

## Chapter I: Introduction

### Orphanhood and Social Attitude

This thesis studies gender, women's position in the society, and traditional gender roles through the feminist perspective. This study goes through these tenets minutely and analyzes the text *The Witch of Portobello* in relation to the theories. This research not only applies the elements of the feminism to critique the roles of the characters in the novel. The novel intends to establish the harmonious society by making aware all the characters that the conflict is prevalent when there is the combination of different views. The patriarchal society seeks to dominate the women. The Patriarchy does not think necessary to make equal between men and women.

Generally orphanhood means that the condition of child whose parents are already dead. They are totally careless, alone, abandoned, and lack of love and affection in their childhood. A child has to struggle alone for the survival and identity of one's life. But according to *thefreedictionary.com*, the meaning of the orphanhood is the condition of being a child without living parents. It means a child is alone, living in orphanage or adopted by other but their parents are still alive. A child abandoned by their parents. Athena, the main character of the novel has parents but she is living without her own parents. Athena abandoned by her parents and living the orphaned life. She struggling throughout her life for freedom and identity. In this sense orphanhood means not only a child living without parents who are already dead, there is also such a condition of child whose parents are still alive but they abandoned their child, where a child living without parents or far from parents.

The Brazilian author, Paulo Coelho has one of the greatest names among the contemporary writer. He is the best selling fabulist writer who continues to transform

his trademark with combination of mysticism and storytelling into spellbinding examination of the human soul. Coelho writes about religion spirituality, relationship, destiny and freedom. This book's focus on love, life, sex human suffering and man's search for self-identity.

Paulo Coelho was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He attended a Jesuit school and as a teenager, Coelho wanted to become a writer. Upon telling this to his mother this, she responded with "My dear, your father is an engineer. He is a logical, reasonable man with a very clear vision of the world. Do you actually know what it means to be a writer?" (1). In an interview with Glauco Ortolano, under "The Coming of Age of a Brazilian Phenomenon Coelho" says that a writer "always wears glasses and never combs his hair" (3) and has a "duty and an obligation never to be understood by his own generation," (5) amongst other things. At sixteen, Coelho's introversion and opposition to following a traditional path led to his parents committing him to a mental institution from which he escaped three times before being released at the age of 20. Coelho later remarks "It wasn't that they wanted to hurt me, but they didn't know what to do . . . . They did not do that to destroy me; they did that to save me" (7). At his parents' wishes, Coelho enrolled in law school and abandoned his dream of becoming a writer. One year later, he dropped out and lived his life as a hippie, traveling through South America, North Africa, Mexico, and Europe and started drugs in the 1960s. Upon his return to Brazil, Coelho worked as a songwriter, composing lyrics for Elis Regina, Rita Lee, and Brazilian icon Raul Seixas. Composing with Raul led to Paulo being associated with magic and occultism, due to the content of some of his songs. In 1974, Coelho was arrested for subversive activities by the ruling military government, who had taken power ten years earlier

and viewed his lyrics as left-wing and dangerous. Coelho also worked as an actor, journalist, and theatre director before pursuing his writing career.

In 1986, Coelho walked the 500-plus 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 describes autobiographically in *The Pilgrimage*. In an interview with Glauco Ortolando, Coelho states:

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 *The Alchemist*, 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. (3)

Therefore, Coelho finds joy in writing. Writing provides him food and water. The novels represent the real life of the people. He sees whole in the novels

### **Coelho's Writing Career**

In 1982, Coelho published his first book, *Hell Archives*, which failed to make any significant impact. In 1986, he contributed to the Practical Manual of Vampirism, although he later tried to take it off the shelves since he considered it of bad quality. After making the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1986, Coelho wrote *The Pilgrimage*. The following year, Coelho wrote *The Alchemist* and published it through a small Brazilian publishing house that made an initial print run of 900 copies and decided not to reprint. He subsequently found a bigger publishing house, and with the publication of his next book *Brida*, *The Alchemist* became a Brazilian bestseller. The Alchemist has gone on to sell more than 65 million copies, becoming one of the best-selling books in history, and has been translated into 71 different languages, the 71st being Maltese, winning the Guinness World Record for most translated book by a

living author. *The Alchemist*, easily known as his most successful story, is a story about a young shepherd who follows his spiritual journey to the Egyptian pyramids in search of a treasure.

Since the publication of *The Alchemist*, Coelho has generally written one novel every two years including *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept*, *The Fifth Mountain*, *Veronika Decides to Die*, *The Devil and Miss Prym*, *Eleven Minutes*, *Like the Flowing River*, *The Valkyries* and *The Witch of Portobello*. This dates back to *The Pilgrimage*: While trying to overcome his procrastination of launching his writing career, Coelho said, "If I see a white feather today, that is a sign that God is giving me that I have to write a new book." Coelho found a white feather in the window of a shop, and began writing that day.

Coelho's novels revolve around the mystery and the adventurous. He brings the characters who are courageous, loving, and adventurous and the like. For example, *The Alchemist* (1988) follows the journey of an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago. Santiago, believing a recurring dream to be prophetic, decides to travel to a Romani in a nearby town to discover its meaning. The gypsy tells him that there is a treasure in the Pyramids in Egypt. Along the way, he encounters love, danger, opportunity, disaster and learns a lot about himself and the ways of the world. During his travels, he meets a beautiful Arabian woman named Fatima, who explains to him that if he follows his heart, he shall find what it is he seeks.

*Eleven Minutes* (2003) is based on the experiences of a young Brazilian prostitute called Maria, whose first innocent brushes with love leave her heartbroken. *Brida* (1990) tells the story of a beautiful young Irish girl and her quest for knowledge. On her journey, she meets a wise man who teaches her to overcome fear

and a woman who teaches her how to dance to the hidden music of the world. They see in her a gift, but must let her make her own voyage of discovery. As Brida seeks her destiny, she struggles to find a balance between her relationships and her desire to transform herself. The story is neatly woven around the ancient belief of witchcraft and related to the present world in an interesting way.

Likewise, *Veronika Decides to Die* (1998) tells the story of 24-year-old Slovenian Veronika, who appears to have everything in life going for her, but who decides to kill herself. This book is partly based on Coelho's experience in various. It is based around the subject of madness. *The Pilgrimage* (1987) is about a parable that explores the need to find one's own path. In the end, we discover that the extraordinary is always found in the ordinary and simple ways of everyday people. Part adventure story, part guide to self-discovery, this compelling tale delivers the perfect combination of enchantment and insight. It is a recollection of Paulo's experiences as he made his way across northern Spain on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

*By the River Piedra I sat Down and Wept* (1994) is one of Paulo Coelho's most prominent titles. This is the first part in Coelho's trilogy "On the Seventh Day". The other two parts are *Veronika Decides to Die* and *The Devil and Miss Prym*. This trilogy is a week in the life of someone ordinary to whom something extraordinary happens. *The Zahir* is a 2005 novel by the Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho. Just as in an earlier book, *The Alchemist*, *The Zahir* is about a pilgrimage. The book touches on themes of love, loss and obsession.

In total, Coelho has published 30 books. Three of them – *The Pilgrimage*, *The Valkyries* and *Aleph* – are autobiographical, while the majority of the rest are

fictional, although rooted in his life experiences. Others, like *Maktub* and *The Manual of the Warrior of Light*, are collections of essays, newspaper columns, or selected teachings.

*The Fifth Mountain* (1996) is based on the story of Elijah from the Hebrew Bible. The focus is on Elijah's time in Zarephath. Much has been added to the simple Bible story by Coelho, including Elijah witnessing the sacking of Akbar by the Assyrians, Elijah's journey up the Fifth Mountain itself (said to be the dwelling place of Baal), and Elijah's falling in love with the widow to whom God sent him. This story may be considered religious in focus, despite a strong focus on the theme of rebellion against God. In this book, Coelho has explored the manner in which the prophetic questioning of authority, rebellion and liberation, and 'thinking for oneself' are important in one's relationship with God and one's life work.

In many of Coelho's novels, the expression of the human spirit is evident through the portrayal of his characters. The careful development of each character highlights various internal struggles that many people encounter; using his characters as his mouthpiece, Coelho answers some of life's basic questions as his readers learn to see themselves reflected back through eyes of complex characters. Characters in Coelho's works vary in their levels of innocence and vulnerability, but it is easy to recognize them in the sense that most are seeking something, and use the knowledge others share as well as connections to a spiritual world to aid them in their quest.

The main characters of Coelho's novels are instrumental in illustrating major themes, while simultaneously exhibiting fundamental human traits with which readers can easily identify. Leading us through the story, the main characters often face many uncertainties and must overcome obstacles, whether physical or

psychological. These experiences of indecision and difficulty are a common thread tying Coelho's characters to one another, despite varying circumstances and personalities. When faced with a vast expanse of desert between himself and his greatest treasure, *The Alchemist's* Santiago unites with others who possess a common desire to pursue their goals in life; forced to choose between material wealth and the goodness of the human spirit, Chantal Pym of *The Devil And Miss Pym* must look inside herself to find the will to overcome temptation; Pilar, another character of Coelho, receives the kindness of an old woman who teaches her that "love perseveres" and inspires her to throw off her feelings of sufferings and embrace the goodness of each day. In these three instances, it is clear that though the individual experience of these characters is greatly varied, all of them face a responsibility for themselves and their actions, and all work to overcome those things that hinder their progress.

In this way, readers can see a trend in the way in which Coelho develops his characters, introducing them as individuals with a story to tell and continuing, showing the situations that will ultimately cause each character to grow and begin to come into their own. While it is true that the circumstances that develop character are often vastly different in Coelho's separate novels, the basic concept of growth after enduring a hardship or overcoming an obstacle is a consistent one. Readers get to know each character more and more as they analyze the decisions characters must make, and observe how outside forces cause certain reactions.

One thing to be noted about Coelho's character development is his ability to include great diversity in the creation of his characters. In his novels, the male characters do not overshadow the female characters, there is a balance of youthful characters with the elderly, and while there is a constant sense of individuality, of

searching for personal growth, Coelho also incorporates a strong sense of community and family into each of his stories.

Another signature Coelho puts on many of his characters is the lack of a name. Mostly these are minor characters who play influential roles in the development of the main characters; these minor contributors to the plot of each novel often affect the behavior of major characters in a significant way, yet rarely are they given a name other than "the man," "the woman," or the title of the job they have. This allows the reader to focus on the actions of the character and their effects on others. Also, by only identifying these characters by the jobs they carry out in their community; it assigns their worth to something more tangible, as well as provides prior associations to strengthen each identity. Thus, through observing the kinds of characters Coelho creates, the reader can easily see similarities and differences between the personalities found in his novels. Yet the common experiences they all share unite them together to exemplify many variations of a multi-faceted human spirit.

### **Critiques on *The Witch of Portobello***

*The Witch of Portobello* explores the role of female protagonist who attempts to overcome the patriarchal norms and values. The protagonist, Sherin Khalil, born in Romania and is adopted by industrialist family of Beirut as their much loved, much wanted daughter, who grows into a wise and beautiful woman. Her adopted mother who is always ready to take care of her, gives her all the love and comfort she can. But the mother does not understand her. As she grows up, Athena becomes aware about her position in the society. She wants to be different from the parents and the society. Athena wants to change her role by the knowledge that she sought and that knowledge was within her. Athena is a child, student, teacher and wife but how she is



trying to fill the space in her life through calligraphy, dance among the people. However, her attempts fail in the society when she is accused of being as witchcraft and ultimately gets executed.

This research study centered on how the women survive in the patriarchal society. It talks about displacement, religion, identity and gender. The novel can be analyzed and interpreted through various perspectives to bring out the marginalized voices or hidden part of the society. In this regard, a large number of critics have attempted to bring out somewhat distinctive interpretation from different angles. John Burgman studies this novel as the protagonist's dilemma and tearing quest to fill up the space within. Athena silences her life to answer the question of self of will and truth. Burgman further mentions:

Her search takes her through a journey of many phases until she realizes that silence is what defines the sound. This discovery is enough for open new doors of perception and she finds within herself, a powerful energy. She is recognized by some as a saint and some as sinner. So, this book is a testament to her unshakable trust in humanity, with standing all the atrocities which finally killed her. (89)

Similarly, according to Carlos Emmanuel Quiapo, *The Witch of Portobello* gives the reader this sort of strength and by using a woman, he managed to empower the perspectives of being a woman. It breaks the carriers of the world's view on being a woman and to the aspect of religion. Quiapo mentions:

The novel gives readers this sort of strength and by using a woman, Coelho managed to empower the perspectives of being a woman and what it takes to do an incredible feat albeit being a woman. It breaks

barriers of the world's view on being a woman and to the aspect of Religion, isn't it usually a man who is leading, preaching and spreading? (2)

In this way, the novel gives strength to the women to fight for their freedom. It encourages them to break the barriers between men and women.

Another critic Lamski Kikita Spamiola focuses this novel as the way to enlighten herself. Spamiola mentions:

Spiritual, mystical, and will absolutely take over your soul! while reading this book, i felt inhibited by every feeling and gesture, and was possessed by Athena, the woman who is everything each and every one of us want to be, but is afraid of becoming. The book certainly questions organized religions and brings back the idea of mother earth as the ultimate goddess. (5)

Likewise, according to Anna Katterjohn, in Athena's quest she opens her heart to intoxicating powers and becoming controversial leader in London. Anna comments on the issue of spiritual questing. She points out: "Coelho returns to his favored territory of spiritual questing in the tedious accounts of a young woman's ascendancy as a guru. It is heavily laced with references to spirituality and mysticism. Coelho's novel imparts an esoteric feelings and it offers a light sampling of his spirituality" (80-81). Coelho, thus, believes in the spiritual thing and his novels mainly revolve around the spirituality.

Moreover, Theresa Flores opines that the novel revolves around the main character Athena who becomes a student and a teacher at the same time because she experiences and teaches lesson others simultaneously:

*The Witch of Portobello* is about a woman named Athena and how her life was changed by the knowledge that she sought, and how she changed the lives of others, who sought the knowledge that was within her, as well. Athena was a student, and also, a teacher. Athena fulfilled and changed lives through dance, hers included. She also filled the spaces in her life through calligraphy, among other things. She proclaimed and professed her belief to other people, eventually leading to the battle she faced before her supposed death. *The Witch of Portobello* is a great book that ventures on feminism, religion, self-exploration, and a lot more. (4)

The novel gives emphasis to Athena and shows her great effort to change her life from one status to another. She has become the role model for other women how women can succeed to lead the life against the adversity of life.

Finally, this research study explores the novel *The Witch of Portobello* as the female exploitation and domination in the male dominated society. The male ideology always keeps women silent without giving chance to raise female voice. Women are not allowed to assume positions of power and authority. Paulo Coelho's novel *The Witch of Portobello* manipulates the ideas about people's emancipation and their inner self. He, in this novel works with the return to the goddess religion, the interpretation of love, and the feminine part of the divine within the theme of searching for one's true self and opening to the energies of the world.

## Chapter II: Theoretical Modality

### Defining Feminism

Feminism is the belief in the political, social, and economic equality between male and female. It encompasses the various movements, theories, and philosophy, which are concerned with the issue of gender difference, talks about the equality for women, and campaign for women's rights and interests. Feminist literary theory interprets a work of art or any intellectual discourse through the perspective of women and their concern is writing. It also attempts to describe, explain, and analyze the conditions of women's lives and creates a discourse on ending the unequal position of women in a society. It sees currently predicament social discourses as patriarchal. It began as a reaction against the male dominated history and culture; they are structured in such a way to benefit to men. Men always establish norms, and women are defined as 'other' with reference to these norms. There is little possibility of deviation of such conceptual school. Women's image has always has been constructed upon man's imagination. Thus, women have always been regarded as subalterns in life situated with gender specific roles, which the society imposed on them.

Feminism poses an inferior position in society and the discrimination faced by them because of the social, economic, political or cultural order. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski define feminist theories:

Feminist theories examine and try to explain the causes and conditions in which men are powerful and men's productions, ideas, and activities are seen as having greater value and higher status than women's. For many feminist theorists this comes to mean examining and explaining all structures of domination, whether based on gender, race, class, age,

sexuality, nation or some other difference. (2)

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In its early days of emergence, feminism primarily focused on inclusion of 'women'. Later they began to talk about the necessity of assessing the cost of household works done by women, the social value of childbearing and motherhood, the economic value of generating human capabilities. It is a plural field of theory, which links with social, cultural, and political and even historical aspects.

Initially most feminist movement and theories had leaders who were predominantly middle class women from Western Europe and North America. Their main concern was gaining equal rights for women; particularly the right of suffrage. But there was a change in the perspective and attitude in later phase. Women of other races and countries also proposed alternative feminism, which gave birth to, 'post-colonial' and 'third world' feminism. Today feminists refute dualistic thinking in

general that divides the world into hierarchical dichotomies with one regarded as superior and other inferior, recognizing the existence of multiplicities. Gyaatri Chakravorty Spivak has challenged the assumption that all women are the same, and has emphasized the difference in class, race, religion, social status and culture.

Historical circumstances and values in third world countries make women's issues different from the western feminist rhetoric. Therefore, feminism is theorized differently in Third world countries than in the west. Third World feminist scholars and activists have struggled to carve a separate identity for feminism in their country. It has changed over time, along with the changes in perspectives, time, space and culture. Feminism represents one of the most important social, economic, and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. The goal of the third world feminism is to work toward the full participation and dignity of women along with men.

Because of social changes such as mass education, the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, increasing urbanization, and the growing liberalization of sexual mores. Notwithstanding the contributions of revolutionary nineteenth and early twentieth century authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary Shelly, George Eliot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf, feminist literary criticism developed mostly since the beginning of the late twentieth century women's movement. That movement included the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, and Betty Friedan, who examined a female "self" constructed in literature by male authors to embody various male fears and anxieties. They saw literary text as models and agents of power. In her book *The Second Sex* (1949), Beauvoir asks what is woman, and how is she constructed differently from men? The answer simply was men construct that woman differently. The thesis that men write about women to find

out more about men has had long- lasting implications, especially the idea that man defines the human, not woman.

From the ancient time, men have shaped women's identity. Women are regarded as second sex, the weaker one and the men are regarded as the first one. Such imbalance outlook of men and women has weakened the women. Mary Wollstonecraft is one of the prominent critics who wrote a book called *A Vindication of the Right of Women* (1792). In this book, she has described the state of ignorance in which society kept women. Through her essay, she paved the way to feminist writing. In her book, she says that women are made inferior at several levels such as social, political and economic. She asserts:

In all these areas, women never get proper position; they never get proper education, never get the right to vote. When all these things are impossible for women, they suffer from inequality. Every time women's greater responsibility goes to men but men never give possible right for them. Men hold society therefore the position of women is inferior. (56)

Likewise, Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1992) argues about the imbalance of power between men and women. She says feminist movement is to liberate women. Women do not have their own room. It means they do not have their own right, prestige, space and do not have any identity. In her own words:

Room is the place where people get comfort. Women writers do not have their own right, they write literature in common room. She herself protests against the patriarchal society for not providing right to own a room of her own. She as a writer feels difficulty in accommodating in

her husband's room. (89)

She argues that women should have their own room to go on with their writing works and they should have their own income for their survival so that it will not be necessary for them to depend upon their husbands.

Similarly, Elaine Showalter one of the Gynocritics has not only shaped feminism but has also introduced 'Gynocriticism'. It is a criticism by the women for the women and of the women. Like Woolf, she also wants to see happy women. According to her, a woman can be as much tyrannical as a powerful man is, if she is extremely powerful in the family.

From the very beginning, women were treated as valueless beings that could not enjoy all the rights as males can enjoy. They were not given any franchise right up to 1920. Women started different movement for voting right. In 1921 for the first time, women were given voting right in England. Women in France were able to enjoy voting right in 1949, whereas in 1983 New Zealand women were given voting right. At the very beginning, women were concentrated on gaining legal equality. These women also fought to end educational and job discrimination against women.

Simone de Beauvoir, a French feminist critic says that there is no difference between two sexes such as male and female in the process of biological creation. Later, men seize all the power from women and make them ineffectual beings. Slowly women started writing to reform the society, changing men's attitude towards women. Women of every society have to look after their children, household works, cooking food, washing clothes and are also forced to work outside their homes to solve their economic problem. The term feminism is originated from the awareness of the women. The concept of feminism was popularized since the Women's Liberation



Movement of 1960s in America. Feminists started to revolt against male hegemony to protect women from their domination. In a society women's identity has been shaped by the values and norms set by men. The main cause of women's suffrage is due to the domination of powerful males. The great Greek philosopher Plato's philosophical theories have glorified women for their physical beauty only but not for the adventurous works. Women's status is always shaped by the norms and values set by men.

Women's writing reflects women's voices. Their writing presents painful life of the women. Mostly in eastern countries, males are holding power and property they are the real successors of parental property. With the rise of women's voice different women novelist appeared in the history of literature. The women characters in their novel are very conscious about their work and look bold at the difficult movement. Though they faced different problems in the society, they are never afraid. Beside the four walls of the houses, they seem more conscious about the outer world. They know that beside domestic matters there is also another world of music, painting, law, which they want to adopt.

As the women were given franchise, right feminist movement nearly disappeared. Later during 1900s, a large number of women entered the labor force. They come to know that many high paying jobs were closed to them; they began actively participating to end educational and job discrimination against women.

In second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, women became more independent. These women have challenged men for their exploitation and domination over them. They believed that married women are not husband's property but man's life partner to run the family.

After the introduction of feminism, different feminist appeared in the world history. Marxist feminist believe that women are being dominated because of lack of mode of production. Women are always proletarian and males behave as bourgeois so women must be economically independent. They opine that capitalism is the source of oppression. When capitalism is removed from the society then only the suppression of women will be removed.

Cultural feminists believe that the culture where women are living is the culture of male. All rituals, behaviors are male centric so women must decide their own culture then only they can be independent. Likewise, bio-feminists talk about female body. They believe that females are richer than male, they have stronger experience like menstruation, pregnancy etc. Men never understand such type of women's experience. Bio-feminists are proud of being women. They never feel inferior in front of males.

Gayatri Spivak Chakaravarty, a postcolonial feminist, in "Can Subaltern Speak?" says that eastern women are suffering from two problems i.e. they are women and they are not western European women. She says:

There is double domination for the non-western women. Women of east have suffered more. They are fighting with males as well as white women. Males dominate women and white women dominate eastern women. Eastern women charge white women because they represent themselves as males and try to throw out eastern women. (54)

Therefore, post-colonial feminist demands equality.

Psychoanalytical feminist like Helen Cixous says males are suffering from phallus and logo centrism. These feminists simply oppose the Freudian idea. They say

women never see erotic dreams. Males never understand the psychology of females.

Linguistic feminist believe that male has created language. They say that language should be de-sexing. Feminist believe that women should be as loud, rough, strong, ferocious, sharp and fast as man. It is a male myth that men are stronger, active, aggressive right from the beginning of birth, they prefer adventuresome activities in their life span. Women on the other side are less interested in adventuresome activities because they are not men. Ruth Says, "According to misogynist ideology women are inferior in two ways: (1) women are morally inferior, evil, bad, sinful, dangerous, harmful, and dirty; (2) women are inferior in competence-physically, intellectually and spiritually" (158).

Most of the time a woman is a homemaker and a mother. Ruth in this regard says:

To the question, "why haven't women produced any geniuses? Why are there no female Shakespeares or Beethovens? Virginia Woolf answered that we have not been allowed a "room of our own". We have been accorded bread, but not roses. We have not been allowed the spiritual atmosphere, the creative space men are heir to the amenities that raise life above the mundane and encourage one to creativity.

(160)

She further illustrates the fact that Male historians and anthropologists 'forget' to research the contribution of women to early civilization-the introduction of pottery, weaving, food preparation and so on.

We should not forget the fact that men and women are created equal and are given equal rights by our creator. But there are several male critics having the

patriarchal notion and believe that women are worthless and inferior beings. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* writes:

For Montherlant transcendence is a situation; he is the transcendent 'he soars in the sky of heroes; woman crouches on earth, beneath his feet; it amuses him to measure the distance that separates him from her; from time to time he raises her up to him, takes her, and then throws her back; never does he lower himself down to her realm of slimy shadows. (994)

From the above lines we can know that Montherlant believes that women submit herself to the will of men. She does not possess her own identity.

Lawrence believes that a woman should have demure quality rather than dauntless quality. In *Elements of Literature* he says:

The tragedy of cocksure women is that they are cockier, in their assurance, than the cock himself. They never realize that when the cock gives his loud crow in the morning, he listens acutely afterwards, to hear if some other wretch of a cock dare crow defiance, challenge. To the cock there is always defiance, danger and death on the clear air; or the possibility thereof. (12)

It means hen is hen all the time; she can't be cock. The patriarchal society believes that cocksure women are dangerous and devastating. So, a woman in a society should not cross the boundary of the home, if she crosses the boundary of the home it creates disaster.

Many writers and critics talk about women's writing for many years but

females expanded their territory of writing. A large number of women writer were discovered. They started writing their journals, letters, biographies, poem, novel, stories etc. Showalter says:

Supported by such feminist writers, artists, and poets as Adrienne Rich, Marge Percy, Judy Chicago, Susan Griffin, and Alice Walker, the female aesthetic spoke of a women's culture that had been neglected and had to be revived, of a "woman language", and of literary styles and forms that come out of a specific female psychology.  
(6-7)

Moreover, Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970) is the first widely read work of feminist literary criticism. Millet's focus was upon the twin poles of gender as biology and culture. In her analyses of D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer, Henry Mailer, and Jean Genet, she reads literature as a record of male dominance. As a "resisting reader" (24), Millett included critiques of capitalism, male power, crude sexuality, and violence against women. She argued that male writers distort women by associating them with (male) deviance. She aptly concludes: "Interior colonization of women by men is sturdier than any form of segregation such as class, more uniform, and certainly more enduring" (24-25).

At the same time as women have been re-read in words by male writers, feminists have promoted the underappreciated work of women authors. The writings of many women have been rediscovered, reconsidered, and collected in large anthologies such as *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, including women who had never been considered seriously or had been elided over time. For example, Harriett E. Wilson, author of the first novel by African American Women, *Our Nig*,

the story of a free black (1859), was "discovered" one hundred and fifty years later in a rare book store by Yale scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. However, merely unearthing women's literature did not ensure its prominence; in order to assess women's writings, the preconceptions inherent in a literary canon dominated by male belief and male writers needed to be reevaluated. Along with Fetterly, other critics such as Elaine Showalter, Anette Kolodny, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar questioned cultural, sexual, intellectual, and/ or psychological stereotypes about women and their literatures using both essentialist and constructivist models. The focus upon the silencing and oppressing of women gave way to deeper interrogations of what a history of women's oppression meant. As Rivkin and Ryan ask, "Was woman something to be escaped from or into?" (528). Though much of the early "sisterhood" solidarity of the women's movement was lost as the field diversified, a good deal of philosophical and political depth was attained as these interrogations became more complex.

Elaine Showalter has identified three phases of modern women's literary development: the feminine phase (1840-80), during which women writers imitated the dominant male traditions; the feminist phase (1880-1920), when women advocated for their rights; and the female phase (1920- present), when dependency upon opposition- that is, on uncovering misogyny in male texts- is replaced by the rediscovery of women's texts and women. Women's literature is "an imaginative continuum of certain patterns, themes, problems, and images, from generation to generation" ("Feminist Criticism" 11). Within the present or female phase, Showalter describes four current models of difference taken up by many feminists around the world: biological, linguistic, psychoanalytic, and cultural. Showalter's biological model is the most problematic: if the text can be said in some way to mirror the body,

then does that reduce women writers merely to bodies? Yet Showalter praises the often shocking frankness of women writers who related the intimacies of the female experience of the female body.

Showalter's linguistic model asserts that women are speaking men's language as a foreign tongue; purging language of "sexism" is not going far enough. Still, feminist critics see the very act of speaking- and of having a language- as a victory for women within a silencing patriarchal culture. Tillie Olsen demands to hear women's voices despite impediments to creativity encountered by women; in her 1978 work *Silences* she cites: "Those mute inglorious Miltons: those whose working hours are all struggle for existence; the barely educated; the illiterate; women. Their silence is the silence of the centuries as to how life was, is for most of humanity" (327). *Silences* arise from "circumstances" of being born "into the wrong class, race or sex, being denied education, becoming numbed by economic struggle, muzzled by censorship or distracted or impeded by the demands of nurturing" (Guerin 225). But women's deployment of silence can also be 'resistance to the dominant discourse', Olsen notes, such as Emily Dickinson's 'slant truths' or the inner dialogues of such 'quiet' characters as Charlotte Brontë's *Janes Eyre* or Virginia Woolf's *Lily Briscoe* (Olsen 5).

Though women writers may have to use 'male' language, feminist critics have identified sex-related writing strategies such as the use of associational rather than linear logic, other 'feminine' artistic choices such as free play of meaning and a lack of closure, as well as genre preference such as letters, journals, confessional domestic, and body-centered discourse. As Showalter has observed, "English feminist criticism, essentially Marxist, stresses opposition; French feminist criticism, essentially psychoanalytic, stresses repression; American feminist criticism, essentially textual, stresses expression" (qtd. in Guerin 226). All three, however, being woman-centered

or gynocentric, must search terminology to rescue themselves from becoming a synonym for inferiority.

Showalter's psychoanalytic model identifies gender difference in the psyche and in the artistic process. Her cultural model places feminist concerns in social contexts, acknowledging class, racial, national, and historical differences and determinants among women. It also offers a collective experience that unites women over time and space- a "binding force" (186-88).

Today it seems that two general tendencies, one emphasizing Showalter's biological, linguistic, and psychoanalytical models, and the other emphasizing Showalter's cultural model, account for most feminist theories. On the one hand, certain theories may be said to have an essentialist argument for inherent feminine traits- whether from biology, language, or psychology- that have been undervalued, misunderstood, or exploited by a patriarchal culture because the genders are quite different. These theories focus on sexual difference and sexual politics and are often aimed at defining or establishing a feminist literary canon or re-interpreting and re-visioning literature (and culture and history and so forth) from a less patriarchal slant.

### **Feminism and Diversity of Women**

One might agree that feminists ought to work to end all forms of oppression - oppression is unjust and feminists, like everyone else, have a moral obligation to fight injustice - without maintaining that it is the mission of feminism to end all oppression. One might even believe that in order to accomplish feminism's goals it is necessary to combat racism and economic exploitation, but also think that there is a narrower set of specifically feminist objectives. In other words, opposing oppression in its many forms may be instrumental to, even a necessary means to, feminism, but not intrinsic



to it. E.g., bell hooks argues:

Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, and that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact. This knowledge should consistently inform the direction of feminist theory and practice. (hooks 22)

On hooks' account, the defining characteristic that distinguishes feminism from other liberation struggles is its concern with sexism:

Unlike many feminist comrades, I believe women and men must share a common understanding--a basic knowledge of what feminism is--if it is ever to be a powerful mass-based political movement. In *Feminist Theory: from margin to center*, I suggest that defining feminism broadly as "a movement to end sexism and sexist oppression" would enable us to have a common political goal...Sharing a common goal does not imply that women and men will not have radically divergent perspectives on how that goal might be reached. (hooks 1989, 23)

Hooks' approach depends on the claim that sexism is a particular form of oppression that can be distinguished from other forms, e.g., racism and homophobia, even though it is currently (and virtually always) interlocked with other forms of oppression. Feminism's objective is to end sexism, though because of its relation to other forms of oppression, this will require efforts to end other forms of oppression as well. For example, feminists who themselves remain racists will not be able to fully

appreciate the broad impact of sexism on the lives of women of color. Furthermore, because sexist institutions are also, e.g., racist, classist and homophobic, dismantling sexist institutions will require that we dismantle the other forms of domination intertwined with them. Following hooks' lead, we might characterize feminism schematically (allowing the schema to be filled in differently by different accounts) as the view that women are subject to sexist oppression and that this is wrong. This move shifts the burden of our inquiry from a characterization of what feminism is to a characterization of what sexism, or sexist oppression is.

### **Chapter III: Quest for Freedom in *The Witch of Portobello***

#### **Athena and Her Circumstances**

This thesis focuses on a Romanian girl Athena as a feminist who struggles throughout her life for the sake of getting rid of patriarchal domination over women. Her attempts to exist herself in the society can make the strong voice of women. As a child, Athena is treated as an angel and saint. She gets everyone's love and affection, and care, and she enjoys all kinds of facilities. As she grows up, Athena becomes aware of her roots and self-identity. Consequently, patriarchal society confines the position of women within hidden activities, like domestic and narrow household circumstances. Male prohibits female to identify themselves and development of their creativity. Athena attempts to make equal value between male and female but the hostile social forces accuse her to be involved in the witchcraft. To approach to freedom she gets married, bears a child, earns money and friends. She is not satisfied with them she becomes a spiritual leader in London for her Identity. This is her ultimate goal to be a spiritual leader because she believes that she can change the patriarchal society by convincing them not forcing to make them believe despite that fact that they call her witch.

Athena is the product of the patriarchal society in which she is given name by the males. Patriarchy is a social system in which males are the primary authority figures central to social organization; occupy roles of political leadership, moral authority and control of property, and where fathers hold authority over women and children. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and entails female subordination. Many patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage. The female equivalent is matriarchy.

Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization of a range of different cultures. The title of the book itself suggests the patriarchal domination. The patriarchal society gives the name good women to the submissive women while witch, slut, and some other names suggesting negativity.

The story of Athena's life is told in the form of a series of interviews conducted by her journalist friend with the initial intention of being a biography on "The Witch". From the individual perspectives of Athena's adoptive parents, her Pagan teacher, her student, her journalist friend, her ex-husband and several others, the tale of Sherine Khalil is recounted.

From an early age, Athena takes on the self-imposed name Athena and has an innate spiritual calling. She marries young, has a son and divorces her husband; all because she believes it is her spiritual purpose to do so. From her initial beginnings as a devout member of the Catholic Church, to her humiliating dismissal, Athena searches for a way to fit into the world on a spiritual level. She finds herself connecting to her spiritual self through music and dance, and like any good prophet, she shares her discovery with those around her. Through her newly embraced spirituality, she prospers in her life and is able to travel extensively and learn new ways to channel her mystic side.

Moreover, Athena eventually takes on a student, on the advice of her own spiritual teacher, whom she teaches her secrets to. By forming a connection with her student, she is able to pass down her learning's and ensure that they continue to be spread the world over. Word of Athena's weekly meetings, in which she channels her inner goddess, Hagia Sophia, spreads and she becomes both something to be seen and

something to be feared. She is faced with the ultimatum of losing her son or continuing her spiritual sessions.

As the novel begins, it gives the sense that Athena struggles throughout her life to get freedom. In the society, women are given bad names. If they go against the social norms and values, they are given bad names like witch. Athena is also given such name:

I wake and fall asleep with that certainty; it's best that Athena left when she did rather than descend into the infernos of this world. She would never have regained her peace of mind after the events that earned her the nickname "The Witch of Portobello." The rest of her life would have been a bitter clash between her personal dreams and collective reality. Knowing her as I did, she would have battled on to the end, wasting her energy and her joy on trying to prove something that no one, absolutely no one, was prepared to believe. (5)

In this way, in the traditional society, women are dominated and oppressed. If any woman goes beyond the patriarchal norms and values they are punished in many ways.

Similarly, there is different experience and feeling between male and female. Males do not understand what is going on with women. They just estimate the world of women. Athena is unknown to others. She has her own struggle. Nobody knows what is going on with her:

They don't understand and would be incapable of understanding Athena's world. Yes, that's the best way to think of it—Athena's world. I'm finally coming to accept that I was only a temporary

inhabitant, there as a favor, like someone who finds himself in a beautiful mansion, eating exquisite food, aware that this is only a party, that the mansion belongs to someone else, that the food was bought by someone else, and that the time will come when the lights will go out, the owners will go to bed, the servants will return to their quarters, the door will close, and we'll be out in the street again, waiting for a taxi or a bus to restore us to the mediocrity of our everyday lives. (6)

The outside world of Athena is totally different from the inside world. She is suffering from various problems for her identity.

Athena is determined in her work. Although she is treated badly by the society, she faces with boldness and courage:

'No one can manipulate anyone else. In any relationship, both parties know what they're doing, even if one of them complains later on that they were used'. That's what Athena used to say, but she herself behaved quite differently, because she used and manipulated me with no consideration for my feelings. (7)

Here, it implies that to understand Athena there is male perspective. She is understood what patriarchy thinks about her not who she is as.

Moreover, the narrator is conscious that a man or boy easily traps a girl or woman. Women believe them without thinking about the consequence. As females are innocent, males get unnecessary benefit from them:

If a man we don't know phones us up today and talks a little, makes no suggestions, says nothing special, but nevertheless pays us the kind of

attention we rarely receive, we're quite capable of going to bed with him that same night, feeling relatively in love. That's what we women are like, and there's nothing wrong with that—it's the nature of the female to open herself to love easily. (10)

Patriarchal society has made women very weak, contingent, emotional and dependent. Right from their birth, they are given such culture that they have to depend on men for their identity because they do not have own culture, religion, language and so on. Therefore, their experience in their life with the male characters ruin them. They easily believe men and go to bed.

Likewise, normally, feminist study poses women as an inferior position in society and the discrimination faced by them because of the social, economic, political or cultural order. Women depend on men for their basic needs. They internalize that they are born to serve men. They must follow the rules and orders of male characters. They learn such thing in the house, society, community and culture. Inside the house, when a boy and a daughter are born at the same time, there is vast different in their upbringing. The boys are considered strong and independent while girls are considered delicate and dependent:

Her greatest problem was that she was a woman of the twenty-second century living in the twenty-first, and making no secret of the fact either. Did she pay a price? She certainly did. But she would have paid a still higher price if she had repressed her true exuberant self. She would have been bitter and frustrated, always concerned about 'what other people might think,' always saying 'I'll just sort these things out, then I'll devote myself to my dream,' always complaining that 'the

conditions are never quite right.' (14)

Athena is conscious about the position of her and overall women. She does not want to keep secret her feelings as the traditional women. However, it is the problem for Athena because patriarchal society does not accept it. She knows that she is against the traditional norms and values but still she is doing because she wants to prove that she is a bold girl.

The narrator describes Athena as a different girl having distinct features beyond the stereotypical girls. She has unique qualities that are rarely found in other women or girls:

Athena? What an interesting name! Let's see . . . her Maximum number is nine. Optimistic, sociable, likely to be noticed in a crowd. People might go to her in search of understanding, compassion, generosity, and for precisely that reason, she should be careful, because that tendency to popularity could go to her head and she'll end up losing more than she gains. She should also watch her tongue, because she tends to speak more than common sense dictates. (17)

In this way, Athena is described as optimistic and sociable. However they comment that if she goes beyond the traditional given roles by the society, she has to lose more than she gains.

Moreover, she is described as capable girl who has leadership capacity. It shows that now modern girls are not like the traditional ones who only follow males in all respects: "As for her Minimum number eleven, I sense that she longs for some leadership position. She has an interest in mystical subjects and through these tries to bring harmony to those around her" (17). Not only Athena but also her mother knows



life is full of struggle and they have to face with the time boldly. In the text, she experiences:

We tried everything: we made vows and promises, went to places where miracles were guaranteed, we consulted doctors, witch doctors, took remedies and drank elixirs and magic potions. I had artificial insemination twice and lost the baby both times. On the second occasion, I also lost my left ovary, and after that, no doctor was prepared to risk such a venture again. (20)

This extract shows that how courageous and bold they are to face the adversity of their life. Women are not only for bearing the problem but also go ahead fighting against it, they believe.

Deidre O'Neill comments that Athena's path is completely different from others. Athena is a perfect woman for Deidre. She understands Athena's problem partly due to being a woman and partly being close to her.

If I had done that, Athena's path might have been completely different, and she would still be alive and living with the man she loved. She would have brought up her son and watched him grow, get married, and have lots of children. She would be rich, possibly the owner of a company selling real estate. She had all the necessary qualities to find success and happiness. She'd suffered enough to be able to use her scars to her advantage, and it was just a matter of time before she'd manage to control her anxiety and move on. (94)

In this way, Deidre is hopeful that Athena is capable girl to keep her family well and balanced. After getting married she can maintain the family well. Athena, she adds,

has learned many things from her life as she went on struggling with the life.

Athena's mother thinks that culture is not received from the genes but from the society and environment where one is grown up. One gets the culture and learns the customs. The children whether boys or girls they learn the given roles what they have to play right from the earlier childhood:

I retorted that culture isn't something that's transmitted through the genes. The child, who was barely three months old, would be our daughter, brought up according to our customs. She would go to our church, visit our beaches, read books in French, study at the American School in Beirut. Besides, I knew nothing about gypsy culture—and I still know nothing. I only know that they travel a lot, don't wash very often, aren't to be trusted, and wear earrings. Legend has it that they kidnap children and carry them off in their caravans, but here, exactly the opposite was happening: they had left a child behind for me to take care of. (21-22)

In this way, she believes that culture is learned not attached with the gene. When one takes birth, especially girl, one gets the custom. The society is the giver of the culture and the daughters are oppressed in this way from the males.

Similarly, in traditional society mostly women are dominated by male characters. They are given the knowledge that they have to depend on the men. Their identity is known from the men. They are considered irrational and weak in contrast to men characteristics. In this context Lois Tyson argues:

The belief that men are superior to women has been used, feminists have observed, to justify and maintain the male monopoly of positions

of economic, political, and social power, in other words, to keep women powerless by denying them the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political, and social power. That is, the inferior position long occupied by women in patriarchal society has been culturally, not biologically, produced. For example, it is a patriarchal assumption, rather than a fact, that more women than men suffer from hysteria. (86)

Therefore, women are considered weaker while men are stronger according to the traditional norms and values.

Athena's mother is conscious about this role of women that they are only for serving males and getting married and bearing children. They are only counted as the child bearing machines:

People think that a woman's only dream is to get married and have children. And given what I've told you, you probably think that I've suffered a lot in life. It's not true, and, besides, I've been there already. I've known other men who wanted to 'protect' me from all those tragedies. What they forget is that, from Ancient Greece on, the people who returned from battle were either dead on their shields or stronger, despite or because of their scars. It's better that way: I've lived on a battlefield since I was born, but I'm still alive and I don't need anyone to protect me. (33)

Thus, women only think about marriage and children. They suffer a lot in their life more than the male characters. In the novel, we can women suffering from several ways. They should be subservient to the family and the its members. However, she is

bold, she has learned many things from her life so that she does not need anyone to help. She is independent and bold because her circumstances have taught like that.

Athena has undergone several fluctuations in her life. She has experienced many bitter things in her life. Her so called husband did not help her. For her he does not deserve to be called husband. Thus, she calls him her son's father. When real problems come to her he does not help her.

She loved Lukás more than any man she had ever met; he was her son's father, the person she had chosen to spend her life with, someone who had given up everything and had courage enough to start a family. When the difficulties started, she tried to convince him that it was just a phase, that she had to devote herself to their son, but that she had no intention of turning Viorel into a spoiled brat. (51)

Athena, thus, understands her life so closely. She experiences all kinds of problems. She knows what happens when none is there to help a person. Athena gives respect to the elderly people where she lives. She understands that family is like an organ of a body. Nobody can go beyond the family. About her, Nabil, one of the characters in the novel expresses about Athena in this way:

It made me very happy to know that Athena had kept a photo of me in a place of honor in her apartment, but I don't really think what I taught her had any real use. She came here to the desert, leading a three-year-old boy by the hand. She opened her bag, took out a cassette tape player, and sat down outside my tent. I know that people from the city usually give my name to foreigners who want to experience some local cooking, and so I told her at once that it was too early for supper. (73)

These responses made by Nabil shows that they are all positive towards Athena.

Athena is a source of inspiration for all of them.

When Athena goes to the church, it is the way out of the problem that she has. As she does not have anyone to give her happiness, she chooses going to church. However, does not become satisfied in the church. She has the marital problem. She likes to get divorced from her husband. However, there is discrimination in the church that divorced women cannot preach like the normal girls or women. Mens constructed that women differently:

It was no longer the voice of the girl who sang her worship of the Virgin Mary, who talked about her plans, who was so moved when she shared with me what she'd learned about the lives of the saints, and who almost wept when she spoke to me about her marital problems. It was the voice of a wounded, humiliated animal, its heart full of loathing. (55)

The above lines show that women have been dominated from ancient times including in the church. Athena has multitudes of ups and downs in her life.

The life of Athena is compared to several people who have experienced many difficulties. Pave, for example, has same problems and compares himself to Athena and say:

Athena and I had one thing in common: we were both refugees from a war and arrived in England when we were still children, although I fled Poland over fifty years ago. We both knew that despite the physical change, our traditions continue to exist in exile—communities join together again, language and religion remain alive, and in a place that

will always be foreign to them, people tend to look after one another.

(58)

Pave compares his problem to Athena's that both of them are refugees from a war and arrive in England during their childhood. Their life is spent in exile, both of them have not found happiness in their life. They are burden in the society. They consider outsiders in their own place. It is a kind of patriarchal society that oppresses women and they are suffering from various problems.

Peter Sherney talks about Athena and says that Athena gets a lot of experience in her life. She does not depend on salary and she considers her life as pointless. She regards life futile working and doing same things everyday and every time:

I did everything I could to achieve my objective with Athena. She didn't depend on her salary to live and would soon learn how pointless it was: having to get up early, drop her son off at her mother's house, slave away all day at a repetitive job, pick her son up again, go to the supermarket, spend time with her son before putting him to bed, and then, the next day, spend another three hours on public transport, and all for no reason, when there were so many other more interesting ways of filling her days. (71)

Thus, she is fed up with her repetitive job doing same thing again and again. She is tired from the routine life because it does not give meaning in life. It shows the plight of women that they live their burdened life rather than free one.

It is said that problems teach people to be bold and courageous. When one faces several problems in one's life, that person becomes stronger and stronger.

Athena has also understood the life so closely that she has learned many things from

her life:

Her efficiency increased, even though her workload remained unchanged. Her colleagues, who up until then had never exchanged more than a “good morning” or a “good night” with her, started asking her out to lunch. When they came back, they seemed very pleased, and the department’s productivity made a giant leap. (72)

As she goes on with the adversity of her life, her energy and power increases even though her workload remains same. By seeing her commitment, everyone respects her and asks for lunch.

Peter Sherney comments that Athena is a very good girl. She trusts everyone. The reactions given by him shows that she is liked by other members of the family. Her movements to improve the society start from love not from hatred:

When I returned to London, I immediately told Athena about this invitation, and she accepted at once. She told me that she spoke fluent Arabic (I knew this already because of her father), although, since we would mainly be doing deals with foreigners, not Arabs, this would not be essential. I thanked her for her help, but she showed no curiosity about my talk at the conference and merely asked when she should pack her bags.

Peter mentions the invitation given to Athena and her acceptance quite easily. He says that she is also good at Arabic language.

Athena is one of the good examples that she has learned from the experience. She has become daring and determined in her work.

Occasionally, she would talk about her work. She said she was enjoying what she was doing and that she had just received a job offer from a powerful emir. He had gone to the bank to see the manager, who was a friend of his (emirs never go to banks to withdraw money, they have staff who can do that for them), and while he was talking to Athena, he mentioned that he was looking for someone to take charge of selling land, and wondered if she would be interested. (95)

She rarely talks about her work. She enjoys working in her situation.

Heron Ryan, the journalist, one of the narrators of the novel, considers Athena as a prostitute. He is also guided by the patriarchal society that if women do something different they instantly name them as prostitute and the male thinks that the women are cannot speak very well:

She smiled, told me her name and I immediately felt wary. It had been too easy—she might be a prostitute. Her English, however, was perfect, and she was very discreetly dressed. I decided not to ask any questions and began talking at length about myself, noticing as I did so that the woman at the next table had put down her magazine and was listening to our conversation. (110)

In this way, he regards wonderful when she is perfect in English language. Generally, males think that women are not excellent in language. He becomes surprised as he finds her different from others.

Everywhere there is the patriarchal perspective to interpret and analyze the characters in the novel, especially Athena. Although some of the people think that they are modern people and there is no discrimination between men and women, we



can get the sense of patriarchal domination in women. Women are objectified and given name based on what they are to men not who they are themselves.

My unconscious mind was telling me to explore the territory a little more, because although the idea that she might be a prostitute was still buzzing around in my head, I very, very much wanted her to come with me. She politely refused my offer. The other woman joined in the conversation at this point, as if to protect the younger woman, and I felt then that I was in the way and decided to leave. (150)

In the extract, we can see that the male characters have perspective from the deep-rooted feeling of male superiority and female inferiority.

Athena, thus, undergoes a lot of suffering. She is orphan but she does not give up her courage, she never feels disappointed with her life. Her struggle has taught her what her life is. She is the example for other women that struggle is necessary in one's life. The world is for winner not for loser. If we think that the life is straight-line journey, we are wrong because there are many vicissitudes in our life. Athena is such a girl who has seen every adversity in her life. She does not worry how other people comment her but continues her journey courageously:

At the next meeting, foreseeing a repetition of the pitched battle of August, the police brought in half a dozen officers to avoid any confrontations. Athena arrived accompanied by a bodyguard improvised by Ryan, and this time there was not only applause but also booing and cursing too. One woman, seeing that Athena was accompanied by a child, brought a charge two days later under the Children Act 1989, alleging that the mother was inflicting irreversible

damage on her child and that custody should be given to the father.

(303)

The society has evaluated her negatively. They overlook the condition that she had undergone a lot of suffering but they only blame her. Still, she does not become frustrated and disappointed but moves on courageously facing with the all kinds of problems.

Athena always focuses on the collective power of women. She believes that if women are united they can fight against the patriarchal society. For that love is needed according to her. Love provides positive thinking in one's mind. Athena says:

You're absolutely right when you talk about collective energy. In your group, for example, there are four couples and your wife. All of them have found love. That's why they can share such a positive vibration with me. But I'm on my own, or, rather, I'm with my son, but he can't yet manifest his love in a way we can understand. So I'd prefer to accept my loneliness. If I try to run away from it now, I'll never find a partner again. If I accept it, rather than fight against it, things might change. I've noticed that loneliness gets stronger when we try to face it down but gets weaker when we simply ignore it. (54)

Thus, she believes in her own. First of all she is determined that she can convince people that it is necessary to fight against the patriarchal domination over women.

Lukas Jessen Petersen, ex-husband of Athena narrates the story that his wife is not replying any words while he speaks for the cause of divorce: Athena said nothing, as if she had been expecting this, or as if she had unconsciously been provoking such a response. (48)

Thus, Athena wants to be free from male domination, she cannot live with her husband and gives her acceptance for divorce. She feels that her husband is making disturbance for her freedom.

Finally, the novel depicts the character of Athena as a daring, courageous girl who fights against the society despite many complexities. She is one of the examples of women who are suffering from the patriarchal society throughout the world. She is the source of inspiration that women should struggle against the domination and oppression not just accept it and submit themselves to patriarchal domination. The novel has become the guideline for women who want to change their society. They can get inspiration that if they fight continuously they can be free at last.

## **Chapter IV: Conclusion**

### **Face Death Rather than Compromise with Freedom**

The thesis studies the issues of an orphan woman's quest of freedom in Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*. The novel has proven that orphanhood feeling in a girl may lead to various types of experience in the life. The main character, Athena is orphaned woman who is accused as witch eventhough she courageously struggling to get freedom from gender discrimination. Freedom is higher than anything else, always freedom determined our identity. Athena wants to establish her identity through her freedom. Her freedom is captured by patriarchal norms and values and this thesis seeks the idea that the patriarchal society dominates women.

Orphanhood is the condition in which a child is without the living parents whether their parents are dead or alive. Generally orphanhood intends parents are dead and the child living alone but on the other hand it intends parents are still alive, not dead and abandoned their child where a child live without their parents or far from parents. In this sense orphanhood means not only a child living without parents who are already dead, there is also such a condition of child whose parents are still alive but they abandoned their child where child live without parents or far from parents. It is the condition a child has to struggle alone for the survival and identity of one's life. Orphaned girl, Athena is living without her own parents but she stands for freedom.

Feminism is the movement in which people especially women raise the voice for political, social, and economic equality between male and female. It includes the various movements, theories, and philosophy, which are concerned with the issue of gender difference, talks about the equality for women, and campaign for women's rights and interests. This theory interprets a work of art or any intellectual discourse

through the perspective of women and their concern is writing. It also attempts to describe, explain, and analyze the conditions of women's lives and creates a discourse on ending the unequal position of women in a society. It sees currently predicament social discourses as patriarchal.

Historical situations and values in third world countries make women's issues different from the western feminist rhetoric. Feminism is theorized differently in Third world countries than in the west. Feminists raise the voice that women's writing reflects women's voices. Their writing presents painful life of the women. Mostly in eastern countries, males are holding power and property they are the real successors of parental property. With the rise of women's voice different women novelist appeared in the history of literature. Moreover, cultural feminists believe that the culture where women are living is the culture of male. All rituals, behaviors are male centric so women must decide their own culture then only they can be independent. Similarly, linguistic feminists believe that male has created language. They say that language should be de-sexing. Although women writers may have to use 'male' language, feminist critics have identified sex-related writing strategies such as the use of associational rather than linear logic.

*The Witch of Portobello* deals with a Romanian girl named Athena who was adopted into a rich Lebanese family. This novel explores the role of female protagonist Sherin Khalil known as Athena who attempts to overcome the patriarchal norms and values. It mainly focuses on the existence of women in the male dominated society through the experience of feminism view point. Athena was born in Romania and she is adopted by industrialist family of Beirut as their much loved, much wanted daughter, who grew in wisdom and beauty. Athena is a feminist character whose

attempts to exist herself in the society can make the strong voice of women. As a child, Athena is treated as an angel and saint. She gets everyone's love and affection, and care, and she enjoys all kinds of facilities.

The novel depicts the condition of Athena who struggles throughout her life to get freedom. In the society, women are given bad names. Males do not understand what is going on with women. They just estimate the world of women. Athena is unknown to others. The protagonist of the novel, Athena is conscious about the position of her and overall women. She does not want to secret as the traditional women. Athena she is described as capable girl who has leadership capacity. It shows that now modern girls are not like the traditional ones who only follow males in all respects. The novel portrays the circumstance in which traditional women are dominated by male characters. They are given the knowledge that they have to depend on the men. The novel covers most of the thing about Athena. She has gone several fluctuations in her life. She has experienced many bitter things in her life.

In conclusion, Athena is the product of the patriarchal society in which she is given name by the males. Patriarchy is a social system in which males are the primary authority figures central to social organization; they occupy roles of political leadership, moral authority and control of property, and where fathers hold authority over women and children. In this way, the novel centers around the main character, Athena, as a daring, courageous girl who fights against the society despite many complexities. For her, freedom is more important than anything else. Hence, her quest lives on even when death grips her unawares.

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