



“THE FEMININE DIVINATION AND FEMINIST ORIENTATION IN PAULO COELHO’S *BRIDA* ”

Mrs.V.Jesinthal Mary

Assistant Professor, Dept of English ,
Don Bosco Arts and Science College
Kilpauk
Chennai-600010

(Affiliated to University of Madras)

Abstract

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Paulo Coelho creates his characters based on the experiences of people whom he meets or hears of during his journeys and tours. He is an ardent lover of travel especially pilgrimages to his favourite holy sites. Women play significant roles in the novels of Coelho. His women characters are virile, sharp and well-etched characters who encounter life in the way they like and pursue their freedom in the way their heart perceive. The protagonists of the novels, *Brida* , *By the River Pidera I Sat Down and Wept* and *The Witch of Portobello* are female characters who undertake journeys of self-realization by way of their experiences in mental institutions, international prostitution, and spiritual awakening. They are also based on the author’s personal life as stated by him on his feminine alter ego.

Brida is a unique novel of Coelho in which he probes into the life of a woman who loves to learn sorcery and her experiments with different magical traditions. This novel provides spiritual wisdom. Different themes such as the Great Mother, pagan religions and love are explored from different perspectives. Coelho brings in the elements of the “Dark Night” experiences, studying the tarot cards, transcendentalism, learning the Tradition of the Moon, identifying one’s soulmate and the unrhythmic dance that brings the mysteries to light.

Key Words:Feminine Divination,Feminism,Feminist Orientaion,Soulmate,etc.

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The novel *Brida* is about the story of a young Irish girl called Brida who begins to discover her purpose in life. She believes in a supreme power called “God” who is a perennial source of knowledge and wisdom. It is true that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom as Bible says. Brida says, “ ‘I have faith’, she started to say softly. ‘I have faith in God, faith in my Guardian Angel, who brought me here, and who remains here with me. I can't explain what he's like, but I know he is near. I will not dash my foot against a stone’ ”(BR 21). Nature is the greatest gift by God and Brida cherishes the beauty of nature in all walks of life. She is attracted towards the sun, the moon, the stars, the sky, the woods, the grass and all minute objects of nature. She believes that God is found in all things in Nature.

Brida leans towards magic and mysticism, and she wishes to know about the secrets of life. Her eagerness towards magic takes her to a forest where a wizard called Magus dwells. He immediately recognizes Brida as his soul mate. After learning about her curiosity, he consents to teach her magic. He explains about magic to Brida and says that magic speaks all the languages of the human heart. "Magic is a bridge that allows you walk from the visible world over into the invisible world and to learn the lessons of both those worlds" (BR 1). The Magus prefers to teach her the Tradition of the Sun.

The Magus warns her to get rid of her fear of making mistake first. People who are always aware of not doing mistakes can never succeed in life rather people who are prepared to learn from mistakes are the successful people. It is only through tools like disappointment, defeat and despair, God guides human beings. She is immediately given a punishing test in the frightening darkness of a forest where she is left all alone to discard her fears and conquer her doubts. He asks her to sit down near a rock and meditate. When she opens her eyes after dusk she is disappointed and frightened as the Magus has left her alone on a rock in the middle of the forest. She loses all her hopes and gets frightened.

Brida feels composed in the beginning; the images of horrible creatures test her courage. She imagines the hidden scorpion and snakes that haunt the forest and her mind. Fear of darkness frightens her every thought. Then she reassures herself that those are just fragments of her imagination. She feels that she has been deserted by the Magus, and she decides to calm herself by chanting the psalm from Bible with which she feels comfortable. She diverts her mind towards certain things that would create a friendly environment around her. She feels safe at the thought that "the night is just a part of the day" (BR 23). Brida expresses her attitude towards life in the following lines:

'I learned about the Dark Night', She said to the now silent forest'. I learned that the search for God is a Dark Night, that Faith is a Dark Night. And that's hardly a surprise really, because for us each day is a dark night. None of us knows what might happen even the next minute, and yet still we go forwards. Because we trust. Because we have Faith (BR 25).

Brida's path towards enlightenment leads her to another teacher, Wicca, who takes Brida as her student. Brida is taught to experiment with the tarot cards, to the complex and important act of visualization, she begins to unfold the mystery of the nature based religion.

In between her ritualistic teachings Brida tries to keep her relationship secure, she finds herself asking the ultimate question. Is there such a thing as a soulmate?, From Wicca, Brida learns an entirely unknown phenomenon known as soulmate. *Brida* is a novel which deals with the search for life and the soul mate. It is the central theme of the whole story. The story revolves around the search of one person who possesses the same soul as yours, yet in a different body. This is what is necessary to love and to live your life with the thought of being in love. The story tells us how it is not necessary for us to find our soul mate in a single person, and how it is not necessary for us to be with our soul mates forever, even when there is love. A single encounter with a soul mate has the power to last a lifetime.

Wicca is Brida's another teacher who teaches her how to dance to the music of the world, and how to pray to the moon. As she seeks her destiny, she struggles to find a balance between her relationships and her desire to become a witch. The novel is about exploring life, learning to connect with your truest self, finding one's soulmate in this life and feeling complete. This is astonishing information not only to Brida but also to the readers. Like crystals, stars, cells and plants, our souls get divided into two during certain occasions which form new souls in turn. "Our soul divides into two, and those new souls are in turn transformed into two and so, within a few Generations, we are scattered over a larger part of earth" (P 37).

Finding one's soulmate is a divine mission in everyone's life. All human beings have their own counterpart. Man has his feminine part, similarly woman has her male counterpart. The male counterpart present in a woman charges her with nurturing and maintaining knowledge. On the other hand, the female part is something far more subtle and fragile. Though fragile, it is required for transformation and without this the male knowledge becomes senseless. The men left the soil fertile, we sowed seeds and the soil was transformed into trees and plants.

The soil needs the seed and the seed needs the soil. The one does not have meaning without the other. It is the same thing with human beings. When male knowledge joins with female transformation, and then the great magical union is created and its name is Wisdom. Wisdom means both to know and to transform. There has been a constant war between male and female down the ages but nature has combined both men and women together in a beautiful bond and as a result a new life comes to the world. Men and women are complementary characters because one cannot attain fulfillment without the other.

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