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Ironic Representation of the Female Power in Coelho's *Brida*

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Letter of Recommendation

Miss Chomitra Rai has completed her Thesis entitled "Ironic Representation of the Female Power in Coelho's *Brida*" under my supervision. She carried out her research from December 2009 (A.D) to December 2011 (A.D). I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for the final *viva voce*.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Chomitra Rai, entitled Ironic Representation of the Female Power in Coelho's *Brida* " has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present dissertation seeks to explore the ironic representation of the female agency in Paulo Coelho's novel *Brida*. It attempts to show how Brida's resort to magic for her empowerment undermines her effort to challenge patriarchy. In the novel, Brida manages to challenge patriarchal values once she becomes a witch armed with supernatural powers under the guidance of two teachers of the magic and witchcraft: Wicca and Magus. It shows that Brida, as a woman, is not capable of challenging patriarchal values in reality. Therefore, her challenge to the patriarchal values through witchcraft and supernatural powers undermines Brida's own identity and agency as the woman.

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I. Collusion of the Elements of Magic and Reality in *Brida*

The present research work is an attempt to find out the use of magic realism ironically in Paulo Coelho's novel *Brida*. The central character Brida moves from present to past life under the influence of magic. Here it is shown that as a simple woman in reality, Brida is not capable to challenge patriarchal values, therefore she looks for a magic teacher to learn magic and with the help of supernatural power she manages to challenge patriarchal values. Therefore, her challenge to the patriarchal values through magical power undermines Brida's own identity and agency as the woman.

Brida has been presented as a young Irish girl, who cannot acquire what she really wants through her ability but only through the magical power. Only with the help of the fantasy, she is successful to fulfill her dream to remove all the blame imposed on the women since the past. The novel is the story of Brida, a beautiful young Irish girl, who is in search of a magic teacher. She follows the two magic teachers: Magus, who teaches her about the knowledge of the sun, and Wicca, who teaches her the knowledge of the Moon. In the search of the knowledge, Brida finally knows about her gift and becomes a witch, thus it gives the story a supernatural twist, when she comes to know about her earlier incarnations as Loni, who is dead. She sees everything about her past life in a state of magic while she is talking to Wicca lying on the ground in the forest.

Brida, the title of the novel, is a long winded transformation from the Irish Brigid, a name born by a popular Irish goddess of wisdom. The title of the book is named after the protagonist Brida who undertakes several lessons on magic to be a witch in order to gain wisdom. At first, Brida appears to be a naive girl but, at the end, she proves that she is intelligent and brave as she learns magic to gain wisdom and

knowledge to fight against the patriarchal social norms and beliefs which she could not do without the power of magic as she is a simple girl. Only through supernatural power, she achieves what she wants.

As the main concern of the present research is Coelho's *Brida*, let's see how other critics and reviewers have analyzed it. *Brida* has received lot of critical commentaries and responses from many writers, critics and scholars. Different critics have commented with different responses on his work. They have focused their commentaries on the issues of feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, magic realism, location and religious aspects. Among many commentaries, Henry Markov, in his review, has interpreted the novel from the technical aspects. In this connection, he claims:

Written in third person point of view the novel shifts between four characters: Birda, her teacher in the tradition of the sun, mostly referred to as Magus; her teacher in the tradition of the moon, Wicca and Birda's lover a clever physicist assistant named Lorens. As every chapter brings a different point of view, the reader is left out to put together the puzzle from the past and present relationships of the characters during Brida's search for wisdom. (2)

The admixture of the magic is known in Coelho's novel *Brida* by referring to the three main characters: Brida, Wicca and Magus. Brida meets various types of mysterious persons like Wicca's and Magus's teacher and visits various places as she travels through Time Vision. There is a blur between past and present as the past has been recalled and brought in the present to compare with life happening in the present.

In this regard, David Johnson has commented on the narrative style of the novel in these words:

Coelho's brilliant tale of young Brida an Irish girl who wishes to become a witch is a compelling and vividly fantastic epic. Sadly, narrator Linda Emonds uninspired and monotonous reading is discursive to this fantastic tale. Though the story is set in the context of the Ireland in 1930s Emond takes no attempt at the relational dialect or even the slightest shift in tone for any characters. (7)

Here, *Brida* focuses on the narrative style of the text. This story is narrated by an outsider, who is an author, and his character is not present in the novel. He is just present as a story teller. This story is set in Ireland which is known mostly for revolution. Brida struggles to learn magic and it's been described in a fantastic way by Paulo Coelho. Brida meets different people from different fields while she was on her way to magic to become a witch. Mostly two people teach her regarding magic and she masters her profession of magic.

Paulo Coelho's fantastic novel *Brida* has inspired many people from all over the world. The charming, simple and well written story allows readers to interpret it in many ways that they choose. Another critic Michael Smith has interpreted *Brida* as a surrealist novel:

Bizarre surreal tradition of witchcraft and to some extent wizardly against Brida is loaded with fragmented inspirational messages. The book has some strange link against to the virgin Mary, Jesus and the Catholics. Look into witchcraft the four ways a women can communicate with the universe through reincarnations the virgin, the saint, the martyr and the witch. (16)

Coelho has presented that the magical activities are even performed in this 21st century, which is the scientific and technological era. This practice of magic seems

something superstitious and out of the norms in the present situation. Surreal tradition of witchcraft is shown as connected with Christian religion as the witches pronounce the name of Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ before performing any ritual. They do it. So, Jesus or Mary may be present in their act of magic.

Harper Collin's, the publication house of *Brida*, writes: "This is the story of Brida, a beautiful young Irish girl and her quest for knowledge. On her journey she meets a wise man who teaches her about overcoming her fears, and a woman who teaches her how to dance to the hidden music of the world. They see in her gift, but must let her make her own voyage of discovery" (qtd. on the book back cover).

In the text, the author uses very simple sentence structure, which helps the reader to follow the story freely because the whole text is about a simple young Irish girl. The simplicity gives the novel a unique voice. The mixture of magical flavors, supernatural elements, mystery, science and symbols may sometimes become little bit monotonous.

Brida, during her lesson of magic, becomes a witch; she becomes enlightened about different types of magic from different teachers. Paulo Coelho himself believes in magic and supernatural elements so he portrays his character having these qualities. Brida's mind begins to travel miles away, wandering about in the places she's never been before while she is on the phone answering to Wicca. Every detail on the card before her seems to push her further on that journey.

Henry Dalford has interpreted the novel from the feminist perspective. He argues: "One of the strongest novels to depict feminism is *Brida*. In the *Brida*, the physical and psychological journey and the ultimate victory of the female characters proves the novel having the qualities of feminism" (52). Brida uses especially the male characters to possess her knowledge about love and magic, whenever she needs

them and they act and move according to her demand. The whole story only revolves around Brida and others are on the margin. She finally becomes successful in her mission to become a powerful witch gaining all the knowledge about the struggles of the women in the past.

Thus, these critical views show that the ironic representation of the women through magical realism in *Brida* needs a serious attention. Different critics have presented criticism of this dissertation by using magical elements differently. However, my thesis does not speak against these voices rather seeks different mode of research as ironical use of magic realism mode of research to unfold the magical realism in this dissertation.

The present dissertation has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a short outline of *Brida*, literature review, hypothesis and the overall outline of the study. Similarly, the second chapter discusses the theoretical modality. The third chapter analyses the text in the light of the theoretical insights so as to prove the hypothesis. This last chapter is the overall summary of the research in brief.

II. Representing the Women through Magic Realism

Magic Realism is a term used by critics to describe the mingling of the mundane with the fantastic. It is a literary term, which refers to a mode of writing that can be characterized as an amalgamation of realism and fantasy. The term 'magic realism' was first coined by the German art critic Franz Roh in the mid 1920s in his book *Nach Expressionismus* in 1925 to describe the work of expressionist painting. The term was adopted in the United States with the 1943 exhibition at the New York Museum of modern art, entitled American Realists and Magic Realists.

From the 1950s to 1980s, some fiction writers like Emma Tenant, Angela Carter and Salman Rushdie used this technique. Magic Realist novels and stories have a strong narrative drive in which the recognizably realistic mingles with the unexpected and inexplicable. Everyday events are portrayed as supernatural, extraordinary and even fantastic events, whose authenticity is never questioned.

Magic Realism appeared as a critical term for the arts and later it was extended to literature. First this term in 1925 was used by Franz Roh to characterize a group of post-expressionist painters. Magic realism can be said as a preoccupation or interest in showing something strange or unnatural:

The writer confronts reality and tries to, it by looking for what can be mysterious in life, objects, and even human actions. A magical realist narrator creates the illusion of 'unreality', faking the escape from the natural, and tells an action that even if appears as explainable it comes across as strange. In the strange narrations, the writer instead of presenting something as real, the reality becomes magical. The strategies the writers consist in suggesting a supernatural atmosphere without denying the natural and the tactic is deforming the reality.

Characters, things and events are recognizable and reasonable, but because the Narrators intentions are to provoke strange feeling, the explanations are neither clear nor logical. Also, there is no ambiguity or psychological analysis of the characters, instead they are never well defined almost in opposition, and they never appear confused or surprised about the supernatural. (203-35)

During the period of 1920s, magical realism was not limited in expressionistic painting; it also had been used in surrealist painting. By opposing the material object, surrealist focuses more to cerebral and psychological reality. Surrealists were greatly influenced by Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung's explorations of the human i.e psychological analysis of human mind. Much of the confusion concerning magic realism arises from the fact that it was contemporary with Surrealism.

Alejo Carpentier, one of the Cuban magical realist writers was influenced by Roh and the Surrealist. Carpentier proposed that the marvelous real defines the most appropriate way of seeing the history of Latin America in his novel *The Kingdom of This World* in 1948:

The marvelous real comes into existence in an unexpected way when it is born from an Unexpected, change in reality (a miracle), from an enhanced revelation of reality, or from an Illumination, which is unusual or singularly able to reveal the hitherto unnoticed richness of reality. Here the strange is commonplace and always was commonplace. (108)

Carpentier went on to say that the marvelous real is a question of the people in Latin American actually believing in the supernatural, miracles, and ghosts, even in the twentieth century. Since the 1950s and 1960s the concept of magic realism has been

associated with Latin American fiction. One of the prominent writers of the magic realism in Latin America is Gabriel Garcia Marquez. His work *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is one of the epitomes of Latin American writing. Magical realism challenges polar opposites like life and death and the real and unreal or fantasy. Magic realism presents a world that is not based on natural or physical laws rather unnatural and unreal. In this regard, Luis Leal points out:

Magical realism is more than anything else, an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultural forms, in elaborate or rustic styles and in close or open structure. In Magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts. The principle thing is not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances. In magical realism key events have no logical or psychological explanation. (119)

Magic realism in literature has produced a significant body of magic realistic writing in Canada too.

David Grunt explains that "here realism is achieved not by imitation, but by creation; a creation which, working with the raw materials of life, absolves these by the intercession of the imagination from mere faculty and translate them to a higher order" (15). He further argues:

The key to understanding how magical realism narrative is constructed in order to provide a realistic context for the magical events of the fiction. Magical realism relies upon realism but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits. It is therefore related to realism but is a narrative mode distinct from it. (Grunt 22)

However, twentieth century theories of realism in literature emphasize the involvement of the imaginative process in literature.

The author must have ironic distance from the magical world view for the realism not to be compromised. Simultaneously, the writer must strongly respect the magic, or else the magic dissolves into simple folk belief or complete fantasy, split from the real instead of synchronized with it. The term “magic” relates to the fact that the point of view that the text depicts explicitly is not adopted according to the implied world view of the author. As Gonzales Echevarria expresses, the act of distancing oneself from the belief held by a certain social group makes it impossible to be thought of as a representative of that society.

Authorial reticence refers to the lack of clear opinions about the accuracy of events and the credibility of the world views expressed by the characters in the text. This technique promotes acceptance in magical realism. In magical realism, the simple act of explaining the supernatural would eradicate its position of equality regarding a person’s conventional view of reality. Because it would then be less valid’ the supernatural world would be discarded as false testimony.

In magical realism, the supernatural is not displayed as questionable. While the readers realize that the rational and irrational are opposite and conflicting polarities, they are not disconcerted because the supernatural is integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictional world. In an essay entitled “The Baroque and the Marvelous Real” Alejo Carpentier championed the idea that the baroque is defined by a lack of emptiness, a departure from structure or rules, and a “extraordinary” plentitude of disorienting detail. From this angle, Carpentier views the baroque as a layering of elements, which translates easily into *the* post-colonial or trans-cultural Latin American atmosphere that Carpentier emphasizes in

The Kingdom of this World. These mixing ethnicities grow together with the American baroques; the space in between is where the “marvelous real” is seen. Such a complex system of layering encompassed in the Latin American “boom” novel, such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, has as its aim of translating the scope of America.

Something that most critics agree is the sense of mystery. Magic realist literature tends to read at an intensified level. The reader must let go of preexisting ties to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, and scientific reason to strive for a state of heightened awareness of life’s connectedness or hidden meanings.

To cut the long story short, magical realism is transgressive since it crosses the borders between magic and reality. Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris have noted these aspects in their introduction to a collection of essays on magical realism, claiming that such critical analyses reveal:

Magical realist texts are subversive, their in-betweens, and their all at oneness courage resistance to mode, particularly useful to writers in post-colonial cultures. Magical realism is a mode suited to exploring and transgressing boundaries, whether the boundaries are political, geographical or generic. It brings into question the very assumption of dominant culture and the influential ideas. (6)

A feminist writer Angela Carter uses magical realism as a tool to attack the patriarchal society in her novel *Wise Children*. In the novel, her characters of the female illegitimate working class. She turns the system of being oppositions upside down and brings into question. The assumption of such patriarchal definition through the novel. Similarly Indian critic Kum Kum Sangari proposes, “The magical realist attack on

dominant culture and its authoritative version of the truth actually provides a new and more comprehensive mode of preferentiality” (163).

Magic realism is most commonly associated with the geographical region of Latin America. The Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Gracia Marquez who has come to epitomize the image magic realism has influenced many writers to adopt the mode due to his innovative use of the technique. In Marquez’s fiction we can see these characteristics as he incorporates folklore in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Marquez in this novels gives voices to those culturally marginalized people of the Columbian coast. In this context, Philip Swanson notes that Marquez’s magical realism:

Must be a political question of reinterpretation of reality, utilizing the oral style inherited from his grandmother’s fantastic story telling.

Gracia Marquez seems to want to reproduce a traditional, popular rural perspective- challenging the hegemony of the alien, dominant, imported culture and reinstating the value of the community’s own cultural perspective. (12)

Marquez uses magical realism as a tool to indirectly resist politics. His writing deals with history like civil wars, the rule of a dictator and brutality act of the army against the poor citizen of the country.

Magical realism as a style in literature in English language appeared first in the early 1970s in the world. Main location of magic realism is Canada, West Africa, New Zealand, India and Carribean. Magic realism appears as an opposition to British Colonialism from many countries like India, Canada, Australia and the region of West Africa. In India Salman Rushdie, Amitav Gosh and Kum Kum Sangari are very notable prize winning writers of magical realism. This use of magical realism is

highly presented in the novel *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie. Saleem the protagonist is the narrator of the book, from his perspective everything is seen who tells his and India's tale retrospectively while he was working in pickle factory. From the very beginning of his life he witnesses and participates in many magical happenings like he sees bodies disappearing and he rides through the air with a witch.

Similarly, Canadian magic realism is also popular realism, as it opposes the dominant ways of thinking of colonialism. The most notable contemporary Canadian magic realism writer is Michael Ondaatje. Probably, the best well known writer of the magic realism in the English language are British Indian writer Salman Rushdie, African American writer Toni Morrison, African writers Ben Okri, native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko, Carribean writer Pauline Melville are the major writer, about magical realism through their writing.

Although my text does not cover these fields Films, paintings and music are important to talk about the other fields to which realism is related. To know the magic realism it is necessary to mention of its influences in other areas or fields, as it is not limited only in the field of literature and literary works rather cultural forms of paintings and films also have some kind of affinity with the term magical realism. We can recognize features of magic realism in many films particularly mostly in horrific science film like Frederic Jameson, who adopts the same skills used by the visual art critic. His essay 'On Magical Realism in Film' written in 1986, is the essay which explores the genre of film as magic realism. Today, there are several films which are based in magic realism theme. For example, *The Wings of Desire* by the German director Wim Wenders is one of the prominent magical realist films in which magical element and events are highly focused. He uses computer animation techniques to show ghost image with human actors in real life settings.

As the term, magic realism was first and principally associated with the field of painting during the period 1920s by German Critic Franz Roh. In this regard, Alejo Carpenter says:

The term magical realism was coined around 1924 or 1925 by a German art critic named Franz Roh what he called magical realism was simply painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality. In fact, what Franz Roh calls magic realism is simply expressionist painting. Here, the strange is common place and always was common place. (102-03)

The artists like Otto Dix, Alexander Kanoldt and Edward Hooper became magic realism's most famous artist painters. All are based on World Wars, painted in a style that depicts the horror and chaos of First World War It is their photographic quality which creates a magical impression in their painting.

In its early days the paintings by a Mexican artist Frida Kahlo appeared as a groundbreaking work in the field of magic realism. Frida Kahlo's painting is smooth on the surface and the photographic quality and the smoothness of the surface creates a strange juxtaposition of objects in the context. Because of this quality of her painting her works were proved as the milestones in the development and in the popularity of magic realism. Another Mexican artist Carlos Fuentes praises Frida Kahlo saying that the working of Kahlo depicts the notion of magic realism through the employment of the technique and surrealism. Fuentes argument becomes clear from the following lines:

Kahlo is the most important artist of magic realism especially employing the technique of surrealism in her painting. Her use of vivid imagery and the surreal quality of her paintings are enough to deal with

the theme of magic realism. Thus, Kahlo remains the most powerful reminder that what French surrealist codified has always been an everyday reality in Mexico and Latin America, part of the cultural stream, a spontaneous fusing of myth and fact, dream and vigil, reason and fantasy. (14)

The passage above provides Kahlo's contribution to the development of magic realism.

As we know, the present dissertation is about the ironic representation of the agency of the woman. In the novel, *Brida* makes an attempt to establish her identity by challenging the patriarchal values. However, the way she resorts to witchcraft accompanied by the supernatural powers amply tells one how she undermines her agency. In this connection, a brief discussion on feminism is essential.

Feminism is a discourse that involves various theories and philosophies that are concerned with the issue of gender difference, advocates equality for women, and campaign for women rights and interests. It is a broad movement embracing numerous phase of women's emancipations aiming to understand women oppressions in terms of race, class, gender and sexual preferences and its efforts lie in changing it. So it is the social movement and pertains to marginalization of women that seeks equal right for women as man and freedom to decide their career and life patterns. It questions such long-standing dominant phallogocentric ideology, patriarchal attitudes and male inter-presentation in the society where the women have been excluded to marginality. So it's a voice against the inadequacy, the distortion as well as the ideologies, which the males have created.

From the very beginning of human civilization, women were considered as inferior, incidental and inessential being whereas man as the subject, superior and obstacle ones. Patriarchal society has indeed been well served by the masculinity

images. In patriarchy, all the images of women have been across the ambivalence men's feelings towards women. For the masculinity, women and sex are almost synonymous terms. If sex evokes mixed feelings of approach and avoidance, most certainly it is likely that women evoke the same feeling. So woman is an integral part of masculinism and patriarchy. But Misogyny includes the beliefs that women are irrational, incompetent, gossipy, silly, overemotional, stupid, petty, dishonest, oversexed, and a host of other ugly things. Such stereotypes culminate in the attitude that women must be dominated, controlled, subdued as well as abused.

Many women writers came in the field of literary feminist theory and criticism. Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simon de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter etc Women feminist writers presented that how women are exploited and their situation and also about their rights. At the beginning, feminist produce their theory and then learned history and textual criticism. They began to reprint women's works and to study the image of women. But theory or criticism is more difficult to apply than producing the theory or criticism itself.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), well deserved its ranked as the first literary feminist work. In this essay, she has gone beyond her dissenter Rinds, whose views remained strictly patriarchal. In general, the fundamental principles enunciated of in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* are that the mind does not know sex and that, as Clare Tomalin has remarked that "society is wasting its asserts if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and alluring mistresses denies them economic independence and encourage them to be docile and attentive to their looks to be exclusion of all else". Wollstonecraft has discussed the pernicious impact of sentiment novel on the lives of women in 18th century. So, she attacks the sentimental novels of her time for their pernicious

influences on women's intellectual and mental development. According to her, due to the traditional education system, women are compelled to study such novels, which are not intellectual but are sentimental. In sentimental novel of her times, there are presented the women's characters. Through the stereotypical way, women are emotional, not rational and docile to their looks. Due to the impact of those novels, women can't exercise their intellectuality but are trapped in the sentimentality which leads them to a concept that a knowledgeable man is nothing in comparison to brave rake. Mary Wollstonecraft's concern in literature is the characterization of women character in the literary works. She says:

Everything that they see or hear serves to fix impression, call forth emotions and associates ideas that give a sexual character to the mind. False notion of beauty and delicacy stop the growth of their limbs and produce a sickly soreness, rather than delicacy of organs: and thus weakened by being employed in unfolding...It is unreasonable as well as cruel, to upbraid them with faults that can scarcely be avoidable, as well as cruel, to upbraid them with faults that can be avoided, unless degree of negative vigor be supposed, that falls to the lot of very few amongst mankind. (395-96)

From the very beginning, Wollstonecraft opines that woman is affected by the misinterpretation of the life style of the society. In a novel, a boy is depicted as an active person where as girl is presented as passive beauty. If woman read such novels and make an ideal picture of male and female in their mind. Wollstonecraft advocates the women's social and political rights through her literature. After the publication of the Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* there was a series of books published in favor of the women's participation in the literature. All of them

have raised the voice against the canon's domination (male canon) in the literature. They all have found that the domination of the female character is due to the hegemony of patriarchal society.

Virginia Woolf, one of the influential of the twentieth century, presents an important statement concerning women's alienation from the related ethics of war and patriarch in *A Room of one's Own*. Virginia Woolf raises the social obstacles to write literature due to lack of literary space in *A Room of one's Own*. Through this book, she argues against the patriarchal society which has prevented women from their creative potentialities. She believes that women have always faced social and economic obstacles to their literary ambitious. Woolf addresses the problem which might have faced by Shakespeare's sister, who was unable to write literature. She also guessed that Shakespeare's sister had none of the material resources, breath of human experience, money and time to do. She would have been discouraged by everyone. In her *A Room of One's Own*, she lays focus on the women's right that women must have money and room of their own if she tries to write literature. She, in *A Room of One's Own*, says, "She must have shut herself up in a room in the country to write and been torn a sunder by bitterness and scruples. Perhaps, though her husband was of the kindest and their married life perfection" (819). Woolf hopes to achieve a balance between a 'male' self-realization and 'female' self-realization. Her ultimate belief was that talents if they achieved social and economic equality with men.

Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, summarizes the writings of five male authors about women by demonstrations the way in which each of these authors depend on their own specific self-image and constructed by himself in his own mind. She present her view that male dominate females by creating myths about women which shows women culturally, socially, biological spiritually and politically

inferior than males. Here, De Beauvoir finds politics in the male writers who always either overestimates or underestimate woman without judging them on the surface reality. According to Beauvoir, men call females either angel or witch but not a human being. *The Second Sex* book's central argument is that among these writers, D.H. Lawrence says that phallus cannot exist without female but at the same time female are inferior to males. Through the history, women have always occupied a secondary role in relation to man being relegated to the position of "other" i.e. that which Valerie says:

Is adjectival upon the substantial subjectivity and essential activity of man whereas man has been enabled to transcend and control his environment, always furthering the domain of his physical and intellectual conquest woman has remained imprisoned within immanence, remaining a slave with the circle of duties imposed by her maternal and reproductive function. (682)

For her introduction to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir points that masculinity is considered to be the absolute human type, the norms and standard of humanity. Men, of course, have had their own reason for perpetuating such duality of self and other fore grounding the issue. Beauvoir says, "Legislator, Priest, Philosophers, Writers and Scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of women is willed in heaven and advantaged on earth" (22). Beauvoir argues that there is nothing as 'feminine nature'. There was no physical and psychological reason why women should be inferior to man and yet throughout history and across culture, woman has always been second class citizen.

Similarly, Virginia Woolf emphasize that economic independence is a prerequisite to an autonomous women's art and proposes that women's literature

should have distinctly female vision. It should not be compared with the male version of literature. Male version of literature could not explore the essential truth of female experience such as menstruation, pregnancy; gestation, child rearing, abortion and mothering which are special feminist domains and it could be taken distinctly from the male version of literature.

Patriarchy, the rule of father, would refer not simply a society where men hold power, but rather to as society ruled by a certain kind of men wielding a certain kind of power. It is the society that reflects underlying value of traditional male idea. Patriarchy is a culture which driving ethos in an embodiment of masculine idea and practices. It determines image of woman and the relation between the sexes. It sets the hierarchy between male and female. And it asserts that male is first, light, white and female is second, dark and black. Patriarchy expects the woman to serve the man physically, taking care of the homes, property, clothing or person, economically doing countless job for which woman are ill paid or not paid at all; sexually, as wives, mistress or prostitutes, and reproductively, assuring men of paternity through the female chastity. Shelia Ruth says; "In a patriarchal culture, men define else. The issue is not only that man perceives women from masculine perspectives, but that given the nature of socialization, all member of society, including women, perceive the female from the prevailing masculine perspectives" (84).

In patriarchy, domination is so much rooted that it evaluates woman not regarding the human being but like everything else. Woman's position in patriarchal society is culturally constructed. They are compelled to perceive their own images and identity from male perspective. Their behavior, attitude and social status are determined from male perspectives. In patriarchy, everything is measured in touchstone of male ideology.

So, patriarchy sets the stereotypes about women. Stereotype is a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or things and they are recognized by that fixed image in the given society, but in reality, which is not often true. In most of the given society, first persons or caste, nation gives fixed name or image to second persons. But that flexed image may be wrong. Because that first person cannot understand the actual position status of second person like in the patriarchal society, male gives fixed ideas and image to woman but in reality that is not true. For male cannot understand female's real experiences. Stereotypes exclude or reject everything which falls out of definition - everything which is different. It sets up symbolic boundaries and then provides the mechanisms of cultural production for people to police those boundaries. People use stereotypes to determine who should naturally belong to one group or another. One person cannot produce and circulate a stereotype all alone; stereotypes function within groups of people as knowledge. Importantly, they are usually produced by people who are positioned to circulate their ideas widely so that even the group stereotyped may come to take on this as a kind of fact.

The present research looks at the ironic representation of the female agency. Therefore, a brief discussion on irony is indispensable. Even though it is very difficult to define what irony is, the term irony basically refers to the contrast between the statements and its meaning or simply the difference between form and its content. The basic feature of every irony is a contrast between appearance and reality. No sensitive authors, critics, and readers can avoid sensing its presence and feeling its powerful impact in literature. So irony has become a major literary mode or device these days. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English* defines the literary

meaning of the terms as an “expression of one meaning by saying the direct opposite of one’s thought in order to be emphatic, amusing, sarcastic etc” (665).

For many reasons the concept of irony is vague, unstable and multiform. The word irony does not now mean exactly what it mean in earlier centuries, or it means different to different writers, critics, scholars. Though the word has been applied to different phenomena, it is very tenuously related in application. M.H. Abrams observation deserves citation on the evolution of the concept:

In Greek Comedy the character called the Eiron was a dissembler who characteristically spoke in understatement and deliberately pretended to be less intelligent than he was, yet triumphed over the Alazon the self deceiving and stupid braggart. In most of the modern uses of the term “irony” there remains the root sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually the case, not however in order to deceive but to achieve especial rhetorical or artistic effects. (134-35)

This citation makes it clear that the origin of the term has a long history and the term irony is used to hide what is actually the case for many reasons.

While seeking the origin of “irony” D.C. Muecke remarks as:

Eironeia is first recorded in Plato’s *Republic*, applied to Socrates by one of his victim, it seems to have meant something like a smooth, low down way of taking people in. For Demosthenes an Eiron was one who evaded his responsibilities as a citizen by pretending unfitness. For Theophrastus, an Eiron was evasive and non-committal concealing straight his enmities pretending friendship misrepresenting his acts and never giving a straight answer. (15)

Wyane C. Booth, in the preface of his book *A Rhetoric of Irony* tries to clarify the concept of irony as: "For both its devotees and for those who fear it, irony is usually seen as something that undermines clarities, open up vistas of chaos, and either liberates by destroying all dogmas or destroys by revealing the inescapable canker of negation at the heart of every affirmation. It is thus a subject that arouses passion" (ix).

The above view supports that irony has become the mother of confusion and there is no agreement among critics about what irony exactly is. It has never been fully explored.

Booth remarks about the trouble of irony as:

Irony, an aggressively intellectual exercise that fuses fact and value, requiring us to construct alternative hierarchies and choose among them; demands us that we look down on other men's follies or sins; floods us with emotion-charged value judgments which claim to be backed by the mind accused other men not only of wrong beliefs but of being wrong at their very foundations and blind to what these foundations imply all of this coupled with a kind of subtlety that cannot be deciphered or "proved" simply by looking closely at the words, no wonder that failure to communicate and resulting quarrels are often found where irony dwells. (44)

Besides that, during late seventeenth century the words derision, droll, ratty, banter were used heavily which automatically helped to keep the word irony as a literary word later on. As in the rest of Europe, the concept of irony developed very slowly in England. For two hundred years and more, irony was considered as a figured of speech, defining the word as saying contrary of what one means, or as saying one thing but meaning as praising in order to blame and blaming in order to praise. Most

interesting meaning in Cicero is a way of treating one's opponent is an argument and as the verbal strategy of whole argument which was ignored at first.

By the middle of eighteenth century the concept of irony in England and in other European countries had scarcely developed in broad outlines. Muecke comments on the latter concept of irony in England as: "It was at the very end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century that the word 'irony' took on a number of new meanings. The old meanings were not discontinued, though one notices a tendency towards disparaging satiric irony as cruel, corrosive or diabolic" (9). We can see new meanings, new in many respects, which we can sort out. Earlier, irony had been thought of as essentially intentional and instrumental, realizing a purpose by using a language ironically but it has been even unintentional- observable. We can see the concept of irony enlarged in Romantic period beyond Instrumental Irony to Observable Irony. So now irony has become double natured: sometimes instrumental and sometimes observable, where before, irony had been thought of as being practiced only locally or occasionally but now we can realize the world itself as ironic stage and paramount, obligatory, dynamic and dialectical.

The emergence of new meanings of irony made German intellectual leader for many years. The principal ironist of the period was Friedrich Schlegel. If we see the chronological development of irony, first it was thought of irony not of someone being ironical but of someone being the victim of irony, changing the attention from active to passive.

D.C. Muecke calls verbal irony of events in Shakespeare's Henry V:

After his renowned battles, Henry wished to secure his conquest by the marriage with a French princess; all that has reference to this is intended for irony in the play. The fruit of this union, from which the

two nations promised to themselves such happiness in future, was the weak and feeble Henry VI, under whom everything was so miserably lost. (19)

Another philosopher Friedrich Schlegel adds a further and even more radical development of the concept. He made irony open, dialectical, paradoxical or romantic. For him the basic metaphysically ironic situation of man is that he is a finite being striving to infinite and incomprehensible reality. We can call this the observable irony of nature with man as victim. Irony, he says "is the form of paradox" (24).

Irony is "the analysis of thesis and antithesis" (24). Schlegel comments on irony as:

Irony is the only involuntary and yet completely deliberate dissimulation, everything should be playful and serious, guilelessly open and deeply hidden. It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication. (qtd. in Muecke 24)

Schlegel argued that artistic creation has two contrary but complementary phases: expansive and contractive phases. In the expansive phase the artist is naive, inspired and imaginative; but this thoughtless odor is blind and not free. In the contractive phase the artist is reflective, conscious and ironic but irony without odor is dull.

Connop Thirwall introduces the term practical Irony and refers Verbal Irony as Dialective Irony. D.C. Muecke comments on Thirwall's introduction of the term as:

Thirwall knew that he was using the English word irony in new senses. But these new senses had already been developed in Germany. Hegel, for example, had seen irony as the dialectic progress of history and

before him Solgar had liberated irony from its negative association. So it could be applied to situations and events that seem unpromising but surprisingly turn out fortunate. (29)

A sense of irony involves not only the ability to see ironic contrast but also the power to shape them in mind. Kierkegaard says, “Irony is not present in nature for one who is too natural and too naive, but only exhibits itself for one who is himself ironically developed” (271). For Sigmund Freud irony is very close to joking and it produces comic pleasures in the hearers and readers. Goethe says, “Irony raises a man above happiness and unhappiness, good or evil, death or life”. Kierkegaard agrees with Goethe’s view and thinks that no true philosophy is possible without doubt and at the same time no authentic human life is possible without irony. This does not mean to advocate ironic presence in every work of art and human behavior, the more lyrical the art is, the less ironic it becomes. The world without irony would be like a forest without birds, we need not wish every tree more bird than leaf. So we might see ironic and the non-ironic as complementary opposites, as reasons and emotions, mind and heart are, both desirable and necessity.

Verbal irony is also called instrumental irony in which language is the instrument. However, it is not always easy to distinguish verbal irony from observable irony. In verbal irony the ironist says something in order to have it rejected as false. In observable irony, the ironist presents something ironic like a situation, sequence of events, a character etc. M.H. Abrams defines irony as:

Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation but with indication in the overall speech situation that the

speaker intends a very different and often opposite attitude or evaluation. (135)

Wyane Booth, in his *A Rhetoric of Irony* discusses on two types of irony: stable and unstable irony. M.H. Abrams mentions:

In *A Rhetoric Of Irony*, Wayne Booth identifies as stable irony that in which the speaker or the author makes available to the reader an assertion or position which, whether explicit or implied, serves as a firm ground for ironically qualifying or subverting the surface meaning. Unstable irony, on the other hand, offers no fixed standpoint which is not itself undercut by further ironies. (136)

Another type of irony is Socratic irony. It got its' name from the philosopher Socrates who usually dissembled by assuming a pose of ignorance and having an eagerness to be instructed. Another widely used irony is dramatic irony. In dramatic irony, the character is ignorant whereas the author and readers have knowledge of present or future.

Here at last, normally the character has a journey from ignorance to knowledge M.H. Abram remarks as:

Dramatic Irony involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant; in that situation, the character unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances. (136-37)

In the passage above, M.H. Abram pinpoints a gap created by the audience's knowledge about the main character's world and destiny and the character's lack of the same.

Like Paulo Coelho, several writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Ben Okri, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie have tried to represent the women by blending the women's everyday reality with the supernatural elements. Sometimes, the use of magical realism actually helps the writers to represent the voice of the marginalized groups like the women. However, sometimes, the very use of Bharati Mukherjee, in her novel *Jasmine*, renders power to Jasmine, the protagonist, by relating her to the goddess Kali. Whenever Jasmine is abused by the males, she takes revenge by turning herself into the goddess Kali. However, this kind of representation of the female power, as we can see, is ironic rather than metaphoric. As Jasmine, as a woman in the reality, is not capable of challenging male counterparts, she has to resort to mythical supernatural power, which eventually undermines her own agency as a woman. The same thing can be noticed with Brida, the protagonist of Coelho's *Brida*. Brida's resort to magic for her empowerment undermines her effort to challenge patriarchy. In the novel, Brida manages to challenge patriarchal values once she becomes a witch armed with supernatural powers under the guidance of two teachers of the magic and witchcraft: Wicca and Magus. It shows that Brida, as a woman, is not capable of challenging patriarchal values in reality. Therefore, her challenge to the patriarchal values through witchcraft and supernatural powers undermines Brida's own identity and agency as the woman. Deriving the insights from the above discussion on magic realism, feminism and irony, the text will be meticulously examined in the next chapter so as to prove the hypothesis.

III. Representation of Magic Realism as an Irony in *Brida*

Paulo Coelho in his novel *Brida* presents the use of magic realism ironically in this dissertation. *Brida* is a novel based on the young Irish Protagonist Brida, who is on her way to learn magic on any condition as magic has been her passion to know the knowledge of wisdom as a central character. As women have no power to have a say in a decision making body and were most of the time considered as an inferior being who have no existence. She is trying to learn magic as to go against the imposed patriarchal norms on women. Since the ancient time, they have been tried as witches and burn alive to death. Coelho uses magic realism ironically to show that only through some supernatural power women are able go against the patriarchal values, and without the influence of magic it is impossible for Brida as she would be like a lame fellow. Brida learns magic from two magic teachers, Wicca and Magus, whose existence is presented in a mysterious way.

In this novel, woman's naked body has been glamorized by the writer, while women perform their last initiation ceremony. Brida, Wicca and other woman are naked and are dancing in front of the male guest in a circle in the forest. Brida, the main protagonist, enjoys the largest space in the novel as the whole novel deals with her magic class and rituals. The novel *Brida* opens by making the perfect blending of the reality and magical elements, as is evident in the novel. From the very beginning of the novel, Brida is shown in the forest looking for a strange man called Magus, even though she's heard negative about him, as magic is her passion. He asks her, "Don't you think you're rather young to learn magic?" (10). And also he questions her why she wants to learn magic. Brida answers him, "So that I can find answers to some of the questions I have regarding life so that I can learn about the occult powers and possibly, how to travel back into the past and forwards into the future" (9). Coelho

uses magical realism in an ironical way as Brida wants to learn magic to be powerful and fight against the evil male practices. Magic is used as a mere digression from the existing social reality. Magic has been presented as a fantasy, illusion, mystery and supernatural. Brida goes against the wrong impression about Magus and with his help dives into the world of magic to know something about the past and future of her and other's woman condition.

Magus expresses his desire to Brida that “now I want to be alone, to climb mountains tend plants and commune with God” (12). Here, it is a verbal irony as the meaning which Magus implied differed sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude but with indication in the overall speech situation that the speaker intends a very different and often opposite attitude. As in reality he wants to live like other people with his Soul mate, who is Brida and present right in front of him. Magus asks her to make a choice between magic and the love of her life, and she answers that she sees no contradiction between her search and her personal happiness. Right after her answer, he says he will be her teacher:

Magic speaks all the languages of the human heart . . . Magic is a bridge . . . a bridge that allows you to walk from the visible world over into the invisible world, and to learn the lessons of both those world . . . There are two forms . . . the tradition of the Sun, which teaches the secrets through space and the world that surrounds us, and the tradition of the Moon which teaches through time and the things that are imprisoned in time's memory. (16)

Coelho Presents here magic as a technique and a way of looking at one's life. For the completeness of the vision, he includes magical and real elements, as his character

Brida feels incomplete as she is present only in the visible world and wants to know about the invisible world and to be part of it.

Before the beginning of their magic class, Magus tells her that “when you find your path you must not be afraid. You need to have sufficient courage to make mistakes. Disappointment, defeat and despair are the tools God uses to show us the way” (17). For failure makes people to struggle more to find out the result. When Brida is all alone in the dark jungle at night, various images of imagination were creating fear in her and at that moment she wishes for her dead Grandmother, who is a dead soul now. Magic began to take place as the psalms, which she learned from her grandmother as a child began to come back to her “exactly as if her grandmother was reciting to her now” (22). Despite fear, she feels her protective presence. Coelho has presented the story in a confusing way as the next chapter does not have the continuation of previous chapter. The first setting is in the forest while the second setting is in the city, where lifestyles are quite different.

Brida gets Wicca’s address from the mysterious owner of the bookshop and she has to wait for a week to meet Wicca. Brida has admiration about Wicca’s building as the inner and outer backgrounds are quite opposite. It evokes strange and mixed feeling about Wicca in Brida. Wicca lays the cards and says that her stronger side is always a woman in her previous incarnation. She says that “the soul mate is the first thing people learn about when they want to follow the Tradition of the moon” (36). Wicca continues her explanation:

We are eternal because we are all manifestations of God that is why we go through many lives and many deaths, emerging out of some unknown place and going towards another equally unknown place. You must get used to the fact that there are many things in magic

which are not and never will be explained. God decided to do certain things in a certain way and why he did this is a secret known only to him. (36-37)

In certain incarnations, souls divide as do crystals and stars, cells and plants. We form part of what the alchemists call, the Anima Mundi means the soul of the world. The process to find ourselves is called love. Our souls are divided into male and female parts. The book of Genesis explains that “the soul of Adam was split into two and Eve was born out of him” (38).

Brida practices to spread the tarot card as advised by Wicca everyday, but she feels frustrated as no magic takes place even after her hard labor. She dials Wicca’s number saying she won’t be able to come the following day. All of a sudden, then, Wicca asked her if she has got cards in between and when she is listening to Wicca, Brida feels a terrible tedium taking hold of her. She starts feeling something different and can no longer hear what Wicca is saying and travels to the other world:

The Tarot cards before her began to show fantastic scenes: men with bronzed, oiled bodies, wearing only things and some sporting masks like the giant heads of fish. Clouds raced across the sky, as if everything were moving much faster than normal and the scene shifted abruptly to a square, surrounded by grand buildings where a few old men were urgently telling secrets to a group of young boys, as if some form of very ancient knowledge were about to be lost forever. ‘Add seven and eight and you’ll have my number. I’m the devil, and I signed the book...the scene changed yet to the sea, to reveal temples carved out of the rocks, and then the sky began to be covered by black clouds pierced by brilliant flashes of lightning. A door appeared. It was a

heavy door like door of an old castle. The door came closer to Brida
[. . .]. (53-54)

Coelho uses magical scenes and presents strange people in strange land in the novel to create a mixture of magical elements and reality in the novel that paved the way to unearth the elements of magical realism. Wicca leads Brida to travel to the distant world through the help of telephone talk and tarot card and at the end she asks Brida what has happened to her after coming back to the real world. Wicca also tells her that it is when male knowledge joins with female transformation, then the great magical union is created and its name is wisdom.

Wicca thinks that magic led her to know that Brida possesses a gift as revealed in the conversation below:

‘How do you know?’

‘Easy. By your ears.’

‘By my ears! How disappointing!’ Brida thought to herself. ‘And there was me thinking she could see my aura’. (58)

Here Paulo Coelho brings the opposite, complementary impulses in order to achieve a balance between Brida’s expectation and view. Wicca’s answer is quite opposite from what Brida thinks. When she comes to know that people with a gift are born with very small, attached earlobes, she is frustrated.

According to Wicca, one remains incomplete if anyone fails to find one’s soul mate. Therefore it’s a must to find one’s soul mate. It’s a great irony on the part of the Coelho to say that one is incomplete without one’s soul mate. He makes Brida to struggle and get confused to find soul mate, without which she is incomplete. She questions and also thinks how to find and how can she know that one is her soul mate

in this vast world. All this is done so that Brida could know that at last Magus is her soul mate.

Coelho has also brought two conflicting perspectives about past and present in *Brida*. Magical power leads Brida to travel back into her past life and she comes to know that her name was Loni, who was on the verge of death and Talbo was her husband, a warrior. Always a strange voice used to torture her by pre- informing her about her death in this way: “You are going to die” (71). This voice accompanied Loni till her death. “You are not afraid”, (76)) says the voice to Brida, who is not afraid of death as she knows that death is merely another beginning. She could see the faces, bodies and gestures visible only to her and sometimes she uses her invisible friends to shift objects around and make strange noises that startle her companions:

She with her affection and gaiety, had been largely responsible for him having rediscovered the meaning of life, that her love had driven him to the far corners of the Earth, because he needed to be rich enough to buy some land and live in peace with her for the rest of his days. It was his utter confidence in his fragile creature, whose life was now fading fast, that had made him fight with honor, because he knew that after battle he could forget all the horrors of war in her arms, and that, despite all the women he had known only there in her arms could he close his eyes and sleep like child. (80)

Coelho here brings irony of fate on the part of Loni, who was deceived by her husband whom she loved very much and she was dying for him as she was with him during the war between Cathars and the Catholics. Talbo did not tell Loni about his woman, who was waiting for him. But the voices which were torturing her by telling her that she was about to die didn't deceive her and were always with her until her

death. This voice seemed much more loyal than her husband at the end. Love raised Loni above happiness and unhappiness and also death and life at last. We find two conflicting parts in the novel between Loni in the past who died for love and religion, whereas Brida in present world is on her way to magic for love

A sense of irony involves not only in the ability to see ironic contrast but also the power to shape them in mind, the historical war between Cathars and the French Catholics. A great blunder was created in the name of religion, as they were trying to prove that they were the true Christians by waging wars, Cathars believed in reincarnation and was ready to meet death in the name of religion: “For forty years, Cathars and Catholics fought bloody battles” (88) and the Catholics won the battle. One March morning after the surrender of the castle, two hundred and twenty Cathars hurled themselves, singing, into the bonfire. People became blind for religion and the religious fight made them to forget about humanity. Here different belief in same religion and religious war is presented as an irony.

Lorens gives a two edged dagger to Brida as a gift, since it is ordered by Wicca to bring for the rituals as it is necessary tool for the witches. During the ritual, Wicca consecrates the dagger involving magical words, charcoal designs drawn on the blade and a few blows with a wooden spoon. It is to be used as a prolongation keeping the energy of her body consecrated in the blade like as Wicca says, “Fairy Godmothers used a wand for the same purpose, and magic used a sword” (120). Only our present has power over our loves, and magic is to surrender oneself to the greater power, Wicca says to Brida.

Paulo Coelho has used irony in various speeches of the characters in the novel, like Brida’s questioning Magus: “Is God only the God of beauty” (98). Magus, advised Brida to be careful here after in her speech. Also Magus asks Brida, “Do you

know how to pray” (102). But Brida’s reply is funny as she says her soul is silent and she does not know how to pray. In reality, it is only the enlightened one does have silent soul.

Brida, again, goes to the forest to meet Magus. On their second meeting, though Magus wants to tell her that she is his soul mate, she interrupts and asks, “Why are you wasting your time with me?” (110). Hiding his feeling and the truth he answers, “Because I need someone to talk to” (110). It’s an irony that the magicians and the witches calling out the name of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ to bless them before the rituals as their source for power, whenever they need to invoke magical spirit. This is how Wicca begins her prayer:

May the Virgin Mary free us from those marks and put an end forever to our sense of guilt. We feel guilty when we go out to work because we’re leaving our children in order to earn money to feed them. We feel guilty when we stay at home because it seems we’re not making the most of our freedom. We feel guilty about everything, because we have always been kept far from decision making and from power. (129)

In a way the technique of magic realism has become a weapon at the hand of Coelho to represent the voice of women. Through this prayer Wicca is trying to let Brida know that how much women had to suffer in the past at the hands of male dominated society. The position of the women is still so pathetic that only through some supernatural power women can fulfill their ambition of fighting this humiliation. Wicca gives an example of Joan of Arc: “Joan of Arc had to disguise herself as a man in order to fulfill the lord’s word, and yet still died in the fire” (30). As males thought it was a humiliation that God chose female as a messenger to spread Religion of Love against the power of evil in the world, they condemned Joan of Arc

as a witch and a threat to patriarchal norms and to the church. They burnt her alive at a stake.

We also find inequality of treatment regarding the type of punishment implied to male and female in the past. Women were treated as inferior beings whose presence had no value. Men were tried in the public square over land disputes, whereas women were tried in the public square for adultery. In the context of the novel, the women with magical knowledge have more freedom in the present society as we can know from the presence of an intellectual person like university professor, Lorens, and others in the witches' initiation ceremony comparing to women with some power in the past. Wicca wants to remove all the blame imposed in the women in the past with the help of these new witches as rebels. One afternoon, Wicca asks Brida to wear everything from her wardrobe as “clothes always transform emotions into matter” (133). But Brida thinks that Wicca is meddling into her private life, which she shouldn't, then she hears a voice. The voice leads the invisible to the visible world.

Roman people would never enter a building with cross on it. They would think it was a house of torture, with a cross in it thinking that cross was an instrument of torture invented by man. While in reality Christian hold cross with great respect as their source of power and they find peace in it, we see different people bearing different about the cross. Magus, a magician who has already experienced tragedy in love, is repenting for it at that time. Brida says to him “But if you've ever felt love. You'll know how painful it is to suffer for love” (143). It is an irony on the part of Brida talking to the one like Magus, about the pain in love that who was drinking the cruelest poison for the very cause of love since many years.

Wicca says that knowledge without transformation is not wisdom and Brida must know about Force before her last initiation. She says this force is in everything around us; it's in the visible world of ordinary people and in the invisible world of the mystics. But once someone experiences this Force, he or she will not be able to forget it. Brida sees Magus asks him to teach her about Force. Magus gives her theory class but in reality Tradition of Sun always deals through action saying plunging into the world of magic means discovering unknown senses and sex propels us towards one of those doors. One Saturday, while Brida and Lorens go for a walk to the cliff, she tells him that she wants to make love with him right there. While making love, a magic takes place, "She could no longer control the world around her, her five senses seemed to break free and she wasn't strong enough to hold on to them" (113). Everything disappears and after a while a vast golden light, which grows and grows until it touches the most distant star in galaxy. She has discovered another bridge that joins the invisible to the visible and she would never again forget the path that leads to it.

While Brida comes back to Magus, he notices that her energy is quite different as she has managed to awaken the Force. Brida's real intention for inviting Magus for a drink is to take revenge by saying that she has discovered Force with another man, whom she loves. Her other intention is to ask him about his affairs with Wicca. Magus refers her as the King of the Night, since the party is thrown out by her that night. Paulo Coelho has used wine as a magical tool and power to give courage to Brida to ask him about his love story, which she could not do without the influence of wine. Brida is surprised. She thought Magus wouldn't drink. A man, who spends whole day in the forest seeking communion with God, is also capable of drinking and getting drunk. Though in reality she doesn't want to know about him and Wicca, she

insists him to tell as it would be the best way to get a reaction. Thus, wine starts to work on him and he begins to pour out his love story saying, “We were part of a generation that knew no limits, the generation of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones” (180). He tells her how both of them became teachers on their own fashion and how they split up when they learned about soul mates. She insists Magus to drink little more by saying, “After all I’m the King of the Night” (182). These words King of the Night and wine build up her confidence as a magic and allowed her to insist Magus to tell about his love affair with Wicca.

Irony of fate manipulates so as to lead the character to false hope and eventually to frustration. Though Magus preferred to learn the Tradition of Moon, which was more interesting involving rituals and learning the wisdom of time, his teacher told him to learn the Tradition of the Sun, as it would be better for him to learn. Magus also recall his past life that how he lost his love and left him in pain for another simple man without any knowledge regarding magic, nor was he her soul mate. Both Magus and Wicca quarreled for it and his passion was stronger: “Kept on whispering in his ears that he must not lose that woman” (185). This led him at last to self repentance as it was his fate destined by God. The contrast between man and his hopes, wish and undertaking a dark fate exhibit the tragic irony. It was tragedy on the part of that ordinary man who has got no supernatural power to fight against Magus and had to meet tragedy for his love with the women who know The Tradition. It reveals that man without some magical power cannot fight against a man who has got magical power. Magus with the power of magic removed that ordinary man from his way and for it he had to repent till now. He realized that it was impossible to break the secret vow he had made that night. And for it, he had to drink

the cruelest poison in his life that is “loneliness: (187). Unless again that very love sets him free from the bondage he had wounded and reveals his soul mate to him. For the first time Brida noticed light in magus’s eyes, the light that showed he was her soul mate in the pub. After the drink they went into the wheatfield and stopped in the middle. Magus gets the presence of his Teacher in the wheat field and also earlier in the pub in spirit form, but Brida didn’t know it. By picking up the twig she started to perform magical rituals and suddenly the whole circle filled with mysterious light and saw light above the left shoulder of Magus and said my soul mate. Vision of light holds great significance in supernatural world. After her invocation magic began to take place and Brida asked what that was? To Magus and he said, “A gift of love and gratitude for the fact that you exist and because I have waited so long to find you” (196). Now he tells Brida that she is the one for whom he has been waiting for so long in the lonely forest. The power of magic makes him to tell the truth. Brida requests him to take her and show how to travel through his world. Then, Magus says let’s start our magical journey.

They travelled through time and space, through the two Traditions.

Brida saw meadows full of flowers, animals she had only read about in books, mysterious castles and cities that seemed to float on clouds of light. The sky lit up as the Magus drew for her, above the wheat field, the sacred symbols of the Tradition. At one point, they appeared to be in the icy landscape of one the Earth’s two poles, but it was not our planet: other smaller creatures, with long fingers and strange eyes were working on a vast spaceship. Whenever she was about to say something to him, the images would vanish to be replaced by other.

(196)

Coelho shows that Brida's rejoicing after the vision from Magus is also dramatic. Here, the spiritual world and everyday world are shown as Brida and Magus takes spiritual journey. But fantasy does not last for long and everyone has to return to the real world leaving imaginative world, like Brida and Magus after their spiritual journey come back and go to their own appointed destinations. The above lines bridge the marriage between the real and the magical elements. This presentation of the magical elements frequently occurs in the novel to make the reality and the magic appear in the same horizontal line of equality. The fight means that the magical realism adopts in order to encompass the often phantasmagorical vision.

Brida's mother strange experience of love for a stranger as she reveals to her daughter: "I've never stopped loving your father, not for a single day" (209). She adds:

He's always been by my side doing his best, and I want to be with him until the end. But the heart's a mysterious thing, and I still don't really understand what happened that afternoon. What I do know is that meeting that man left me feeling more confident, and showed me I was still capable of loving and being loved, and it taught me something else that I'll never forget: finding one important thing in your life doesn't mean you have to give up all the other important things. (209)

Brida's mother love is an ironical romantic love for the stranger. Here the irony is that the natural love is defeated by supernatural love. Brida's mother says that she has experienced the love of a lifetime by spending few hours with a stranger and its one sided love on her part. She loves him with full strength and will never forget him.

Brida thinks that love between human beings is much more different to understand than love for a Supreme Being "The first person to whom he appeared was a woman, who accompanied him to the last" (215). Brida remembers Jesus

having known the love of one person; it became difficult to sacrifice him and to leave the earth for the love of all men. Women were closer and understanding the love of Christ than the man. It's an irony Brida saying that she is afraid of love as it involves complications that are beyond her understanding. Brida herself is in love and has been with many others in the past.

The woman has been portrayed as a jealous creature even in the male's imagination and its irony on part of a male exposing their own negative nature while trying to expose the negative nature of women. Magus imagines that Wicca may be jealous of her when she comes to know that Brida is his soul mate. He thinks, "Witches were above all else women" (218). It is not Wicca who will be jealous about other man. He compares Wicca with snow white stepmother from a fairytale, who could not bear other woman to be more beautiful than her, but in reality Wicca does not get jealous as she knows the reality about soul mate.

The novelist presents irony of thoughts that bring light to the hidden complexities regarding Brida's and Lorens's expectations about initiation ceremony as something sacred turns out to be like a party at first. As in reality it is Wicca's plan so that everyone should be in trance to start initiation without anybody's knowledge and it is wisely done by her. This initiation ceremony makes Magus remember the comment his teacher gave him "Haven't you ever been to a party?" (229) when he asked what was going on as the Sabbath looked like a party in his first initiation ceremony day. He sees Brida's aura and vast range of different colored auras rapidly changing and moving towards the colors that Wicca has chosen. Lorens is surprised to see a professor of the university present in the ritual of the Witches and other Magic Teacher's could see the filaments of Light joining various people. Lorens notices something strange "The odd thing was that the rhythm also seemed to

be dictating the beating of his heart” (236). The supernatural world is shown taking control of the real.

Magic has started to take control over Wicca and other initiates, and no longer had the world seemed faraway and no longer cared about superficial things. Wicca feels proud of her body and stands naked only to show how free her soul is at that moment. She looks again at the naked women, who are now travelling through time and meeting many soul mates. Inside the invisible circles, she draws five pointed stars to come into contact with the world of light. She says:

Open the eyes of her soul and found her in a desert and remembered she had been there before with Magus in her earlier magical journey. Brida met with Wicca’s Teacher in that mysterious land, who told her that he is Wicca’s Teacher and informed her you have found your path. Then he smiled and magic began to take place. In his right hand a blue cloak suddenly appeared. ‘You can only be close to preparing if you are one of them. The scene around her changed. She was no longer in a desert, but immersed in a kind of liquid in which various strange creatures were swimming. (252)

The magical elements are always related to the supernatural world that goes beyond boundary of the time and space of the physical world. Magic realism is characterized by two conflicting perspectives- one is based on an enlightened and rational view of reality and the other is based on acceptance of the supernatural as part of life.

Wicca’s teacher said it is a mistake that set the world in motion and tells her never to be afraid of making mistakes. He brought the example from the Holy Bible to His creation:

‘But Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise.’ ‘And they will return one day knowing the miracle of the heavens and of all the world. God knew what he was doing when he drew their attention to the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. If he hadn’t wanted them to eat it, he would never have mentioned it.’

‘So why did he, then?’

‘In order to set Universe in motion’. (253)

Wicca’s and Magus’s teacher are omniscient, omnipotent, transcendent, absolute, infinite and free as they can appear and travel wherever they prefer. Wicca’s teacher has told her never to be ashamed. Slowly the figure of the teacher begins to dissolve, along with the desert and the stone. Brida after her initiation knows that Magus would never be hers even though he will help her whenever she will need him. The love between Brida and Magus is a magic since due to the vision of light only both of them know that they were each other soul mates, otherwise they would have never known each other, and never fall in love.

When Wicca and Magus compared and say that each of their Tradition is far better than others in their thoughts while they are in the last initiation ceremony. Magus thinks the tradition of Moon is a fascinating one with teacher and it’s rituals but the Tradition of Sun is more difficult to follow though it looks simple, a simple thing always seems so complicated. He, too, at first, longed to learn Tradition of Moon. It was his irony of fate that compelled him to learn the Tradition of Sun at last. Wicca on her part is glad that she is the teacher of the Tradition of Moon. Everyone who comes to her is eager to learn, while in the Tradition of the Sun most are in permanent flight from what life is teaching them.

Lorens feels something strange happening with him in the forest, his hands are trembling slightly, that he has never experienced before. He believes that God is trying to return to time through Brida: “God was the God of the Brave” (260). He makes a sacred promise to himself for his love. After the initiation ceremony, Magus tells Brida that knowing that one day his soul mate would come, he devoted to learning the Tradition of the Sun and she was one reason for him for continuing to live. He says:

Then you came, and I understood all of this. You came to free me from the slavery I myself had created, to tell me that I was free to return to the world and to the things of the world. I understood everything I needed to know, and I love you more than all the women I have ever known, more than I loved the woman who, quite unwillingly, waited me to the forest. I will always remember now that love is liberty. That was the lesson it took me so many years to learn. That is the lesson that sent me into exile and now sets me free again. (263)

Brida, as a woman, is represented as an inspiration to make a man to live in the world. Coelho presents the magical belief which has been taken seriously to the extent that determine human belief and shape reality. Magus has chosen this very witches initiation as Magus knew initiation too after he is released from his own bondage, that very night.

In this manner, there are many similarities between Brida and Jasmine, the protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine*. Brida, the main protagonist, functions in Coelho’s novel in a way reminiscent of Jasmine, a subaltern woman who cannot take revenge the way she is in the society. So she has got to turn herself into Kali to undertake the revenge. Here, too, Brida is forced to resort to mythic and supernatural

forces to attain what she wants in the patriarchal society. And, both Jasmine and Brida, though they manage to establish themselves as independent and strong women, are merely the ironic representations of the female power since their power is not based on the real world but on the mythic and supernatural world. In their bid to achieve agency and identity, both Jasmine and Brida are forced to choose the paths, which eventually undermine their stand. Furthermore, both are stereotyped. Jasmine has been living with the burden of her female body. She gets attacked and raped for being a woman. Her flesh, i.e. physical beauty, gains prominence. Likewise, Brida is also told that sex is one of the ways to integrate the real with the supernatural. Magus is teaching her as he has fallen for her beauty. Finally, he confesses that Brida is his soul mate. In both the novels, there are undercurrents of the treatment of the woman as a sex object. Brida has been presented as a kind of muse to men like Magus. In this way, the present dissertation has exposed the ironic representation of the female agency in Paulo Coelho's novel *Brida*.

IV. Foregrounding the Plight of the Woman in *Brida*

In the novel, Paulo Coelho blurs the demarcation line between natural and supernatural, history and fiction, poetry and the scientific invention, and religion and superstition. This sort of blending of magical elements with the reality is reflected basically in his portrayal of characters, incidents, and situations. His crossing of such borderlines, on the one hand, becomes an alluring aspect for the readers and, on the other hand, it leads to his representation towards irony.

Brida shuns the traditional life style and wants to adopt the modern adventurous life. She is ready to face any obstacle and dangerous situations while learning magic, even though she is all alone. She arrives in the deserted forest determined that she should learn magic by any means so as to carve a path for herself. On her journey to magic, Brida encounters a man called Magus, the teacher of the Tradition of the Sun, in a mysterious way. She meets him in the forest even though she's heard negative about him from the people around. Likewise, Brida meets Wicca, a mysterious woman, who is a witch and a teacher of the Tradition of the Moon. Wicca, through magic, knows about Brida's previous incarnation as Loni. Through the performance of rituals, Wicca leads Brida to travel back to the past in her state of subconscious. Obviously, such phenomenon is beyond the natural reality. In other words, this mixture of fantasy with reality helps Coelho present Brida as an empowered woman, who, through her magic, knows about her previous life and who knows what she should do in the days ahead.

Magus's and Wicca's Teachers, are omnipresent in the form of spirit in the novel. They are very old and have the knowledge of the world and are the great magic teachers. Coelho creates them as super magicians by presenting them with supernatural powers. They can be present anywhere they prefer. For example, Magus

Teacher is with him in the field, pub and also during his last temptation and in every ritual to bless the beginners not in the bodily form but in the spiritual form. But they also have the wisdom of the ages and able to talk directly to the soul of the world, and the capacity to control and to tame the natural forces. Here, while the readers realize that the rational and irrational are opposite and conflicting polarities, the supernatural has integrated them within the norms of perception of the narrator and character in the fictional world Coelho creates.

Magical realism prevails everywhere in the novel. For example Brida travels in the time vision to her previous life; she hears the voice while thinking about clothes. She deals with the spirit in the present life as she dealt in her past as Loni. Brida knows and becomes able to deal with magical powers and rituals. Brida has learnt magic so that with the power of magic she could remove all the blame imposed on women in the past as witches, who would be burned alive at stake. It is an irony that without some supernatural power it was not possible for Brida to fulfill her dream. At the end, after her last initiation ceremony, Brida is presented as being successful in learning magic and becoming witch. Only then, she finds herself enlightened and empowered. However, this kind of empowerment does not help her much. She is empowered with the supernatural forces. This kind of empowerment only robs her of her subjectivity. For she is not powerful as a woman but as a witch, i.e., a supernatural creature just like Jasmine, the protagonist of Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*. The way Mukherjee's representation of the woman's power turns ironic, Coelho's representation of the woman's empowerment, too, turns ironic due to the representation of the female power on the supernatural level. This tells us volumes about the patriarchal society in which the women can't even assert their identity and subjectivity in the real world.

Instead, they are forced to have fantasies about their power, agency and identity by resorting themselves to myths and supernatural elements.

To sum up, the present dissertation has proved how Brida managed to learn magic from two magic teachers; Wicca who taught her The Tradition of Moon and Magus who taught her The Tradition of Sun. In this novel Brida dares to challenge the patriarchal values once she learns magic and becomes a witch. It shows that Brida, as a woman, without any supernatural power in reality is not capable to challenge patriarchal values, therefore under the influence of magical power to challenge the society undermines Brida's own female identity. Brida is reduced to soul mate and muse to her male teacher, Magus. Again, she has been presented as a sex object. Again, she has been attributed with emotional powers only. She is compelled to experience making love with any man before leaning magic as it will help her to integrate natural with supernatural. In this manner, the novel, through the ironic representation of the power of Brida while attributing her with female stereotypes, foregrounds the plight of the women in the male dominated society.

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