy. One of the most prominent features of this level is to show love indiscriminately for the beings. Siddhartha tells his friend that love is, for him, the most important thing in life: “But I think it is only important to love the world, not to despise it, not for us to hate each other, but to be able to regard the world and ourselves and all beings with love, admiration and respect” (Hesse, 1951, p. 119). He reaches the apex of self-realization where he finds unity in every phenomenon. He enjoys perfect serenity and feels himself at an elevated position not by way of pride but in terms of self-knowledge and wisdom. As Hesse remarks, “Within Siddhartha there slowly grew and ripened the knowledge of what wisdom really was and the goal of his long seeking” (1951, p. 106).

5.0 CONCLUSION

The application of the theory of positive disintegration to the mystical experience of Siddhartha, the mystic in the novel Siddhartha reveals that the mystical journey and the process of personality development envisioned by Dabrowski share a few common denominators with regard to their emotional cum psychological growth. The theory’s claim that only a few rare individuals can pass through Level IV and achieve self-autonomy and can translate their personality ideal into reality at Level V proves highly relevant in case of the protagonist’s quest for self-realization. The research confirms the contention that mystical journey is initiated by a conflict, scepticism and curiosity that lead a mystic to break the existing structures and substitute the prevalent beliefs with his/her personality ideal. Siddhartha is initially driven and overwhelmed by broader human questions. When he succeeds, through his efforts and under the tutelage of Vasudeva, in throwing away the social masks, her existing beliefs and psychic structures are automatically replaced by his idealized self. He experiences a state of mind that is characterized by psychological wellbeing, health and serenity. It is also revealed that mystical experiences are diametrically opposed to the state of mind experienced by psychologically diseased individuals and that it lacks substantial evidence to equate mystics with madness. This study, in fact, fills an important research gap by giving an explanation to the study of mystical experience and also by adding to the literary criticism on the novel not hitherto been studied through this angle.

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