

I. Paulo Coelho and his Feminist Vision

My research aims to explore the quest of women's Identity in Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello* through a female character Athena, an adopted child of Romania. Though, the quest of Athena seems to be spiritual, it is the search for existence and freedom for womanhood. The Patriarchal society always tries to dominate and restricts Athena in every sphere of her life, when she rejects the social norms and values created by Patriarchal society, threatens her to take her life, she struggles for female existence and self-identity even in the final moment of her life.

Patriarchy is the main ideology of the male dominated society, which restricts women to go in the open air. It binds woman inside the home. They are restricted from enjoying and joining different professions. Whenever, they try to break the boundary tags, they are graded as Satan or witch or 'other'.

Paulo Coelho, in his writing, attempts to show that women in the modern age can get freedom and find their existence in male dominated society by rejecting Patriarchal age old tradition and convention. Paulo Coelho, the author of *The Witch of Portobello* was born in the Botafago of the Rio de- Janerio, Brazilian 24th August 1947. He worked as a director, actor, lyricist and a journalist before he planted deeply into literature. Today Paulo Coelho is not only one of the most widely read, but also one of the most influential Author. Before the period of gorilla and hippy movement of 1968, he was follower of Marx and Angles. He took part in election and demonstration. It was during this period, Coelho linked himself with drugs, hallucination and travelling with some money he had earned as an actor and after escaping from mental asylum, he involved in journalism. He also started a magazine that brought him in contact with Raul Seixas, the emerging music producer of Brazil with whom he joined as a lyricist. The singer was populated inside as well as outside

Brazil. So, Coelho too made a lot of money which enabled him economically. During his working with Raul he also developed an interest for black magic under the inspiration of Aleister. When he put himself up from black magic, he was kidnapped and tortured by a group of active Para-militaries during Brazil dictatorship. Almost miraculously, he escaped from the kidnaping and decided to live a normal life by working as a lyricist for many music companies. But in 1978, his writing passion took him away from Brazil to the U.K. where he worked as the correspondent for Many Brazilian magazines.

Paulo Coelho's latest novel *The Witch of Portobello* is his 13th novel in which he portrays a mysterious lady as the protagonist who devoted herself for the quest of truth, love and female existence. The major character in the novel Athena, the female protagonist is an adopted child of Romania brought up in Beirut to Lebanese wealthy couple but living in London, as an adult. Athena, a young woman, who tries to fill the space, the silence in her life. The more she tries to fill, the more dissatisfied she becomes. The Portobello of the title is London's Portobello Road where Sherine Khalil, aka Athena finds the worship meeting she's leading, where she becomes an omniscient goddess named Hagiasophia, disrupted by a protestant protest. Framed as a set of interviews conducted with those who knew Athena, who is dead as the book opens, the story recounts her birth in Transylvania to a Gypsy mother, her adoption by wealthy Lebanese Christians, her short, early marriage to a man she meets at a London college, her son Viorel's birth, and her stint selling real state in Dubai. Back in London in the book's second half, Athena learns to harness the powers that have been present but inchoate within her, and the story picks up as she acquires a "teacher" (Deidre O'Neill, aka Edda, another interviewee), then disciples (also interviewed), and speeds toward a spectacular end. Coelho veers between his

signature criticism of modern life and the hydra-headed alternative that Athena taps into. Athena's earliest years don't end up having much plot, but the second half's intrigue sustains the book.

Paulo Coelho's book *The Witch of Portobello* has woven a very unique and compelling tale. The part of the story draws itself and part is the very unique way it is written. Rather than a straight forward narrative of dialogue or even a series of letters, this is unique narrative technique. It is written as a series of first person accounts of individual's interactions with unusual heroine Athena aka *The Witch of Portobello*. Most of the works of Coelho has the same features as his uncanny fusion of philosophy religious Miracle and moral parable. Especially, the book *The Witch of Portobello* is heavily laced with reference to religion, spirituality, mysticism, freedom and woman's existence in the society.

Paulo Coelho is one of the most widely read and loved authors in the world. His books have been translated into 63 languages, the recipient of numerous prestigious international awards, amongst them the Crystal award by the world Economic Forum and France's legion d' Honneur, Paulo was inducted into the Brazilian Academy of letters in 2002.

Different critics and writers have viewed the text differently. After the publication of Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*, in 2007, it has been receiving many critical acclaims. Regarding Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*, the critic Lisa Ruffle says that it is a mix of new age mysticism, personal enlightenment and modern spirituality. She further comments:

Athena's initial beginnings as a devout member of the Catholic Church, to her humiliating dismissal, she 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. (56)

Similarly, another critic John Bergman comments that the expectation of Coelho's book is someone's life will be lacking, religious undertones will be prevalent.

Destinies will be sought, someone will probably die. He further says:

Someone is already dead when Coelho's newest book, *The Witch of Portobello* opens. Athena, the ultra-spiritual daughter of a Gypsy woman, is being remembered by those who knew her best a numerologist, an ex-husband, a landlord obsessed with fanatical trance dancing. We learn that Athena harnessed a divine capability for Clairvoyance. We learn that she was a supernatural psychotherapist, giving advice on love and the universe. (122)

Another critic Tadhg Peavoy says that *The Witch of Portobello* is a blend of all the magical, spiritual, mystical and religious elements. It is loved and admired. She remarks:

The novel explores the idea of witchcraft from a modern perspective. Whilst Witches may have been burned at the stake in times gone by, nowadays such acts would never be tolerated or conducted. So witches can work freely amongst us. Not for the power of evil, necessarily, but for the power of change. It is the concept that Paulo Coelho focuses on. (57)

In this way, different critics have viewed the text differently. They have talked about an amalgam of new age mysticism, personal enlightenment and modern spirituality,

but no critics seem to have made research of woman's quest of identity. So this research will be innovative to explore the woman's issue of identity.

Though, the many issues are raised by different critics in the novel *The witch of Portobello*, my claim is that the search of Paulo Coelho through the female character, Athena, is to protest against the patriarchal domination and makes the female aware for their freedom and self-identity in the 21st century. In this novel, the female protagonist Athena is the victim of Patriarchal ideology. Although the patriarchal society avoids her in the struggle for self existence and freedom, she doesn't surrender and continues her mission for the progress and self-identity of women even the patriarchal society blames her as and witchcraft and threaten her to get murder.

This novel attempts to show the rejection of traditional pattern of rules and regulations. In modern era also, females struggled very much to make self-identity and their existence in the society. From the beginning of human civilization, women are dominated and ill-treated according to the deep rooted patriarchal rules and regulations. Society has been formed by the male oriented notion which has kept women in the inferior positions. Social norms and values, behaviours and all other aspects of the society are controlled and guided by the male authority. Men use their so-called superiority to dominate social, political, cultural, economic and religious aspects. In such society, power passes from male to male, not to female, such as father to son. Daughters are not given any roles and women are not given any opportunities to uplift them. Rather they are forced to accept the male ideologies.

Different women intellectuals have been protesting against patriarchal domination. They involve in different movement in different times. The main issue of

this movement is to strike the so-called patriarchal norms and values made against women's welfare.

The main focus of the movement is to free them from cultural restraints which restrict woman's identity within a narrow atmosphere. This movement strongly disregards the cultural definition of woman. This cultural definition limits women's identity and existence within the male dominated world. Its role is to break the male hegemony.

The main aim of the feminist is to establish woman's original status and self-identity in the society by rejecting the male superiority and cultural domination, which helps them to dismiss the misrepresentation of woman in the society. Feminism aims to provide woman's equal status, identity, education, employment as well as free expression of woman's experience. It endeavours to break male domination, suppression and discrimination on the basis of age, class, gender, language and tries to keep balance of power between male and female.

The research paper devotes to study the female existence and their identity in the society of 21st century on the part of the major character through the theoretical modality of existential feminism.

Existential Feminism derives from the school of thought of Simone de Beauvoir. Feminism is a doctrine redefining woman's activities and goals from women centred point of view and refusing to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to sex object, a second sex, a submissive and "other". In Simone de Beauvoir's view, "The woman is not always powerless and doesn't always need to be dependent in a male-female relationship. Prostitution allows women an avenue of escape from dependency on men in a way that doesn't leave them victims, but empowered women"(28).

Feminist theory thus began with the immediate need to end women's oppression. The word feminism was not used until the end of the 19th century though the emergences of recognizably feminist ideologies were there before the nineteenth century as well. Anyway it is a political theory and practice to free all the social bondage of patriarchy. John Wallach Scott has following view regarding Feminism:

Feminism as politics appeal to the woman [---] to mobilize them into a coherent political movement, the history of feminism thus has been the history of the project of reducing diversities (of class, race, sexuality, politics, religion and socio-economic status) among females to a common identity of women (usually in opposition to patriarchy, a system of male domination). (4)

Simone de Beauvoir produced perhaps the greatest classic of post-world war II feminism. Her work *The Second Sex* first appeared in 1949. Beauvoir was attacked by those who felt her account of women's lives was heavily based on her personal experience and her middle class values.

Existential Feminists say that females are free to choose to come out of void, but paternalism regards women as "other". Simone de Beauvoir argues that male is considered as 'self' and 'subject' but female is treated as 'other' and 'object'. Male is considered as 'subject' who is assumed to represent humanity in general. It is social construction that based on male domination, which treats the woman as commodities. Similarly Beauvoir says that paternalism regards women as mystery. Male claims that woman is mysterious and enigmatic but she views that male are as equally mysterious as female. Mystery is nothing but the failure of proper communication. Simone de Beauvoir, then, talks about myth that is created by patriarchal ideology regarding

woman. Nature of patriarchy is egocentric that creates negative images about women. Men create myth about women generalizing their individual experiences, she says.

The first chapter is the general introduction of this research paper. It clearly states the problem and hypothesis of this research paper with some critical views. The second chapter will be the textual analysis with different topics in which the application of theory to the text will support the hypothesis of this research paper including some important feminist theorists in relation to gender and society. The third chapter will be the concluding part which will again restate the important ideas of this research paper in brief.

II. *The Witch of Portobello* as a Feminist Novel

The novel, *The Witch of Portobello* depicts the inferiority of women in the patriarchal society. The major female protagonist, Athena is born in Romania with Gipsy mother. After a week of her birth, she is put in the orphanage. Later, a successful industrialist family of Lebanon adopts her and she is brought up in Beirut. As her adopted parents' much loved, much-wanted daughter, Athena grows in wisdom and beauty. When her family moves to London, she gets chance for school education in the reputed school in London. From the childhood period, Athena was intelligent girl who could able to understand the empty space in her life and started to fill up that empty space. She had the secret desire to become a saint someday, from the very early on, her parents discovered that she had a strong religious vocation. She spent all her time in the church and knows the gospels by heart; this was at once a blessing and curse. In a world that was starting to be divided more and more along religious lines. She told her parents that she had a series of invisible friends that are angels and saints whose images she was accustomed to seeing in the church she attended.

When Athena has finished at secondary school, she chooses to take a degree in engineering. She and her family came to London fleeing the civil war that has broken out in Lebanon. Her adopted father a Masonite Christian a branch of Catholic church, which although it comes under the authority of the Vatican, doesn't require priests to be celibate and uses both middle Eastern for the Lebanese government. Then Athena decided that it was time she grew up, that she assumed her filial responsibilities and protected those she loved. When she was at school, she attended dance classes because dance was her passion. She performed a kind of dance and pretended that she had gone into a trance (she had learned all about this kind of thing at school when she

studied the lives of the saints), and started making various pronouncements. She did those things because she was convinced that she'd saved the lives of her family.

Athena, from her early days, she was aggressive to those who try to discriminate and dominate her friends as well as her family. She can't accept the hateful behaviour. She thinks that everybody can enjoy his/her freedom equality; all are human beings, who are equal in position and in their status. Engineering College, she had a stand-up fight with a fellow student in the university cafeteria because the fellow student, assuming Athena to be English, had made some insulting remarks about the Middle East. When her fellow friend insulted her, Athena grabbed by the collar and stated screaming; 'Racist!

Athena was ungrateful to those who insulted her and dominated her. She was fully aware about her identity and dignity in the society. She always tried to find the true path in her life. She always lived between two worlds. What she felt was true and what she had been taught by her faith. People think that a woman's only dream is to get married and have children, but Athena suffered a lot in her life. She had known the men who wanted to protect her from all the tragedies, but she convinced herself 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 is better that way: she lived on a battlefield since she was born, but she is still alive and she doesn't need anyone to protect her.

Athena decides to marry at the age of nineteen. She chooses her boy-friend called Lukas at the engineering college in London. The family of Lukas was totally against the Christian church. He marries Athena against his family's will. So, they had to struggle for their survival because they were only students. After some time, of their marriage, they had a son called Viorel. Lukas, after his son's birth, showed his

desire to leave Athena and divorce her. After the divorce with her husband, Athena struggles for her own survival and for her son Viorel. She did many jobs but couldn't satisfy her restless soul. Though, she loved her husband to the extreme, he departs her then Athena devotes herself to win in her quest and fill the silences inside her through her own difficult and complete ways. She found the possibilities of dance and music. Later, she masters in calligraphy and finds the same possibilities as that of dance and music. She turns to protagonist revealing the future of people and gains the name of witch of Portobello. She helps the people to unleash the energy within them through the mystic ideas even though; they are not at all mystic to great extent as Coelho thinks about them.

The witch of Portobello has over a very unique and compelling tale part of what draws the reader in is the story itself and part is the very unique way it is written. Rather than a straight forward narrative, or a dialogue or even a series of letters, this is a unique narrative technique. It is written as a series of first person accounts of individual's interactions with the unusual heroin Athena. Their stories taped, interviews and letters have been compiled by a narrator. The narrator has decided to let Athena's story be told as other's tell it, through their own words, and with all of their emotions, anger, support, respect or disgust. The way the 'biography' is written, it allows us to draw our own conclusions, rather than a traditionally researched biography that is colored by the lenses of our experiences, and cultural biases.

Feminism: Historical background

The term "feminism" is a doctrine focusing and redefining women's activities which pay special attention to women's right and their position in culture and society. It is a discourse that involves various movements, theories and philosophies concerned with the issues of gender difference, advocate equality for women. This

term was first used to denote the support for woman's equal legal and political rights with men. New Feminism also refers to any theory which sees the relationship between the sexes as one of inequality, subordination or oppression. Thus the aim of feminism seems to identify and remedies the sources of all kinds of oppressions and subordination. 'Feminism' tends to be used for the women's movement which began in the late 18th century and continues to campaign for complete political, social and economic equality between man and woman. Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks equal right for women giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their career and life pattern.

Feminist theory began with the immediate need to end women's oppression. It is a political theory and practice to free all the social bondage of patriarchy. However, feminist have used different theories to explain the inequalities prevailed in the society and have advocated different ways of readdressing inequalities and there are marked and geographic and historical varieties in the nature of feminism. Steric Jackson and Jackie Johns have following view regarding feminist theory:

It seeks to analyse the conditions which shape woman's lives and to explore cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman. It was initially guided by the political aims of the women's movement to need to understand women's subordination and their exclusion from, or marginalization within, a variety of cultured an social arenas. (1)

From the ancient time, it has been recorded that civilization has been over taking by male deity worshipping, Patriarchal cultures in which men were political military leaders and women were kept in subordination. In a classical times and early Christian era, women were excluded from public and were made inferior to men. Aristotle in 'politics' viewed that women were inferior to men and they must be ruled by men. He

viewed female as lacking some qualities. Similarly, St. Thomas Aquinas called woman as imperfect man. Moreover men regarded their sperm to be active to give form to ovum which lacked identity and waited for sperm and the body, woman have been associated with the body, whereas men have been associated with the mind. Later, Freud believed that females suffer from penis-envy. Different feminist, in different times, have protested against such concepts about women and their marginalization. Throughout most of the second millennium, in most society's woman were deprived of property, education and legal status.

There is long list of woman who protested against the discrimination, inequality prevailed in the patriarchal structures in their lives and writings. Hildegard of Bingen defied the authority of male church leaders and as Italian writer and Courtier Christine de-Pisan defended woman and wrote biblical commentaries which challenged the patriarchal ideas inherent in Christianity. By the end of 17th century, a number of woman writers such as Mary Austell was calling for empowerments in woman's education.

There is inequality shown in the norms created by males, where women are taking plights to follow shown in the norms created by males of their most work. Maria Mies says, "Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-woman relationship and who want to change it"(6). She talks in favours of women's autonomy. For her, autonomy, is the feminist effort to maintain and recreate the innermost subjective human essence in women similarly, Troi Moi defines feminists as "The word feminist or feminism are political level indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement" (135). Her concept about feminism focuses it as a political movement which aims at breaking the patriarchal boundary and hierarchy between men and women.

In the same way, a prominent critic, M.H.Abrams has given his view in his own ways. He says, "Feminist literary criticism continues in our time to be closely inter-related with the movement by political feminist for social, economic and cultural freedom and equality"(234). He views about feminism as women's fight for freedom. It is the search for equality, in social, political educational and cultural aspects. Or in short, feminism is the quest for autonomous existence required by women.

The patriarchal society doesn't like female supremacy in the society. If she goes against the rules and regulations, patriarchy can give her many pseudo names. In the society, if female runs according to society's rules and regulations, she gets the name like angel, if she runs out of society's rules and regulations, she gets pseudo name like 'witch', or evil thing. In the novel, *The Witch of Portobello*, major female character Athena gets pseudo name "the witch" and is treated accordingly, when she devotes herself to change society and establish her own identity. But she doesn't care about the comments of patriarchy. She knows very well that of women do some extraordinary works in the society they have to face many problems. Athena doesn't fear, and doesn't surrender herself when the patriarchy accuses her as witch, because she gathers courage to face all the troubles given by ideological forces. Her religious devotion from the early childhood makes her the spiritual leader. She tries to adopt the female side of divine god and prophets the people around her, but the patriarchal society doesn't accept her and accuses her as witch and behaves her as the criminal. Even though the patriarchal forces torture her, dominate her and try to put in the pathetic condition, she doesn't hesitate and moves forward for woman's dignity and identity. Women can't be superior with their intellectuality and by heart, their intellectuality is cut up and put them as inferior and second sex in the society. Patriarchal society doesn't accept Athena's intellectuality as in the positive aspect in

the society rather they treat her leadership as curse or Satan. They transform her into Satan.

Feminists are united by the idea that woman's position in society is unequal to that of men and that society is structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social and economic detriments of women.

Although, the word 'feminism' was not used until the end of the 19th century, the emergence of the recognizably feminist ideologies can be traced to the late 19th century. The earlier form of feminism was concerned with equal rights for woman and men. This meant equal standing as citizens in public life and to some extent equal legal status within the home. Those ideas emerged in response to the French revolution and the American war of Independence, both of which advocated the values of Liberty and equality. Feminists in France argued that revolutionary values of liberty, equality and fraternity should apply to all while woman activist in America called for an extension of the principles of the American Declaration of Independence to women, including right to citizenship and property.

Feminist critical Theory can be said to have begun in the 1960s and 1970s with the work that questioned the representation of female characters in the male authored texts and also the questioned the exclusion of the women writers from the canvas. Kate Millet favours power as an inevitable matter to change the society. In the "sexual politics (1969), she has cited the fact that power is exercised in the society by subjugating women. She emphasizes that women should be given power to develop their status and career. She says, "Patriarchy dominates and subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exercised directly or indirectly in the civil and domestic like to constrain women" (134). In the large canvas of male literary works, women presented just as sexual object, whose roles are

subservient to those of the central male protagonist. Violence and domination seemed to be the main idea by which the unequal power relations in the area of sexual politics are maintained.

Athena is an extra-ordinary girl who always chooses a radical step in their life she tries to fill the space, silence in the life. She thinks that "the world was deprived of some excellent gardeners, bakers, antique dealers, sculptors and writers" (35). So, she chooses the difficult path to fill up that deprivation or lack. Athena opines that most of the people have degrees. This doesn't mean that they have managed to find the kind of work they wanted. Not at all, they go to university because someone, at a time when university seems important, says that, in order to rise in the world, we have to have a degree. And thus, the world is deprived of some excellent gardeners. In this way, Athena doesn't focus the formal education, to gain degree, she says that to get degree is not everything, but we have to rise in the world to do something special which was never gained. So, Athena's devotion to exist in the world manages her to leave university to fulfil her aim in her life.

Similarly, Virginia Woolf, one of the major feminist writers of 20th century had great contribution in the field of feminist theories. In her work "A Room of our own" (1928) focuses on the women's rights that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction. It is taken as the first blow on Patriarchal structure. Here, she is not raising the issue of women in general; she is specially talking about the plight of women writers. Woolf imagines a society where man and women would come together in purpose and desire. So, she recreantly exposes about equality between man and woman. She is the first critic to include the socio-economic dimension as the inevitable part of the female writing. She says that right from the history, women writers have been discouraged. Woolf says, "she must have shut

herself up on a room in the country to write and been torn a sunder by bitterness and scruples perhaps, though the husband was of dynast and their married life perfection.

Feminism has often been criticized as Eurocentric by black and women in developing world. The dissatisfaction of Afro-American woman toward the feminist theory of western writing, women contributed to the rise of African-American Feminism. The African-American feminism argues that the problem faced by women of colour is different from that by women of western white community. Western feminists' assumption that all of the same gender across classes and cultures are socially constituted as a homogenous group is criticized by the African- American feminist. They argue that the only focus upon gendered power and viewing woman as a homogenous group shadows the differences between women. The African-American feminists consider western feminism almost a failure for not speaking about the issue of woman of colour in the one hand and making themselves higher and superior to coloured women on the other. Thus western mainstream feminism doesn't speak about the double marginalization for the African-American women. African-American feminist argue that sexism, class oppression, and racism are inextricably linked together. They believed that the Liberation of African-American women entails freedom for all people since it requires the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression. The African-American feminists Alice Walker, Bell Hooks, Tony Morrison, Maya Angelo and some on have explored the problems and issues of coloured the problems and issues of coloured women in the racist, sexist and patriarchal society where they have been doubly marginalized. Even the white woman poorest the women of colour because they also considered women of colour as inferior to them.

Indian critic Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak has accused Anglo-American feminist theorists of making women of the developing world 'the other' by imposing western culture and have taken up feminist ideas and accommodated them in their own situation.

Barbara Smith, an African-American feminist defines feminism as the power to raise the females' voice for their dignity and self-identity, she further says:

Feminism is the political theory, practice to free all women, women of colour, working class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians old women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women, anything less than this is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandisement. (8)

Post-colonial feminists argue that oppression relating to the colonial experience particularly social class and ethnic oppression has marginalized women in postcolonial societies, Post-colonial feminists are concerned with the 'double' colonization's third world women under the imperial condition. They are ghettoized and seduced from the mainstream culture and suffered due to their western siblings as well. Because the western feminists create an inseparable division between them, the non-western women suffer from a sense of isolation and have hard time to express their identity. They also shout between two trends of domination, patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation. The post-colonial feminists accuse the mainstream feminists of being 'Eurocentric' in their attitude toward women in the countries of third world trying to impose western model of feminism that is not always appropriate to their particular condition of third world countries. Post-colonial feminists' today struggle to fight gender oppression within their own culture models of society rather than through those imposed by the western colonizer. So, it can be said

that post-colonial feminists reacted against universalizing tendencies in western feminist thought. In the novel *The witch of Portobello*, the major female protagonist, Athena is doubly marginalized, from her own male counterpart as well as from the patriarchal society. They always try to modify her as subservient female without any existence and identity. But, she struggles against the bias attitude of patriarchal society and ultimately becomes martyr for the welfare of women's dignity and self-identity.

According to the above discussion, most of the feminist critics believe that women have same mental capacity as their male counterpart and should be given the equal opportunity in social, political, economic spheres. To empower and free women, feminist literature plays main role in patriarchal society. Feminist critics believe that only a feminist struggle will significantly change the positive status, role and relations between men and women. Moreover, it will bring some social changes which, will improve the social status of women and eliminate the domestic violence.

Third World Feminism

Western Feminists have produced homogenous and dangerous images of the third world tradition. In reality, there is not such similarity in the lives of women in third world. So, western feminist create singular images of third world women. It produces the images that third world women are ignorant, uneducated, poor, family oriented, tradition bound, domestic, victimized which depicts their self-representation as educated, modern, free to make their own decision.

The group of feminist theorists who acquired their views and took part in feminist politics in so called third world countries are called Third World Feminists. These feminist criticize western feminism in the ground that it is ethnocentric and doesn't take account the different experience of women from Third World countries.

Chandra Tarpade Mohanty defines third world geographically. The nation, states of Latin America, the Caribbean sub. Sahara, Africa, south and south East Asia, China, South Africa and Oceania constitutes the parameters of the Non-European third world. In addition, Black Latin American and indigenous people in USA, Europe, Australia, some of whom have historic links with geographically defined third world. The use of the term "The Third World Women" by western feminism has been widely critiqued, Mohanty argues that:

What we seem to constitute women of colour or third world women as a viable oppositional alliance are a common context of struggle rather than colour or racial identification. Similarly, it is third world women's opposition political, relation to sexist, racist and imperialistic structure that constitutes our political commonality. (7)

She argues that western feminism appropriates the production of the third world women's singular monolithic subject 'for a discursive colonization'. Furthermore, western feminism articulated a discursive colonization through the production of third world differences a historical something that apparently oppresses most of, not all of the women in those countries and it is in the production of this third world difference that western feminism appropriates and colonizes the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterizes, the lives of women of different classes religions, cultures, race and castes in those countries.

Third world feminists criticize western feminism that it failed to account adequately to experiences of the third world women Western feminists' assumption that all the females are socially and culturally constructed as a homogenous group is criticized by the third world feminist. Third world feminist tries to give response to the problem faced by third world women, are domestic violence, dowry murders,

early marriage, mismatched arrange marriage, discrimination which are totally different from the problem of western countries.

Kristen Hits Peterson and Anna Rutherford have used the phrase 'a double colonization' to refer to the ways in which women have simultaneously experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. It is argued that colonialism celebrates masculine achievement in a series of male oriented myth while "women are subject to representation in colonial discourse in a way which colludes with patriarchal values" The women in the third world post-colonial societies become victim of gender in equalities existing in both the indigenous and the colonial culture both often simultaneously oppress women during colonialism and in its wake.

Society needs an organization and management for the long lasting and peaceful world, however, in most of the societies of the world, women are compelled to act as inactive, dull and worthless. Regarding their duties, they are just the machine to bear children, only to cook, to wash, to make happy to their husband and four walls where they are free to walk wherever they want, but only in the wishes of her children, husband and her other family member's will, only then she is a perfect and good woman otherwise if she even tries to raise her voice against the any kind of domination, she is punished physically as well as psychologically. And also she would be blamed as Witch as the characterless woman which is not suit for their house, community and society.

Under patriarchy, the role of women seem meaningless and having no worth because they are imposed in each and every decision making plan such as to walk out of house, to earn bread and butter for them. And even they are fully dependent on their husband's wish about how to manage their home and what kind of furniture they have to put. Even in their own custom. They are completely reliable on their hand and

wish, what to wear, which colour of cloth to wear or what type of sandal they have to wear. They think in accordance to their husband's wishes.

In the novel, *The witch of Portobello*, female character, Athena, in the beginning, is supposed to be a faithful daughter towards male ideology. The patriarchal society try to present her as a devoted daughter and wife, she is restricted toward freely by using her own intellectuality. But, later, Athena tries to raise her voice against the patriarchal domination. She searches her freedom in the society; she presents herself as the strong women by neglecting bias norms and values. She doesn't accept her marginalization and moves forwards in a quest for her existence in the shadows of patriarchy.

Athena is a young woman who tries to fill the spaces, the silence in her life. The more she tries to fill them the more dissatisfied she becomes. Until she learns that it is the silences between the notes that make the music so powerful when she learns to embrace the silence, the spaces, she finds power energy, she becomes a spiritual leader. In this book, Coelho works with the return to the goddess religion the interpretation of love, and the feminine part of the divine within the thereof searching for one's true self and opening to the energies of the world. Athena grows into a woman in search of answers to many questions that arise within a person. She has a contented life but her mind is not at ease. So, she sets out to find answers to the classical question of Who am I through many experiences. In her quest, she opens her heart to intoxicating powers and becomes a controversial spiritual leader in London

Gajendra Kumar, in the essay *Empowering the Third World Women*, the post-colonial perspective, says that western feminism has an ethnocentric bias in presuming that the solutions white women of west have advocated in combating their oppression are equally applicable to all the women on the earth, as a result, issue of

race has been neglected which have prevented feminist from thinking about the ways in which racism and patriarchy join each other. Besides, white women have not been able to visualize themselves as the potential oppressors of the black and Asian women, even when trying to be benevolent toward them.

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak's essay *French feminism in an international frame* problematizes the relationship between Third World Women on their representation via First world Scholarship. She goes on to point out the problematic assumptions that the system of knowledge can be generally applicable around the world. She also problematizes the position of the critic while recording the error in feeling empowered as well educated women in the west who could help the less privileged women of the third world. Spivak demands that the relationship between the critic and her sheath must be more positive. In her next essay *Can Subaltern Speak?*, taking the help of the post structuralist thinker like Michael Foucault. She challenges the notion that human individuals are sovereign subject with command over their consciousness. These critics are victim of assumption that they can be reliable mediators for the unrepresented voice of the oppressed through whom the oppressed can clearly speak. She made it clear that the muteness or silence of the women as subaltern is created by the fact that even when they uttered words, they were still interpreted through conceptual and methodological devices which were unable in rightly decoding their voice hence the silence of the woman as subaltern is a fact of interpretation and not a failure of articulation.

The novel *The Witch of Portobello* asserts that women are as capable of choice as men and thus can choose to elevate them, moving beyond the 'immanence' to which they were previously resigned and reaching 'transcendence' a position in which one takes responsibility for oneself and the world, where one chooses one's freedom. So

self-empowerment is the realization of knowledge of their inner potentialities that should be properly conducted to establish their value and identity in the society. It is the presence of confidence and determination to achieve their and it is to assess their strength and weakness.

Women's plight is historically and culturally specific and the gender inequalities existing in both the indigenous and the colonial western culture often simultaneously oppress woman during colonialism and after. In this context, it is argued that both colonialism and some of the nationalist resistance to it can be viewed as patriarchy an male centred and this problematizes the context to which they offer freedom to women, Women's plight therefore, before and after the achievement of independence remains more or less the same and what we find out is the crude fact that during the anti-colonial struggle the feminist agenda has been sacrificed to the cause of national independence and after independence women have been assigned to their usual domestic roles.

Third world feminists find fault in culturally and socially created practice of patriarchal society and try to subvert them. They protest against the forces which relegate them to secondary position. Uma Narayan says, 'third world women's problems' are fundamentally problems of third world women being victimized by traditional patriarchal cultural practices.

Third World woman's problems are fundamentally problems of traditionally patriarchal cultural practices. Men of Third world exploit women with the help of traditional patriarchal norms and values. Unchanging traditions are dangerous for women's life. These cause so many sufferings of women. According to patriarchal system, change is bad and traditional are good.

They don't want to change their customs and eye old traditions. Third world feminists need to challenge the notion of tradition. They argue that traditions do not improve the lives of women and they need to be alert and attentive to all their various possibilities and to encourage widespread and critical dialogue on various aspects of social change.

Self-Identity and Autonomy

The concept of self-identity autonomy is closely related and inseparable. The concept 'autonomy' expresses the positive goal for the feminist movement. It is the freedom from domination regarding the bodies and lives. Maria Mikes says, "The feminist claim to autonomy---means a reflection of all tendencies to subsume the women's quest and the women's movement under some other apparently more general theme or movement" (41).

Self-identity and autonomy are associated with persons. We are autonomous to social processes which bring us into being as self for ourselves and others. There are so many concepts about selfhood and autonomy in the feminist movements. But the most common concept among feminist is 'individual independence', self-determination of the individual women' or 'the right to individual choice'. The emphasis individualism refers to the autonomous existence. Women in the patriarchy fight for their individuality. Women have united for their self-identity which is taken as the essential thing for woman's development. If the person is independent, she can live her life well. Feminists think that woman is a biological person or subject. This is the main feature of women which characterizes the feminist writings. In Louis Marin's view, "... writing of the self gives rise to a theoretical and methodological occasion allowing us to grasp with greater rigor and precision the manner in which these two sets of signifiers function' (199).

The Individualistic sense of uniqueness and self-consciousness is wide spread which is not shared to the same extent by people. Self is inseparable from the network of kinship relation and not use the pronoun 'I'. Every person has feelings of self-identity and need their own autonomous. Identity is the social construct. Looking at the western female self, Alison prentice and Ruth Pierson say, "Women as human should not have to make a greater sacrifice of autonomy than men" (164).

Women in the patriarchal society had false identity. They were restricted to go outside from the house. Feminism is the movement which demands autonomous existence and identity of female. The identity of person is the cultural representation. For these, identity and autonomous are the necessary components.

Writing for self is for visual portrait and signification. All the masses of possession and of the appropriation of the written object emerge from the tensions inscribed within 'I'. Self is the representation of 'I'. Women are in search of 'I' or subjectivity. Simone de Beauvoir says, "True woman" she must accept herself as the "other" (1000). The feminist ambition to maintain and recreate this innermost subjective human essence in women is expressed and preserved in the concept of autonomy. Everyone is free to fulfil all her/his desires and needs that individual freedom is identical.

With the choice of the self-identity and subjectivity of the person, Maria Mikes further views on autonomy as says:

...autonomy is the preservation of human essence in women....It is also a struggle concept which was developed to demonstrate the women wanted to separate from mixed, male domination organizations and to from their autonomous organization, which their own analysis, programs and methods. (40-41)

The feminist approaches mentioned above are useful to find out the main causes how the female protagonist- of Paulo Coelho's novel *The witch of Portobello* searches the self-identity and autonomy by challenging the deep-rooted patriarchal norms and values. The feminist discourses have provided chances to understand the text better. It has shown the way to know the females problems, identity and existence of their search of self-identity and autonomy.

Paulo Coelho valorises the women's freedom and identity in the society through this novel. He, in this novel *The Witch of Portobello* mainly focuses the women's revolutionary act to overcome the patriarchal domination and discrimination in the society. The women as Gayatri Spivak says, is the neglected syntagm whose identity and autonomy from the centuries, is erased in the shadows of patriarchal ideology so, Paulo Coelho, through this novel, supports women's move and struggles for their self-identity and dignity in the society. Women from the ancient time were subjected and dominated by the males. It was necessary to break such system and ideology to enfranchise women from the corrupted society. By presenting Athena as the female protagonist of the novel, Coelho claims that a woman in the society is not just a puppet in the hand of a male but also can struggle for her freedom and identity. The female character, Athena, in *The Witch of Portobello* struggles for the freedom and self-identity in the male dominated world. She never shows her agreement with the patriarchal norms and values which were obstacles for the autonomous self-identity of women. Such presentation of women as a heroic figure in the novel is Coelho's way of strengthening them to act forward so that to get a proper place in the society.

Athena is a revolutionary girl who aimed to free and establish woman's self-identity as men have in the society. She doesn't like the discrimination between men

and women. She thinks that males and females are the equal human beings and must get equal chance. She also can do works as man does. Only a man is not capable for everything but a woman is more capable than man if she gets and grasps every opportunity available in the society.

Female heroism is clearly shown in this novel. Athena challenges male dominated society, which was totally grounded upon the traditional and conservative power-seeking tendency of the males and their narrow-mindedness misconception about the females. Quite opposite to this value, postmodern writings and social belief was:

One of the prevailing notes in the fiction of the twentieth century is that of rebellion against the restrictions of personal freedom. It is concerned not so much with economic condition as it is with limitation imposed by traditional barriers of conventions was written largely by men, so this other phase was developed principally by women. (698)

Therefore, it is mainly the age of search for freedom and identity from woman's side. We have seen woman as flesh, the flesh of male is produced in the mother's body and recreated in the embraces of the woman in love. Thus women are related to nature, she incarnates it; value of blood, open rose, siren, the curve of hill. She represents to man, the fertile soil, the sap, the material beauty and the soul of the world. She can hold the keys to poetry, she can be mediatized between this world and the beyond: grace or oracle star or sorceress, she opens the door to the supernatural, the surreal, she is doomed to immanence and through her passivity, she bestows peace and harmony, but if she declines this role. She is seen forthwize with as a praying mantis, an ogress. In any case, "she appears as the privileged other, through whom subject

fulfils himself: one of the measures of man, his counter balance, his salvation, his adventure, his happiness" (944).

While talking about myth, she has talked about immanence and transcendence. Throughout the history man has occupied the transcendental position and women are put to the position of immanence.

Search for Female's Identity in Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir raises the voice against man-woman dichotomy as the male ideology makes woman the second sex. Women are made inferior which is just artificially made. She further says that women are not born, but made. The human culture has given supremacy to the sex that haunts and kills, and not the one that gives birth, to masters of nature and not to the natural functions, Giving the notion about the book, *The Second Sex*, M. H. Abram's notes, "*The Second Sex* is a wide-ranging criticism of identification of women as merely the negative object or 'other' to man as defining and dormitory subject who is assumed to represent humanity in general" (234).

Women are mystic that they are vast, something reversed and they undergo those processes, but Beauvoir condemns these myths saying that they are natural process and male-made myths are false. She further says males too are mysterious. She claims:

The myth of a woman is a luxury which can appeal only if man escapes from urgent demands of his needs, the more relationships are concretely lived the less they are idealized---but along with luxury there is utility, their dreams where irresistibly guided by interest. Surely most myths had roots in the spontaneous attitude of man toward his own coexistence and toward the world around him. But going

beyond experience towards the transcendent idea was deliberately used by patriarchal society for purpose of self-justification, through the myths this society imposed its laws and customs upon individuals in a picturesque, effective manner if it is under a mythical form that group imperative is indoctrinated into each conscience. (999)

Beauvoir criticizes the male-made myths about women that myth is just mirage which is not reacted with reality at all. She further criticizes the cultural identification of women as merely negative objective or 'other' to man. The notion of otherness of 'she' affects in the social ideology. Thus, Beauvoir requests the feminist to break the patriarchal norms and values and established female's disk wet ideology which is necessary for woman's self-identity and autonomy.

Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1994) reads the whole human history which has done injustice to women because women have been relegated to secondary position in relation to man. It is her narrative of women's existential otherness. A mask of otherness is one's inability to shape one's psychological, social and cultural identity. She analyses men's depiction of women in biology, psychoanalyses, history and literature. Opposing the statement in *The Old Testament*, a woman is created out of man's ribs she says:

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents on society, it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male a eunuch which described as feminine. (301)

Paulo Coelho presents normal and general life of women and insists on their repressed desire to be free and their revolt against patriarchal domination. He wants to appeal

the feminists to be aware from their all rights, freedom to choose their individuality to be free from all bondages which blocks their way to walk forward or to develop their potentialities. The woman should conform their own way of living their way of judging each and every idea about their life. Paulo Coelho's major female character attempts to revolt against patriarchy and its norms and values which make the woman just cry within themselves. If woman wants to speak a word against the patriarchy she is blamed as witch or Satan or something more than that. The role of patronization husband makes the woman just as object and a machine which gives love and affection to the male and for bearing children. In the novel *The Witch of Portobello*, major character Athena is supposed to be the faithful daughter, wife and mother in the family who sacrifices herself for the dignity of her family, but Athena struggles for newness in her life. She is not a woman to accept all the norms and values of patriarchy. Her husband Lukas wants to see her faithful and lovely towards him. He wants love, affection and full-intention from her, but Athena doesn't bound herself with in family sphere, she moves forward to the complex ways in her life because she realizes that her position and status in the society is nothing but diving only on the shadows of patriarchy. When Viorel, her son was born, her husband Lukas decides to leave her then gets divorce. Athena prepares herself to move forward to struggle in the complexities of her life alone without her counterpart. Her separation with her husband teaches her to move in her way unhesitately without being afraid from further difficulties. She learns to move ahead without fear by the betrayal of her husband.

Lukas, Athena's husband blames her for not giving any intention towards him. He, first thinks that Athena can't live her life without him, so, he forces Athena to move in his way as he desires, but Athena chooses her own way to move and Lukas

blames her as the narrator says, "you were only thinking about your plans and forgot to include me in them" (48).

Athena was self-indulgent girl who struggles herself without taking support from another. She doesn't accept her passivity by taking supports from another, she herself is able to manage everything for her and to move on her way. When Lukas get divorce with her, he offers her something for support but she neglects Lukas, as the narrator says, "I told her that she could keep the house and the furniture, but she wouldn't hear of it. She'd stay with her parents for a while, then look for a job and rent her own apartment" (49).

Females are able to possess everything they need. They are in the age of activity who believes in their own act. The sense of existence, the knowledge of self-empowerment and the consciousness of women's life can be observed easily. The sense of challenging and the deterministic view of women's life which not only makes them inactive or passive but some kind of productive and unflagging personality which is able to cope with the challenges of life. That helps to develop the vision and attitude of self-discipline, reason and farsightedness. It helps to be open toward pragmatic problems and to solve them. The broad mind to realize and to share problems is also kind of resisting against male patriarchy. Self-independence, self-awareness adds the power of self-expression and advancement in their personality by knowing their own inner-feelings and ideas, and expressing to them, they place them as important parts of society, which can mould the world in a new way cooperating this. Meena Kelkas and Deepti Gangavance describe freedom, "Freedom is state of mind where one can doubt and question everything and therefore it is no intense active and vigorous that it throws away every form of dependence and slavery"(25).

If women succeed in constructing a newer psychological framework that aware them of their position in the society. They assumed male domination can be eradicated if women become aware of their life and their self-status in society.

If we view the world's history, each page of history can be seen as created by males. Neither the decision of women nor the thoughts can be found. Each and every tale played by male and the division of labour is also very unconventional. West or East both are fond of making women the 'second sex'. The woman who is compelled to follow the path shown by the father, husband and community in the name of males an reputation or norms and values. The religion which divides the male and female totally contradictorily. Women are denied by men, they make religion in their own framework. Women are denied by religion, culture and society too.

In the novel, the protagonist Athena from her early childhood has strong religious vocation, which devotes her to the Christian church. She always visits the church in the morning to play her guitar and praise the virgin. Before getting divorce from her husband, her life was going smoothly because she has the male-counterpart with her whom the traditional type of society believes and bounds her freedom. After separation, she was abandoned by the society. Her devotion to Christian church was suddenly broken when she was stopped from receiving the sacrament in the church. When Athena's husband departs her, the society starts to neglect her female values in the society. The father of the church abandons her to pray the Virgin Mary. The father as the narrator doesn't accept Athena's worship and says, "Athena, the church forbids divorced people from receiving the sacrament. You signed your divorce papers this week" (55).

It clarifies that Christian church doesn't permit woman to worship the god. Women are neglected from every field where male norms and values are only

highlighted. According to the church law, divorce people can no longer receive the sacrament of the Eucharist; all they can do is contemplate the suffering crucified Christ and listen to his words that are not always in accord with the laws of the Vatican. Athena was forced to leave the church because she was being excluded just because of a piece of paper she'd signed, something of no importance on the spiritual plane and which way of interest only to registry office and the tax man.

When Athena was forbidden from receiving the sacrament, she started protesting against the norms and values of patriarchal society which restricts her in every sphere. She raises her voice against the biased norms which abandons and restricts women from getting freedom and their self-existence with the help of her sharp tongue, she attacks church authority. Her resistance to patriarchy first is through verbal attack. As a narrator, Athena revolts against the domination in the church:

I swear that I will never set foot in a church ever again. A curse upon all those who slam the door in the face of a mother and her child! You are just like those people who refused to take in the Holy family like those who denied Christ when he most needed a friend. (56)

Athena has a strong desire to create her own identity rather than sheering under another's identity. Her refusal in the Christian church affects her mind and devotes herself to destroy all the conventional barriers and establish the new forms of society.

In the patriarchal society, the majority induce suppression, exploitation and imbalance between people. Hence, Athena revolts against the assumption made by the man and appeals women to find out their true essence and their real existence to stand on, no binaries of superior and inferior. Men have created religion to show woman inferior, they are the spokesman of religion, and they treat women not as human beings but just as things or as non-living being. Coelho refuses the notion of a

female essence prior to individual existence and attacked patriarchal myth of women that presumes that false essence.

Patriarchal society wants a mother who is completely devoted to her children. The mother eats after her children are fully satisfied. Maternity is a symbol of love and attentiveness. Mohini Chhaterjee quotes Sara Ruddick:

The mother's concern for the child fosters the development of attentive love the training to ask 'what are you going through? Material thinking therefore involves a reverential respect for an independent validity, on which one doesn't attempt to impose total control. (226)

But Coelho rejects this prejudiced opinion of makes in the patriarchal community and assets women to rebel against the social tearing to assets their capacity for intellectual work and the assertion against the inferior social mentality towards women also create a new world towards motherhood.

The Radical Feminist Elaine Showalter described the change in 1970s as a shift of attention from and so text to gynotexts. She coined the term gynocriticism, meaning the study of gynotext. Gynocriticism is a mode of criticism done by the women of the text written by women, she says:

The subject of gynocriticim is the history, style, themes, genres and structure of writing by women, the psycho dynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career, and the evolution are laws of female literary tradition. (115)

She divides feminist criticism into two types that which is concerned with woman as writer. Her feminist essay *A Literature of their own* is one of the most influential works of recent feminist criticism where she has recognized the problem, the danger

of universalism that would bury feminist critical activity in patriarchy founded discourse" (197).

A Literature of their own describes three stages in the history of women's literature and proposes a similar multi part model of the growth of feminist theory. The first phase is feminine which is the phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition. The second phase is the phase of protest against the values and standards in favour of autonomy. The third phase is identified as the phase of self-discovery and search for identity and journey within.

An American feminist, Showalter published one influential work of feminist criticism, *Towards the feminist poetics* (1977). In this work, she provides a survey of the literatures written by the famous female writers of 18th and 19th centuries. Through this work Showalter raised a question about the problems of not including the books written by female writers in the literary course and to be printed. Further than this, she argued for the separate Canon building of the female's literary texts. She says, "--- women's literature must go beyond these scenarios of compromise, madness and death ---its purpose is to discover the new world" (1229). It is called Gynocriticism. She says that women are different in terms of nature, race, culture and nation so they can't be studied universally. Women texts should have specific style of reading. The text written by the female writers should be read from the gynocritical point of view to justify the womaness in the text. Gynocriticism is an attempt to establish feminist tradition.

Elaine Showalter categories feminist criticism into two types, "woman as a writer' and woman as a reader". Women as a writer consider "women as a producer of textual meaning, with her history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women" (1226). Women are the producers of the text, language, themes, images, and

so forth. She gives space to her own experience, where women as reader read the text from the women's point of view. She is a feminist critic as a reader. She adds,

It is historically grounded inquiring which probes the ideological assumptions of literary phenomena. The omissions of and misconceptions about women in criticism, and the fissures in male constructed literary history. (1226)

Here, the studies male's experience and women's manipulations and exploitation by males and the stereotyped image given by male. It rejects the misconception about women in criticism and attacks the male-made literary history.

In the novel *The Witch of Portobello*, the major female protagonist Athena, as Showater says, once to create female's own world where the female's norms and values can only be raised. So, she devotes herself to create female side of divine god. Athena's religious devotion always takes her in the church to pray the Virgin Mary, but her husband's family, obscure aristocrats from Denmark, were against the church. Lukas's father was based himself on frankly unanswerable scientific arguments. The Bible, on which the whole religion is based, was not really a book, but a collage of sixty.-six different manuscripts, the real name or identity of whose authors is unknown, she said that almost a thousand years elapsed between the writing of the first book and the last, longer than the time that has elapsed since Columbus discovered America. Even though, Athena's husband's family were against the church, she never accepts them and continues to her devotion because she had clear ambition to become a saint. Her husband Lukas doesn't help her to fulfil her ambition, rather her tries to stop her to move in her way. Athena has a strong soul. So, strong that she spends hours in deep contemplation. She has a special gift for music and she dances very well too she always brings her guitar each morning and spend some time there

singing to the Holy Virgin before going off to the classes. She plays her guitar and sings hymns of praise, with her eyes fixed on the statue of the Holy Virgin.

Athena's parents don't permit her for religious vocation, they want her that she should do what they desire. They want her to be a faithful daughter, wife and mother, but Athena doesn't surrender herself with her family because she has strong devotion to be the saint and serves to those people who are always dominate and abandons from the society that's why, she chooses difficult paths in the opposite to the parent's desire. Athena is never concerned about the comments of other people. She decides herself to find her own way. As the narrator, Athena says about the devotion to fill the space silence in her life:

When I come to the church to praise Virgin with my music, I am not bothered about what other people might think I'm simply sharing my feelings with her. And that's how it's always been, ever since I was old enough to think for myself. I'm a vessel in which the divine energy can make itself manifest. And that energy is asking me how to have a child, so that I can give it what my birth mother never gave me:

Protection and security. (41)

The above extract clearly shows that Athena doesn't want to be subservient to the traditions and conventions of the society, her willingness to walk in her own way by choosing it herself to fulfil her dream.. Athena, according to the wish of divine energy, she wants to have a child to fulfil her desire. She always walks in her way alone. She doesn't get support from other, but she never has late to do something new in her life. Her birth mother abandons from her, she never get protection from the birth mother, that is why she wishes a child to give them all the protection and security which her birth mother can't give her, she says,

I know I have a mission which I have long rejected, and now I must accept it. That mission is to be a mother. I must carry out that mission or go mad. If I don't feel life growing inside. I will never be able to accept life outside me. (42)

Athena wants to have a child because according to her, she needs to give her life to him which she never realizes in her life. To fulfil her aim she has a mission to have a child. It is clear that Athena has a mission to have child in the age of nineteen. She leaves The University to search her inner quest to fulfil the lack in her life. She thinks that life is always lack which we have to try to fulfil it, but it can't be. Athena takes religion as her support to complete her ambition to be the saint. She doesn't concern with the society which overburdens her with the braised norms and values, but she has the aim to break it all to establish her own values and norms in the society.

Athena doesn't lose her strength even when she is refuse by the patriarchy. She is unhappy with the corrupted society stubborn with their conservative thinking. Even if she is no helped by anyone, she didn't like to bow in front of them.

When Athena is rejected from the church, she was abandoned by her husband; he left her because Athena, as Lukas said, cares him. Now, the patriarch society, in the name of religion, abandons her. So, she is so much frustrated to bear all of this, but late, she gathers her strength to struggle with that domination upon her and to the womanhood.

After Athena's husband leaves her, she then starts to look for a job and lent her own apartment. He starts to struggle for her own dependency and for her child Viorel. She has rented a small attic flat in Basset Road, where she has to carry the baby up three flights of stairs every day. Athena from the adolescence let herself face certain of life's challenges alone. She is devoted herself to her ambition as well as her son

Vioel, because she has no intention of turning Vioel into a spoiled brat. Her dream to have a child is complete after the birth of Vioel who helps Athena to fill the space, silence in her life. Later Athena works for a bank to fulfil her financial problem.

Athena is a courageous woman who struggles too much for fulfilling her desires and her ambition. Patriarchal society confines women within household activities like, washing, cooking, cleaning, child bearing etc. Women are not supposed to be faithful for their responsibilities in the official work. When she starts to do her work in a bank in Holland Park, Peter Sherney, the manager of the bank, believes that Athena as a woman cannot do her work successfully as the male workers do so she is given a dull clerical post, hoping that she would soon resign: This sort of society tries to get rid of women. The society does everything to provoke them into rudeness but Athena here justifies herself as the good employee in the bank. She brings in everything positive change in the bank with her devotion to do the work. Her efficiency increased, even though her work-load remains unchanged. Due to the devotion and sincerity in her work, the department's productivity makes a giant leap. Athena becomes a kind of natural leader among the workers in the bank. There is a definite innovate in the 'energy' at the bank. The bank is able to increase profit without increasing expenditure and that of course is the only thing that intersects executives everywhere.

Since childhood, Athena felt that she should grow closer to God, but her life always took her further away from the God. Music is one-way she has discovered of getting close, but it is not enough for her. Whenever she dances, she sees a light, and that light takes her to go further to get something new.

Athena never becomes content with her achievement in her life, as much as she acquires in her life, she further becomes hunger of knowledge. She tries to fill the

space, silence in her life, but she never lives her contented life. When she moves to Dubai, she goes in search of the teacher for calligraphy. Athena meets the calligraphy teacher, Nabil Alaihi, in Dubai who helps Athena with the way of approaching Allah through calligraphy and the search for the perfect meaning of each word. For more than six months, Athena came to calligraphy teacher to learn calligraphy to calm her soul.

For Athena "writing wasn't just the expression of a thought, but a way of reflecting on the meaning of each word" (92). With calligraphy teacher, she works on text written by an Arab poet. She thinks that music has been created by God, and that rapid movement was necessary for people to get in touch with themselves, and Athena dances obeying only her soul which forces her to concentrate on something greater than herself and brings her into contact with God. Dance has helped her to change many things in her life, including her work. Athena has mysterious gift but she never tries to let he know that since these gifts can bring about not only an encounter with God, but also her perdition. For her, "Calligraphy is just one of the ways which Allah-blessed be his name. Places before us. It teaches objectivity and patience, respect and elegance, but we can learn all that –through dance" (98).

Athena turned to the social construction and social generalization for women in patriarchal society. Religion as she is fascinated by is thought a step as a prize of a divine plan which shapes the framework of nature's harmonies and is essential to the argument of a god and the norms and values creator i.e. man in society. Society has levelled women as low creature that doesn't have any worth but if sons are born from their comb/womb, they are worthy and are superior who puts women inferior. In the novel, Athena is put as inferior but her intellectuality and honesty threatens male norms and values.

Athena is a woman who is the hunger of knowledge. She is always in search of true knowledge. She first struggles for her financial dependency, and then she fights with the established norms and values and devotes herself for social innovation newness in her life. She doesn't take rest in her life rather she struggle for social freedom and identity. Athena learns calligraphy to understand the meaning of each and every word. She makes her hand perfect with calligraphy but she is not satisfied, she jumps from one world to other to master the blank space. Later, Athena has left her job at the bank and starts selling real estate in which she gains excellent financial supports.

Religion and society consists upon the social life and live of woman. Paulo Coelho, in the novel, argues that this mystical vision is limited. Being a girl, there is equal soul and mind as human being: Nature has created equal structure as male has. There is just two sexes one male and one female, nothing more than that. Thus, Coelho says there is hardly possible male as 'one' and female as 'other'. No limitation for woman as men are the free wonderer of this patriarchal world. If a woman tries to cross the household of their house, the evil eye of men will look as chance at her. So, Coelho praises woman not to care their evil eye. So, he empowers woman to be rebellion by crossing that threshold. From, they can move towards the emancipated life and living. So, Coelho has clear intention to subvert the male hegemony and their values and to maintain the equal status in the society.

Athena struggles to think freely for her own life and she would be able to design her life in a way of her own. Determination draws her concept of 'being' and her existence in that male dominated society. She wants to get rid of that four walls and the boarder created for whole feminine. The travel from the land of loss to spirituality and freedom is exposed through her struggle in the patriarchal society.

Resistance and Emancipation

Third world feminism's goal is to make their voice heard and work toward the full participation and dignity of women along with men. Uma Narayan says that if women want to make their voice heard, they should not be afraid of patriarchal institution and should revolt against their domination and start writing too. She views writing as 'a political gesture' that challenges politics of dominants. She views that feminist should struggle to end patriarchal domination. Resistance should be the main weapon against patriarchal treatment.

Third World women need to subvert demythologize indigenous traditions which seek to label them into subordination and contest those conventions of system of values and knowledge that seem to tilt the scale in favour of patriarchy.

Third world feminists argue that mainstream western feminists only focus upon gendered power and viewing women as a homogenous group shadows the differences between women. The position of women in different places can't be same. The experience of third world women and experience of white woman can't be similar because white woman only suffers from gendered discrimination and inequality from white men but women from third world have to suffer from double victimization. They not only suffer from Third world men's gender based discrimination but also from colonizer's oppression. So, racial discrimination and exploitation, i.e., double victimization of women never gets place in western feminist theories. Western feminists have founded universal category to women and those who do not share those norms are excluded as others unable to represent themselves quiet and ignorant. The third world women are treated as slave domestic animals that are to be confined within the four walls of house remain submissive, docile and obedient. So suffering of

third world woman is its own kind which is quite different from those women of western countries.

In patriarchal society, the tradition of making man feel superior and the woman reducing herself almost becoming an instrument of man's pleasure as well as other is embedded in our culture, indeed in our psyche. Because of the strong social shackles of their upbringing and the prevalent ideals of the womanhood, they might not be able to revolt against the situation directly. But they try to resist the subordination in their own ways. Some of which are implicit action and some are explicit revolt. The major character in *The Witch of Portobello* doesn't however surrender to domination imposed upon her. When she is abandoned from receiving the sacrament in the church, she resists the church authority through verbal attack. She curses to all those who dominate and discriminate the women in the name of religion.

Athena is a courageous girl who always revolt against the domination in which she is involved. She tries to establish the new norms and values which can free women from the patriarchal convention and traditions. Athena has strong determination to become a saint but in the contrast, the patriarchal society doesn't accept the female side of divine God from the ancient time, the myths are created in the side of male. Female are always subservient to the male. But Paulo Coelho, through the major character Athena, revolts against the established notion which treats woman as the second sex. Athena is capable of anything and can overcome seemingly impossible obstacles. She gains her professional success; she is able to earn money. She has everything in life but she is always being so dissatisfied. When Athena has left the job at the bank, she decides to go in search of her birth mother, her adopted parents were terrified when she told them to go Romania to search of her root, but

nobody could stop her because her determination to search someone who had denied her and to survive on her own. Athena wants to visit to the place where she was born though it was dangerous to go to Romania because the recent collapse of the Romania government makes travel impossible. Athena doesn't concern with it and devoted herself to go there in search of her birth mother and to ask her why she abandoned Athena. She requests her parents:

All I'm asking is to be given the chance to visit the place where I was born and perhaps ask my birth mother why she abandoned me perhaps, when I look into her eyes simply by nothing. If I don't at least try and do that, I will feel like coward and I won't ever understand the blank spaces. (105)

Athena engages in different activities and jobs to seek knowledge, how she gains knowledge always becomes hunger of it. Though she possesses everything but still she is unhappy. This is the main problem of Athena and her intellectuality: She learns calligraphy while she was in Dubai, she dances whenever she can, but music only exists because the blank space exist: when she is doing something, she feels complete, as soon as she stops, she feels there is something lacking. She wants to sit quietly but she can't her brain won't stop. She always needs to be involved in anything which helps her to exist herself in the society.

When Athena goes to Romania in search of the rebirth mother, she meets her spiritual teacher, Deidre O'Neill, with whom she comes closer to St. Sarah, the Great Mother, and the Goddess of creation. St. Sarah is the Patron saint of gipsies. When she goes to Romania, she meets her birth mother and gets idea about gipsy tradition and comes to be attached with gipsy with Deidre O'Neill who guides Athena to reach to the great Mother. After returning from Romania she goes to Scotland to meet

Deidre O'Neill, who Athena says supports to gain her spiritual mission. She feels that she has a mission. While she was celibately life and nature, she discovered things she didn't even know existed. What she though could be found only through dance is everywhere and it has the face of a woman. By taking the path of spiritual fulfilment through the female side of god, Athena takes a risk taking a path that no one else is taking. She devotes herself to teach people to be different. Athena was a kind of woman who never refuses a challenge in her life. She challenges with the society's biased norms and values and able to be susses in some extent. Whenever a religion tightens its rules, Athena breaks it away and goes in search of more freedom in her search for spiritual contact. She proves herself that a woman is capable of living without an institutionalized religion, while still continuing the spiritual search in order to her existence. Athena wishes to have mother god, turn women need only gather together with other people and adore her through rituals intended to satisfy the female soul, rituals involving dance, fire, water, air, earth, songs, music, flowers and beauty. Later, Athena has come into contact with the universal Mother. Hagia Sofia. Hagia Sofia, universal wisdom, came into the world accompanied only by love. According to the tribal custom, Hagia Sofia is the beginning of everything and before she existed there was chaos. For her love fills everything. It can't be desire because it is an end in itself.

Patriarchal society wants to paralyze women in accordance with their norms and values She wants her own solitude so that she could cry for her own freedom She is gradually emerging bold enough to build up he confidence to 'swim' in the river and cross that border to reach to the land of freedom. Here, Athena has a full fathom confidence to march toward eternity. Her ambition to become a saint is going to be fulfilled when she comes into contact with the universal mother, Hagia Sophia.

Athena becomes the prophet by embracing the Great Mother, Hagia Sofia who speaks through Athena's mouth. Athena decides herself to come into contact with the power because the universal mother has given her signs that she was a light. While she danced, she changed into letters when she was learning calligraphy.

Male dominated society has always treated women as inferior one who has to obey her family and society's norms and values created by male patriarchy. She has to remain docile and submissive and server the male according to their desires in the novel, the female protagonist Athena is the representative of all the females in male dominated society who is prevented from creating her own existence. She is supposed to be limited within household work and is not allowed to public place to create her identity. She is exploited from the traditional social taboo. There has always been the power relationship between male and female as the novel has where the major character Athena is sometimes idealized but most of the time oppressed and exploited. Male dominated society always represses her feelings, desires and dreams of womanhood. Athena grows up in such a society where women's identity is marginalized and is considered as child breeding machine, and to do household affairs. This sort of society considers women as to serve family and remain away from the outside affairs like working for earning money, understanding social circumstances, decision making etc. If these suppressed women gets chance to empower themselves, they can resist the oppression in any way they can, either through direct revolt, indifference or through silence to create their identity. In the novel Athena attempts to resist the domination through silence and sometimes through her verbal attack. When Athena is able to keep herself in the side of female god, she begins to work as prophet. She serves the people around her by exploring their future. Athena in the intimation with Hagia Sofia, the mother of love, has saved

a man from cancer; another has accepted his sexuality and a third has stopped taking sleeping pills. Her skill of prophecy spreads like wild fire, then she becomes fully engaged to explore the people's future and Athena's apartment is packed with her followers. As the narrator Andrea McCain says, "She makes her followers dance without rhythm, as if she needs that collective energy in order to get in touch with Hagia Sofia" (235). Athena is in touch with Hagia Sofia before her prophecy. Her popularity increases, Athena starts to serve her followers who believe in the female side of the divine god. On the other hand, the male-dominated society doesn't accept Athena as the spiritual leader and the society is suspicious of her skill of prophecy. The society is not ready to accept the female side of the divine god. The patriarchal society tries to restrict her from her skill of prophecy. A representative of patriarchal society, Rev. Ian Buck blames her and called Athena "the satanic cult at the heart of England" (267). When Athena tries to resist against the domination and devotes herself in search of female identity, the patriarchal forces blame her as 'Satan' and dominate her as much as they can. Male patriarchy is afraid that if they accept the intellectuality or the skills of leadership of women, their position in the society would be endangered and their identity would be at risk. That is why; male-dominated society uses all types of means to dominate women to secure their position in the society. Athena leads to the new generated society where there is the new form of social structure and everyone is equal and has to enjoy equal freedom but the patriarchal society tries to burden females with traditional biased norms and values which doesn't liberate the marginalized people. In this way, through female character Athena, Paulo Coelho emphasizes that society where everyone, whether there is male or female, is equal and no sense of any kind of discrimination. In the novel Athena is restricted and dominated by the patriarchy, they treat Athena as a witch.

Athena engages herself to emancipate the people around her. Her supporters increase rapidly. They make her their spiritual leader who, they believe, can give freedom to those who are oppressed and dominated. Rev. Ian Buck, the representative of patriarchy and his followers restricts her and blames her to be involved in witchcraft and dominates her for involving the Devil. As the narrator Rev. Buck blames Athena and her followers as:

A group of suspicious individuals have been keeping the neighbourhood awake every Monday night for the last six months, Monday, being their chosen night for invoking the Devil. The ceremonies are led by Athena, after the goddess of wisdom. (267)

It clearly says that woman's intellectuality and identity is controlled in the hands of patriarchy. They never try to understand the devotion and condition of women rather they treat women as secondary object and they transform woman's ability and capacity into 'evil things' in the society. But Athena doesn't hesitate with the threatening of patriarchy led by Rev. Buck but she collects the power to resist them and their domination. More than two hundred people take part in ceremony led by Athena in a former East India company warehouse for their work of prophesy. The patriarchy in the name of Christianity led by Rev Buck tries to stop Athena and her followers to enter inside the warehouse and Rev. Buck mobilizes his parishioners and orders them as "gather outside the warehouse to stop Devil-worshippers' getting in ..." (270).

Patriarchy plays role not only in political system but also in Literary and philosophical system. There's hierarchy made between male and female where male is the standard and female is subordinate. The woman is made to be subjugated by male. Simon de Beauvoir mentioned her view in this context in her famous work *The*

second Sex (1949). In her work, she has demonstrated how women are marginalized, subordinated and hegemonized by the patriarchal ideology. She is concerned with destroying patriarchal ideology. In the literary text, women are always in secondary role. They are ordinary, unimportant and marginal. Feminism criticize the one sided evaluation of literature. Beauvoir says, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman---. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature--- which described as feminine" (89).

Paternalism regards women as other and man as one. This mystical otherness of woman has nothing to do with their nature. This otherness is a cultural construct. A female becomes woman after her birth. There is nothing womanish in her. It is the male discourse that defines woman giving them patriarchal identities. Her main argument in this book is that women have always been thought of and treated as an object which regards women as second sex-inferior and weaker sex. In the title 'myth and reality' of the book, she points out that myth is created by patriarchal ideology about women and those myths are just created to rule and subordinate women. The book even reflects upon the great collective myths about women in the works of great writers.

Athena and her followers demand to allow freedom of worship the female side of god. They demands to stop the religious discrimination, they raises their voice against the biased norms and values of patriarchy which keeps women in subordination. But Rev. Buck and his parishioners are ready to fight with Athena and her followers. They force Athena's party to do the charitable work in the name of Jesus. Andrea McCain. Athena's follower resist against the parishioners by saying "They say, they are fighting in the name of Jesus, but what they really want is for people to continue to ignore the teaching of Christ, according to which "we are all

gods" (271). When McCain opposes patriarchy's move to dominate the females and their identity, she receives a cut above her right eye because the parishioners attack her physically.

When patriarchy and its followers attack Athena and her supporters, they become more aggressive but they control themselves and raise their voice against the domination and for the freedom of worship. Athena rejects the suggestion that she should stop the meetings with the followers because of the disturbances. Athena awares to all her supporters to resist against the domination and makes them devoted to denounce the religious discrimination. She encourages to her supporters to struggle against domination and for freedom and says as:

We gather together to offer mutual encouragement, because it's very hard to face social pressure alone. I demand that we denounce the religious discrimination to which we have been subjected over the centuries. Whenever we do something, that is not in accord with state-instituted and state-approved religions, there is always an attempt to crush us as happened today: Before, we would have faced martyrdom, prison, being burned at the stake or sent into exile, but now, we are in a position to respond, and force will be answered with forces, just as compassion will be repaid with compassion. (272-73)

Athena delivers her speech to her supporters for not to be hesitate with the domination, rather to gather strength to overcome the biased norms and values which discriminate and dominate women in her name of religion. She becomes the spiritual leader and gets support of everyone who is in favour of gender equality identity and equal religious status in the society. Athena curses to the male power which attacks and threatens women in search of their identity and freedom. She gives a good slap by

accusing him of as "manipulating his parishioners and using intolerance and lies as an excuse for violence" (273).

The establish religions no longer ask fundamental questions about female identity and their reason for living. Instead they concentrate purely on a series of dogmas, and rules concerned only with filling in with a particular social and political organization. Athena, in search of real spirituality is, therefore, setting off in new directions and that inevitably means a return to the past and to primitive religions, before those religions were contaminated of the structure of power.

When Athena decides to hold a meeting, she and her followers feel that they are under threat, but their devotion in search of their freedom and identity leads them to struggle with the parishioners led by Rev. Buck. When Athena holds her meeting with her supporters, the infinite numbers of people crams together on the pavement outside because the venue would only hold certain people. The people come being placards demanding for female equity and identity in the society. Heron Ryan, a journalist as the narrator describes about the meetings and the people's desire for freedom and identity as:

People came to see the 'being' bearing placards defending freedom of
`religion and freedom of speech and hoping for at least a glimpse of
the women who appeared to be the priestess of the oppressed. (255)

Most of the oppressed people in the society are tired of the patriarchal domination. They want to seek freedom. They want to enjoy freedom and equality in the society but male dominated society restricts them in the narrow house hold work, but in the novel Athena makes everyone aware about their self-existence in the society and she encourages them to resist against the domination. That is why, the people from every

corner of society comes to see Athena, the priestess of the oppressed, and to support her in her mission. Heron Ryan, a journalist as the narrator says:

When Athena arrives in the meetings with her followers, she is received with applause, handwritten notes and request for help. The journalist says as: "People threw flowers and they asked her to keep in fighting for women's freedom and for the right to worship the mother.

(276)

When Athena and her supporters hold meeting, there is no aggressive comments, the ceremony passes off as normal with density, the appearance of Hagia Sofia. By seeing the meeting of Athena and her followers, the parishioners led by Rev. Buck fail to turn up to that meeting despite the threats they had made during the previous days. They hesitate with that meeting which makes them impossible to attack Athena because of the big crowd of people involved with Athena.

Athena convinces her followers that they mustn't frighten from the power. She asks her supporters to fight against the biased norms unhesitatingly. She as the narrator speaks as:

We all have duty to love and to allow love to manifest itself in the way it thinks best. We can't and mustn't be frightened when the powers of darkness want to make themselves heard, those same powers that introduced the work 'sin' merely to control our health and minds.

(276).

Athena gets support from the crowd of people who ask her to fight against the domination and for the search of female identity and dignity: she doesn't surrender to the power even she gets threatens from them, but her strength increases in search of her dignity. Athena is able to convince her supporters that they must struggle and

fight against the power which always treats woman as inferior. In her opinion, today's society should move in its own accord, not by the threat from outside. She as the narrator further says, "We are entering a new world in which we can choose to follow our own steps, not those that society forces of darkness again. But no one will silence our voice or our heart" (277).

It is clear that the females in the modern era are fully aware about their right and freedom in the society as Athena in the novel. They are not in that position to tolerate any kind of domination imposed upon them to go further.

Through this novel, Coelho tries to explore the female identity and dignity in the society. In his opinion, female are not in the phase of domination, rather they move forwards towards the emancipation and are able to enjoy their self-identity and equity in the society.

Athena in the novel is resisting the domination that patriarchal society wants to impose upon her. She is trying to be free from all kinds of patriarchal oppression. Athena is a modern woman but she doesn't discard her cultural value and morality. She wants to modernize her culture and avoid the inequality, discrimination and repression in it. She wants to clear out these things and values which are obstacles in female's progress and self-development. She wants her existence and desires for meaningful and respectful life in the society. She devotes herself to avoid dependency, discrimination and suppression. Paulo Coelho, through this novel, focuses on the cooperation of both male and female which is necessary to run society ahead. His female protagonist of the novel doesn't totally discard the existence of male but discards the patriarchal oppression imposed upon female. He believes that both men and women should respect each other's feelings and desires. Coelho, in his novel, *The Witch of Portobello* wants women's individuality, freedom, identity and their

womanhood. That is why, his female character Athena struggles for individuality, self-identity and exposes her leadership towards other women and the result is mainly related to individual success of women. Coelho, through this novel, makes women conscious to liberate themselves from the male created nations which control them in every sphere, and motivates women to express their suppressed desires and their devotion for creating their own identity and emancipation which leads them to move against biased orthodox rules and convention of patriarchal society.

III. Exploration of Female Identity through Athena

Paulo Coelho, a Brazilian writer of the twenty first century, exposes the social, political, religious and cultural picture of the oppressive Patriarchal society. His novel is modest on Panic sufferings, doubt and repression and thoughts of emancipating woman's life from the very patriarchal society. This research has analysed Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello* from feminist perspective. It has analysed his novel as women of the post-modern society attempts to free herself from patriarchal boundaries by establishing her self-identity and autonomy. Athena, the protagonist of the novel success to rebel against the biased rule of the dominant forces of the society dramatizes the possibility of freedom of women.

The hierarchy made between men and women by the patriarchal society has marginalized women from the social position. But, some conscious women have raised questions against such discrimination and tried to stand on their own. Athena, in the novel rejects the social norms to follow patriarchy and attempts to live with her own intellectuality. She struggles for the empowerment of women with the help of meditation. She raises her voice to emancipate women from the discriminated society. She aims to focus her work on the welfare of women who are suppressed in a male-dominated society.

According to the social rules and regulation, women should only involve themselves in the household works. They are not allowed to choose for themselves what is right and what is wrong. They must be puppets in the hands of ruling class and their voices are made silence in the shadow of patriarchal society. In this situation, Athena, when she becomes conscious about the biased condition of the society, she struggles for self-dignity and identity in the society. She is able to understand the empty space in her life and started to fill up that empty space. Her desire to become a

saint is fulfilled in their life with the help of religion. She devotes herself to serve the women around her by making them aware about their position and identities in the society. When the people followed her path for the women's position and empowerment in the society, dominant forces understand it as the threat and try to stop Athena to move forward to make aware to the people. Though the patriarchal society threatens and blames her as witch, Athena continues her mission for the dignity of women.

Patriarchal society thinks Athena as the puppet in their hands and treats her as 'doll' without any existence in the society. But, her position in the society encourages her to be free from the social bondage. She wants to live the independent and meaningful life for this purpose. She starts to move freely and independently in the society and she encourages to all the women to reject the social bondages to live free and independent life. She suggests the women not to bear all sort of domination made by men and also suggest them to struggle for their own identity and freedom.

Female heroism is one of the salient features of Catholic's writing. The necessity of female heroism in the literary texts is to keep female in social dignity to bring women in the world of freedom and equality, it is necessary to give women the role of the protagonist in the literary text and to help women to come in the open ground without hesitation.

Athena raises the feminist voice for freedom from male domination. She has shown masculine qualities to change the life by living it autonomously. When Athena abandons from the Church authority in the church, she promises herself to live a confident and independent life. Though her husband gets divorce from her, she struggles herself and for her son Viorel unhesitatingly and ultimately she becomes the priestess of the oppressed and leads to the true path of life.

Athena is the fearless woman who never surrenders with the dominant force in the society. Patriarchal society restricts her to lead the free and independent life to be subservient towards them but she completes her mission to destroy the lopsided rules and male values of the society.

Generally, Paulo Coelho is taken as male writer but he is a man with full understanding of women's status and their power in society. So, his portrayal of Athena in *The Witch of Portobello* correlates with his ideas of the female as being equal in society. In the conclusion, we can say that Athena, in the novel is a conscious, independent and courageous woman who struggles for women's right and equality against the patriarchal society. Her courage and devotion inspires her to challenge the patriarchal society and get victory over it in order to attain the autonomy and self-dignity in her life.

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